

Tenrikyo

newsletter



America Canada Boys and Girls Association 50th Annual Convention

On Friday June 19th and Saturday June 20th, the America-Canada Diocese Boys and Girls Association successfully held a lively convention service and summer festival with over 150 participants, including youth members and adult leaders.

Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America

www.TenrikyoAmericaCanada.org

July 2026

“A Work in Progress” by Bishop Fukaya

- *Daily Thoughtfulness* (2) -

The Young Men’s Association’s International Hinokishin Corps will be held this month. I pray that the participants will engage in their hinokishin activities in high spirits and without injury.

Oyasato Seminar is also being held, and the participants are scheduled to receive the truth of the Sazuke. I hope that they will successfully become Yoboku and play an active role in the service of the Path.

At the end of this month, the Childrens’ Pilgrimage will be held at Jiba. Many children will be making the pilgrimage, and I sincerely hope they all spend their time there safely, free from injury or accident. I also wish to express my deepest gratitude to all the staff members who will be looking after them.

Furthermore, the America Young Men’s Association Convention will be held on the 15th of next month. It is my sincere hope that as many members as possible will gather to inspire and encourage one another, and that, moving forward, they will actively promote the Association’s activities without ever forgetting their fundamental duty as pioneers of the path.

Some time ago, I wrote my “A Work in

Progress” Newsletter article titled “Daily Thoughtfulness” (in the May 2026 issue). In it, I shared an anecdote about how the strength of a certain high school soccer team could be gauged by the way the players took off their shoes at the building lobby entrance.

The main focus of the story was the sense of unity among the students involved in the team sport of soccer and their sincere attitude toward the game. While the act of voluntarily straightening up scattered shoes might seem unrelated to athletic skill at first glance, I believe that such actions embody a team’s discipline and a mindfulness toward subtle, unseen details.

At that time, the discussion focused primarily on the mindset required for team sports; however, I believe this concept is by no means limited to team sports. The very same principle applies to individual sports and, indeed, to the life journey that each of us walks. In other words, it is our “daily thoughtfulness,” the way we approach things day-by-day, that shapes our true character.

When it comes to individual sports, the

(continued on page 18)

Coming Up

* TYMANA Convention @ Mission HQ

8/15 @ 10:30am

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June Monthly Service Prayer

June 21, 2026

Before You, God the Parent, Tenri-O-no-Mikoto, who is enshrined in this altar, I, Hiroshi Alexander Fukaya, Bishop of Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America, invoke with reverence.

Dear God the Parent, You created human beings and this world, where there was no form, from Your deep desire to see our Joyous Life and to share in it. You appeared in this world upon the arrival of the Promised Time, receiving Oyasama as Your Shrine, and revealed the final Teaching.

Since then, these teachings have spread to the world, and here in America and Canada, we have been blessed with those who lean upon Oyasama's Divine Model, engage in spreading the fragrance of the teachings, and help others be saved. For this, we are truly grateful.

Grateful for Your daily blessings, we are engaging in salvation work while seeking out Your intention in all occurrences shown to us in the world.

On this fine day of our June monthly service, from now, receiving the truth of Jiba, we service performers will unite our minds and spiritedly perform the seated service and Teodori service dance.

In addition to Yoboku and followers, this month, many of our Boys and Girls Association members, are gathered here to express their gratitude for Your daily blessings and to ask for Your continued grace. In witnessing our spirited singing of the Service songs, we ask that You, God the Parent, become spirited as well.

Yesterday, our Boys and Girls Association held its annual service convention; for this, we are truly grateful. We ask that You nurture our young members, who will carry the future of our path, so that they become Yoboku who take active roles in world salvation.

Also, next month, at Jiba, the Oyasama Seminar, the Young Men's Association International Hinokishin Corps, and the Children's Pilgrimage will be held. We ask for the blessings of many members from our diocese to take part in these programs.

Aiming towards the Joyous Life in which all people mutually help one another, we pledge to spread the fragrance of the teachings and to engage ourselves in salvation work. Further, we pledge to convey the path to our next generation and to engage ourselves spiritedly, day after day, in doing work for the path.

Dear God the Parent, please accept our sincerity and continue to guide us where we are lacking, so that even one day sooner, we can transform this world into one where we all live in harmony and respect for one another. In unison with the whole congregation, I humbly pray that You bless us so.

June Monthly Service Sermon

by Rev. Hiroko Okazaki

How this Faith Became Mine

I am very grateful that we have been able to perform the June monthly service of the Mission Headquarters in America with the Bishop and Mrs. Fukaya leading the congregation. As I have been asked to deliver this month's sermon, I would like to fulfill this honor to the best of my ability.

I would like to speak to you today, as someone who really struggled to find their way. Someone who was born into the religion, but only came to grasp their faith at the age of 30.

Do you identify as being Tenrikyo? And if so, what gives you the conviction that this is the path for you and when did you come to truly believe in God? And if you can't confidently say that you are a Tenrikyo believer, what would you say are some of your hangups?

I was born and raised in Kathmandu, Nepal, and lived there for 14 years with my parents and two younger sisters. I am 4th generation Tenrikyo on both my paternal and maternal sides of my family. Much like others who were born into the path, I grew up praying alongside my parents, reading scripture, and learning the dance and instruments for the service. I identified as being Tenrikyo, but when my non-Tenrikyo

friends from school asked me about my faith, I felt inadequate in answering their questions.

Those of you who grew up speaking English with your parents and had a chance to attend the Boys and Girls Association Sunday school, TSA activities and Oyasato Seminar, or came to know Tenrikyo later in your life and attended the Joy Workshop, Two Day Course or Shuyokai, are very lucky to have a good foundational knowledge of the teachings.

But knowing about Tenrikyo and having a sense of conviction that this is truly your faith, I think, are two different things.

At different stages in my life, there were specific instances that helped me solidify my own faith.

I think the first instance my faith started to awaken is when I was about 11 years old. At this point in my life, I was an English learner, being pulled out into ESL classes until the 4th grade and not understanding the language or the culture of my mostly American friends. I always felt lost and behind, and I was always trying to catch up. I was generally dissatisfied with my life and wondered what I was doing in this world, why I couldn't be like others, and so forth. My father was a very busy person and I didn't get to spend too much time with him, but on one of those occasions that we did get to talk, he told me that God the Parent created us to see us lead the Joyous Life and that was the meaning of our existence. Knowing



Rev. Hiroko Okazaki
head minister of Hollywood Church

the goal and purpose of my life was really powerful. Although there were many things that I still didn't know or understand about my faith, that knowledge really grounded me and became the foundation of my faith.

The reason Tsukihi began human beings was the desire to see you lead a joyous life.

Ofudesaki IVX:25 [Part 14, verse 25]

The American school I attended only went up to the 9th grade. So, after that year, I was to attend school in Japan. I went to Tenri with my mother and two sisters as we had done before to attend the Children's Pilgrimage. Except when the summer ended, they all went back to Nepal, and I stayed by myself at the Tsumesho dormitory. My mother gave me a binder and wrote to me all the time on loose leaf paper that could be kept in that binder. Can you imagine being separated from your 14-year-old and trying

to instill life lessons and passing down the teachings through letters? That is what she was trying to do.

Although I spoke Japanese at home with my parents, my reading and writing were not grade-level. Every day, I had to be tutored after school instead of being able to join a school club and enjoy a sport. I had to start from 2nd grade kanji characters and do worksheets every day. At school, kids would ask me how to say bad words in English. I got reprimanded by older students for not knowing cultural protocols. And did I tell you that they had to put me in the 8th grade so I could catch up and pass the high school entrance exam? Again, I was behind and trying to catch up. I was frustrated with myself, my studies, and life in general.

When I was 15, for a middle school excursion of all the graduating students, we traveled to a faraway location, stayed at a Tenrikyo church, and visited famous temples. One night, I thought I would assert myself and have a little fun. I joined a group of kids who snuck out at night, bought beer from a vending machine, and hung around at a bus depot. Since we weren't local, little did we know that this was on the other side of a police station, and soon enough, we got rounded up in a police van. At the police station, we were made to hand-write a document saying that we had been out after curfew consuming alcohol and had our fingerprints taken.

When I returned to Tenri, my mother called me. In those days, there was no internet, no Facetime. International calls were expensive so people usually communicated by writing. It was very unusual for me to receive a phone call.

What I remember about that call is that she said I already knew that what I had done was wrong and she didn't reprimand me. I can't really remember what else she said, but I felt that I had disappointed my parents, my teachers, the people I lived with at the dormitory, and that I had brought shame to my school, and even my religious community that was associated with the school.

The adults who lived with me at the church dormitory were nice, but they were not family. And if I did anything that had to be corrected, they all let me know at different times. The only relative I saw was my uncle who came to Tenri once a month. I had no sisters to talk to or parents to hold and comfort me nearby.

I started to go to the main sanctuary to clean the corridors, I went to the church headquarters morning service, I went to the Foundress' Sanctuary and talked to Oyasama. I could confide in Her and say anything to Her. Her warm presence brought me comfort that I could find nowhere else.

*To Tsukihi, all of you in the world are
My children.
Love for you fills Me: this is My single
heart.*

Ofudesaki XVII:16 [Part 17, verse 16]

In dark times, I learned to lean on Oyasama.

Sometimes the Songs for the Service helped guide me. The summer of my senior year in Tenri High School (the school year starts in April, so summer is mid-year), I visited my parents in Nepal. Seniors were having to decide what school we were going



to for college. My parents told me that I should attend Tenri University and major in religious studies. I was not happy because I wanted to study biotechnology at a different university. I felt like there was a Tenrikyo track laid out in front of me and I had no choice but to go along that track.

Then one day, when I was dancing the Teodori with my mother, Song 9 Verse 6 suddenly spoke to me.

*I never compel you to go forth,
Until you determine your own minds.*

Mikagura Uta, Songs for the Service IX:6

[Song 9, verse 6]

I felt like God was telling me that I wasn't being forced to do anything just yet and I was being given some time until I was ready to set my mind to devote myself to Tenrikyo. That might have been a self-serving interpretation, but it allowed me to accept the path that was suggested to me. In hindsight, there was no better place for

me to study religion at Tenri University. I was able to learn from professors who were prominent Tenrikyo scholars; people who had written books that I use as reference materials today when I am teaching or translating.

In my freshman year in college, there was another incident that helped me in my life of faith. I was in a Tenrikyo student group called SATOM (Students Association for Tenrikyo Overseas Mission). We had a guest speaker come and talk to the group. It was Rev. Tsunenori Ichise from Hawaii. We had an opportunity to submit questions for him to answer, so I wrote, "Why do we pray to our ancestors?" This question had been simmering in me for quite some time since my childhood. When my school friends came to play at my house, they saw the sanctuary and someone had remarked that my religion was not a legitimate one because we were praying to multiple gods. I understood that Oyasama and God the Parent are one and the same, but I did wonder about the memorial shrine.

Rev. Ichise read my question in front of the group, and said something like, "First of all, we don't pray to our ancestors. We give thanks to those who came before us. This is a non-starter." He sounded dismissive, but for me, this was a huge revelation and lifted a veil of dissatisfaction and doubt about my faith.

One never knows what someone might be thinking; what questions, doubts, or misunderstandings one may have that hold them back from completely believing in God and making their faith their own and not just their parents'. This is why I always encourage people to ask questions.

If someone cannot answer your question to your satisfaction, please find someone else to ask.

In the very beginning, I relayed to you that I only came to grasp my faith at the age of 30. I had asked God many times to show me signs of God's existence. "Hit me with a bolt of lightning. Throw me down the stairs!" I felt that my religion was Tenrikyo, but I wanted some experience to sense God's presence. This is a story about how I finally got that experience.

For about a year around the age of 30, I wondered every day why I wasn't married. Many of my friends were married. Even my youngest sister was already married. By that age, my mother already had 3 children. I equated marriage with stability and happiness as I had experienced in the home in which I grew up.

My parents had raised my two younger sisters and I with the hopes that the three of us could fill the shoes of someone like Lois Uchida who had been an interpreter who served the church headquarters. They had not agreed to some of the chances I had in marriage due to timing or circumstances that would not allow me to fully serve God in the way that I should be able to. I felt like I was trying to swim upstream against a raging river that was intent on stopping me.

Around this time, I was assigned to the small drum for a women's association service convention. I asked someone I knew who I thought could teach me the small drum and we practiced several times. The convention went well, and I asked my instructor if I could take him out to dinner as a way to thank him. We agreed to meet in front of a bar and grill. However, when he

arrived, he said that he had gift certificates for a French restaurant, so he drove us there instead. How would you take this move?

After that day, we met at coffee shops a few times. I thought he was really nice, and the type of person my parents would like as well. Before I fell too hard for him, I went to go talk to Oyasama. I told Her that I had always planned to engage in overseas missionary work and I told Her that now I was ready to commit to this. I asked that I be able to marry someone who would enable me to do that. I told Her that I was going to ask my small drum instructor where he thought our relationship was going. If that worked out, that would be great, but if it didn't work out, I would marry the first person that was introduced to me in an arranged marriage.

So that day, I asked my small drum instructor, "We have been having coffee together several times, but where is this going?" "I am sorry!" he said, bowing deeply. Shocked, I asked, "Even if we spent some more time together you don't think we could make it work?" He said again, "I'm sorry!" I felt as though he told me that he wouldn't choose me even if we were the last living people on Earth.

I went home and cried and drank. Drank and cried. The next morning, I went to work at the Tenrikyo Language Institute and taught English to a bunch of young adults like nothing happened. Then, I went home and cried and drank. Drank and cried. On the third day of doing this, Rev. Akio Inoue called and asked me to come to his office. I knew Rev. Inoue since I was about 5 years old when my family stopped by the Tenrikyo Singapore Mission Centre on our way to Ojiba. Since I had recently interpreted for

an event that he had put together, I assumed he wanted to talk about something like that.

At his office, he asked me. "How old are you? Why aren't you married?" I told him that I was 30 and that my parents didn't approve of my marrying any of the people I had dated in the past. Then, he said, "I'll introduce someone to you."

After I left his office, it slowly dawned on me that it had been three days since I promised Oyasama that if the relationship with the small drum instructor didn't work out, I would marry anyone that was introduced to me.

Rev. Inoue, however, didn't have a concrete idea of who he was going to introduce to me at this point. He kept me in suspense for a month. During this time, he traveled to Los Angeles and spoke to members of the Young Men's Association. The Bishop at the time lamented that there were several church successors who were "eligible bachelors." He rattled off some names, including Marlon Okazaki. Then, Rev. Inoue traveled to Honjima Grand Church and spoke to the young men there. The ministers at Honjima were also worried about some of the church successors who were getting a little bit up there in age who had not found life partners. Marlon Okazaki's name was mentioned there as well.

This is how Rev. Inoue came to introduce Marlon to me. I thought that I would be introduced to someone I didn't know, so it came as a surprise that he would introduce me to Roxane's brother. She had been my pool hall buddy when she was teaching at Tenrikyo Language Institute a few years before I got there. One of my sisters had



been friends with Roxane since middle school and had attended another of Marlon's sister's wedding in Los Angeles. I had met Marlon eleven years earlier when he wrote that red, spiral-bound Otefuri Guide and I had thanked him for writing such a useful book.

My parents were happy to know that Rev. Inoue had suggested Marlon to me and they were in agreement of our marriage. My colleagues and friends were happy for me. I had a very strong sensation as though I was being gently carried in a warm current, and I felt peace and happiness.

God the Parent didn't hit me with lightning or make me tumble down a flight of stairs. God is constantly sending us messages of love, providing for and protecting us. If we were astute, we would see and feel God's messages through everything we see and hear.

In case this hard-headed person still didn't get the message, God has provided me many other "coincidences" surrounding our union.

The church establishment date of Marlon's church, Southern Pacific Church, is January 11th – my birthday. His mom's birthday is January 8th, three days before my birthday. She has a sister named Keiko. I have a sister named Keiko. All coincidences, you say? How about this? The apartment she lived in after college when she was working at the Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department was Nigokan. She lived on the 3rd floor. Second unit on the left. The place where I lived when I was introduced to Marlon for marriage? Nigokan, 3rd floor, second unit on the left.

If you haven't experienced God. If you say you've been looking and listening, but you still haven't found God, you might be on the wrong radio frequency. The wrong app. The wrong remote.

In the Divine Directions of January 13, 1887, we read:

Sah, sah, where there is sincerity, you shall receive sincerity. You may not know what My sincerity is. It is My providence—fire, water, and wind.

Further:

Sah, sah, you are to purchase My sincerity. Purchase My sincerity with your own sincerity.

With your sincerity, may you purchase God's sincerity and awaken to God's boundless Parental love.

Thank you for your kind attention.

1) JULY MONTHLY SERVICE (7/19)

Officiant: Bishop

Assistants: Zen Yukimoto, Dairei Masuno

Director: Junjiro Nakatomi

Attendants: Eddie Takemoto, Koji Uesugi

Offerings Officiant: Kinpei Ito

Sermon: Noriko Kitai (J)

2) CHURCH/FELLOWSHIP AFFAIRS

- Joyous Fellowship Los Angeles: Address change, Fellowship Name Change, Fellowship Head change

Fellowship Head: Emily Mikiko Ichise-Sizemore

Monthly Service Date: Second Sunday

Directly Supervised Church: Ikeda Grand Church

Church Affiliation: Tsuruichi Branch Church

3) TENRIKYO LANGUAGE INSTITUTE (TLI) APPLICATION

- Eligibility:
1. Those who completed formal education for a minimum of 12 years.
 2. Those who have passed N5 in the Japanese Language Proficiency Test.

When applying for the Japanese Language Department, Japanese ability of N5 in the Japanese Language Proficiency (or equivalent) is required when submitting the application.

- For those who have not passed N5, applicants will be given study materials from the Japanese Language Department in May of the application year, and now TLI is requiring all applicants to take the skill certification test online, between August 1~31.
- Depending on the results of this skill certification test, should TLI certify that the applicant's proficiency is equivalent to that of N5, the application will be accepted, and accommodations should be made so that the application process itself will not be hindered.

Regarding application distribution:

- As of April 25, downloadable application forms are available on the TLI website. At the same time, details regarding the study requirements for the skill certification test can be found here as well.

Application Deadline: September 28

Please refer to the TLI website (https://kaigai.tenrikyo.or.jp/tli/top/?page_id=497) for more details.

4) SHUYOKA SPANISH CLASS

This year, the Shuyoka (three-month Spiritual Development Course in Jiba) Spanish Class will be held from September 1 to November 27. Non-Japanese applicants must apply for a visa, so please contact the Mission Headquarters as soon as possible.

5) LAY MINISTER PREPARATORY COURSE, HEAD MINISTERS QUALIFICATION COURSE

Please contact the Mission Headquarters by the end of July if you are interested in attending the Lay Minister Preparatory Course, beginning from August 27. Also, the Head Ministers Qualification Course English Class, usually held from September 27 upon fulfilling the minimum of five participants, has been rescheduled this year to begin from October 27. Please contact the Mission Headquarters by the end of September if you are interested in attending.

6) HAWAII FLOOD RELIEF

The Mission Headquarters in America and the Mission Headquarters of Hawaii were able to

raise \$3,840 in donations (including \$1,550 from the Mission Headquarters in America) towards the recent Hawaii flood relief efforts. The funds raised by our congregation were entrusted to Mission HQ Hawaii Bishop Jiro Ohara, and the Mission HQ Hawaii donated the total sum to the Hawaii Community Foundation. We would like to offer our sincere appreciation to all those who contributed.

COMMITTEE & ASSOCIATION REPORTS

MISSIONARY COMMITTEE

- Thank you for your monthly service duty at the Mission Headquarters for church, fellowship, and mission center heads. The duty calendar up to July is as follows.
July: Robert Yuge, Hifumi Nakagawa
August: Hiroko Okazaki, Ray Tadokoro
September: Koji Uesugi, Kazuyuki Kawata

NURTURING AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- We are planning to hold our SoulFire Faith Gathering at the Mission Headquarters on November 14 from 10:30AM ~ 4:00PM. The theme will be “Fueling Our Faith, Strengthening Our Community.” We invite our English and Japanese speaking members to attend, and registration will begin from August 1.
- This month’s bake sale after the monthly service will be sponsored by TSA. The funds raised will be put towards the TSA Winter Conference.

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

- We have incorporated an ongoing section in the Ichiretsu/Newsletter to highlight local activities and events under the title, “Joyous Life Here & There.” Therefore, we would like to request churches, fellowships, districts, and individuals to submit your activity information & pictures to us (Kawakami: kamishuyo@hotmail.com or Hayashi: takhayashi@gmail.com).
- We have created and are continuously updating the Mission HQ Homepage so that our congregation members may make use of it. We have recently updated the Our Guide to Jiba page. Also, we have uploaded “Missionary Work Pamphlets” (via the Overseas Department website) to our “For Ministers” page. (If you need the password, please contact the Mission HQ.) Please visit our homepage, and let those around you know as well. Domain Name: TenrikyoAmericaCanada.org.

WOMEN’S ASSOCIATION

- TWA Convention (Seattle District)
August 22, 2026 (Sat) @ 11AM Place: High Seattle Church
 - TWA Convention (San Francisco District)
August 29, 2026 (Sat) @ 10AM Place: Marina Church
 - TWA Convention (Chicago District)
August 30, 2026 (Sun) @ 10:30AM Place: Midwest Church
- * “Nurture Ourselves to Become Foundations of the Path Seminar”
October 17 (Sat) from 1:00 ~ 3:30 PM
Venue: Mission HQ MP Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room

Content: Lecture regarding “The Service,” Group Talk, Refreshments

Eligibility: Members of ages 16 ~ 49

- Anyone may attend the lecture (men included). Those not eligible are not required to register.

Lecturer: Japanese: Bishop Fukaya English: Board of Director Rev. Masahito Kimura

Please reach out to your District Representative to learn how to register

BOYS & GIRLS ASSOCIATION

The 2026 BGA Youth Conference and the Practice Service Convention were successfully held at the Mission Headquarters on June 19 (Fri) and June 20 (Sat), respectively. The Tenrikyo Creatives team has put together a video, so please visit the following link to view: <https://youtu.be/7VmTRUiO3OQ>

- This year’s Children’s Pilgrimage to Jiba and International Shonen Hinokishin Corp for the America-Canada-Hawaii group will be from July 24 (Hinokishin Corp from July 25) to July 30.
- Please send an email to [moto1884@icloud.com] if there are any new BGA members, newborn or new to the North America congregation

TYMANA

- We will hold our TYMANA Convention on August 15 (Sat) from 10:30 AM. This year, we will welcome a representative from TYMA HQ. Please stay for the afternoon activity, followed by a barbecue at the East Hall in the evening.

NY CENTER

- The Tenri Cultural Institute Children’s Class has culminated on June 20, with over 150 students enrolled. This year, five students graduated after studying for 12 years.
- 15 TYMANA members from the New York District will be attending the International Hinokishin Corps. In addition, 17 BGA members from New York will be attending the Children’s Pilgrimage to Jiba.

Hawaii Flood Relief

by Disaster Relief Team of Mission Headquarters in America

We continue to keep everyone affected by the March 2026 Hawaii floods (Kona low storm) in our thoughts and prayers, while expressing our gratitude to the emergency workers and community members supporting the recovery. A total of \$3,840 was raised for flood relief in Hawaii through the combined efforts of Mission HQ in America and Mission HQ in Hawaii (\$1,550 of which came from Mission HQ in America). The funds collected by the Mission HQ in America were entrusted to Bishop Jiro Ohara of Mission HQ in Hawaii, who then donated them to the Hawaii Community Foundation. We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed.



Bishop Fukaya presents Bishop Ohara of Hawaii with donation check.

America Canada Boys and Girls Association

On June 19–20, the Boys and Girls Association of the America and Canada Diocese held its 50th Annual Convention, welcoming more than 150 students and staff from across the diocese.

The convention began with a lecture by a local church head minister, who explained the meaning and significance of the service, helping participants deepen their understanding of its spiritual importance. Following the lecture, attendees divided into groups for hand dance and musical instrument practice. In addition to rehearsing their assigned roles for the following day's service, many eagerly challenged themselves by learning instruments they had never played before. Older members, in particular, devoted themselves to practicing accompaniment instruments such as the flute, small hand drum, koto, shamisen, and kokyū—rare opportunities that were met with great enthusiasm.

That evening, participants attended the evening service at the Mission Headquarters before gathering for a festive social event. Over a delicious meal and a lively game of bingo, they strengthened old friendships and formed new ones.

The highlight of the convention was the commemorative service held on the second day. Dressed in their ceremonial attire, participants served with sincerity and joy in the upper sanctuary. Each person demonstrated the fruits of their preparation, creating a vibrant and uplifting service that marked the convention's 50th anniversary.

Following the convention, everyone enjoyed a summer festival featuring game booths, cotton candy, ice cream, and other activities. The festival provided a fun opportunity for participants to relax and spend time together, bringing the two-day event to a joyful close.

Just days before the convention, a large warehouse broke out near the Mission Headquarters, and firefighters were still working to contain it during the event. As a result, there was concern that smoke conditions might force the summer festival indoors or lead to its cancellation. However, shortly before the final decision was to be made, the wind shifted unexpectedly, clearing the area and allowing the festival to be held outdoors as planned. This unexpected turn of events left many participants feeling the protective guidance of God the Parent through the blessings of fire, water, and wind.











SOULFIRE

TENRIKYO FAITH GATHERING

Saturday, November 14th, 2026
10:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters of America & Canada
2727 East First Street, Los Angeles, CA 90033



<https://tenrikyoamericacanada.org/tfc>



@tenrikyo.faith.conference



www.facebook.com/soulfiretfc/

first thing that likely comes to mind for us Tenrikyo followers is judo. Tenri Judo, spearheaded by Tenri University, has produced numerous outstanding athletes and earned worldwide renown. Of course, judo does feature team competitions where the bonds between teammates are crucial; however, once a competitor steps onto the tatami mats, they are fighting alone, so it is fundamentally an individual sport.

In the world of judo, there is a judoka from Tenri (let us call him Athlete A) who achieved a brilliant record on the sport's ultimate stage: the Olympic Games.

At the Olympics, an environment charged with extreme tension, Athlete A took an action that astonished those around him. He would pick up litter in the Athletes' Village and neatly align the slippers in the restrooms. In a setting where elite athletes from across the globe gathered, an atmosphere where everyone was fiercely focused solely on victory, he practiced the same kind of thoughtfulness he showed in his everyday life.

Subsequently, Athlete A achieved a magnificent victory at that Olympics and went on to win a second consecutive medal at the following Games, accomplishing a feat that would go down in judo history.

Of course, these victories were a testament to his exceptional ability; yet, what drove such a formidable athlete to pick up trash or straighten slippers on such a grand stage? The answer lay in a magazine interview conducted as he was preparing for his second Olympic appearance. He offered the following retrospections:

"After I was selected for the (Olympic) team, I had a meal with the Chairman of the Board at

Tenri University, and he told me, 'Do one good deed every day.' ... He said, 'There is an element of luck in competition, but accumulating virtue will bring you peace of mind.'" (<https://number.bunshun.jp/articles/-/849052?page=3>)

These very words were the driving force behind his actions. For Athlete A, picking up trash or neatly aligning slippers was not merely a matter of etiquette or self-satisfaction. Rather, it was a practice of "accumulating virtue," a way to attract the "luck of the game" (which could arrive at any moment) while simultaneously guiding his own mind into a state of utmost stability.

There is another anecdote that illustrates just how unique the environment at the Olympics is. It concerns the athlete who shared a room with Athlete A in the Olympic Village (let's call this person Athlete B).

Athlete B was set to lead the charge for the men's judo team. Amidst the weight of high expectations and immense pressure, he was required to undergo a drug doping test the day before his match. While such a test is normally routine, the circumstances were grueling; he was in the midst of a severe weight-cutting regimen, leaving his body dehydrated and unable to produce a urine sample. He had to complete the test, yet he could not provide a sample, all while a crucial match awaited him the following day. He was driven to the brink of mental anguish. Consumed by this mounting anxiety, he reportedly paced endlessly around his room.

Athlete A, watching the scene unfold nearby, reportedly thought, "The Olympics are insane." Even someone possessing the kind of formidable mental strength capable of conquering the world

can lose control of themselves if just one gear slips out of alignment. That is the nature of the Olympics, a place inhabited by demons.

When Athlete A later asked Athlete B about the time they had spent pacing around the room, Athlete B replied, "I have absolutely no memory of it." Athlete B had been pushed to the absolute limit mentally, teetering on the edge of unconsciousness.

This episode teaches us both the difficulty and the importance of maintaining mental stability.

What kind of mental state is required for a person to unleash 100% of their potential? I believe it is a state of "composure," neither overly agitated nor despondent. Maintaining this composure is a crucial challenge, particularly for athletes, for whom a split-second decision can determine victory or defeat.

This is where the act of "accumulating virtue," which I mentioned earlier, becomes so important.

At first glance, accumulating virtue appears to be an outward-facing good deed. Yet, its true benefit may well be directed inward, toward oneself. Acts such as picking up trash when no one is watching or praying for the well-being of others, this accumulation of "one good deed a day," can help to build a sense of self-confidence within one's subconscious mind. This kind of confidence is distinct from arrogance; rather, it is closer to a humble resolve, the mindset of "doing all one can and leaving the rest to fate."

The Chairman's earlier remark, that "accumulating virtue brings peace of mind," may imply that the pride derived from having conscientiously accumulated virtue in one's daily life enables one to maintain a calm, composed state of mind even in critical, high-

pressure situations.

Conversely, if your daily life falls into disarray or you neglect to be mindful of others, you will lack the internal support, the conviction that "I did my best," to lean on when a crisis strikes. You would likely find yourself swept off your feet by waves of anxiety and impatience.

In light of the Tenrikyo teachings, this act of "accumulating virtue" likely serves as the foundation for receiving divine protection from God the Parent. In our daily lives, we tend to fixate on tangible results and efficiency; however, what God the Parent truly looks upon is surely the "thoughtfulness" that we cultivate as we work toward those positive outcomes.

The practice of "accumulating virtue," as seen with Athlete A, is not limited to the world of sports. We never know when we might encounter a critical turning point or suddenly find ourselves pushed to the brink mentally, much like Athlete B. I believe that what sustains us in such moments is the "virtue" we have built up over time. Maintaining a calm, steady mind is crucial, regardless of the environment or circumstances, and I believe that "accumulating virtue" is a vital way to achieve this.

There is no need to accomplish great feats. It is likely that our modest yet heartfelt acts of everyday life is what will forge an unwavering "core" within us. Let us cherish and accumulate daily acts of thoughtfulness and virtue. Such a path will lead to great blessings of God the Parent; it is through this journey that we can move forward with a peace of mind, even amidst the roughest of waves.

(translation by T. Osawa)

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TOWARD THE JOYOUS LIFE

TENRIKYO came into existence on October 26, 1838, when God the Parent, Tenri-O-no-Mikoto, became revealed through Oyasama, Miki Nakayama, to save all humankind. God the Parent is God of Origin and God in Truth who created this world and has nurtured and protected us ever since.



God the Parent created human beings so that by seeing us lead the Joyous Life, God could share in our joy. Leading the Joyous Life is, therefore, the purpose of our existence. Since God is our Parent, we are all God's children; thus, we should realize that we are all brothers and sisters.

“With human beings : the body is a thing lent by God, a thing borrowed. The mind alone is yours.”
Osashizu : June 1, 1889

We are taught that we borrow our bodies from God the Parent and only our minds truly belong to us; further, through the proper use of our minds, we will be able to lead the Joyous Life.