

# Tenrikyo

newsletter



**Happy New Year!**

**Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America wishes everyone a Happy New Year. Let us remind ourselves that, “Single-heartedness with God is the one path for the world.”**

*Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America*

[www.tenrikyoamericacanada.org](http://www.tenrikyoamericacanada.org)

**January 2025**

## “A Work in Progress” by Bishop Fukaya

- Sales and “Missionary Work” -  
(part 2)

Happy New Year!

This year, just as you did last year, I hope that you will continue to work diligently in your respective positions to help realize the Joyous Life world and to support our Mission Headquarters. In particular, this year marks the final year for our pre-anniversary activities towards Oyasama’s 140th Anniversary, so I would like to see a final push and aim to complete the “Pre-anniversary Activity Guidelines” and “Specific Goals” of each of your directly-affiliated churches and branch churches. I would also be grateful if you could invite others to return to Jiba. Thank you very much.

On the morning of January 7, after I had completed my first draft of this article, a wildfire broke out along the coastal areas of Los Angeles, followed by additional wildfires in several locations across the region. I am once again deeply reflecting upon the words of the Shinbashira during his Autumn Grand Service sermon of last year:

*I felt that the efforts we had been making ... were not really sufficient in terms of responding to the intention of our Parent.*

TENRIKYO Newsletter by Tenrikyo Overseas Dept,  
Dec. 1, 2024, p. 2  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SfsYwrQ7e2M8jldgGsW3uR2DQPZK7M2/view>

To all of us in our diocese, I humbly request that we move forward throughout this year spiritedly to follow Oyasama’s Divine Model as our goal. I sincerely ask for your continued dedication.

I will now continue from last month’s article (December 2024 issue).

*(continued on page 21)*

## Coming Up

- \* Three Day Course  
2/21 (Fri) ~ 2/23 (Sun)
- \* Seminar for Heads of Churches, Fellowships,  
and Mission Centers and their Spouses  
2/15 @ 2:30 pm

**EDITOR:** Robert Yuge **STAFF:** Raymond Morishita, Amy Morishita, Ryo Wong

**PRINTING STAFF:** Chisei Nakabayashi, Masao Tanaka, Yoshinobu Hayashi, Hiromi Hayashi

**COVER DESIGN:** Jun Nakagawa

**VOLUME LIV (54)**

**January, 2025**

published by: TENRIKYO MISSION HEADQUARTERS IN AMERICA  
2727 EAST FIRST STREET, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90033

Phone: (323) 261-3379 / Fax: (323) 261-8659

E-mail: [ameden@tenrikyo.com](mailto:ameden@tenrikyo.com) / Website: [www.tenrikyo.com](http://www.tenrikyo.com)

# *December Monthly Service Prayer*

## *December 15, 2024*

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, throughout this past year, with Your unchanging blessings, You have safely guided us and today marks our last monthly service of the year. Looking back, we were able to celebrate our 90th Anniversary with the honorable attendance of Rev. Daisuke Nakayama, the Shinbashira's official representative; and Mrs. Harue Nakayama, the Shinbashira's wife.

On the day before our 90th Anniversary, we were able to hold the joint convention for the 70th anniversaries of both the Women's Association and the Young Men's Association of America, with their respective presidents, for which we are truly grateful.

Toward the third year of the "three years, one thousand days" pre-anniversary activity period leading up to the 140th Anniversary of Oyasama, we are always connecting our hearts with Jiba and promoting pilgrimages to Jiba. We also aim to accomplish the goals and activity guidelines set forth by each grand church and to engage in daily salvation work.

On this fine day, receiving the Truth of Jiba, we service performers shall unite our minds and joyously perform the seated service and Teodori service dance for our December monthly service.

Looking forward to this day, Yoboku and followers have gathered here to give thanks for Your daily blessings and for safe guidance throughout the year, and we pray for Your unchanging parental love. In witnessing this, we ask that You become spirited as well.

The Students Association's Winter Conference and the Oyasato Seminar Preliminary Session will be held here from the 26th of this month till the 29th. We ask for Your unchanging parental love in nurturing our next generation of youth, and we pray that their activities be completed smoothly and safely.

As we conduct the last monthly service of this year, we will advance toward the third year of our "three years, one thousand days" pre-anniversary activities towards Oyasama's 140th Anniversary. Further, we, the followers of this diocese, will take steps toward spiritual growth in a unity of mind.

Dear God the Parent, please accept our minds of sincerity and guide us so that, in the coming New Year, no disasters occur, and the world will be settled in peace. May we, even one day sooner, transform this world into one of the Joyous Life, where all people join hands together to help one another.

Further, please guide us so that all the followers in this diocese can make progress in their spiritual growth. In unison with the whole congregation, I humbly pray that You bless us so.

# *New Year's Service Prayer*

*January 1, 2025*

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.

Due to Your unchanging parental love and blessings, we were able to welcome in the New Year for the 188th year of Tenrikyo. I extend our New Year's greetings together with the head ministers, yoboku and the whole congregation gathered here.

Looking back on last year, we were able to successfully conduct our 90th Anniversary with the honored presence of Rev. Daisuke Nakayama, the Shinbashira's official representative, and Mrs. Harue Nakayama, the Shinbashira's wife.

Also, I am grateful that we were able to conduct our Women's Association and Young Men's Association 70th Anniversary Joint Convention together with their respective presidents.

Today, while giving thanks for all Your blessings and warm parental guidance in this past year, we ask for continued blessings of good health throughout this year. For this New Year's Day service, we service performers will now unite our minds to joyously perform the seated service and service dance.

For our first service of the year, we Yoboku and followers have gathered here with refreshed minds. We will spiritedly sing the service songs to give thanks for Your blessing throughout the past year and we ask for Your continued blessings. In witnessing this, we ask that You, God the Parent, become spirited as well.

As this is the final year of our pre-anniversary activities towards Oyasama's 140th Anniversary, in performing today's New Years service, we will strive steadily towards the realization of the Joyous Life world and broaden the path by connecting our hearts with Jiba even more.

Also, we pledge to walk the path of single-hearted salvation and to aim in nurturing our youth, who will lead the next generation. In addition, moving towards Oyasama's anniversary, we will engage further in missionary and salvation work and strive to return to Jiba with even one more person during this year and for the anniversary date.

God the Parent, please accept the sincerity of our minds, continue to bless us with Your warm parental love, and guide and nurture us, throughout this entire year. In unison with the whole congregation, to start this new year, I humbly pray that You bless us so.

# December Monthly Service Sermon

## by Rev. Robert Shimizu

### *~My Three-Year Experience as a Member of the Tenrikyo Church Headquarters Keidai Gakari~*

**G**ood morning, everyone! Because of your presence here today, we were able to successfully perform the December Monthly Service joyously and with high spirits bringing joy to God the Parent and Oyasama.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Bishop Fukaya for allowing me this opportunity to speak today.

Allow me to introduce myself. I am Robert Shimizu also known as Bobby, the Forth Head Minister of the Terminal Church here in Los Angeles. I am affiliated with the Honjima Grand Church.

Now, If I may ask for your attention, I would greatly appreciate it.

The title of my sermon is “My three year experience as a member of the Tenrikyo Church Headquarters Keidai Gakari .

In 1993, after completing the Three Month Spiritual Development Course and the Head Minister’s Qualification Course – Course One in Jiba, I was accepted to join

the Tenrikyo Church Headquarters Keidai Gakari Precinct Security Section in October of 1993 and served for a term of three years.

How I became interested in becoming a member of Kedai, being one of the most difficult both mentally and physically exhausting Hinokishin sections within the Tenrikyo Church Headquarters organizations was my experience with the Oyasato seminar back in 1987 where we worked alongside with the Keidai members for a period of one week. With this experience, I became interested and felt that one day it would be my calling.

It all started with a four-week training session to learn the methods and procedures. It was run like a military like organization.

We had gone through extensive security training regarding our authority and the regulations or laws within the interior and exterior of the Main Sanctuary, The Foundress’ Hall and The Memorial Hall as well as the surrounding areas around Church Headquarters.

We were instructed to observe the followers and to look out for anyone suspicious. We were also instructed that photographing within the interior of Church Headquarters was strictly prohibited. We were to confiscate the camera and take claim of the film. Mind you, this was back in the 90’s.

Eating and drinking was also prohibited

within the grounds.

Our main objective was to protect the Kanrodai.

There was a total of 204 active Keidai Gakari members and 9 members in administration. Keidai was composed into three separate groups (Kumi's), Ichi Kumi, Ni Kumi and San Kumi which had a total of 69 members per Kumi or group.

Keidai Section had a total of four stations that surrounded Church Headquarters which includes, Hon Sho (Main Office), Naka Shi Sho (Inner Courtyard Station), Nishi Shi Sho (West Station) and Kita Shi Sho (North Station).

The Hon Sho Station was responsible for providing security for the South, East and West Worship Halls, the basement as well as patrolling the corridors and restrooms and the surrounding areas outside of Church Headquarters.

The Naka Shi Sho station was responsible for providing security for the North Worship Hall and to the entrance of the Shinbashira's Residence.

The Nishi Shi Sho Station was responsible for providing security for the Memorial Hall and patrolling the corridors and restrooms.

The Kita Shi Sho Station was responsible for providing security for the rear exterior of The Foundress' Residence and Garden.

I was assigned to the Hon Sho Station, Ichi Kumi, Furuhashi Han, Team two. Furuhashi Hanchō was our team leader, and I guess the best way to describe his

classification was that he was our sergeant. He was responsible for twenty-three members. I was the handicap within his group since he did not speak any English, and my Japanese was very limited just to get by.

There is also another team of twenty-three members in our station and we would alternate shifts for the next 24 hours. So yes, we work together for a 24 hour shift where we would have our meals, bathe and sleep at our station. Sleep was very limited.

On a normal day, our basic job description within the Hon Sho Office entails one Keidai guard standing inside the Worship Halls (which is referred to as Den-nai Sho-Men) at the rear entrance and two more guards standing at the front of the Worship Hall on opposite sides of each other next to the Kekkai (partition bar) which is the border that separates the Sanctuary (Shinden) - (Kanrodai) and the Worship Hall where the general population of followers come to pray. This task in Keidai language is referred to as "Ri-sho".

There are guards standing outdoors of the Worship Halls (referred to as Den-Gai) and inside the basement (referred to as Kaika) which also is a way of means to enter the Worship Halls. The Outdoor and Basement guards are supposed to greet followers with a traditional Japanese bow along with a respectful welcoming greeting. They will also wipe down the followers' shoes with a clean rag and neatly place their shoes down next to the steps. When the followers



Rev. Robert Shimizu  
Head Minister of Terminal Church

are ready to leave, they will offer them a shoehorn for their convenience and again, give them a respectful bow and a thank you.

One guard will be assigned to a one-hour long patrol on the outskirts of Church Headquarters.

I will now share with you some of my personal experiences. On one cool evening, I was assigned to stand guard inside the South Worship Hall (Minami-Rai – Hai - Jyo – Shomen) at the rear main entrance. Right after the Evening Service had concluded, a family of around 12 to 15 members had entered the Worship Hall carrying a body roughly around 7:00 PM. At the time I thought the family just brought in a person with a health condition and wanted to Pray for his or her recovery. Also, keep in mind that the family had to first pass through the Keidai members that were assigned outdoors. So, I didn't think anything unusual at the time. The family

sat all the way up front behind the partition bar (kekkaï) with the person that had the health condition laying down on the tatami mat surrounded by the family members. Now, I assumed that this was a family. The family started to perform the Seated Service followed by administering the Sazuke to the person laying down on the tatami mat. They continued persistently repeating this process over and over.

When I went back to the Keidai Hon Sho station to take my break, I had reported this to Furuhashi Hanchō. He directed me to keep watch and to inform other Keidai guards that were assigned to the South Worship Hall about the family. In Japanese, he said to me, “Chuui shinasai”.

As the hours had passed on, the family was still there performing the Seated Service and administering the Sazuke relentlessly. I had the last shift from 11:30 PM to 12:00 AM before we had to switch teams. Suddenly, Furuhashi Hanchō stepped into the Worship Hall and stood next to me. He was silent for about a few minutes as he was observing the family. He then directed me to approach the family up close and take a good look. So, I proceeded forward and made my way up to the family and stood right behind them. They were unaware of my presence as they were performing the seated service. I took a close look at the person laying down on the tatami mat laying face up and noticed that the face was covered with a piece of white cloth and the body was wrapped in a blanket. At that time, I then realized that the

person was deceased.

I immediately made my way back to Furuhashi Hanchō and reported to him that there was a dead body up there. I remembered using the phrase, “Hanchō! Denaoshite no kata imasu”. He then told me that it’s prohibited to bring a dead body onto Church Headquarter grounds and to administer the Sazuke to a deceased person.

He also said to me that we need to look at their happi coats to identify which grand church and branch church they belong to so we can report this infraction. In Keidai, I had learned to read Japanese kanji in regard to grand churches and last names. At that time, it was near midnight and the family had finally stood up and carried the deceased family member towards the exiting door. Furuhashi Hanchō and I bowed to the family as they walked past us to show our respect for their loss. I was so relieved that the family decided to leave because we were about to stop them and escort them off the property. However, we did formerly make contact with the families Grand Church to report this violation.

During my Keidai working hours is where I learned to grow spiritually. All the long hours standing guard inside the Worship Hall watching followers pray to God the Parent. I saw followers pray with true sincerity from their hearts.

I had come to learn the regulars who come to pray on a daily basis always sitting at their favorite spot. I was overwhelmed

with joy seeing so many followers visit Jiba during the weekdays and especially on the weekends. The weekends were very busy at Jiba. Followers would come and pray even throughout the midnight hours. I have seen families and groups of friends having a good time smiling and laughing as they walked throughout Jiba.

I have seen followers bring large bags full of coins and pour those coins into the wooden offering boxes that had metal liners inside that funneled down to the basement. All you hear is a very loud noise of coins crashing down into the offering box.

I have seen many followers cleaning the wooden corridor floors on their hands and knees with white clean rags that was supplied by Keidai and as they move forward wiping the floors, many would sing out loud the Twelve Chapters and make their way starting from the South Worship Hall to the Memorial Hall, and then to the Foundress’ Hall and then back to the South Worship Hall. Wearing knee pads was highly recommended. I have seen followers use chopsticks and toothpicks to clean out all the dirt and dust in between the wooden floor cracks.

During Keidai, once a month, we would travel to Nara Train Station to deliver short speeches aloud to the public and of course I delivered mine in English.

From there, we would break up into small groups to engage in door-to-door missionary work. It was quite interesting



as people would allow us into their homes and offer us tea and listen to us Sprinkle the Fragrance of the Teachings.

I was once given a cash donation and of course, once we arrived back to Church Headquarters, I placed the donation into the offering box and performed the Seated Service to show my appreciation for this experience.

During all the Grand Services, all three Keidai groups, Ichi Kumi, Ni Kumi and San Kumi are assigned a post during the Service. My group had just finished a 24 hour shift and immediately, we had to support the other groups. So, we were not allowed to go home. We were all assigned a position, and I once recall standing guard in the West Worship Hall up front next to the partition bar (Kekkai) – (south side) during the January (Spring) Grand Service. I was positioned here to stop anyone from entering past the partition bar and into the Shinden and to restrain anyone from making contact with the Kanrodai.

There were so many followers inside the Worship Halls. As I was standing guard, literally, there were people sitting beside me. I had no free space and thought to myself, I'm trapped. I would have to jump over the partition bar and sprint as fast as I can to apprehend a person trying to get to the Kanrodai. The Worship Hall was so packed full of followers that it was nearly impossible for me to run across the tatami mats to get to a suspicious person.

On that morning, I stood guard at this post for five hours straight. I was totally focused on protecting the Kanrodai. Keep in mind, the winter weather conditions at Jiba are freezing and we Keidai Gakari guards cannot wear a jacket, gloves or beanies. I wore two pairs of thermos, both top and bottom with a long sleeve dress shirt, necktie and a cardigan sweater. My Church Headquarters happi coat was made of thick fabric. I carried in my back pocket a thick knitted grandma style (bachan) socks with a white slip on covering and it kept my feet warm while standing on the freezing tatami mats or when on patrol throughout the corridors. It also came in handy when we had to sweep all the snow off the exterior open hallways during the midnight hours. Speaking of which, I recall at 3:00am is when the freezing temperatures really start to kick in.

Regardless of the freezing temperatures, the humid hot summer heat and limited amount of sleep that we had to endure, I always kept a positive attitude and reminded myself that I am here working for God the Parent.

There was an incident one time where a male in his thirties ran past me and hopped over the partition bar in the South Worship Hall during the day. I immediately chased after him and caught him without incident. Turns out that he was a person of mental illness and a student in the three-month Spiritual Development Course. We released

him to his group.

There was another incident which was on a weekend where a little boy knew that I was watching people in the South Worship Hall. I stood at the entrance. He then started to test me by making a run towards the partition bar (kekkaï) and I literally sprinted full speed towards him and he would then immediately stop. His mother grabbed him and sat him down as she continued to pray. I then took position in the center of the Worship Hall keeping my eye on the little boy.

He then again stood up and made a run for it again. This time he made it all the way to the partition bar and at that exact moment, I jumped over the partition bar into the Sanctuary (Shinden) side. The little boy ran straight into the partition bar slamming his forehead and landed on his back. He started to cry ferociously, and the mother grabbed him by the arm and yanked him away. She then slapped him across his head. The mother looked at me and sincerely apologized verbally and bowed to me.

During this incident, two other Keidai guards in the South Worship Hall were also running to assist me.

But seriously, if this boy had made his way onto the Sanctuary (Shinden) floor, all three of us Keidai guards that were watching the South Worship Hall, would have been seriously reprimanded.

In Keidai vocabulary, a person that hops over the partition bar is referred to as



”Kekkai Shinnyu” and if that person has intentions to cause harm or damage inside the Shinden, this is a serious offense that carries significant consequences.

When I became a supervisor, I was assigned for six months to a task called Kairo Seiri. Which refers to The Shinbashira’s security detail during the Morning and Evening Service.

After the Service was complete, The Shinbashira and Church Headquarters Staff Members (Honbu – In) would exit the South Worship Hall on route to the Foundress and Memorial Hall. I along with several other Keidai Gakari members would be waiting in the corridor and I would start to walk in front of The Shinbashira and my task was to escort him to the Foundress’ Hall and then to the Memorial Hall. There were Keidai Gakari members instructing all the followers who sat in the corridors during Service to sit and Pray off to the sides keeping a clear

pathway for us to travel.

I still recall my very first experience escorting the Shinbashira and Staff Members through the corridors. It was Morning Service on the day of a Monthly Service. There were so many people sitting down in the corridors sitting in the formal traditional Japanese way called, Seiza.

When the followers observed me, that was a sign that the Shinbashira was nearby, and they would assume the bowing position to show polite acknowledge and respect. My body posture had to be straight up with my chest out, arms down to my side, fingertips facing downwards. I had to keep my head up and face forward. I was not allowed to smile nor acknowledge anyone that I knew in the crowd. There were a few times when my friends would wave to me and I had to ignore their presence.

I must admit that chills ran through my body. I was nervous and scared. Keep in mind that I had to walk at a slow pace by myself with the Shinbashira behind me. This was one of the highest honorary assignments within the Keidai organization. I felt very honored and proud with a sense of appreciation and gratitude to be chosen. I proceeded with dignity and respect with high regard during the performance of this task.

Whenever I was assigned to work the front desk at the Hon Sho Office, I would have to drive out to the Tenri Swimming Pool and walk up to the very top of the North

Tower where we stored a large traditional taiko drum. I would then open all of the steel shutters. The tower overlooked Jiba and Tenri City. I would call into the Hon Sho Office with my walkie talkie to make confirmation that I am ready. I then grab a very large four-foot wooden taiko stick and would glue my eyes onto a red beacon light mounted high above the Hon Sho Office. Once the red light turned off, that was the signal that it's thirty minutes before the Morning or Evening Service. I then would hit the taiko drum as hard as I could and continue with a countdown striking the drum repetitiously for the next five minutes.

The striking of the drum echoed throughout Tenri City to alert the followers that it's time to make your way to the Worship Hall for Service. I really enjoyed hitting the drum. It was exciting.

I will share a few humorous stories with you.

Once a year, every section or department that is employed with Church Headquarters receives a bonus directly from the Shinbashira. Back then the Shinbashira was the third Shinbashira, Zenye Nakayama.

We received the bonus after the Morning service had concluded behind the Foundress' Residence in a large beautiful conference room with tatami mats. We would sit in order in Japanese seiza style.

The Shinbashira with many Church Headquarters staff members and aids would sit up front. The atmosphere within the room

was very calm and quiet. Keep in mind that there were a lot of people in the room as well as outside.

The Shinbashira would call out your name. You then would proceed forward and sit seiza style directly in front of The Shinbashira. You then would bow down staring at the tatami mat and hold both of your arms out, while cupping your hands. The Shinbashira would then place an envelope onto your cupped hands. You then give him a slight bow for a sign of respect and proceed to exit the conference room.

Well, in my case, when the Shinbashira called out my name, he said, “Keidai Gakari No Shimizu Bi - Ba”. So it sounded like my name was “Beaver”.

Now, I heard many giggles in the background and I clearly heard laughter outside. Mind you, there were speakers outside as well, so they heard everything. I personally knew some of the staff members and aids as they were also laughing. The Shinbashira had no idea what was going on as he looked up and around at everyone.

So, one of the aids whispered in his ear and told him what my name was. He then was smiling and looked at me. From there, The Shinbashira had re - addressed my name as “Keidai Gakari No Shimizu Ba – Bi”. I then bowed down and placed my hands out to receive my bonus.

The Shinbashira apologized to me with a smile and bowed.

I had the biggest smile on my face and bowed back. When I made it outside,

many people were laughing calling me Bi – Ba! This was the joke around Church Headquarters for a while. Funny thing was, many months after on a weekday, late afternoon, Nakayama, Zenji Sama (at that time he was the successor to become the 4th Shinbashira) was walking around the exterior grounds of Jiba with the presence of Keidai Gakari Security by his side and approached the Keidai Hon Sho Office. I was outside speaking to a fellow American from Hawaii that was working for the Tenrikyo Language Institute and at that moment, suddenly, Nakayama, Zenji – Sama saw me and walked over to me and started having a conversation with me. He first addressed me as, “Ba – Bi San”. And of course, I respectfully and formally bowed and acknowledged him. Nakayama, Zenji Sama then thanked me for my services and moved on.

I was still trying to figure out how did he know me by name. I walked back into the Hon Sho Office and was praised by everyone. And still, I was still trying to figure out why Nakayama, Zenji Sama knew of my existence.

My role as a Keidai Gakari member was one of my most memorable life challenging experiences that I will never forget. With deep emotions and inspirations, I learned the true meaning of the Teachings of this Path through my experience as a Keidai Gakari member. I Thank God the Parent for walking me through this experience providing me with Divine Guidance and

showing me the steps in creating a Joyous mind through the realities of life.

When I wasn't on duty, I resided at the Honjima Tsumesho (dormitory). This is where I noticed my beautiful wife Masami. Masami was then a student in the Three Month Spiritual Development Course (Shuyoka). She was assigned to do Hinokishin in the Kaicho Taku Kitchen (Grand Church Head Minister's Family Kitchen). I was there socializing with other Americans that were students in the Tenrikyo Language Institute and that's where I saw Masami in the rear of the kitchen taking out the trash and caught my attention as I thought how beautiful she was.

I instantly became attracted to her, and I then spoke to my female friend who was also a Shuyoka student with Honjima to get information from her.

At that time, they were third month students referred to as, "Sanki-Sei", that were ready to graduate the Three Months Spiritual Development Course.

To my surprise, my friend had informed Masami that I was interested and had introduced us.

Moving forward, on October 20, 1996, we were married at the Honjima Grand Church and resided at the Honjima Tsumesho in Tenri City for a period of two years working as staff members at the Tsumesho until our departure to America in January of 1998.

In conclusion, I try to reflect on myself using my experience living in Ojiba and at my Grand Church through all the knowledge

that I had absorbed to sow seeds of sincerity and to dedicate myself to the Path of this wonderful religion.

Thank you very much and I am grateful for your kind attention.

**1) SPRING GRAND SERVICE (1/19)**

Officiant: Bishop

Assistants: Junjiro Nakatomi, Takahiko Hayashi

Director: Shigemi Torizawa

Attendants: Mitsuharu Ito, Koji Uesugi

Offerings Officiant: Motohiro Iwahashi Sermon: Bishop (E)

**2) CHURCH & FELLOWSHIP AFFAIRS**

\* Divine Sanctions:

Brotherhood Church: Head Minister Appointment, Request for Special Service

Divine Sanction: November 26, 2024 Head Minister: Raymond James Brown

Installation Service: February 8, 2025

San Francisco Church: Request for Relocation, Request for Special Service

Divine Sanction (Scheduled): January 26, 2025

Enshrinement Service: January 31, 2025

Installation Service: February 1, 2025

Terminal Church: Church Roof Replacement, Temporary Transfer of the Medo (2 cases), Request for Special Service

Divine Sanction (Scheduled): End of March, 2025

Enshrinement Service: May 30, 2025

Installation Service: May 31, 2025

**3) PASSING AWAY FOR REBIRTH**

On November 10, 2024 at 11PM, Rev. George Blesch, Cupertino Fellowship head, passed away for rebirth at the age of 98. Funeral services were held on November 30th (Sat). We would like to acknowledge and appreciate his many years of service and dedication. \*We apologize for the late announcement in the Ichiretsu & the Newsletter.

**4) OYASATO SEMINAR PRELIMINARY SESSION**

The OS Preliminary Session was held at the Mission Headquarters from December 26 (Thu) ~ December 29 (Sun). Eight students attended. This year's OS Preliminary Session was held so that students would also be able to participate in the fun activities of the TSA Winter Conference. We believe that this schedule also enabled students to create bonds with one other. The applications for the Oyasato Seminar in Jiba are due January 31 (Fri).

**5) TSA WINTER CONFERENCE**

The TSA held its annual Winter Conference at the Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America from 12/26 (Thu) till 12/29 (Sun). 16 students attended the conference.

**6) THREE DAY COURSE**

The Three Day Course is scheduled for February 21 (Fri) ~ 23 (Sun), 2025. The English course will be held if there are at least 4 applicants, and the Spanish course will require at least 2 applicants. The deadline for applications is February 16, 2025, but please contact the Mission Headquarters as soon as possible if you know of anyone interested in attending.

**7) SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE IN JIBA**

Shuyoka (three-month Spiritual Development Course in Jiba) English Class will be held from the end of March. Non-Japanese applicants 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 prospective students may not be able to obtain a visa.

### **8) TENRIKYO HINOKISHIN DAY**

We request each district to prepare for next year's Tenrikyo Hinokishin Day. If you did not yet submit the Hinokishin Day Plan Report to the Mission Headquarters, please do so as soon as possible.

### **9) 85TH AMERICA SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE (SHUYOKAI)**

The 85th Spiritual Development Course at the Mission Headquarters is currently scheduled to be held from June 15 (Sun.) to July 12 (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 (May 18).

### **10) SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES RELIEF FUND AND HINOKISHIN**

- The Mission Headquarters has set up a box in the office to collect donations for the wildfire disaster that affected Southern California, until March 16 (Sun). Please write checks to "Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America" and write "SoCal Wildfires Disaster Relief" on the memo line. Please do not send cash by mail. If you require a receipt for tax purposes, please write your name, address, donation amount, and "SoCal Wildfires Disaster Relief" on a slip, and place your donation in the box. Thank-you letters will be sent out from the Mission Headquarters at a later date.

- We are planning to do Hinokishin in the city of Pasadena on January 25 (Sat.) and February 1 (Sat). We will contact you about the details, but please plan to help distribute supplies at the evacuation centers.

## **COMMITTEE & ASSOCIATION REPORTS**

### **Missionary Committee**

\* Information Regarding the Seminar for Heads of Churches, Fellowships, and Mission Centers and their Spouses

- Date & Time: February 15, 2025, from 2:30 PM PT
- Eligibility: Heads of churches, fellowships, & mission centers (cfm) and their spouses, Advisors & their spouses, along with board members from each association and committee. (participation via Zoom is possible)
- Place: Mission HQ MP Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room
- Program: Deepen our understanding of mental health care, so that we may apply this to salvation work.
- Registration: Use this link to fill out the registration form: <https://bit.ly/4gtwJJ4> .

\* Corridor-Cleaning Hinokishin at Jiba

Dates: For those attending the Church HQ Spring Grand Service, please assemble at the rear

east side of the South Worship Hall on January 25, 45 minutes before the Church HQ morning service (6:15 AM).

### **Nurturing & Educational Committee**

#### \* TSA Cabinet

Chairperson: Yosuke Kayama

Vice-Chairperson: Luc Tabata

Secretary: Lauren Yukimoto

Vice-Chairperson: Genevieve Yuge

Vice-Chairperson: Hana Gragus

Treasurer: Madison Mendoza

### **Public Relations Committee**

\* We have incorporated an ongoing section in the Ichiretsu/Newsletter to highlight everyone's efforts and activities leading up to the 140th anniversary of Oyasama 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).

\* The Mission HQ Homepage has been updated with new content, including monthly service sermons and "SoulFire" reflection videos. Please visit our homepage to view these videos, and let those around you know as well. Also, the domain name has been changed from Tenrikyo.com to TenrikyoAmericaCanada.org .

#### Future Path

\* The Tenrikyo main scripture study session is being planned for August 30~31, 2025.

### **Women's Association**

\* TWA Convention: April 19, 2025 (Sat) @ Church HQ Inner Courtyard

\* Gathering for District Leaders: January 18, 2025 (Sat) @ 2PM (Zoom)

\* TWA America Convention: May 17, 2025 (Sat) @ Mission HQ

### **Boys & Girls Association**

\* The 2025 BGA Service Convention will be held on August 16 (Sat). More details about the convention, along with a survey, will be distributed in February

\* The BGA Camp will be held from June 20 (Fri.) ~ June 22 (Sun). More details will be announced later.

\* Please send an email to [moto1884@icloud.com] if there are any new BGA members, newborn or new to the North America congregation.

\* Currently recruiting Fife & Drum Corps members: Let's expand our circle of friends of the path. We are conducting activities that teach mutual help and the joy of exerting one's sincerity for the salvation of others. Please contact the email address above for more details.

\* Let's share stories about Oyasama with BGA members! Visit your churches as a family and engage in hinokishin together.

### **NY Center**

\* 2/22 BGA Sleepover (~2/23)



# 2024 Oyasato Seminar Preliminary Session



# 2024 TSA Winter Conference



# Annual Mochi Pounding



## Newly Appointed Head Ministers



**Los Angeles Central Church**  
**Rev. Jonathan Nomachi**  
 Divine Sanction: 4/18/2022

“My ambition is to be the best Yoboku!”

**San Mateo Church**  
**Rev. Akira Yamamoto**  
 Divine Sanction: 4/18/2022



“During the coronavirus pandemic, I was given the permission to be appointed as the head of the church, and thanks to my parents’ support, I am able to get by quite well every day. Although I am still an inexperienced person, I will continue to work hard on the road, mainly on my return to Jiba, in order to receive the full support of the headquarters. Thank you for your continued support.”



**Central Fresno Church**  
**Rev. Steven Yukimoto**  
 Divine Sanction: 10/26/2022

“My ambition is to help save the planet that God the Parent created for us, but humans unfortunately are destroying. And to bring guidance for others.”

**Southern California Church**  
**Rev. Masao Miyano**  
 Divine Sanction: 2/26/2023



“I would like to continue South California Church, that my father and mother originally began so many years ago.”

- **What business partners really want** (“Lessons Learned from the Business Diary of the Man who Sold the Most Coca-Cola in Japan,” p. 32)

Apparently, Coca-Cola products are priced higher at wholesale than other competitors, which is why retail stores often seem to complain about them. The author of the book explains that in order to sell more, they support retail stores by running commercials and conducting many promotions, and that they use carefully selected ingredients, which result in higher prices. However, the retail stores are not happy with this reasoning because the wholesale price is high, and their profit margins are low.

When the author tried to refill a vending machine at one of the retail stores, the machine was turned off. Other vending machines were also off, so he thought a circuit breaker had tripped and went to reset the circuit breaker in the electrical panel in the retail store's storage house. The store owner happened to be there, so the author told him that the circuit breaker seemed to have tripped and that he had come to check the electrical panel.

Usually, the store owner would make some complaints, but this time he said, “The power for our vending machines keeps going out, causing problems. Do you think I will need some electrical work done?” Upon closer inspection, the author found that all of this retail store's vending machine lights were kept on, even during the day. The vending machines in this retail store were old models that did not have the automat-

ic light turning on and off function, so the owner had to turn the lights on for each one in the evening and then turn them off the next morning.

Because this was a family-run business, they were short-staffed and they often forgot to turn off the lights in the vending machines during the day. With this extra electrical load, during the daytime in summer when the machines were in full operation, they used extra electricity for the cooling, which sometimes caused the circuit breaker to trip and shut all the machines down.

The author then asked the owner, “It must be difficult for you to deal with this every morning and night, am I correct?” And without deep thinking, he added, “I will help you. I can't come in the evenings, but I think I can come on weekday mornings. All I have to do is turn them off.” From the following week, the author started to drop by that store every day before visiting his other clients' stores.

One day, his boss asked him why he had started visiting that store every morning. He explained the background to his boss, and a few days later the boss came back to him with a light sensor switch that was capable of turning on and off the vending machine automatically. With this installed at the vending machine, he would not have to visit the store every day.

When he went to install the switch, the store owner said to him, “I will miss you if you stop coming every day. Rather than you giving me all sorts of deals, I value more that you think about my store's business

with me and help me take action. You come see me every morning. That is the most important thing.” The owner talked about the essence of the business relationship.

As I mentioned earlier, the wholesale prices of Coca Cola's products were higher than that of other competitors, so although the store did not make much profit margin, that alone did not determine whether the business relationship was good or bad. In other words, close connections between people are essential in business.

The following story is from an episode of when Oyasama was physically amongst us. A woman named Yasu Inui, the daughter of Rihei Matsuda, had been helping Oyasama with cooking duties for several years from her teenage years. Later, through Oyasama's arrangement, Yasu married into the Inui family. The following is about what Yasu heard directly from Oyasama and is published in the first edition of “Gozonmei No Koro (When Oyasama Was Physically Alive)” (by Tomoharu Takano, page 219), printed on January 5, 2001.

In the Mikagura-uta, there is a verse that says, ‘...cleansing human hearts once and twice, I will advance the work of salvation.’ (Song 9, Verse 1) Yasu Inui, who was serving Oyasama, asked Her about the meaning of this verse. Oyasama answered,

*God is talking about one and two cents. God is also saying that we should give talks about the faith in one and two*

*sittings.*

In Her explanation to me about talking about the faith in one sitting and two sittings, Oyasama said that talking too much about the faith to someone who is sweeping his home gate entrance or to a person who is reluctant to listen can be counterproductive. So, it is better not to give long-winded talks to those who are not willing to listen... Oyasama said that after having talked about the faith, we should wait a day before going back to continue. Following this instruction from Oyasama, Rev. Tsuji and Rev. Nakata went to Kawachi Province to give talks about the faith, in one and two sittings, with a day in between.

Even in the spreading of the path, it is important to visit the same people frequently. When administering the Sazuke, you may visit every day for three days and three nights, but in some cases, you may want to make an effort to visit the person every other day. I think the most important thing is how to connect with the people you are trying to save, and to put yourself in their shoes when administering the Sazuke to them.

- **Where to place your sales pride** (ibid., p. 49)

I think everyone has pride. Sometimes that pride can make it difficult to spread the teachings. The same seems to be true in sales activities.

When the author had a business deal

to negotiate with his senior colleague, the prospective customer rejected the quotation, saying that the vending machines and products were too expensive and that there would be no profit for them. Furthermore, the customer even asked him, "Do you even understand business?" At that time, the senior colleague said, "We use good quality ingredients and make high-quality products, so we have to charge higher wholesale prices. How can you be so sure that you will not make a profit before even trying!" and the two of them ended up exchanging tit for tat. When you get to this point, a deal will not be closed.

However, when the author went out to negotiate with different senior colleague, they were also told by the prospective customer that the wholesale price was too high and there would not be any room for profit. However, as this senior colleague talked about the benefits of installing vending machines and responded to the customer's arguments and opinions, they gradually became like partners who worked together to solve their problems. This moved the customer's heart, and the deal was successfully closed.

After the deal was closed, the senior colleague said, "Customers are motivated to buy from us because we care about them. Of course, we have to be proud that we are selling the best product and that we are the frontline sales force in our company. But do not bring your cheap pride into the sales meeting saying thing like, 'I'm firm on this one point, and I will not compromise.'"

I think the same thing can be said about spreading our path. First, put yourself in the other person's shoes. In other words, empathize with their feelings. If we do this, the person we are trying to spread the fragrance to will likely open up and be willing to listen to us. However, at such times, it is important that we have pride that we are spreading the most wonderful teachings in the world.

I believe we must strive to be open-minded and be able to accept anything, and to keep in mind that we are "Spreading the Fragrance." For example, there may be times when people might yell at you while you are doing door-to-door missionary work at their front door, but you need to have the capacity to remain calm and not get angry.

I must admit, I do have cheap pride and during such times, I do get offended. I need to reflect on this and improve myself.

(To be continued)

*(translation by G. Hirano)*

TENRIKYO MISSION HEADQUARTERS IN AMERICA  
2727 EAST FIRST STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90033

NON-PROFIT ORG.

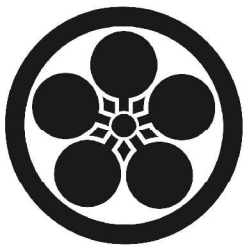
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID

LOS ANGELES, CA  
PERMIT NO. 30002

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.**