

Tenrikyo

newsletter



Oyasama's Birthday Celebration by West Canada District BGA!

On April 7 (Sun), the West Canada District BGA held a birthday celebration for Oyasama at the Granville Church. After presenting Her a bouquet of flowers and reading birthday messages, the members performed the seated service and danced the Eight Verses of the Yorozuyo. In the afternoon, members participated in fun activities and made paper crafts.

Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America

www.tenrikyo.com

April 2024

“A Work in Progress” by Bishop Fukaya

— *Stubbornness & Conviction* —

On the 18th of this month, Oyasama will be celebrating Her 226th birthday. It would be wonderful if we all celebrate Oyasama's birthday from wherever we may be.

We are now about two months away from our 90th Anniversary, which will be held on June 30th. In the time remaining, it is my hope that we put in our utmost efforts towards our spiritual growth and, together with a great many followers, welcome the anniversary with bright cheer in our hearts.

Further, on June 29th, the day before the anniversary celebration, as we will be holding a Joint Convention of the Women's Association and Young Men's Association of America to celebrate their respective 70th Anniversaries. I hope to have as many association members participate as possible.

I sincerely ask for all of your continued efforts to make this happen.

They say that as you age, you become more stubborn.

Of course, there are those who were considered stubborn from when they were younger, but I believe for the average person, they are likely to become more stubborn as they age.

I, myself, am apparently stubborn. I'm not sure at which point people started thinking of me as being stubborn, but at the very least, I am very stubborn now, according to those around me, especially my family members.

The following are the definitions of “stubborn” based on the internet:

1. obstinate, unwilling to change one's attitude or thoughts. Example: “a stubborn craftsman,” “a stubborn old man.”
2. difficult to move, remove, or cure. Example: “a stubborn stain,” “a stubborn fungus.”

The example from the first definition, “a stubborn old man,” likely accurately describes me. Further, based on this definition, one can

(continued on page 14)

Coming Up

* **May Monthly Service Sermon (5/19)**

- Rev. Robert Yuge (E)

* **TSA Spring Conference (5/25~27)**

- Application deadline: May 5

Mission HQ Major Cleaning (5/26)

- Following 26th Day Service

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Spring Memorial Service Prayer

March 16, 2024

Before the spirits of the Nakayama family and our pioneers who dedicated themselves for many years to our Mission Headquarters, I, Hiroshi Alexander Fukaya, Bishop of the Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America, invoke with reverence.

Through a wondrous causality, you were guided by God the Parent and came to follow these teachings. Relying on God the Parent's blessings and the Divine Model of Oyasama, you devoted yourselves single-heartedly on this path and left us with your great legacies here in America and Canada while striving through numerous hardships with a mind of joy.

We are able to live each day splendidly, due to the blessings of God the Parent and the parental love of Oyasama, but also due to your many years of planting seeds of sincerity—and for this, we give you thanks daily.

Today, for this year's Spring Memorial Service, we have made various food offerings. Further, before God the Parent, we have just performed Yorozuyo and the Twelve Songs of the service dance, with all of the followers gathered here today, to give praise to your many virtues and achievements.

From now, we will hold our Spring Memorial Service to give thanks for your sincere dedication, demonstrated throughout your lives.

Today, we have enshrined the spirit of the late Rev. Shoichi Obayashi, the seventh head minister of Utah Church, in this Memorial altar to continue to honor him for eternity.

We shall convey your legacy to the next generation, and with this as our springboard, we shall dedicate ourselves further for the progress of the path, as we aim to realize the Joyous Life world, in which all people work together and help one another.

Please accept our sincerity as we ask for you to watch over your families, as well as all Yoboku and followers of our diocese here in America and Canada, as well as the prosperity of the path.

As we aim for spiritual growth, we ask that you guide us to spiritedly focus on our work for the Path. In unison with all present, I humbly pray that this may be so.

March Monthly Service Prayer

March 17, 2024

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, looking forward to the Joyous Life of all humankind, You created this world and human beings. Over the long years, You have provided the natural workings of the world that sustains all life. We are truly grateful for Your deep parental love as shown through Your continued and universal protection.

As we cannot forget Your blessings for even a moment, we express our gratitude through each morning and evening service. Although our efforts may be lacking, as we aim to repay our debt of gratitude, we devotedly follow the path of single-heartedly helping others be saved.

On this special day, we will hold our March monthly service. Receiving the truth of the Jiba, we service performers will now unite our minds to joyously perform the seated service and teodori service dance.

In Your presence, we Yoboku and followers are gathered here in anticipation of this day to express our gratitude for Your daily blessings and to pledge our spiritual growth. In witnessing our spirited singing, we ask that You, God the Parent, become spirited as well.

We give thanks for being able to successfully perform the Spring Memorial Service yesterday. Building upon the foundation of our predecessors' achievements, we would like to strive for further spiritual growth and the expansion of the path.

In the second year of our pre-anniversary activities toward the 140th Anniversary of Oyasama, taking into consideration the various circumstances of the world around us, we are reflecting upon the slow progress of our spiritual growth. With Oyasama's Divine Model as our guide, we pledge to spread the fragrance of the teachings, to engage in salvation work, to strive for world peace, and to pass on the teachings to our youth, who will lead the next generation.

Furthermore, we pledge to unite the minds of this diocese toward our 90th Anniversary with our continued actions and minds of true sincerity.

Dear God the Parent, please accept our spiritual resolution and grant us Your blessings for the expansion of the path of single-hearted salvation. Further, we ask that this world be transformed, even a day sooner, into one in which all people yearn for the Parent of Truth and live with minds full of gratitude and joy. In unison with the whole congregation, I humbly pray that You bless us so.

March Monthly Service Sermon by Rev. Masahito Kimura

~A Thought on How to Convey Tenrikyo Teachings~

We just completed the March monthly service, led by the Bishop and Mrs. Fukaya. Thank you very much for joining the prayers for the Joyous Life for all people in the world. As I have been assigned to deliver a sermon this month, I would like to fulfill my duty. I ask for your kind attention.

Today, I would like to talk about how to convey this wonderful teaching. This sounds like I am teaching you how to explain the Tenrikyo teaching to others. That is not the case. I am not a Tenrikyo scholar who studied this religion extensively. My primary education in Tenrikyo is a 3-month Tenrikyo Spiritual Development Course and the Head Minister Qualification Course. I was a full-time missionary for about one and a half years at the missionary house in Nagoya and at the Mission Headquarters. So, my education on Tenrikyo is limited and not so much different from many of you. If you want to learn Tenrikyo, please refer to the Doctrine of Tenrikyo for a comprehensive explanation of Tenrikyo.

However, I became a Tenrikyo head minister when I was 32 years old and this year is my 39th year as head minister. Although I have not been successful as head



Rev. Kimura is the head minister of the Chacago Church, also known as the Tenrikyo Temple of Chicago.

minister, I have experienced some successes and many failures during my long tenure. I would like to share my experiences in conveying Tenrikyo teachings focusing on the differences between Tenrikyo and other religions.

I just want to make sure that the following are my personal opinions and interpretation and they are not reflecting the views of the Mission Headquarters.

One day one of my sons came to me and asked a question. “Daddy, how do you explain Tenrikyo?” I guessed that he was asked by his friend about Tenrikyo. To this question, my answer was something like the following. “It depends on what kind

of questions the person asked. Such as, “Is Tenrikyo Shinto or Buddhism? Does Tenrikyo believe in God?” How to explain Tenrikyo depends on what they want to know. That was my response. To tell you the truth, I did not feel like that I gave him a satisfactory answer. As a matter of fact, I had similar problems in explaining Tenrikyo. I am able to explain Tenrikyo in such a way as Tenrikyo is a religion that seeks a joyous life. It is a religion that was started by Oyasama, Miki Nakayama in 1838 in Japan. However, I could only explain the Teachings in a mundane way; it did not properly express how unique and special these Teachings were. It usually ends with a bland explanation. I could not convey the uniqueness of Tenrikyo effectively. Today, I would like to talk about how to convey our teachings by stressing the difference from other teachings.

On this earth

Tenrikyo is to realize the Joyous Life on this earth. In this statement, I would like to emphasize the part, “on this earth.” Contrary to our general belief that religions are seeking happiness in our daily lives, most religions do not believe that the earth is the place to realize ultimate peace and happiness. Rather, this world is a transitional realm on the way to heaven or paradise. It seems that more importance is placed on the other world after death. However, Tenrikyo

does not believe in the existence of heaven or hell. If you say this, I think it is impactful.

Purpose of Life

In addition, the Ofudesaki clearly states the purpose of our life.

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

Ofudesaki XIV: 25

The purpose of Life is to realize the Joyous Life in this world. To my knowledge, other major religions’ scriptures do not clearly state the purpose of life as it is stated in the Ofudesaki. Contrary to what Oyasama wrote, most religions consider that this world is a place of suffering. Buddha, who founded Buddhism, began to search for the truth after observing that life is filled with suffering. These sufferings are living, aging, illness, and death. His life was the pursuit of the answer of freedom from suffering and eventually attained enlightenment. In Christianity, we are all sinners. We can only be saved through Jesus Christ, and we can go to heaven. This world is not the place to realize true happiness. Suicide bombings by the Muslim extremists are due to their belief that they can go to heaven through their sacrifices. I am not criticizing other religions. I am pointing out the difference between Tenrikyo and other religions. In

Tenrikyo, this world is the place where we can realize the Joyous Life, not in heaven. We are taught that when we die, our souls are kept in the bosom of God the Parent until we receive a new body in accordance with how we lived in our current and previous lives. For us, the other world is a temporary place and this world is the real place. I think it is good to point out the difference.

Jiba and Human Creation

Another unique aspect of Tenrikyo is that we worship the place called “Jiba.” The Jiba is the place where God the Parent initiated human creation and the central point where our monthly service is performed by ten performers, five females and five males. The Kanrodai, a thirteen layered hexagonal stand, is placed at this precise location to mark where the Jiba is. The ten service performers reenact through hand movements the Ten Aspects of God’s Workings at the time of human creation and of the world and pray for universal salvation. This is also an opportune time to mention the process of human creation and the world. God designed how to create human beings and the world. God first created male and female prototypes and conceived the seeds of human beings to the body of the female prototype. The initial number of seeds that were conceived was nine hundred million, ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred ninety-nine of them. The

same number of first stage of human beings were born from the mother. They repeated countless rebirths through the evolutionary process and eventually became the human beings we are today. It took years equal to the initial number of human seeds that is nine hundred million ninety nine thousand nine hundred ninety nine. On the number of years, some scholars think it is a literal number and others say it is a symbolic number. It is worth mentioning, The Truth of Origin, as it is very different from the story of creation in the Old Testament.

Similarity with Christianity

You may be surprised, but I find that there are many similarities between Tenrikyo and Christianity. Nobody would mistake a Tenrikyo church for Christian church when they come to attend our monthly service. In front are three shrines and nine Japanese musical instruments. Service performers wear black kimonos and sing and dance to Japanese songs. On the surface, it is so different. However, when they read our teachings without visiting a Tenrikyo church, there exist many similarities. We worship God the Parent and they worship God. We have the Truth of Origin and they have their own creation story, Genesis. Christianity is a monotheistic religion. Tenrikyo is seemingly a monotheistic religion. Both call their place of worship a church. When I explain Tenrikyo, I often receive

a question like “Is your god the same God that we Christians worship?” Some think that Tenrikyo churches are of a Christian denomination because we use the word “church.” I often need to say that Tenrikyo church is not a Christian church. I think we confuse them by using Christian terms. “God the Parent” is an excellent translation of a Japanese term “Oyagamisama.” However, I sometimes use “the Parent of Origin” instead of God the Parent in order to avoid confusion with Christianity. Oyasama made efforts by changing the name of God from Kami/God to Tsukihi/Moon-Sun and then to Oya/Parent in accordance with the level of understanding. Oyasama used farming words and construction terms that were more familiar with early followers. Oyasama was always mindful to use effective words and metaphors so that She could better connect people with the Teachings. According to the data conducted by Religious Landscape Study in 2014, 70% of the people living in the U.S. were Christian. The Christians include Catholic and various Protestant faiths. 50 years ago, Christian made up 90% of the population. There has been an increase in the number of people without any religious affiliation. We need to be more aware of whom we are conveying our teachings to. Regrettably but not surprisingly, Tenrikyo was not listed in these statistics.

Now, I would like to talk about my

church because it is related to today’s topic. Please bear with me. Our church changed its name about 4 years ago. It used to be Tenrikyo Washington Church. Why was it Washington Church? Because our church was established in Seattle, Washington in 1930. Our church was named after the state of Washington. After World War II broke out in 1941, Rev. Mitsuzo Funo, head minister and his family were taken into an internment camp. The church was closed. After the war ended, Rev. Funo was released from the camp on the condition that he work at a frozen food company in Seabrook, NJ. and reopened the church there in 1956. After he retired, Rev. Funo relocated the church to Chicago in 1976. He did not change the church name although the church is no longer located in the state of Washington. The Washington Church did not have a successor and I was sent to Chicago as the successor of this church from its supervising church in Japan. I became head minister in 1985 right before the 100th Anniversary of Oyasama. When I became the head minister, I wanted to change church name to the name that has some relevance to the physical location of the church, but I decided not to change the church name while my predecessor Rev. Funo and Mrs. Funo were alive because they might feel offended or disappointed if I changed the church name that they were affiliated for more than 50 years. I thought that the

opportunity would come in several years as they were 85 and 82 years old, respectively. I was wrong. Rev. Funo passed away the following year, but Mrs. Funo lived to be 105 years old. Therefore, it took much longer to change the name of the church. There was another reason that I wanted to change the name of the church. I was not comfortable using the term “church” as an English translation for the word “Kyoukai.” I had been thinking that if we change the name of the church, I did not want to use “church” for the Japanese word “Kyoukai.” For me, church means a worship place for Christians. Synagogue is for Judaism and mosque is for Muslims. At my church, we discussed finding the best word to describe a Tenrikyo worship place. There were many candidates. Salvation center, house of prayer, mission house, Kyokai, etc. We settled to use “temple” in place of church because it is generally used as a place for religious worship. At the Mission Headquarters, our church is known as Tenrikyo Chicago Church, but the official registered name is Tenrikyo Temple of Chicago and I am using this name to explain Tenrikyo to those who do not know Tenrikyo. A good thing about using “temple” is that nobody confuses our temple with Christian church.

This Mission Headquarters will celebrate the 90th Anniversary of its establishment on June 30th this year. In the early days when

the Mission Headquarters were established, Tenrikyo sent many missionaries from Japan, but their main focus was to spread the teachings to the Japanese immigrants and their families. 90 years later, thanks to our predecessors who devoted their life to the Path, we are now filled with many ministers who were born in North America and those who are fluent in English. Now we are ripe for spreading this wonderful teaching widely to the general public. It is also a good time to contemplate how we can effectively convey this teaching. I firmly believe that Tenrikyo teaching appeals to many people in the US and Canada. With a success in spreading this teaching, I believe Tenrikyo will be listed in the religious demographics in the US and Canada. Thank you.



*You can view all the past sermons
here!*

News and Announcements

1) APRIL MONTHLY SERVICE (4/21)

Officiant: Marlon Okazaki Assistants: Kazumi Kawakami, Takahiko Hayashi Attendants: Ichiro Ito, Gary Yashiki

Director: Satoru Onishi Offerings Officiant: Brian Kojima Sermon: Brian Kojima (E)

2) CHURCH & FELLOWSHIP AFFAIRS

* Divine Sanctions:

Utah Church: Head Minister Appointment, Request for Special Service

Divine Sanction: March 26, 2024 Head Minister: Masayo Obayashi Enshrinement Service: April 21, 2024

Canada Church: Request for Special Service, Request for Temporary Change of Service Date

Divine Sanction: April 18, 2024 90th Anniversary Commemorative Service: December 1, 2024

Chicago Church: Head Minister Appointment, Request for Special Service

Divine Sanction: April 18, 2024 Head Minister: Yohsuke Kimura Enshrinement Service: July 28, 2024

Titan Church: Request for Relocation & Special Service

Divine Sanction: April 26, 2024 Head Minister: Lynn Mitsuno So Enshrinement Ceremony: July 27, 2024
Enshrinement Service: July 28, 2024

3) THIRD SHINBASHIRA TENTH MEMORIAL SERVICE

The tenth memorial service for the third Shinbashira, Zenye Nakayama, will be conducted at Church Headquarters on June 24, 2024.

4) TENRIKYO HINOKISHIN DAY

For those districts that have conducted their Hinokishin Day activities, please submit your Activity Report to the Mission Headquarters Secretaries (attn: Masuno).

5) 85TH AMERICA SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE (SHUYOKAI)

The 85th Spiritual Development Course at the Mission Headquarters is currently scheduled to be held from July 21 (Sun) to August 17 (Sat). These courses will be held if there are at least two applicants for the English or Japanese course, or five applicants for the Spanish course, as of one month prior (June 16).

6) NOTO PENINSULA DISASTER RELIEF

We were able to collect \$4,324.95 in donations for the earthquake disaster that affected the Noto Peninsula. All donations collected will be sent to the Church HQ Disaster Relief Corps, which will then be used towards the Noto Peninsula earthquake disaster relief.

7) AMERICA ICHIRETSUKAI SCHOLARSHIP

We are now accepting applications for the 2024 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(Sun). 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.

8) MAJOR CLEANING TOWARDS ANNIVERSARY SERVICE

This year on May 26 (Sun), following the performance of the May 26th Day service, we will hold a major cleaning in the afternoon, from 12:30PM. It will be conducted the same as our year-end cleaning, as we clean the sanctuary and the other buildings. We ask the heads of churches, fellowships, and mission centers near the Mission Headquarters to reach out to you followers and join us in our major cleaning. In order to prepare meals for that day, if you would like to eat lunch, please contact the Mission Headquarters secretaries by the May monthly service date (5/19).

9) SERVICE ROSTER

Currently, we are confirming the attendance of service performers for the Mission Headquarters monthly services every six months, and waiting for final confirmation of their attendance until about the second Sunday of that month. As a result, the service roster is distributed after the second Sunday, and we find ourselves in a situation where we are receiving numerous calls to confirm the service roster roles. From this year (2024), we would like to distribute the service roster by the beginning of each month, therefore we request service performers to communicate their final availability to the Mission Headquarters by the end of the month prior to their attendance. For example, please communicate your final availability for the May monthly service by the end of this month (April 30, 2024).

10) PERSONNEL CHANGES

On April 14, 2024, Mr. & Mrs. Yoshinobu & Hiromi Hayashi (Myodo GC) arrived at the Mission Headquarters to serve as seinen and joshiseinen, respectively.

COMMITTEE & ASSOCIATION REPORTS**Construction Committee**

- We have determined that the wall in the MP Hall second floor men's bathroom may have sustained damage due to leaks in the roof. We will investigate and repair this after the 90th Anniversary.
- Tenri Kaikan building roof repair was completed
- We are working on weeding the Biotope Garden, around the Missionary House, and in the large parking lot.
- Large tree root in front of Kaikan building removed for planned drain pipe repair.

Nurturing & Educational Committee

- We are planning an online meeting for those students who will be attending this year's Oyasato Seminar, and their parent/guardians, on May 19 (Sun), from 4 PM PT.
- The TSA Spring Conference is scheduled to be held from May 25 (Sat) ~ May 27 (Mon), at the Mission Headquarters. Application forms are available on the Mission Headquarters homepage. Program: lecture, attendance of 26th Day service, major cleaning participation, and other fun activities.

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,

12 News and Announcements (cont'd.)

fellowships, districts, and individuals to submit your activity reports & pictures to us (Kawakami: kamishuyo@hotmail.com or Hayashi: takhayashi@gmail.com).

- Mission HQ Homepage

The “Stories Inspired by Oyasama,” SoulFire, monthly service sermons, & podcast videos are now viewable on the Mission Headquarters homepage. Please visit our homepage to view these videos, and let those around you know as well.

Women’s Association

- The TWA America 70th Anniversary Commemorative photo album, and the joint-convention, are under preparation.

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

- District Conventions:

San Francisco	9/28 (Sat)	@ San Mateo Church
Los Angeles	9/29 (Sun)	@ Mission HQ
Chicago	9/29 (Sun)	@ Midwest Church
New York	10/5 (Sat)	@ New York Center
West Canada	11/3 (Sun)	@ Joyous Fellowship

Boys & Girls Association

- We ask for your help in fundraising! We will be selling popcorn online for fundraising. More details will be provided in a separate notice.

- KIDS FUNFEST: On the weekend of the 90th anniversary celebration, we will be holding activities to learn and have fun, so please register your child using this form: <https://forms.gle/vyYD882Rcq71M1ud9>

- The BGA America Service Convention will be held at the Mission Headquarters on August 17 (Sat). The service roster will be distributed this month, so please start practicing your service roles. If you need help, please reach out to the BGA.

- Children’ Pilgrimage to Jiba General Group: July 24~30. From this year, the America-Canada and Hawaii groups will be combined and participate together. Registration forms will be distributed this month.

- The International Boys & Girls Hinokishin Corps will be held from July 25~30. Registration forms will be distributed this month.

TYMANA

- 4/20 @ 10AM: Biotope garden weeding Hinokishin

- 5/19: Guest mattress, playground cleaning & east hall repair Hinokishin

- 6/16: Pressure wash building walls & exterior windows, weeding of parking lot.

- 6/29 @ 2PM: TWA/TYMANA 70th Anniversary Joint Convention.

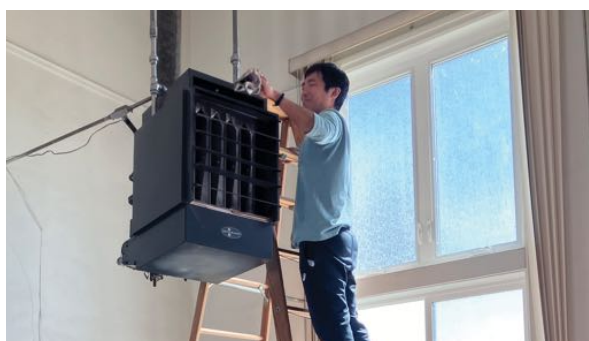
- 7/18~24: International Hinokishin Corps. Applications have been distributed to TYMANA members. Please submit all applications and questions to kkryono@gmail.com.

NY Center

- 3/30-31: Yong Men’s Association Mission Caravan (to Washington D.C.)

- TCI new semester Adult’s Class: 185 students Kid’s Class: 160 students registered

Efforts Towards the 90th!!



SHARING OUR JOY OF FAITH
 Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters
 in America

Sunday
JUNE 30

Saturday
JUNE 29

1:30 - 3:30 PM

70th Anniversary Joint
 Convention
 Young Men's and Women's
 Associations
 Attended by Mrs. Harue
 Nakayama and Mr. Daisuke
 Nakayama

3:30 - 9:00 PM

Commemorative program
 and Dinner Reception

10:00 AM
 Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters
 in America
 90th Anniversary
 Commemorative Service

1:30 - 3:00 PM
 Reception and
 Entertainment



also consider stubborn individuals as “those who do not listen to what others have to say,” as well as, “those who refuse to change their attitudes.” I believe this would also include “those who refuse to change their thoughts or attitudes, despite acknowledging that they were mistaken.”

Also, I'm sure that among these individuals are those who realize they are inconveniencing others around them while some others may be oblivious to how they are impacting others. In other words, despite realizing that they are inconveniencing those around them, they may believe “There is no way I am going to take back what I first said” or “whatever I say or do is absolutely correct,” and as a result, they end up adamantly refusing to change their thoughts or attitudes.

I believe that people become stubborn based on a certain process. This process is related to what I mentioned earlier as “aging,” or in other words, “experience.”

Many people end up making a variety of decisions based upon their own experiences. The more experience one may have, the easier it may be to make certain decisions. Alternatively, if one has little or no experience, or when they lack knowledge or experience altogether, they would have difficulties making certain decisions.

Of course, there may be times when others may seek advice from those who lack experience or have insufficient knowledge on a particular topic. In such times, I imagine that they would rely on whatever experience or knowledge they do have to help them come up with their opinions or make decisions on

such matters.

I believe that their knowledge becomes the source of their stubbornness. In other words, as I wrote earlier, they may think “there is nothing wrong with my thoughts” or “my actions are correct.” When they are faced with younger people or those with less experience, they may think “you guys are all wrong and I'm right because of all the experience I've gained over the years. There will come a day when you will understand.”

If you think about it in this way, “being stubborn” can actually be considered “having a wealth of experience.”

As such, rather than thinking negatively about those we consider stubborn, why don't we simply think of them as being “deeply knowledgeable” or having a “wealth of experience” —or is this a bit outlandish?

The main issue is really more about the “not listening to others” part.

As times change, the experience that one has accumulated may no longer be applicable. So, if one were to obstinately cling on only to their own experiences, they could end up making the wrong decisions. For these reasons, it becomes essential to listen to others' opinions.

I've been elaborating on “stubbornness” thus far, but from another perspective, I believe it could also be considered their “convictions.” Just as one may think “my experience is correct” or “my experience is not mistaken,” to follow one's faith with this “unwavering attitude” could be considered to be one's “conviction,” or to “stubbornly follow one's faith.”

Would it be taking it too far to say that being stubborn is another way of saying you have strong convictions? Based on the internet, the word “conviction” had the following definitions:

1. strong belief that one's thoughts are correct. Examples: “to follow through with one's convictions,” “firm convictions.”
2. strong belief in a religious teaching. “Faith, devotion.”

The first definition above sounds very similar to that of “stubborn,” but what do you all think? One of the definitions provided for “stubborn” is “obstinate, unwilling to change one's attitude or thoughts,” but I wonder if we could also rephrase it to say “strong belief that one's thoughts are correct.”

I believe that as followers of the Path, it behooves us to be “stubborn” when it comes to our faith. In other words, you can see it as “to stubbornly follow the Teachings” or “to determinedly take action based on the teachings.” This aligns with the second definition of “conviction” above, which could also be read as the “conviction of one's faith.”

Last year (2023), the Shinbashira gave the following message at the Tenrikyo Young Men's Association General Meeting:

From beginning to end, Oyasama lived completely in accordance with the mind of God the Parent. This way in which Oyasama conducted Herself ultimately became the Divine Model of sin-

gle-heartedness with God. The mind of single-heartedness with God, in short, means to have the mind to make all decisions based on God the Parent's intentions.

(Unofficial Translation)

It is important that we have conviction in our faith, just as Oyasama did. In other words, it is “being single-hearted with God.” In being “single-hearted with God,” we must be stubborn in our faith and have strong convictions. It is important to flexibly adjust to the times or, at the very least, have an attitude to lend an ear to those around us. However, the basis in which we determine our decisions must exclusively be according to God the Parent's intentions.

Personally, it is difficult for me to hear someone being called “stubborn,” so I think I will simply interpret it as being someone who has “strong convictions of faith!” LOL!

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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.