

# Tenrikyo

newsletter



## **Children's Pilgrimage to Jiba 2023!**

From July 27~ August 6, the Children's Pilgrimage to Jiba was held. Twenty-two people from America & Canada (7 BGA members) attended the pilgrimage from July 26 ~29, and 12 students and 3 counselors took part in the Youth Hinokishin Corps!

***Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America***

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

**August 2023**

## “A Work in Progress” by Bishop Fukaya

— *Passport Renewal* —

I was extremely grateful that on July 15 our Young Men’s Association Convention was held in-person for the first time in quite a while. I would like to offer my thanks to the chairman and members of TYMANA for their hard work. I am also grateful to all the participants. I was so see everyone in person again.

On August 19, our Boys & Girls Association Service Convention will be held. I am hopeful that many children will participate in this event.

Also, in lieu of the August monthly sermon, we will be welcoming Rev. Kazumoto Kubo, board member of BGA Headquarters, to conduct a Vertical Mission Seminar. For those who cannot attend, we plan on publishing his lecture in the *Newsletter*, so please look for it there.

Ten years ago in 2013, I did some “paperwork” to renew my US passport as it was about to expire. At the time, I did not have to write out any of my information

on paper, but instead, I entered all the information electronically on a computer. Once the necessary forms were filled out, I printed them. I attached a 2”x2” passport photo to the form, and signed and dated them. Afterwards, I mailed my still valid passport, with the forms, and a check for the processing fee to an office in Washington D.C.

Until I received my new passport, I would not be able to leave the country—which I remember made me slightly anxious. Especially since I had to snail-mail my paperwork, check, and still-valid passport, I worried if it would ever make it to the correct government office, and even more, whether or not my new

*(continued on page 18)*

## Coming Up

### \* Autumn Memorial Service (9/16)

- Mission HQ, from 7PM

### \* September Monthly Service (9/17)

- Sermon: Mr. Noriyuki Sasaki (E)

### \* Women’s Assoc. District Conventions

- Chicago District: 9/24 @ 1PM

- New York District: 9/24 @ 1PM

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# *July Monthly Service Prayer*

## *July 16, 2023*

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, looking forward to our Joyous Life, 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 path towards the Joyous Life.

Since then, the path has spread throughout the world. In this land of America and Canada, we have been blessed with followers who lean on Oyasama's Divine Model as they strive for the salvation of others. Although our efforts may be lacking, we constantly remind ourselves of the day of origin, and we spiritedly work daily to be in accord with Your intention.

As this fine day is our July Monthly Service, from now, receiving the Truth of Jiba, we service performers will unite our minds and joyously perform the seated service and Teodori service dance.

In Your presence, yoboku and followers have gathered here, looking forward to this day. We give thanks for Your daily grace and ask for Your continued blessings. Please witness our spirited singing and become spirited as well.

We are grateful that our Young Men's Association was able to successfully conduct their annual convention yesterday. Please nurture their members, who are the pioneers of our path, so that they can actively become the vanguard in spreading our faith to the world.

Also this month, many from our diocese will return to Jiba, including participants of the Children's Pilgrimage. Please guide them to receive the truth of Jiba, and to spiritedly and safely return to their communities.

Furthermore, next month, we will hold the Boy's and Girl's Association convention and the Vertical Mission Seminar. Please guide us so that each of these events can be held successfully.

We pledge to ponder Your intention as shown through the endless wars and natural disasters in the world and to settle this intention in our minds. Further, we pledge to spread the teachings and progress toward making the Joyous Life a reality.

God the Parent, please accept our minds of sincerity so that, even one day sooner, this world will be transformed into the Joyous Life, where people help and care for each other. In unison with the whole congregation, I humbly pray that You bless us so.

# July Monthly Service Sermon by Rev. Toru Yamamoto

## ~*Miraculous Blessings*~

I offer my sincere congratulations on joyously completing the July Monthly Service led by Bishop and Mrs. Fukaya. Since I have been asked to give this month's sermon, I would like to ask for your kind attention.

Six years ago, San Mateo Church moved from the city of San Mateo to its current location in Woodside Town. In the San Francisco Bay Area where we live, a lot of the cities do not allow relocation of a religious corporation. However, by chance, we found our current 1.08 acre property and as we examined further, we found out that our new city surprisingly allowed the relocation of a religious corporation. So we proceeded to purchase this property. Even during our move, we received many miraculous blessings and I was amazed with God the Parent and Oyasama's workings. After our move, we built a new sanctuary on the property, which brings us to the present.

In April of 2022, last year, my son received the sanction, in front of



Toru Yamamoto is the former head minister of the San Mateo Church.

Oyasama, to become the second head minister of San Mateo Church. It has been 38 years since I came to America. Ten years after I arrived here, I started our church. I was the head minister for twenty four years and for eighteen years, I have been able to return to Jiba every month. During that time, for eight years, I have been able to perform my duties at church headquarters watching over the Kanrodai area and also performing duties for my grand church follower's dormitory. I was deeply moved and inspired daily to be able to meet the everliving Oyasama every month and to receive many blessings during that

time.

Last year in June, we were able to joyously hold the installation service for the second head minister of our church, led by the head minister of the Sumoto Grand Church. However, ten days later, on the day of the Sumoto Grand Church June monthly service, a wildfire started only about a one-minute car ride from our current church location. By the time we realized this, there was a voluntary evacuation order, which soon turned into a mandatory evacuation order. When I looked towards the direction of the wildfire, there was dark smoke rising up and I was surprised by how quickly and vigorously the smoke was moving. I happened to be on a Zoom meeting with my head minister and after discussing the situation with him, we decided to perform a prayer service before we evacuated. So, all the members at the church gathered in the sanctuary and we performed the prayer service so God the Parent and Oyasama can bless us by reducing a big misfortune to a small misfortune and a small misfortune to no misfortune at all.

Once we finished the service, we stepped outside and looked in the direction of the fire. Instead of black smoke, we witnessed white smoke going

up. The head minister looked online at a website showing the condition of the wildfire and saw that there were helicopters, one by one, dumping water on the red burning flame. We were able to clearly see that the wildfire was slowly being extinguished and the black smoke was turning into white smoke. In earlier wildfire footage, the intensity of the fire overpowered the water dropped from the helicopters and water would drop around the fire's perimeter, but never directly land on the fire.

However, I was able to tell that around the time we started the prayer service, miraculously, water dropped directly onto the flame and the black smoke turned to white smoke. The moment where the fire was extinguished was clearly shown on the screen. We thanked God the Parent and Oyasama for this miraculous blessing. Also the significance of this happening on our grand church's monthly service day shows how we were able to receive the truth of Jiba and virtue from our grand church as well. We felt unworthy, yet grateful, for this surprising reality and we were trembling with joy!

I would like to change the subject. In the United States, the Covid-19 travel mandates were lifted in May of

this year. Similarly, Japan also lifted their Covid-19 travel mandates around the same time. Three years ago, the Covid-19 pandemic spread throughout the world and humanity went through restrictions and constraints it has never experienced. This changed the lives of many throughout the world. In the United States, millions of people got infected with the virus. I was surprised to find that, when totaled, about a third of the nation's population has gotten infected with the virus. Similarly in Japan, when the total was taken, about a third of the population has been infected with the virus. Strangely enough, these values are the same as if someone decided to agree upon the figures.

In 2020, I was assigned duties at Church Headquarters, but in May and June, I had no way of returning back to Jiba, since there were no flights to Kansai Airport due to the lock down. I was at a loss about what to do. However, in August of that year, I received a mysterious phone call from an unknown number. The person on the other line said he was from a travel agency and that he was calling to return a missed call from my cell phone. I was surprised by his sudden call since I didn't remember calling any travel

agencies. Cell phones now have records of all phone calls made so I quickly checked my phone's call history, but I couldn't find his company's number. I asked my son to check my phone as well, but he couldn't find any record of calling that company. Indeed it was strange.

I received a call from a travel agency that I never called. I thought this was some kind of sign so I asked him if he knew of any flights to Kansai Airport. He said he would take a look and get back to me. I also researched a lot of websites, but I couldn't find any flights to Kansai Airport. However, he was indeed a great travel agent. He found a Taiwanese airline which had flights to Kansai Airport once a month via a layover in Taiwan.

In June, they also had one flight on the third. In July it was the 30th. In August, the flight was on the 20th. This was perfect timing since the Sumoto Grand Church Monthly Service is on the 22nd. The price was also really cheap at only \$400. The perfect date and the cheap price led me to think this was Oyasama saying to me, come back to Jiba. On the day of my flight, it was a redeye, but San Francisco Airport was empty and very different from what I was used to.

On the plane, there were only about 20 to 30 people heading to Taiwan. This was the first time I saw this airport so bare and quiet.

After we landed in Taiwan, there were about 8-9 people transferring to Japan. When I got off the plane, a person called my name and they offered to escort me. I followed him and he took me to the lounge. It was a large lounge and there were tables which accommodate parties of five, three, two, and one. I was escorted to a table which seated a party of two. After reflecting on my trip thus far, I flew on a Taiwanese airline for the first time, was escorted to a lounge, and sat at a table for two. I felt as if I was being accompanied by Oyasama Herself and gratitude filled my heart. I just wanted to say thank you for this miraculous blessing.

In the Instruction Four, the Shinbashira states, "Global pandemics...are all expressions of the parental love and guidance of God, who urges us humans, who are God's beloved children, to replace the mind." A few months prior to the Covid-19 restrictions being lifted, the three year, one thousand days toward Oyasama's 140th Anniversary began. God the Parent is urging us to replace our mind by great measures.

Especially for followers of the path, we are given the opportunity to change our mindset greatly and are encouraged to save others and dramatically move towards the Joyous Life.

In the *Anecdotes of Oyasama*, there are many stories where the persons return to Jiba, have an audience with Oyasama, and then receive marvelous blessings. Every time I read these stories, I strongly feel that the first step for our three-year, one-thousand-day undertaking is to return to Jiba as much as possible and meet the everliving Oyasama.

For my church, our head minister returned to Jiba last October and listened to the Shinbashira deliver Instruction Four. Afterwards, he also made a resolution to return to Jiba as much as possible. Last December, he escorted five people from the States who listened to the Besseki for the first time. In April of this year, he escorted two new Besseki participants and two who had already started their Besseki, his party totaling twelve people from the United States. In addition, there were two people who returned to the Jiba from Japan so his party had a total of fourteen people. We are very joyous for this wonderful blessing from God

the Parent and Oyasama.

Among the twelve members who returned from the United States were parents of the head of our affiliated fellowship and his wife. This fellowship head and wife walk the path with filial piety as their first priority, just as shown in Oyasama's Divine Model. They walk daily with this mindset of filial piety as their resolution and the genuine sincerity they have is truly unimaginable. Seeing this, their parents were moved and made a resolution to return to Jiba and listen to the Besseki Lectures for the first time. Of course, their parents were mesmerized seeing the Main Sanctuary as well and returned to the States with high spirits.

In story 118 of the *Anecdotes of Oyasama*, titled "On the Side of God", Kunisaburo Masui returned to Jiba for the first time and was granted an audience with Oyasama. To summarize, Oyasama asked him to grab Her wrist and then She grabbed his wrist at the same time. She asked him to put some strength into his grip, but the harder he squeezed Her wrist, the more his wrist hurt. His hand ached more and more so he finally said, "I am overwhelmed." Oyasama then mentioned, "You really don't have any more strength? Twice

as much strength is on the side of God." Oyasama figuratively used a strength contest to teach us that if we wholeheartedly pour in our sincerity towards God, Oyasama will accept and return twice the amount in the form of blessings.

The 90th Anniversary of Mission Headquarters in America is approaching next year and the three year, one thousand day period towards the 140th Anniversary of Oyasama has begun. This year is already halfway finished, but let's return to Jiba, administer the Sazuke, pour out our sincerity, and joyously and spiritedly strive to make the most of the remaining time towards the anniversaries.

Thank you for your kind attention.

(translation by Y. Nakagawa)



**SoulFire Tenrikyo Faith  
Conference:  
My Reflections on a  
Spiritually and Joyous  
3-Day Experience**  
by Rev. Koji Uesugi

It was only 7:00 in the morning, but the intensity of the desert heat in Palm Springs could be felt moments after walking outside of the cool, air-conditioned corridors of the DoubleTree Hotel. As I looked upon the beautifully manicured golf course and the tall and majestic palm trees that could be seen in all directions, it was hard to believe that June 23, 2023 had finally arrived and the SoulFire Tenrikyo Faith Conference would begin in several hours. It had been four years since the planning committee for this historic event commenced. Our group regularly met every month and more, even through the COVID-19 pandemic and the other challenges that followed, to organize an inspirational and memorable faith conference for the English-speaking members of our congregation.

By 11:00 a.m., family, friends, and acquaintances that many of us had not seen for years gathered at the hotel lobby and conference check-in

table, exchanging hugs, handshakes, hi-fives, and smiles. The SoulFire planning committee and volunteers did a wonderful job preparing for everyone's arrival to ensure every person felt welcomed and special as they picked up their SoulFire gift bag and conference T-shirt.

As SoulFire participants and guests finished their lunch in the beautiful Mesquite Ballroom, all eyes turned to the stage and double screens for the countdown to the start of the conference. Three, two, one... the lights in the ballroom dimmed and the SoulFire conference launch video, produced by Tenrikyo Creatives, provided the perfect introduction for a conference four years in the making. The excitement in the ballroom, generated by the 200+ participants was electric and indescribable! What followed was a sincere and heartfelt opening message by Bishop Fukaya, who's vision back in 2015 to host a Tenrikyo faith conference eventually led to SoulFire. We are truly appreciative to Bishop Fukaya for planting the seed with us to pull this conference together and for fully supporting it financially and with his parental heart.

The opening keynote address by Representative Nadine Nakamura of Hawaii was an inspirational and

deeply personal story of her faith journey of how she has applied the Tenrikyo teachings throughout her life. Representative Nakamura's keynote garnered a standing ovation and was one of many highlights throughout the conference. Other highlights included: the roll out of the English Singable-Danceable Mikagura-Uta of the Seated Service and Yorozuyo, presented and demonstrated by Reverend Marlon Okazaki, who has led this project for over two decades; the presentation of 12 faith-based workshops; interactive activities that generated a great deal of joy and laughter; a Sparks program for Shonenkai participants; and a dinner party that featured a delicious meal, prizes for almost everyone, games, and wonderful memories. Words cannot adequately express the spiritual energy, heartwarming conversations among friends, and the many learning opportunities from the workshops and presentations that took place at a beautiful resort in Palm Springs, CA. Fortunately, the sights and sounds of the memorable SoulFire Tenrikyo Faith Conferences were wonderfully captured in the SoulFire Highlight Video created by none other than, the talented Grant Inouye of Tenrikyo Creatives. Check it out here: [https://tenrikyo.com/](https://tenrikyo.com/tfc?xtfw_notice=002fddd822)

[tfc?xtfw\\_notice=002fddd822](https://tenrikyo.com/tfc?xtfw_notice=002fddd822)

Although nearly two months have passed since the SoulFire Tenrikyo Faith Conference, I continue to feel the collective excitement and joy that we all experienced during our three days together in June. I am extremely honored to have been part of an amazing planning committee, who lent their time (4 years), unwavering dedication, creativity, and sincerity to ensure a memorable event for all participants. Thanks to the leadership and support by Bishop Fukuya and the Board of Directors of the Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America, the many generous donors, including the Tenri Cultural Institute, and everyone who chose to participate in SoulFire; we were blessed by God the Parent and Oyasama with a magnificent event. It will be up to each of us to keep our spiritual flames burning bright and build momentum towards the 90th Anniversary of Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America in 2024 and the 140th Anniversary of Oyasama in 2026. Let's do this!



## Children's Pilgrimage to Jiba!



## Oyasato Seminar



## TYMANA Convention



## Church History Wilson Church

Born and raised in the town of Higashi-izu in Kamo county Shizuoka Prefecture, Rinzo Torizawa, working at a barber shop in Shimizu city, started to deeply follow the path of the teachings after coming across and meeting a Tenrikyo missionary in 1910. While doing so, he decided to move the entire family to Jinan in China after receiving an opportunity to run a rice milling business there. At that same time, he

met Mitsuzo Takagaki, a missionary affiliated with Honjima Grand Church, and Rinzo further became inclined with the teachings. Then in 1922, he returned to Ojiba and completed the 28th Class of Tenri Seminary Bekka. Although he immediately returned and devoted himself to missionary work back in Jinan, the Japan-China relationship further worsened at the same time. He then returned back to Japan, and in 1925, arrived at Hongusa Mission Center based in Tokyo, where he based and dedicated his missionary work. At around the same time at

Honjima Branch Church, Reverend Yoshizo Katayama's thoughtful wish for opening up missionary work in the United States was moving toward realization, and Rinzo Torizawa and Yone Okazaki were together selected and landed in Seattle in high spirits in 1927.

After immediately arriving in Seattle, Rinzo Torizawa built up his church's foundation while devoting and basing his missionary work in the district of Tacoma. And then in July 25, 1928, Masashi Okazaki was granted to be appointed as Reverend of Seattle Church. But soon thereafter his appointment, Toyokichi Kikuno fell ill while doing missionary work within the suburbs of Los Angeles, California. Rinzo then arrived to take the place for Toyokichi to perform missionary work and spread the name of God in the district of Terminal Island in southern California, an area where many Japanese and Japanese-Americans lived. After seeing the bonds of the followers in that area, he returned to Ojiba in 1929, and received the grant to establish Terminal Church.

As the path slowly opened, he also started missionary activities within the city of Los Angeles. As more people started gathering during the church's monthly service, Rinzo Torizawa's eldest son Shigeichi, completed the 48th Class of Tenri Seminary Bekka in July 1932, and thereafter, he lived-in and

devoted to his spiritual development at Honjima Branch Church, and then went to the United States together with his wife. He was then granted to be appointed as reverend of LA Church (currently Wilson Church). Together with Rinzo, they both put their efforts in missionary work. Eventually around this time, the church's monthly service was held in tents set up in the backyard.

In 1936, Hama Fukushima who was doing missionary work back in Jinan China and in Tokyo, was summoned to take the place of Rinzo to succeed as reverend of Terminal Church. Then in January 29, 1936, Rinzo, whom was practically doing church activities, changed the reverend of LA Church to Shigeichi, and subsequently changed and renamed the church as Wilson Church.

Immediately after the outbreak of World War II, in 1942, Japanese Americans were treated by the United States government as hostile citizens, and these people were to abandon all property, were interred to and forced relocation to concentration camps. Days before being sent to the camp, his wife Itsu, kept their church's symbol of worship back at Mission Headquarters. Then in February 1942, Shigeichi was taken in custody by the FBI, and leaving his family behind, was relocated from one concentration camp to another from Lordsburg, New Mexico, to Santa Fe, and then to Crystal City,

Texas. Before their family was evicted from their homes to concentration camps on May 6, his wife Itsu, kept the church symbol of worship at Mission Headquarters.

Soon after the end of the war, Rinzo Torizawa and his wife returned to their hometown back in Japan in Atagawa Shizuoka Prefecture.

As Shigeyoshi was not feeling well while relocating from the concentration camp in Crystal City back to Los Angeles, he spent the next year in Denver, Colorado, for medical treatment. After his return to Los Angeles, Shigeichi Torizawa was appointed as reverend of Wilson Church on October 28, 1953, and was approved to relocate this church within the city of Los Angeles. Shigeichi was then assigned as a one of the board of members of Honjima Grand Church, and devoted his time working for the path as secretary at Mission Headquarters.

In December 1972, the third son of Kentaro Iwahashi (member of the Honjima Grand Church board of directors), Shigemi, was welcomed as son-in law into the Torizawa family. After Shigemi graduated from Tenri University in 1967, he was a live-in at the Grand Church. Upon arriving in the United States, he was a live-in at Mission Headquarters and devoted his time with hinokishin for about one year.

Upon the passing of Shigeichi

Torizawa on June 1985, in the same year on October, Shigemi was granted to be appointed as 4th Reverend of Wilson Church. Thereafter, his times up to today has been spent on various church activities and nurture of the future successors of the path.

#### Church Establishment Dates and Place

1932- July 12: 1541 W. 36th Street, Los Angeles, California

1936 -January 31: 815 Crocker Street, Los Angeles, California

1953- October 28: 3106 S.Brighton Avenue, Los Angeles, California

1995- July 26: 2091 Pacific Avenue, Norco, California

*(translation by H. Kamio)*

## News and Announcements

### 1) AUGUST MONTHLY SERVICE (8/20)

Officiant: Bishop Assistants: Tomoyoshi Tanaka, Junjiro Nakatomi Attendants: Ichiro Ito, Hamilton Niwa  
 Director: Kunishige Ito Offerings Officiant: Zen Yukimoto Sermon: Kazumoto Kubo (J)

### 2) CHURCH & FELLOWSHIP 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, Succeeding Minister: Rev. Noriko Kitai, Enshrinement Service: Oct. 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: Sept. 8, 2023 Enshrinement Service: Sept. 9, 2023

New England Fellowship: Fellowship Head: Alejandro Jimenez Quintero, Date of Founding: June 26, 2023

### 3) LAY MINISTER PREPARATORY COURSE / HEAD MINISTER QUALIFICATION COURSE

Regarding the English classes of the Lay Minister Preparatory Course, usually held from the end of August, and the Head Minister Qualification Course, usually held from the end of September, it is currently anticipated that these classes will not be held due to a lack of interested participants. However, if there are any individuals interested in attending either of these courses, please contact the Mission Headquarters as soon as possible.

### 4) 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 August 15. 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) |

The application information about TLI's Oyasato Fusekomi Department is as follows. If you are interested, please let us know as soon as possible because we need to order application forms.

Application period: October 1 to 31, 2023 (The admission office is not open on Sundays, national holidays, and on the morning of October 26.)

Eligibility: Those who meet all of the following criteria:

1. Those who completed formal education or some sort of recognized schooling for a minimum of 12 years in their home country.
2. Those who are children of church head ministers or fellowship heads, or someone equivalent, and are/will be Yoboku at the time of entrance.
3. Those who graduated/are expected to graduate from TLI's Japanese Language Department this academic year or those who have passed N2 or above in the Japanese Language Proficiency Test.
4. Upon graduation, those who are going to engage in Tenrikyo activities in their home country in the future.

### 5) AUTUMN MEMORIAL SERVICE

The Mission Headquarters will conduct its autumn memorial service on September 16 (Sat), from 7PM.

#### **6) AMERICA ICHIRETSUKAI NEW SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

Ann Oiki of Capitol Church (Honjima Grand Church), Lisa Oiki of Capitol Church (Honjima Grand Church), Riki Okazaki of Hollywood Church (Honjima Grand Church) and Makoto Hayashi of America West Church (Nishijin Grand Church) have been accepted as new scholarship recipients this year.

#### **7) ALL YOBOKU ACTIVITY DAY**

In order to “promote people who live in the same area to encourage and inspire each other, in order to further engage in their own and their church’s anniversary activities, during the period of ‘three years, one thousand days’ that leads up to the 140th Anniversary of Oyasama,” the “All Yoboku Activity Day” will be conducted in each district. We invite you all to participate; please confirm the dates and times with your district representatives.

#### **8) MISSION HQ PERSONNEL CHANGES**

Mr. Tadahiro Yamashita (Honai GC, Honseiai BC), who has served as seinen since June 30, 2021, will finish his term and return to Japan on August 23.

Mr. Masao Tanaka (Konohana GC, Yuasa BC) arrived on August 17 to serve as seinen at the Mission HQ.

## **COMMITTEE & ASSOCIATION REPORTS**

### **Construction Committee**

Committee members, with the help of Mission HQ staff, have been working to beautify the Biotope Garden, the large parking lot, and the area around the Tenri Kaikan building.

We are currently obtaining an estimate for guest room renovations on the second floor of the Tenri Kaikan.

We are currently obtaining an estimate for the removal of the cinder block wall between the MP Hall and the New Lot.

### **Nurturing & Educational Committee**

This year’s Oyasato Seminar was successfully held in Jiba, with 12 students from America in attendance. Following the Oyasato Seminar, the Truth of the Sazuke was bestowed upon 11 new yoboku.

This year’s in-person Oyasato Seminar preliminary session will be held at the Mission HQ from December 28~30. The OS subcommittee is currently contacting students that are eligible and sending out the registration link to those who are interested.

### **Public Relations Committee**

Regarding the Mission HQ homepage:

- The SoulFire Highlight Video has been uploaded.
- The service roster has once again been made available on the Homepage.
- Monthly Service sermon videos, which were behind schedule, have been updated up to last month’s



sermon.

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).

### **Women's Association**

TWA America 70th Anniv. Commemorative Activities: publish photo album; "Gathering of Joy" being planned.

District Conventions: Chicago District - September 24 (Sun) from 1PM @ Midwest Church  
New York District – September 24 (Sun) from 1PM @ New York Center

### **Boys & Girls Association**

22 people (incl. 7 association members) attended this year's Children's Pilgrimage to Jiba; 12 association members and 3 counselors participated in the international B&GA Hinokishin corps. The B&GA America Service Convention will be held in-person at the Mission Headquarters, on August 19 (Sat). We will also hold a sleepover on the day before.

Vertical Mission Seminar: On behalf of B&GA Headquarters, Mr. Kazumoto Kubo will be visiting to conduct the seminar on August 20 [Sun]. (Please be aware that there will be no Sunday School in August. Childcare will be available)

Please contact the B&GA if you are able to lend us some service garments. (moto1884@icloud.com)

### **TYMANA**

The 97th TYMA Convention will be held at Church Headquarters on November 25 (Sat), from 11AM. Following the convention, there will be entertainment provided, along with a stage and booths/food stalls.

The International Hinokishin Corps is scheduled for July 18~24, 2024.

The International Hinokishin Corps is also scheduled to be held from July 18~24, 2026, the year of the 140th Anniversary of Oyasama.

### **NY Center**

August 5 & 9 : Participate in an Interfaith Peace Gathering.

August 26 - 27: B&GA Sleepover, service convention

August 31 - September 16: Japanese American Artist Association of NY Exhibition (TCI)

## 18 Bishop's Message

passport would make it back to me in time.

Without my passport, I cannot do pilgrimages to Jiba. It is hard to describe how I felt during those few weeks. It was so uncomfortable being in a situation where I was passport-less, knowing that if I had to urgently leave the country, I could not.

However, a few weeks later, my new passport with a ten-year expiration date safely arrived, along with my old passport. However, my old passport now had two holes punched on the right side of the cover and on my picture page.

This May (2023), the passport that I acquired in 2013 was going to expire, so I had to renew it, which I did this February.

Even now, US passport renewals can be done in the same way I had in 2013, however, I learned that I could now renew my passport online as well. So that is what I did this time around (unfortunately, due to an overflow of online renewal requests, they are currently not accepting new online renewal applications).

Online passport renewals do not require any paperwork or old passports to be mailed to Washington D.C., so there is no fear of anything getting lost in the mail. Also, since only the new passport needs to be mailed, postage and delivery time are cut in half, cutting the worry

also in half.

When renewing online, although registration on the website is required, once that is complete, you just enter all the information online through your computer.

If everything goes smoothly, it only takes about 40 minutes to complete the entire application. However, since I had trouble with my picture, it took me a bit longer.

I had a 2"x2" passport picture taken in Japan specifically for this, however since I had my glasses on, my picture was rejected. They do not accept photos with glasses on, so I asked my wife to use my smartphone to take a few pictures of me without my glasses. I then uploaded them to my computer after making the image a little lighter (I was absolutely not adding a filter). They accepted the picture.

I paid the processing and delivery fee by credit card and I was able to complete my entire renewal application online.

Since I still had my unexpired passport in hand, I thought I could still use it, but it seems that as soon as the renewal process is started, it becomes invalid.

The instructions stated that it may take up to nine weeks for the new passport to arrive, which meant that it might not arrive in time for my April pilgrimage. So I paid extra for the expedited option and opted for express delivery as well.

My new passport arrived seven weeks to the day after I had submitted my on-line application. At the six week mark, I received notification that my application was being processed, and then a week later, I received another notification that my new passport had been mailed out. The next day, I had my new passport in hand. With this passport, I was able to return to Jiba in April.

Japan has also implemented online applications for passport renewals since March 27, 2023. However, they take into account “usage patterns.” You can only apply online if the passport expiration date is less than a year away, or if there are less than three blank pages in your passport. So if this is your first time applying online, your passport is already expired, or if there are any legal changes to your name or permanent residence, other than a few exceptions, you cannot apply online. The following “exceptions” will allow you to apply online as long as you send your updated family register via registered mail.

What you need: a valid passport, Japan National ID Number card, and a smartphone that can install “mynportal.” In other words, although it is possible to apply through a computer, it is probably easier to apply through a smartphone.

Processing fees can be paid by credit card or cash when you pick up your new passport.

Unfortunately, the applicant has to physically go to the office to pick up the new passport, but instead of having to apply in person and then return a second time to receive the new passport, you now only have to go once.

I have gone on and on about passport renewals in America and Japan, but hopefully one day, there will be no borders and passports will become unnecessary. I believe this will happen one day.

Of course, you would need to have an ID to prove your identity, but that ID does not need to be a passport. For example, a driver's license is currently sufficient to fly on domestic flights in the U.S. Last year, I only had to show my driver's license and have it scanned to pass airport security.

At LAX, flights to Japan now do not require a boarding pass and passport at the gate. Facial recognition alone is sufficient to board the plane.

Although the world is ever-changing, as long as there are still national borders, passports may still be necessary. However, I am secretly expecting that when we achieve the Joyous Life world, these borders will disappear. IDs will probably still be necessary to prove one's identity, but each time I renew my passport, I am hoping that one day passports will become obsolete. Am I the only one?

*(translation by H. Ryono)*

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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.