

# Tenrikyo

newsletter



## **Tenrikyo Women's Association of America & Canada Convention**

On May 20, The Women's Association held their annual convention at the Mission Headquarters, and also allowed members to participate virtually.

***Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America***

[www.tenrikyo.com](http://www.tenrikyo.com)

**June 2023**

## “A Work in Progress” by Bishop Fukaya

— Chat GPT —

From the 23rd to the 25th of this month, the SoulFire Tenrikyo Faith Conference will be held in Palm Springs, California. We hope that this conference will contribute to the development of Tenrikyo not only in our diocese but also among English and non-English speaking followers alike.

Also, the Young Men’s Association Convention will be held next month on July 15th. We kindly request many young members to attend.

Currently, a chatbot (automatic conversational program) that uses AI (Artificial Intelligence) called ChatGPT, developed by the American company OpenAI, is making waves around the world.

During my return to Japan in April this year, there was news that the CEO of OpenAI, Samuel H. Altman, would be visiting Japan and meet the Prime Minister of Japan at his Residence.

ChatGPT was released on November 30, 2022.

Initially, the number of users increased explosively, most likely due to its announcement to be free to use (it still is as of today). According to Reuters, it is estimated that the number of users reached 100 million in just two months after the announcement. This demonstrates the level of interest and usage compared to TikTok, which took about 9 months, and Instagram, which took 2.5 years, to reach that milestone.

Since then, improvements have been made, and GPT-4 was announced in March this year. However, there is a charge for this version. When I asked ChatGPT, “Please tell me briefly about ChatGPT,” I received the following reply.

*(continued on page 10)*

## Coming Up

\* **July Monthly Service Sermon (7/16)**

- by Rev. Toru Yamamoto (J)

\* **85th America Spiritual Development Course (Shuyokai)**

- CANCELED

\* **America Ichiretsukai Scholarship**

- Application Deadline: June 30 (Fri)

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# *May Monthly Service Prayer*

## *May 21, 2023*

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

Dear God the Parent, You created this world and human beings where there was no form. With the arrival of the promised time, You revealed Yourself through Oyasama as Your Shrine, and taught us the Truth of Origin of all matters, in order to start the path of single-hearted salvation.

Since then, this path has spread widely, and we are blessed with followers in various regions in the world, who devote themselves to salvation work, which has led to our path today. As this fine day is our May Monthly Service, we service performers will spiritedly perform the seated service and Teodori service dance.

Before You, Yoboku and followers have gathered here today to show our gratitude for Your parental love and to receive Your continued blessings. God the Parent, please accept our spirited singing of the Songs for the Service in high spirits and become spirited as well.

We are grateful that our Women's Association of America and Canada was able to hold its convention in a hybrid format yesterday. I ask that You continue to guide all their members to be able to carry out their work for the path spiritedly and in a unity of mind.

Also, on the 27th and 28th of this month, our Students' Association will hold its Spring Conference. I pray that the students, who are the future of this path, can be nurtured for their spiritual growth through this conference.

Further, the 85th Spiritual Development Course in America will commence after our June Monthly Service. I pray that we are blessed with many participants, and that we are able to hold the course smoothly.

Finally, the Tenrikyo Faith Conference, SoulFire, is scheduled to be held from June 23 to 25. I pray that You will guide us throughout for its successful completion.

Through the various incidents happening in the world, we greatly feel the importance of engaging in salvation work, and with renewed minds, we pledge to engage in our work to impart the fragrance of the teachings and to help others be saved. Additionally, and toward our 90th anniversary next June, we pledge to unite our minds and walk on our path of spiritual growth.

Dear God the Parent, we humbly ask for You to accept our minds of sincerity so that, even one day sooner, this world will be transformed into one in which all people live in harmony with one another. In unison with the whole congregation, I humbly pray that You bless us so.

# May Monthly Service Sermon

## by Rev. Keiko Nagao

*~Finding Joy in the Truth  
Behind All Events that Occur~*

I am truly grateful for the opportunity to perform the May Monthly Service together with all of you, led by Bishop Fukaya, joyously and in high spirits.

Also, yesterday was the Women's Association of America Convention, which was held in-person for the first time since 2019. It turned out to be a truly joyous convention, with all of the hearts of the association members coming together.

I have been appointed to give the sermon today, so I would like to fulfill my duty, expressing my joy of attending the monthly service four years since the last time I was here.

I ask for your kind attention.

Last October, the Shinbashira announced Instruction Four, and I was able to return to Jiba for the first time in three years.

He instructed us how to proceed towards Oyasama's 140th Anniversary, on how to walk on the path of spiritual maturity.

In Instruction Four, he mentions the Divine Direction from November 7, 1889,

*If you do not follow the path of the Divine Model, there is no need for a Divine Model. . . . There is no path but the path of the Divine Model.*



Rev. Keiko Nagao is the head minister of the Seatac Church.

He indicated that it is a time for each Yoboku to set this as a time to advance our steps of spiritual maturity, and the “three years, one thousand days” is the time to implement the teachings with the Divine Model as the goal and actively move forward on the path of single-hearted salvation.

I strongly felt that it is not enough if only those who can do it, but that it is our mission to go through each day with each one of us firmly carrying out our resolutions.

I then recalled what I have been shown, one knot for every 10 years. We are taught “buds sprout from knots.” Whatever we are shown is from the intention of God the Parent guiding us towards our maturity. Oyasama taught us through Her own example that no matter what happens, we should always search for joy and believe in the joy that awaits

us in the future.

Speaking of a personal matter, next year will mark 40 years since I came to the United States.

The time was less than a year before the 100th Anniversary of Oyasama. My husband and I came to Seattle, Washington with our two young children, to take over the non-functioning Tacoma Church, which was renamed to Seatac Church. Fifteen years later, we were able to relocate the church to its current location, close to Tacoma, Washington. We were able to hold the relocation service after the second construction of the sanctuary.

After that, the minister, my husband, had many physical problems. We were taught many things from God through the various divine guidances, urging the spiritual maturity of all of us. In 2010, 10 years after the relocation, we were shown a knot through the passing away of the minister.

God revealed to us that we should look for joy in the truth behind all events that occur.

When I was 2 years and 5 months old and my sister was 5 months old, my mother passed away overnight from acute rheumatism.

My father raised us in the midst of many hardships, single-heartedly leaning on God.

Thinking about this, I am grateful that my three children had their father around until their twenties, and were able to understand their father and his parental thoughts.

I was granted the role of serving as the minister of our church.

Two years later, when I myself was in sudden physical pain like my mother, and I was in critical condition; I was saved by God, and

was shown a knot that I will never forget and am grateful for.

The name of the disease was later found to be fibromyalgia, and I am thankful that my severe pain and coughing have decreased over the years.

In the Mikagura-uta, the Songs for the Service, Song Three, Verse Eight goes as follows:

*There is nothing so trying as illness;  
So from now on, I, too, will devote myself  
to hinokishin.*

During the daily services, I am reminded that I should not forget that I was saved from the disease, that I should not forget the daily blessing that I am receiving from God, through the little pain and cough that still remains.

Since I was a small child, I was unable to honestly express my feelings and tended to keep them bottled up inside myself.

I also tended to do things on my own rather than asking others for help. Through various knots in my life, I have been able to greatly change my mindset.

Through my duties as a minister, I learned the importance of listening to others trying to understand what they have to say with a smile on my face.

As I myself am getting older and the next generation is starting to take charge, I am thankful that they are taking the lead with the church activities, consulting one another and focusing on the nurturing of the young Boys and Girls Association members.

I would like to change the subject, and talk about how God and Oyasama led me through the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021, an energetic 97-year-old follower became unwell in her nursing home, and was rushed to the hospital where she was found to have been infected with COVID-19. No one was able to visit her since it was the time when infection rates were high, and she passed away in only three days after being hospitalized. Her body was to be transferred to a funeral home, and I did not have a chance to see her. My daughter helped make arrangements for me, and two weeks later, under time restrictions, I was able to conduct a ceremony to transfer the memory of her to the memorial.

I was able to do so thanks to none other than God and Oyasama.

I also thought it was the result of her own long-standing faith.

There was another 82 year old woman who lived by herself, and she would always come to worship and deliver vegetables to our church during the pandemic. She is a person who works very hard for others, but because of the pandemic, she was not able to see other people as often, and was unable to work in the fields, which was her lifework.

I had been speaking to her on the phone, and visiting her home whenever it was possible to do so. Last December, her house was getting messy and dirty, so on December 27, just before the end of the year, the head of an affiliated fellowship and I went to visit the woman's home.

I was feeling something urging me to go to

her home before the end of this year.

I knocked on the door, called her phone, but she did not answer. I felt something urging me to do so, and I knocked on the bedroom window and call her name in a loud voice.

Just at that moment, I heard a voice saying, "Minister! Please break the window! Help me!" Figuring that she could not move, we called an ambulance, and the paramedics removed a small window, went inside, opened the door, and we went in and found her lying on the side of the bed. She told us that she had been in that state for a couple of days. They rushed her to the hospital and we followed her there, where there were many people waiting in line in front of her. We waited with her as she talked and sang energetically. She managed to get admitted into a hospital room that night, and met with the doctor, and would receive detailed examination. I was able to administer the Sazuke.

When I went to the hospital the next day, the doctor had found that she had had several small strokes.

She became unable to speak, and after three weeks of hospitalization, she passed away in her sleep. Her last words were "Thank you, minister." I was filled with the feeling of gratitude to Oyasama for Her help and blessings.

The woman often said that her family had a history of solitary deaths or unnatural deaths. If I had not visited her home at the end of the year, she might have ended up dying lying on the floor all alone.

I had wanted her to continue living and helping others, but am truly grateful that God had blessed her with spending her last days

on a bed with nurses and caretakers around. Although she was unconscious, she was able to have visitors see her at the hospital as well. Carrying many different feelings in my heart, I was able to conduct a ceremony to transfer the memory of her to the memorial, and see the truth behind whatever happens.

Through the pandemic, I felt the importance of accumulating merit in order to have God protect us. There was one follower who had an object of worship in their home, so when they entered a nursing home, the object of worship was transferred to their private room in the nursing home.

When the pandemic began, I could not go see this follower, so I would deliver things and leave them outside for them, and speak to them on the phone.

Now that I can visit them, they told me that they were grateful that they were able to worship and receive blessings every day.

Tears ran down my face, hearing that they were fighting through the worst of the pandemic in this way.

In the Mikagura-uta, Song Nine, verse two, [it says]: *Against any hardship I will protect you...*

Through the songs for the service, I felt that even if the prayer may be somewhat unreasonable, it is important to lean on God and pray to God, and to take action according to your resolve.

This year, we held the 50th anniversary of the late Ei Tsujimoto, our church's third minister, who saved many people and led them to this faith. I pledged to pass on the intentions of our

predecessors to the next generation.

As stated at the end of Instruction Four, this path began with Oyasama alone, and our predecessors walked on the path following Oyasama's Divine Model, and earnestly did so to pass on the faith to us. The path is to be passed down from parent to their child, and from their child to their grandchild. Each step of this succession is important for the path to be passed down for generations.

As a "path of joy" to be walked on together with the next generation, and at the same time not forgetting to show respect to our predecessors, I would like to strive on the path one day at a time, one step at a time, performing the service and salvation work with my mind connected to the Jiba.

We are now about one year away from the 90th Anniversary of this Mission Headquarters.

I would like to work hard and in high spirits to share and spread the teachings, to current and future followers.

Thank you very much for your kind attention today.

## News and Announcements

### 1) JUNE MONTHLY SERVICE (6/18)

Officiant: Bishop Assistants: Marlon Okazaki, Yoichi Fukui Offerings Officiant: Paul Tomizawa  
 Attendants: Motohiro Iwahashi, Gary Yashiki Director: Toshikiyo Yukimoto Sermon: Yoichi Fukui (J)

### 2) CHURCH AFFAIRS

Divine Sanctions:

North America Church: Head Minister Appointment, Request for Special Service, Request for Temporary Change of Service Date, Request to Change Church Affiliation

Divine Sanction: July 26, 2023 Enshrinement Service: October 1, 2023

Heritage Church: Temporary Transfer of the Medo, Repair of the Church Roof, Request for Special Service  
 Divine Sanction: July 26, 2023 Enshrinement Ceremony: September 8, 2023 Enshrinement Service: September 9, 2023

### 3) 85TH AMERICA SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE (SHUYOKAI)

Due to a lack of applicants, we regret to inform you that the 85th America Spiritual Development Course scheduled for this year has been canceled.

### 4) AMERICA ICHIRETSUKAI SCHOLARSHIP

We are now accepting applications for the 2023 America Ichiretsukai Scholarship. Children of church, fellowship, and mission center heads who have been accepted to attend college are eligible. Application forms are available at the Mission Headquarters. The application deadline is June 30 (Fri). New recipients will be announced on the August Monthly Service day. Those wishing to continue to receive scholarship in the second, third, or fourth year will not have to resubmit applications, however, if students plan to take time off from school or transfer to another school, they must report it to the Mission Headquarters by August 31.

### 5) TENRIKYO LANGUAGE INSTITUTE (TLI) & ICHIRETSUKAI SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

TLI applications for the Japanese Language Department (the 2024-2025 academic year) are now available. Ichiretsukai Scholarship applications for Japanese Language Department applicants are also available. For those who wish to apply, please notify the Mission Headquarters by the end of August. Additional information is as follows:

Form	Application Period	Fee
TLI Japanese Lang. Dept.	August 15~September 20, 2023	\$5.00 for each application form
Ichiretsukai Scholarship	August 15~September 20, 2023	Free of charge (for TLI applicants)

### 6) STAYING OVERNIGHT AT THE MISSION HEADQUARTERS

We require those who are planning to stay overnight at the Mission Headquarters for the grand services and monthly services to contact the Secretaries with the necessary meal and accommodation information by the Second Sunday of the month that you plan to visit.

## COMMITTEE & ASSOCIATION REPORTS

### Construction Committee

We have begun weed removal work in the Biotope garden, using herbicides and manual efforts.



We are preparing to remove a wall that currently sits between the MP Hall and the Green House. Security cameras will be installed by the Dendocho staff.

## **Nurturing & Educational Committee**

We are preparing to hold this year's Oyasato Seminar preliminary session at the Mission HQ in December. Those students that would like to attend the Oyasato Seminar in Jiba next summer must first attend this preliminary session. We are currently contacting those students that are eligible, but if someone is interested in attending, please contact the Mission HQ.

The TSA Spring Conference was held, with 4 staff and 7 participants in attendance.

## **Public Relations Committee**

We have incorporated an ongoing section in the Ichiretsu/Newsletter to highlight everyone's efforts and activities leading up to the 90th anniversary of the Mission Headquarters so that we can share our events & ideas with all of our congregation members. Therefore, we would like to request churches, fellowships, districts, and individuals to submit your activity reports & pictures to us (Kawakami: kamishuyo@hotmail.com or Hayashi: takhayashi@gmail.com).

We apologize for the delay in uploading the sermons on our Homepage. Thanks to the development of our new staff, we have updated the sermons up to December. We will continue to make efforts to ensure there are no further delays.

## **Women's Association**

TWA America 70th Anniversary Commemorative Activities: photo album to be published. "Gathering of Joy" being planned.

## **Boys & Girls Association**

The registration deadline for the summer Children's Pilgrimage to Jiba General Group and the International Boys & Girls Hinokishin Corps is June 18 (Sun).

The B&GA America Service Convention will be held in-person at the Mission Headquarters, on August 19 (Sat). Those members and parents who cannot make it to the Mission HQ may participate virtually to hear the message from the Association President.

Vertical Mission Seminar: On behalf of B&GA Headquarters, Mr. Kazumoto Kubo will be visiting to conduct the seminar on August 20.

Please contact the B&GA if you are able to lend us some service garments and/or KOG t-shirts.

## **TYMANA**

This year's annual TYMANA Convention will be held at the Mission Headquarters on July 15 (Sat) from 11AM.

## **NY Center**

June 19: Ms. Yoko Hirano (TWA personnel) and Ms. Yuko Sumida (Koriyama Grand Church personnel) returned to Japan.

July 21-27: Japanese Language Instructor Training Seminar

ChatGPT is a large language model developed by OpenAI. GPT stands for “Generative Pre-trained Transformer” which utilizes deep learning models called transformers. ChatGPT can utilize artificial intelligence and natural language processing technology to perform tasks such as artificial dialogue and sentence generation. ChatGPT is used in many AI applications and services.

The translation of “Generative Pre-trained Transformer” in Japanese seems to be “*Seisei kanōna jizen gakushū-zumi henkaku-ki.*” In other words, it accumulates past data and generates answers based on it.

However, ChatGPT's database is only up until September 2021. So if you ask questions about things after that, which means after October 2021, you may not receive an answer.

Therefore, if you ask, “please tell me about ChatGPT-4 (GPT-4),” the reply would be, “I'm sorry, but my knowledge is up to September 2021, so I cannot provide you with any information regarding GPT-4. For the latest development and release information, please refer to OpenAI's official announcement and related news.”

Even if you ask the same question, you may not get the same answer. The reply changes depending on the moment probably due to its “artificial dialogue and sentence generation task.”

When I looked into the OpenAI website, there was an English explanation about GPT-

4. I had ChatGPT translate it into Japanese.

- GPT-4 is more creative and collaborative than ever before. It can generate, edit, and iterate with users on creative and technical writing tasks, such as composing songs, writing screenplays, or learning a user's writing style.

- GPT-4 can accept images as inputs and generate captions, classifications, and analyses.

- GPT-4 is capable of handling over 25,000 words of text, allowing for use cases like long form content creation, extended conversations, and document search and analysis.

If you read the above explanation, you can see what you can do with GPT-4. You can compose music and even draft books with passages in a similar writing style as an author.

You can also create illustrations. There are certain software programs that require instructions in English to use. Therefore, you can ask GPT-4 to translate instructions from Japanese to English and use those instructions in the software. The software will then generate the illustrations for you. You can watch this process on YouTube, and the illustrations can be mistaken for photographs.

Additionally, you can develop video games using GPT-4. By inputting commands into GPT-4 several times, you can make quite an elaborate game.

Recently, I often use ChatGPT to translate Japanese to English, as well as to check my grammar. I honestly think its translations from

Japanese to English are amazing. It translates well. However, the translations sometimes bothers me, so it is necessary to review them. Particularly, the English translations of Tenrikyo passages are inadequate and strange, perhaps because there is little accumulated data.

Regarding English grammar checks, I am grateful for the corrections and recommendations it provides.

I still use it now, but I have also been using a different software to check my grammar. That software also points out grammatical mistakes properly, but it does not offer suggestions like ChatGPT.

You can also search with ChatGPT, but the accuracy is sometimes questionable. When I input my personal name and asked who I am, I receive an irrational answer. It may be because I asked in Japanese. I think the Japanese version of ChatGPT still has room for improvement.

It is a useful “tool” depending on how you use it. There is no harm if you use ChatGPT and GPT-4 properly, but unfortunately, some people abuse it.

For example, as I mentioned earlier, GPT-4 is able to draft a book, so it can also write a graduation thesis. Depending on how it is used, it is even possible to create advanced academic papers.

Additionally, there is already involvement in cybercrime. ChatGPT can generate malicious passages and codes. For example, if you

ask ChatGPT to produce a phishing email message, it will generate one.

OpenAI is aware of this and is taking measures to prevent ChatGPT from being abused. However, it is a “cat-and-mouse game.” There are various “loopholes” and if countermeasures are taken, corresponding methods of exploitation are created.

No matter how great the technology is, it ultimately depends on the “people” who use it. In other words, depending on how people use it, any wonderful technology can be used to lead the Joyous Life, or the opposite.

Therefore, it is important to understand how people's hearts can be used for the Joyous Life. As Tenrikyo faithful, we must cultivate our minds day by day and recognize the importance of spreading the teachings to the world with this mindset of joy.

*(translation by O. Osawa)*

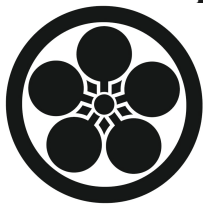
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## TOWARD THE JOYOUS LIFE

**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 of 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.**