

Tenrikyo

newsletter



Action Day for All Yoboku!

Last month, the first of five “Action Day for All Yoboku” was held at venues all around the US and around the world. Please joins us for the next one, scheduled for June 2024!

Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America

www.tenrikyo.com

November 2023

“A Work in Progress” by Bishop Fukaya

— *The Five Senses* —

On the 26th of last month, the Autumn Grand Service was held at Church Headquarters. After the Kagura Service and Teodori Service Dance, the Shinbashira delivered his message, which can be read in the Tenri Jiho, Michinotomo, and Tenrikyo Online.

Also, at the October 26th Ohakobi, Sanction Bestowal, “Special Service Request” for our 90th Anniversary was approved. I hope that everyone in our diocese will unite as one and walk the path of spiritual growth toward our anniversary celebration on June 30 of next year. I would like to ask for your kind cooperation.

We humans have “Five Senses”: “Sight,” “Hearing,” “Touch,” “Smell,” and “Taste.” These are abilities bestowed by God the Parent and are important in our daily lives.

In the Besseki lecture, we are taught that:

It is thanks to God the Parent’s constant providence that we can enjoy the free use of the body as we wish. We can see with our eyes, listen to the truth with our ears, smell with our nose, bite and chew food with our mouth, work with our hands, and walk with our legs.

All the functions of the body, including the “Five Senses,” are lent to us by God the Parent. How we use these functions is important. As we are taught, “we can enjoy the free use of the body as we wish.” So it is up to us humans to decide on how we will use our five senses and our bodies.

“Sight” is the ability to see things. In other words, we are able to “differentiate things with our eyes.”

Unfortunately, I have always been nearsighted, and now that I am older, I am now also farsighted. I also have an astigmatism, which causes me to see fine print in double. Therefore, I have to wear glasses, but it is not as if I cannot see anything when I take off my glasses.

(continued on page 18)

Coming Up

- * **December Monthly Service Sermon (12/17)**
- Rev. Marlon Okazaki (E)
- * **TSA Winter Conference**
- Dec. 26~29 @ Mission HQ
- * **Rice-Pounding (*Mochitsuki*)**
- Dec. 28 @ Mission HQ
- * **New Years Service**
- January 1, from 7AM @ Mission HQ

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Autumn Grand Service Prayer

October 15, 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, out of Your parental love to save all humankind, on October 26, 1838, You descended to the Residence of Origin, where humankind was first conceived, and revealed Yourself through Oyasama as Your Shrine. You revealed the Truth of Origin of all things, taught us the Service, and opened the path of single-hearted salvation.

Since then, through Your boundless parental love and eternal blessings, these direct and ultimate teachings of God have spread to the world. In America and Canada, we are blessed with those who lean upon Oyasama's Divine Model and dedicate themselves in salvation work.

We are truly grateful for the prosperity of the path today.

Relying on Oyasama's workings, we work spiritedly each day, hoping to make repayment for Your blessings. As this is the month of the origin of these teachings, we shall keep in mind Your intention on the day of the Origin of our faith. Receiving the truth of Jiba, we service performers will now joyously perform the seated service and the service dance for our autumn grand service.

Today, we Yoboku and followers have gathered before You, looking forward to this day. We bow in unified prayer to express our gratitude for Your daily blessings. We pledge to further our spiritual growth and ask for Your continued blessings. In witnessing our spirited singing of the Service Songs, may You become spirited as well.

This month, many of our church head ministers, Yoboku and followers, will be returning to Jiba for the Autumn Grand Service at Church Headquarters. We ask that they be able to travel safely, receive the truth of Jiba, and upon their return to their respective regions, serve spiritedly in their duties for the path.

We are determined to take to heart the intention as expressed in the Shinbashira's Instruction Four, which was issued one year ago, to increase our awareness as Yoboku, to spread these teachings that will settle the world, and to convey the path to the next generation. Furthermore, toward our 90th Anniversary, which will be celebrated next year on June 30, my hope is that all followers in our diocese become united in mind and advance on the path of spiritual growth.

Dear God, please accept our minds of sincerity and grant us Your free and unlimited blessing—in accordance with the sincerity of our prayers—and please guide us so that the teachings spread not only within our diocese, but also throughout the globe.

We ask that this world be transformed even a day sooner to a world filled with joy: one in which all our brothers and sisters mutually help one another. In unison with the whole congregation, I humbly pray that You bless us so.

Autumn Grand Service Sermon by Bishop Fukaya

*~Let Us Perform the Service
Wholeheartedly~*

I want to thank all of you for your daily work on behalf of the path and for our Mission Headquarters. We sincerely appreciate your encouragement and hard work.

I am so happy that we have now joyously and smoothly completed our autumn grand service. Please allow me to share my thoughts and deliver today's sermon. I ask for your kind attention.

The autumn grand service commemorates the day of origin of the founding of the Teaching on October 26, 1838. Thus, Church Headquarters will hold its Autumn Grand Service on the 26th of this month. We, however, having received the truth of the Kagura Services performed at Jiba, have concluded our own grand service just now.

The autumn grand service embodies God the Parent's fundamental purpose in establishing this faith, which is to "save the entire world." In other words, when we perform the autumn



grand service, we are not merely doing the service, but we are reaffirming to ourselves God the Parent's intention in starting this faith. Then, we pledge to take action based on that intention. Of course, it is not only important that we make this pledge, but we must act upon it as well.

Since the founding day of Tenrikyo, Oyasama, as the Shrine of God, demonstrated the path of the Divine Model for 50 years. In going through this path, She taught us the Service as the fundamental means to save the world.

Based on this, one of our goals

of Spiritual Maturity for our 90th anniversary is:

Let's Always Perform the Service
Wholeheartedly!

Today, I would like to talk about performing the grand services and monthly services here at our Mission Headquarters. Last year, in Instruction Four, the Shinbashira said:

Oyasama, as the Shrine of Tsukihi, conveyed the intention of God the Parent, taught the Service, ...

Instruction Four, page 1

And,

let us... pray for a solution through performing the service.

Instruction Four, page 6

So, Oyasama taught us how to perform the Service, and She instructs us to pray for the settling of the world through this Service.

Further, this year, the Shinbashira said the following in his New Year's address:

I believe that the spiritual maturity of the Service performers plays a

big role in whether people become more receptive to our teachings and whether we can receive blessings, for them, through the performance of the Service.

Michi no Tomo, February 2023

Here, the Shinbashira emphasizes the importance of the spiritual maturity of the Service performers.

It is written in the Ofudesaki:

What do you think this Service is? It is none other than the means to universal salvation.

Ofudesaki II:9

Hereafter, I shall hasten the Service step by step, preparing only for universal salvation.

Ofudesaki II:21

What do you think this Service is about? It is solely to bring peace to the world and salvation to all.

Ofudesaki IV:93

By this Service which teaches the path quickly, all minds in the world will be purified.

Ofudesaki VII:99

Day by day, hasten to begin the Service. You will escape any danger whatever.

Ofudesaki X:19

However serious your illness may be, you will all be saved by the Service done single-heartedly.

Ofudesaki X:20

If you quickly unite your minds and do the Service correctly, the world will settle.

Ofudesaki XIV:92

Concerning the Service: never think that I have any other intention. I have only the single desire to save all of you.

Ofudesaki XVI:65

The word “Service” in these Ofudesaki verses refer to the Kagura Service, performed around Jiba, which is done for the purpose of saving all people and settling the world in peace.

As I mentioned earlier, our service, that we perform here at Mission Headquarters, receives the truth of the Kagura Service. Therefore, these Ofudesaki verses are relevant to us as well.

Let me reconfirm the mindset that we service performers should have, and the fundamental attitude that attendees should have, for our monthly services here at Mission Headquarters. It is not about doing the service just to

do it, or merely to worship for the sake of worshipping.

At every church’s monthly service, including here at Mission Headquarters, it is essential, first of all, to express our gratitude for the daily blessings bestowed by God over the past month. Further, it is also important to pray for continued blessings toward the following month’s service.

We also need to pray for the world to settle in peace and for all people in the world to be saved. Currently, we are praying for a resolution to the wars in Eastern Europe and the Middle-East, and conflicts in various African nations and other areas of the world. Further, let us pray for calamities to be avoided, but should they occur, let us pray for the quick relief for the victims. In essence, let us sincerely pray for the swift realization of the Joyous Life for all people.

Although some of us may come to monthly services with personal prayers in mind, let us also pray together for the things that I mentioned previously while we perform the service or worship here at Mission Headquarters.

Now, as we get closer to celebrating our 90th anniversary next year, let us take a fresh look at just how much

heart we are putting into performing the service.

There are many stories about our predecessors who, in their earnest desire to save those suffering from illnesses, would purify themselves with water ablutions and then perform the twelve songs of the service at the bedside of the ailing person. They would often do this not only once, but up to six times a day. On each occasion of newly dancing the twelve songs, they would take down the offerings and put up new ones at the home's altar.

Further, if any mistakes had been made in dancing the service, the performers would gather after the service to identify the verse in which the error was made, and discuss what God's intention could be.

They would all self-reflect and make a spiritual resolution, explain their understanding of God's intention to the sick person and their family members, and then they would perform the service once more. This kind of dedication and commitment would continue for two or three days in some cases.

In other words, they performed the service with fervent dedication and

tried to discern God's will at each step.

With this in mind, we must reflect on how dedicated we currently are—in our performance of the service.

It is not merely about doing the hand movements or playing the musical instruments without error. While it is important to be able to dance correctly without needing to look at the other dancers, it is even more crucial to be attentive to the precision of our hand and foot movements while performing the service. In other words, dedication in performing the service means to constantly be conscious of whether we are performing it with our full devotion.

In the Anecdotes of Oyasama, No. 18, titled, "The Songs of Truth," Oyasama instructed:

"These are the song of truth. So you must dance to the truth."

"You should not just dance. You should dance the truth."

Indeed, I believe that the hand movements of the Service contain the underlying intention of God the Parent, which is expressed by God's words,

I want to see you humans lead the Joyous Life and thus share in that joy,

And

I have descended here to save all humankind.

It is critical for us to embrace this divine intention in our hearts as we perform the hand movements of the service.

Again, as I mentioned earlier, the service we perform here receives the truth of the “Kagura Service” performed at Jiba. The “Kagura Service” is performed with the ten service dancers who surround the “Kanrodai.” This service expresses, through its hand movements, the workings of God the Parent at the time of human creation.

In Part One of the Kagura Service, the ten service dancers each perform unique hand movements that represent the ten aspects of God’s complete providence. Although their hand movements may differ, they all perform with their minds in unison.

Since we receive the truth of this Service performed at Church

Headquarters, it is crucial for us service dancers to perform it with a unity of mind. In other words, it is critical for each of the six service dancers to perform the service focusing on whether all six of them have a unity of mind. To achieve this, it is important for all service dancers to align their hearts with the core dancer of the service.

Regarding the service instruments, it is not just about producing a sound. Of course, we should be able to play the instruments from memory and without error, but producing clear and pure sounds is also crucial. To achieve this, we must have cleansed and purified minds.

It is also very important to play in harmony with the other instruments in a way that makes it easy for the singers and dancers to perform their roles.

For those who play the men’s and women’s instruments, it is important for all of them to align themselves with the wooden clappers. For the wooden clapper player, it is crucial for them to listen carefully to the singer to match the pace of their singing. Please be aware of all of this, when you wholeheartedly play the service instruments.

It is my hope that all people in attendance will spiritedly sing the songs for the service. The service prayer should be done wholeheartedly, not only by the service performers, but by all those in attendance. In other words, everyone here should take part in the service with a mind of unity.

Even for those who don't understand Japanese or for those who speak broken Japanese, it is my hope that everyone will sing the service song in the language that Oyasama taught. This is because I believe that the deep intention of God the Parent, that we human beings may still not fully comprehend, is embedded and concealed within the words of the song.

In particular, I ask all of us to spiritedly sing, "Namu Tenri-O-no-Mikoto."

Through our service, we pray for world salvation and for the Joyous Life world.

Currently, there are wars and conflicts being fought around the globe. Further, we see that many more disasters are occurring worldwide. I believe that therein lies some profound intention of God the Parent.

In Instruction Four, it says:

Today, our society is awash with self-assertion that lacks consideration for others and with indulgence in ephemeral pleasures. People are overconfident in their capabilities and tend to be swayed by self-centered human thoughts as they wander about on the mind's dark paths.

God the Parent alerts us human beings to such misuses of the mind by giving us signs in the form of illnesses and other challenging situations. Global pandemics and frequent natural disasters 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. Now more than ever, we are encouraged to implement a way of life that will establish the Joyous Life where people live by helping one another based on the awareness that all human beings are brothers and sisters.

Instruction Four, page 5-6

Our mission is to spread God the Parent's intention to the world, so that all people will be able to lead

the Joyous Life. One of the ways to fulfill this mission is through our performance of the service. As it says in Instruction Four, “let us pray for a solution through performing the service,” let all of us earnestly perform the service to fulfill this mission.

You may be aware, on June 30th of next year, we will celebrate our 90th Anniversary. We only have about 8 months until then. During this period, let us all be conscious of and practice one of our goals for spiritual maturity:

Let’s Always Perform the Service
Wholeheartedly!

To highlight this goal today, I have talked about the proper mindset of us service performers and of those attending our monthly services.

For our 90th Anniversary next year, I would like for all of us to witness a wonderful service. This would mean a service in which all the minds of the service performers and attendees become united as one, as we perform a service that moves our hearts. I believe that this is what will allow God the Parent to work, and we can come closer to the realization of the Joyous Life world.

Further, I hope that each of you, whether in your respective churches, fellowships, mission stations, or at home, will practice the service diligently to ensure that you can perform the service correctly and wholeheartedly. Wherever we may perform the service, let us perform it in a way that allows God the Parent to accept our true sincerity—a service that moves the heart.

With this request in mind, I would like to conclude my talk for today. I thank you for your kind attention.

(translation by M. Okazaki)

News and Announcements

1) NOVEMBER MONTHLY SERVICE (11/19)

Officiant: Bishop Assistants: Masahito Kimura, Yoichi Fukui Attendants: Eddie Takemoto, Ichiro Ito
Director: Toshikiyo Yukimoto Offerings Officiant: Robert Shimizu Sermon: Kunihito Fumioka (E)

2) CHURCH AFFAIRS

Divine Sanctions:

San Francisco Church: Head Minister Appointment, Request for Special Service

Planned Divine Sanction: October 26, 2023 Head Minister: Tomoyoshi Tanaka,

Enshrinement Service: December 2, 2023

Aya LA Fellowship: Fellowship Closure

This fellowship has officially closed, as of August 23, 2023.

Pacific Union Fellowship: Change of Address

3) YOBOKU GATHERING

The Yoboku Gathering will be held on November 18. Registration will begin at 1:30 PM. This year's gathering will be held both in-person and via Zoom. The Yoboku Gathering will be conducted from 2:00PM~4:30PM.

We will view the special talk given at the Vertical Mission Seminar, followed by a discussion.

4) TSA WINTER CONFERENCE

This year's winter conference will be held at the Mission Headquarters, from December 26 (Tue) ~ 29 (Fri). Program: Lecture, HARP Activity, mochi rice pounding, ski/snowboard trip. Registration is currently open; the application deadline is December 3. The limit of participants is 35 persons.

5) END-OF-YEAR / NEW YEAR ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

The Mission Headquarters will be holding our annual end-of-year cleanup from 12:30 PM following the December 26th Day Service. If you would like to take part in the cleaning, and also if you plan to request lunch for that day, please contact the Mission HQ by November 30 (Thu). We will be holding our annual Rice Cake Pounding (Mochitsuki), planned for December 28 (Thu), and we ask for hinokishin from those that live near the Mission Headquarters. Also, we will be holding our New Year's Day Service on January 1 (Mon) from 7 AM (we will open the portals and prepare the offerings from 6:40). If you are a service performer local to the Mission Headquarters and wish to take part in performing the New Year's Day Service, please contact the Mission Headquarters by November 30 (Thu).

6) SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE IN JIBA

Shuyoka (three-month Spiritual Development Course in Jiba) English Class will be held from the end of March next year. Applicants without Japanese citizenship must apply for a visa, which can take several months. If you are thinking of attending, please let the Mission Headquarters office know as soon as possible. Also, please be aware that there may be circumstances where the English Class may be canceled, or the inability to obtain visa permissions.

7) TENRIKYO HINOKISHIN DAY

We request each district to begin preparations for next year's Tenrikyo Hinokishin Day. We will distribute the Hinokishin Day Plan Report documents to all district representatives, and we ask you to submit them to the Mission Headquarters by December 26.

8) ACTION DAY FOR ALL YOBOKU

We ask all District Representatives to submit their ADAY plan for the second event to the Mission Headquarters Secretaries by the end of February, 2024.

9) GATHERING TO PROMOTE SALVATION WORK FOR HEAD MINISTERS AND THEIR SPOUSES

As we enter the second year of the pre-anniversary activities leading up to the 140th anniversary of Oyasama, the “Gathering to Promote Salvation Work for Head Ministers and their Spouses” will be held at the Mission Headquarters, to promote further efforts towards single-hearted salvation. We encourage all head ministers and their spouses, as well as all those that the bishop has deemed eligible, to make their best effort to attend this gathering. We will be sending an announcement letter to all those eligible to attend, so please check accordingly.

10) APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL ICHIRETSUKAI SCHOLARSHIP

The application for the 2024 Special Ichiretsukai Scholarship is now available for students who will attend college or university next fall. The application deadline is December 31, 2023.

11) MAUI WILDFIRE DISASTER RELIEF FUND

The Mission HQ collected \$4,400 in donations for the Maui wildfires relief. Last month, all of the donations collected were handed to the Bishop of the Mission HQ of Hawaii. To all those who offered their support, we sincerely thank you.

COMMITTEE & ASSOCIATION REPORTS**Construction Committee**

We are acquiring estimates for the door installation on the second floor of the Tenri Kaikan. We are continuing to work on the weeding and tree-trimming at the large parking lot.

Nurturing & Educational Committee

The TSA Winter Conference is planned to be held at the Mission HQ from December 26 (Tue) ~ 29 (Fri). Program: Lecture, HARP Activity, mochi rice pounding, ski/snowboard trip. Applications are available at your local church, fellowship, mission center, the Mission Headquarters, and on the Mission HQ website. The registration deadline is December 3, and the number of participants is limited to 35 persons.

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.

Next year’s Three Day Course will be held at the Mission HQ from February 23~25. Applications will be distributed this month, and the deadline for submission is February 18, 2024. The English course will be held if there are at least 4 applicants, and the Spanish course will require at least 2 applicants.

Translation Committee

The Translation Conference was held at the Mission Headquarters in America from October 31 ~ November 4. We completed the base translation of all 200 stories in the Anecdotes.

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).

Upon the request of the Rituals Committee, we are putting together a reference video for practicing the service rituals.

The monthly service sermons that are on the Mission Headquarters homepage will now be viewable in both English and Japanese, beginning with the August 2023 monthly service sermon video. The videos titled "Stories Inspired by Oyasama" can now be viewed on the Mission Headquarters homepage. You can find them on the Resources" page, under the tab labeled "Blog."

Women's Association

106th Tenrikyo Women's Association Convention: April 19, 2024 (Fri), from 9:30 AM at the Church HQ Inner Courtyard

Meetings with Committee Heads by the Chairwoman are currently being held.

TWA America 70th Anniversary Commemorative photo album is under development.

Boys & Girls Association

We are recruiting new koteki members! Would you like to join your Tenrikyo friends to do koteki (fife & drum corps) activities in a unity of mind? We are conducting activities that teach mutual help and the joy of exerting one's sincerity for the salvation of others. Please contact a BGA committee member for more details (moto1884@gmail.com).

The video of the Vertical Mission Seminar has been uploaded to the Mission HQ homepage, so please take a look.

Please conduct children's gatherings at your churches so that BGA members may listen to stories about Oyasama, and engage in hinokishin together with your children.

NY Center

October 20: Mr. Casey Oiki (Honjima GC, Capitol Church) will be serving as staff at the New York Center for 3 months.

December 2: Tenri Gathering will be held.

Church History Marina Church

After arriving in the United States in March 1912, Kan'ichi Uchii was running a hotel business in the city of Portland. In 1930, he collapsed due to cerebral apoplexy and no medical treatment was able to cure him at the time. He was then saved by the sazuake offered by Reverend Kunie Okazaki of Portland Church, and since then, started to offer his prayers to the church. The following year he returned to Jiba and enrolled in *Bekka's* (Graduate Seminary) 47th session. Upon coming back to the United States, he dedicated himself to missionary work as a live-in at Portland Church. Kan'ichi's wife was also inspired by the blessing that her husband received and also completed *Bekka* in 1932. In the same year, along with his wife and despite Kanichi being half paralyzed on one side, they devoted their time to missionary work in the suburbs of Sacramento, California, in the neighborhood of Stockton, and their eagerness to sprinkle the

fragrance of the teachings in the nearby State Hospital brought upon miraculous blessings one after another. Six months later they rented a house, established the San Okean Fellowship, and upon returning for Oyasama's 50th Anniversary in 1936, San Okean Church was inaugurated and Kanichi was appointed as Head Minister in January of the same year.

After Kanichi Uchii passed away in 1938, Ishigaki Manpei and his wife, who were followers at Portland Church, protected and looked after San Okean Church during and after World War II. In October 1973, Shigehisa Suzuki, who was doing missionary work in San Francisco and a yoboku of West Chicago Church, was appointed as the second head minister. The church was subsequently moved to San Francisco and was renamed Honsōko Church. Shigehisa Suzuki was born in Japan's Saitama Prefecture and came to the United States in 1919 at 19 years old. After working in different cities such as Seattle and New York and spending time in the Minidoka War Relocation Center during the war, he became friends with Seigo Ikeda, who was the husband of the late Kiyomi Ikeda of West Chicago Church's New Ground

Fellowship. After visiting the church on multiple occasions and upon the recommendation of Imayo Suzuki, Shigehisa attended and completed the Spiritual Development Course in 1959. While devoting time from the beginning of the Grand Church's sanctuary construction, he met and married Kiyoko, a yoboku of Honchie Branch Church. They arrived in Denver, Colorado in the United States and established the Rocky Mountain Fellowship in 1964. However, they relocated to San Francisco in 1969 and continued to do missionary work. Upon the passing away of Shigehisa Suzuki in 1981, his wife Kiyoko was appointed as the third head minister in November of the same year.

When Kiyoko was still three years old in 1911, her mother Han, came to follow the path. Her mother's passion toward the faith and path once revived Kiyoko's life when she was ill and not breathing. Han then determined that her young child would devote her lifetime to single-hearted salvation. At the time when Kiyoko was 25 years old, she was diagnosed with pulmonary tuberculosis, her medical condition was getting worse with each passing day, and it was declared that she only had a few days to live.

Even at this time, Kiyoko frankly kept on fulfilling God the Parent's desire for having the mind of single-hearted salvation, offered a lifetime to live a joyous mind even at times of suffering, and enrolled in Bekka's 53rd session all the while preparing for death. Although she was told "she will not return from Tenri alive," upon receiving God's miraculous blessings, she safely graduated without any issues. After completing Bekka and her Manchuria missionary work in 1937, she returned to Japan, devoted time to do missionary work in Tokyo, and in 1951, the Honchie Branch Church was established. Soon after she passed along the church to the successor in February 1958, the church was renamed and inaugurated as Honhamano (currently Honchiharu) Branch Church. Finally in 1960, at the care of Grand Church Head Minister Toshitsugu Katayama, she married Shigehisa Suzuki, who was living in Chicago at that time and went abroad to the United States.

After her husband's passing, she carried out the responsibility as church minister for 12 years, and in 1993 she passed away. Since Kiyoko did not have any children, the church successor was decided to be Motoharu

Iwahashi, the second son of Honjima Grand Church staff minister Keizo Iwahashi. After Motoharu graduated from Tenri Daini Junior Seminary, he fulfilled his duties as a live-in worker at Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters of Hawaii, returned to Japan to work for Church Headquarters' Overseas Mission Section, worked at Honjima Grand Church and after missionary practice, was given the virtue of and appointed as the fourth head minister. Furthermore, upon his appointment as the head minister, the Honsōko Church was renamed Marina Church so that it would be more familiar to the local people of the area. Up until 1999, Motoharu would also spend time at the parent church, Portland Church, for their church activities and revival efforts.

In July 1999, Motoharu's brother Motohiro Iwahashi took over and was appointed as fifth head minister at the request of Honjima Grand Church's Fourth Head Minister. Motohiro, who was in the sixth grade when he went abroad, was an important member of the church's overseas mission efforts. He studied abroad through his high school years while commuting from Honjima's missionary house in Mission Viejo, California. From

1992 he studied at San Francisco State University while living and commuting from Honsōko Church, and for half a year, spent church life with Reverend Kiyoko. Immediately upon graduating from the university in 1997, he was suddenly stricken with diplopia (double vision) and at the recommendation of Honjima Grand Church's Fifth Head Minister, attended the Spiritual Development Course, and subsequently performed three months of hinokishin at Mission Headquarter of America the following year. After his appointment as head minister in 1999, he married Akiko Nakada of Ōmorimachi Grand Church's Ōtomoe Fellowship in 2000.

— *Four-Frontedness (Second Half)* —

**Continued from Oct. 2023 Issue*

“Four-Frontedness” is different from “Learn from others’ behavior and correct your own.” It is not merely about reflecting upon one’s words and actions and correcting one’s faults based on what others can see. I tend to believe that God the Parent looks into our innermost hearts and works accordingly. Even if one’s outward appearances were splendid, if the mind is not in accord with that, then I do not believe that God would work in that person’s favor. What do you think?

Further, regarding the Divine Direction of “This Residence is the Four-Fronted Mirror Residence,” (Osashizu, April 23, 1887), means that a spotless clean mirror will reflect everything. Especially regarding the “Residence,” I believe this means that the usage of one’s mind at Church Headquarters, Jiba, is reflected to God the Parent, who knows all and sees all.

I believe these types of meanings can be included in the term “Four-Frontedness.” Please let me expand a bit further on this topic.

It is critical that we reflect upon our words and deeds by taking a good look at ourselves through the Four-Fronted Mirror, and that we correct ourselves if anything is incorrect. However, if looking at yourself through the mirror causes you concern, I believe that those around you would also have that same concern. When we dig a bit deeper into the meaning of “Four-Frontedness,” my opinion is that it could mean that God is teaching us that “we need to take action such that people around us do not have to be concerned about us.” When we dig even deeper, I think that we

are being taught that the ideal would be for us to be able to realize our mistaken usages of mind without having to see our reflection in the “Four-Fronted” mirror. In other words, while we are concerned about what others think, we may not be able to say that we are making progress in spiritual growth.

As long as we apply the teachings in our daily lives and focus ourselves on God the Parent and Oyasama, no matter what others say, there would be no problem nor would it bother us. In other words, if we maintain a mind of being single-hearted with God each day, what others say or do would not concern us and we would not be unduly swayed by others. I think that God is teaching us that “Four-Frontedness” is the means to achieve this state.

Of course, it is important that we align our actions with those around us. However, if we change our words and deeds depending on the look on other people’s faces, and we distort the teachings, we may be straying from the path. That would not be good.

This discussion has become somewhat complex, but I do not think we should become overly concerned about what others say and do. What’s most important is that we always orient our minds towards God the Parent and Oyasama, and that we base our words and actions on the teachings, while becoming united in mind with those around us.

Yet, for us humans, not being swayed or concerned by the actions and words of others is a challenging feat. Hence, I believe that God the Parent taught us the teaching of “Four-Frontedness” as a way to foster our spiritual growth.

What are your thoughts on this?

There is a gentleman named Ousmane Sankhon, a former diplomat and now Japanese TV personality and author, born in the Republic of Guinea. I do not know much about Guinea, but looking at a map, it seems to be located in the western part of Africa and is on relatively flat land.

When Sankhon was in Guinea, his eyesight was an outstanding 6.0. This is very difficult for me to imagine, but how good is 6.0 vision?

In Japan, the eyesight test is based on the "Landolt ring," which is a circular slit in the shape of a "C." The eyesight is "normal" at 1.0 (equivalent to US eyesight of 20/20) when the slit (1.5mm/0.06") of a "C" with a diameter of 7.5 mm (0.3") can be distinguished from a distance of 5 meters (5.5 yards). Therefore, a simple calculation shows that your eyesight is 6.0 if you can see this 1.5mm slit from a distance of 30 meters (33 yards), compared to 1.0 eyesight at a 5 meters distance.

This explanation may be a bit difficult to comprehend, but for example, the cross section of an angel hair spaghetti is about 1.5mm, which means that you would be able to distinguish each cross section of a bundle of spaghetti from a distance of 30m. (Well, I guess this might sound even more confusing to you).

Mr. Sankhon had such good eyesight, but when he began working and living in Tokyo, his eyesight weakened and dropped way down to 1.2, a bit better than "normal."

There are many people in Africa with super good eyesight, and among them, there are recorded cases of Hadza tribe members in Tanzania who have an eyesight of 11.0.

For people who hunt in Africa, it is important to be able to tell whether an animal in the

distance is prey, or whether it is a dangerous predator. It is thought that this is why they developed this super-vision ability to recognize objects at far distances.

However, in urban areas, there are no concerns for hunting, and when looking at a computer, reading documents or books, one is looking and reading mostly at close range, which inevitably eliminates the need to see things far away. This seems to make people more prone to nearsightedness.

When my eyesight started to deteriorate, my doctor told me to look at things far away, which I guess has the same effect on my eyes as people in Africa. However, since I am genetically nearsighted, my vision eventually started to deteriorate in my right eye, which in turn caused my vision to deteriorate in my left eye as well.

One thing that surprised me about "hearing." Several decades ago, a famous composer and conductor came to Jiba, and I attended to him as his interpreter. He was instructing the Tenri High School Brass Band, which was practicing on stage, while he was sitting in the audience in a large hall in Nara City. There were about 100 members of the brass band at that time, and he seemed to be able to distinguish what kind of sound each member was making. He could hear the notes of those members who did not play well, and he pointed at them and instructed them how they should play.

When I saw this, I marveled at his "hearing" ability. It is not like he could tell if "people were telling the truth" with his ears, but he was sure able to "distinguish sounds."

Humans have fingerprints. Nowadays, fin-

gerprints are sometimes used in “authentication” for smart phones (iPhones) and computers, but that was not the original purpose of “fingerprints.”

There was a study on “fingerprints” that examines how many sheets of paper can be rolled up depending on the presence or absence of “fingerprints,” and the results are as follows:

Without fingerprints, work efficiency is found to be significantly lower than with fingerprints. It is thought that the moisture and oil content in the valleys of the fingerprints serves as an anti-slip function, making it easier to turn the pieces of paper. It can be said that fingerprints enable people to perform small and fine detailed work.

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In addition, “fingerprints” have the function of making the tips of fingers sensitive. In other words, many pressure-sensitive sensory points and nerves are concentrated in the fingertips, and “fingerprints” make it possible to feel the size and strength of an object in minute detail, because only the “peaks” of the fingerprint is concave when an object is grasped. In other words, it seems that “fingerprints” allow us to recognize subtle differences in size, and it could be said that “fingerprints” are there to make our “sense of touch” even more sensitive.

There was an exact moment when I felt “I’m in America!” when I first arrived at Mis-

sion Headquarters as the Bishop. It was when I smelled the detergent (I am not sure which brand) in our laundry room.

As you probably know, I came (returned) to the U.S. as a high school student, and for the first two weeks or so, I was allowed to stay at Mission HQ. At that time, of course, I did my own laundry. It seems that the smell of detergent at that time is strongly associated with my memories of when I had first started to live in the U.S., and even now, my “American smell” seems to be the smell of American detergent. Even now, when I smell detergent, wherever I am, I sometimes feel that I am in America again. Perhaps you have had similar experiences. I think that when you catch a certain scent, it sometimes awakens memories of the past.

I believe the same thing happens with your sense of “taste.” We remember the taste of our mother’s cooking when we were young, and when we return home, we miss it and want to eat her great cooking.

There are many functions in the human body, not just the ones listed here. There are still many things we do not know about our bodies, and we may not be able to understand all of them. However, how we use the “five senses” (sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste) that God the Parent provides us is important.

Because God the Parent created this world and us human beings in order to “see our Joyous Life and thus share in that joy,” I believe that the proper use of the loan of our bodies, including our five senses, should be for the purpose of achieving the Joyous Life world.

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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.