



# PROGRESS

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*Boys and Girls Association Sleepover*

TENRIKYO MISSION NEW YORK CENTER

### **God is Wondrous, the Path is Wondrous 23**

In September 1934, my mother enrolled in Bekka, the Six-Month Missionary Training Course at Tenri Seminary, taking her eldest daughter Kiyoko and Aunt Kura with her. I imagine it was not easy to be a seminary student while having a two-year-old with her, but because my mother did not have to worry about meals every day, she surely must have thought to herself, "Here is paradise on this earth." However, this paradise-like seminary life did not last very long. There was a serious measles epidemic across the nation that winter. When the measles occurred in conjunction with pneumonia, the combination was lethal. Deaths rose to the tens of thousands.

Jiba was not spared from the outbreak. Seminary students became infected. Many adults and children passed away for rebirth. Funerals were held continuously day after day at the many followers dormitories. The epidemic was so awful that close to half of the 500 or so children of seminary students who were looked after at the day care center had passed away for rebirth.

During this time, there was also something wrong with Kiyoko. The doctor concluded that it was pneumonia triggered by the measles. Kiyoko ran a high fever for some time and her nostrils began twitching. It all appeared hopeless to everyone's eyes. Mother informed my father of Kiyoko's condition a few days earlier, but his response was: "Even if I were to stop my missionary work and return to Jiba, it would likely only result in me seeing her off as she passes away for rebirth. To have Kiyoko be saved, I will leave the rented home we have been living in and renew my missionary efforts today while sleeping outdoors. I ask you to take care

of Kiyoko just in case something critical happens."

My father was a doting parent like any other. But no matter how much he may have believed in his head that the only way to have his daughter be saved was to dedicate himself single-heartedly to God, I can only imagine what he felt inside. People can do nothing sitting at their dying child's side. It is God who saves them. If one wants to save someone who cannot be saved, one must do something to stir God's heart. The only thing human beings can do is to pour forth their sincerity until God accepts it.

Kiyoko's breathing was growing weaker. Sitting at her side, my mother had a sudden insight. She thought about how Father surely must have been walking around ceaselessly in the cause of salvation work these past few days, without food and without sleep, out of the single desire to have Kiyoko be saved. She thought, "I must do something too!" She gathered her belongings. Deciding to keep just one nightdress, she ran and took everything else to the pawnshop. With three yen in her hand, she ran to the Main Sanctuary and prayed toward the Kanrodai.

When Mother returned to the followers dormitory, Grandmother Sumi was there. Sumi heard the news from Father, had rushed to the followers dormitory and was now wailing, cradling her dying granddaughter in her arms. Mother, also in tears, went to sit at Sumi's side. At that moment, Kiyoko suddenly shouted, "Grandma!" and turned to Mother to say, "Mommy, I'm hungry." Mother's roommate immediately went to the dining area to get something Kiyoko could eat. Everyone in the room shouted with joy. Kiyoko had been blessed with a full recovery. (R)

## November Monthly Service

The November Monthly Service was held on November 7 under blue skies. (100 attendees) The sermon was delivered by Michael Yuge, Staff Minister of New York Center. After the service, a blood drive was held at Queens Hospital as well as a Women's Assn. monthly meeting and a Drum and Fife Corps practice.



### Service Sermon

Michael Yuge  
New York Center Staff Minister

Thank you for attending the November Monthly Service today and for performing the service in unison and in high spirits. It is a pleasure to be able to perform in the service with everyone in our wonderful sanctuary. It is also an honor to speak to you today. I would like to share a few of my thoughts on the state of things in New York and touch on where we can go in the future.

First I would like to speak about New York Center. In October, we opened up our doors to the public for the event called Open House New York which is a tour of New York City's architecturally interesting sites. It was our second year participating as a church, but this year 20 or 30 people came to visit us, including a reporter. He eventually wrote a nice article about our church and the Tenrikyo teachings and how we opened our doors to "residents from across the city to a religion many in the area may have never heard of." It eventually was published in the *Flushing Times* as well as the *New York*



*Post.*

Some of the other people who visited us on that day apparently pass by the church all the time but never had the courage to come inside. It is through community activities such as these that people have really shown an interest in our new building and our practices. Ultimately this becomes a great opportunity to tell them about Tenrikyo. One of our members who participated in Nioigake Day the previous week said, "It's much better to have people come in for an event like this than to go out and pass out pamphlets." This new building has given us a

way to break the ice and tell people about the teachings. And when people step into the building, they often feel a great sense of peacefulness and comfort. I feel this is the ultimate gift from our architects, our contractors, our supporters, and God the Parent and Oyasama.

And I cannot help but feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude to people such as the late Rev. Jiro Morishita and the late Mr. Tokiyuki Yokoi who sacrificed so much so that this dream sanctuary could be realized. I hope to one day tell my grandchildren about how Rev. Jiro spent a year and a half to design and build these shrines, the *kandoko* housing, the chairs, the *hassoku* stands, the donation box and this podium all in Los Angeles and then shipped it to New York to put it all together. His greatest concern was that this traditional looking shrine would not match the modern construction of the building. I think it matches beautifully and it keeps us grounded and connected to God no matter how modern the building may be. And it was the late Mr. Yokoi who connected this microphone, our PA system and the translation receivers at the risk of his life. He had a kidney disorder and needed to receive kidney dialysis treatment every other day, so coming from Los Angeles to install this equipment was very risky. We later found out that he even passed up an opportunity to receive a kidney transplant since he had committed to come to New York. Both of these incredibly dedicated and generous individuals passed away shortly after their tasks on this job were finished. Their greatest hopes were that the younger generation would utilize this sanctuary

to its potential.

In New York, we had previously received a wonderful blessing and gift which was Tenri Cultural Institute. Next year will mark the 20th Anniversary of TCI. Over the years, we have welcomed thousands of students and we have had hundreds of concerts and events. And every time someone comes for the first time, they are pleasantly surprised and comforted with the space and are eager to find out about all our programs. Whether the person is a student, a parent, an artist, a musician or a tourist, there is no denying the universal appeal of our space. It is up to us to show kindness to the people who come in and show them how we practice the teachings in our daily lives. In New York, I meet many people who say that they are not interested in religion, but they look at our staff, followers and children and comment on what a wonderful community of nice people we have. Rev. Okui used to say that it was up to us to show people our "*sokonashi no shinsetsu*," or kindness which shows no bounds. And it is thanks to this kindness, which you rarely find in New York, that people will come back.

And due to this, TCI has become an established community center. As a Japanese school, we no longer have the need to advertise since our classes are well attended. Nowadays people either hear by word of mouth or simply find us on the internet and come in. If you search "Japanese Language New York City" in Google, we are the first hit. Not only have our adult classes grown, but we now have an equal amount of children taking our classes. At last count, we

had 89 adults and 89 children. That's 178 students, which is 22 short of this year's goal of 200 students. Recently, many New York Center followers have been helping us to teach these classes. Thankfully, we now have eleven followers who teach and five volunteers who help with administrative tasks.

For our performance space at TCI, last year we held nearly 100 concerts and recitals. People who attend these concerts often ask us how they can have a concert at TCI as well. We also do not advertise our space, but performers have needed to schedule their concerts half a year ahead of time in order to secure a date. Our own concert series, Arts at Tenri, is also doing well. For our last concert, which was a shakuhachi, koto, cello and dance performance sold out, so we had to add a second show which also sold out. For our gallery, we continue to receive positive reviews in art publications and our exhibition schedule is full for the next two years. We are currently exhibiting the works of world-renown Japanese artist Hiro Yamagata. We also continue to host community events such as the Japanese Artists Association annual exhibition, the Haiku Society of America meetings and the Japanese American Social Services Inc., JASSI, concert for the elderly. All in all, I think we have been able to become a fixture in the community.

This is precisely why it was so important to have a bridge to Tenrikyo which the new sanctuary provides. Talking about Tenrikyo at the cultural institute is difficult, but if we bring them to New York Center it is natural to introduce the teachings. The new building makes it

easier to bring someone who is familiar with Tenri Cultural Institute in Manhattan to our sanctuary in Flushing, Queens. No matter how appealing our teachings may be, the first impressions of our church are quite important. If you see one of our students or friends from TCI, please welcome them.

Even though it is an exciting time to be a member of this congregation, it has taken some time to get used to this new building especially since it is so different than your average church. We are much better now at performing the service here every month, but at first it was difficult to get everyone on the same page. It has also taken the associations some time to get used to performing for their annual service conventions here. With this new building, we have also had memorial services and a funeral for the first time, but we have never had a wedding here. It will be interesting to see who is first! We have also started Japanese language classes for children, in addition to the gagaku practices and judo practices all held on Saturdays. It is very nice to see everything coming into place and all our groups flourishing.

Nevertheless, this is just the beginning. Once people come in and learn about the basic teachings, to take a person to the next level takes a great deal of effort. And having an equal amount of support from the Tenrikyo community is very important. We also hope to have more educational programs in addition to the Joy Workshop in the future, so please feel free to bring your friends and family to our activities, and hopefully our community can grow.

Another aspect we can focus on is joining efforts to create a greater American community. Right now the Mission Headquarters of Hawaii is preparing for the Hawaii Convention 2011. It is a wonderful opportunity for English speakers to gather in the paradise that is Hawaii to meet and learn and become inspired by the teachings all over again. It is both a continuation of the Tenri Forum and the Oyasato Seminar Alumni gatherings. It is a three-day program over Memorial Day weekend that focuses on workshops, discussions, introducing the English version of the service, inspirational talks highlighted by an address by Rev. Masahiko Iburi, as well as *nioigake* and *hinokishin* activities. I am part of the committee that is organizing the event and I think this is a great opportunity for everyone to gather and think about the issues that mean the most to us and find a way to take the teachings of Tenrikyo in America to the next level as a global family.

On a more personal level, today just happens to be my 41st birthday. I was originally supposed to give the sermon in December, but it was changed to today, my birthday. At first, I didn't think much of it, but everything that happens in our lives is an opportunity to ponder. With the Young Men's Association, which I have been heavily involved with for over 20 years, I always thought that when you turned 40, you "graduate" from the Young Men's Association. I asked about this and was told that it is on your 41st birthday that you are finished. So I guess from today, I am an old man! And instead of relying on the Young Men's Association, perhaps it is my time to be more of

an advisor.

Most of you know that I have three daughters. My youngest daughter, Natalie, has had problems with fluid building up in her ears. She has had three surgeries to install drainage tubes in her ears, but after years of visiting the doctor, her condition does not improve. Natalie is fine, but from time to time, she cannot hear very well.

My wife and I were once told that we should listen closely to the truth that God is telling us. It is very hard to understand what God is saying, but we would like to do our best to keep our ears open.

We now have a new appreciation for the blessing of hearing and I hope to use that blessing to take the time to listen to more people and help them with any problems. With that in mind, I would like to do my best to become a good big brother to the younger generation and a good listener.

Thank you very much.



***New Year's Day Service***

*January 1 from 10 a.m.*

***Spring Grand Service***

*January 2 from 10 a.m.*

*Sermon by Rev. Toshihiko Okui,  
Minister, New York Center*

*After Service: Staff Minister meeting,  
Women's Association Monthly  
Meeting, Drum and Fife Corps  
practice, Joy Workshop*



## Boys and Girls Association Fall Sleepover

From November 27 to 28, a Boys and Girls Association Sleepover was held with 20 members and 30 staff. The sleepover was filled with activities including service practice, a teachings hour, skit performances and picking up litter around the neighborhood. With all the big kids and little kids participating, each group did a great job with the skits, which were based on themes from the teachings, bringing the audience to their feet in applause. With the increase in the children participating in the sleepovers, the big kids did a commendable job in taking care of the little ones. We are looking forward to their future participation and growth as staff members.



*Service Dance Practice*



*The skits were a bit hit!*



*Craft making for teachings hour*



*Hanging out at meal time*



*Picking up litter all together*

# Tenri Cultural Institute

43A West 13th Street NYC 10011 tel: 212.645.2800 www.tenri.org

## Children's classes at New York Center

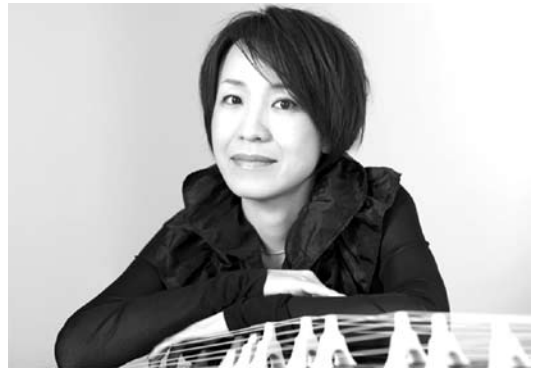
From October 9, Japanese language classes for children started at New York Center. This year a new kindergarten class opened along with a lower grade level class and a higher grade level class, making three classes in all. The teachers are Junko Schnabel, Kaori Fukui and Satomi Yasue, and the assistants are Yukimi Fukui, Michinori Fukui, and Hiromu Kamio, respectively.



*Children enjoying the study of Japanese at New York Center*

## Special Concert

On December 11 (Sat.) at 8 p.m., Arts at Tenri will present a concert with koto virtuoso, Yoko Nishi. Based in Tokyo but traveling the world with her koto, Ms. Nishi will give a rare solo performance in New York City. In addition, Ms. Nishi will perform music for the 17-string bass koto. She will be joined by shakuhachi grand master James Nyoraku Schlefer for several works. We would like to invite members to come to this opportunity to see an incredible talent. Tickets for church members are \$10.



*Profile:* Yoko Nishi started learning koto at the age of four. She began her studies under Tadao Sawai and Kazue Sawai. In 1980, she won a prize at Sankyoku competition in Japan at the young age of sixteen. After graduating from the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, she performed at the event organized by the Imperial Household Agency at the Imperial Palace for the Japanese Emperor and Empress as a representative from the Tokyo National University. She is currently visiting scholar at Columbia University.



# Association Announcements

## WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

As the year is coming to an end, we would like to thank everyone for their support of the Women's Association activities. Many members from New York returned to Jiba for the 100th Anniversary of the Women's Association, making it a very good year.

We kindly ask for your continued support in the coming year.

### *Upcoming activities*

December 17 (Fri.) from 9 a.m. - Preparation for the Holiday Bazaar

December 19 (Sun.) from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. - Holiday Bazaar (Preparation starts at 10 a.m.)

January 2 (Sun.) - After the Spring Grand Service, we would like to hold our first monthly meeting of the year in the format of the Friendship Circle Gathering. We hope that many will come to attend the meeting. (January musical instrument practice will not be held.)

## BOYS AND GIRLS ASSOCIATION

On November 27 and 28, our fall sleepover was held with many in attendance and without mishap. We would like to thank everyone for their help with this busy weekend.

## STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (TSA)

On December 26 (Wed.), TSA will be holding our winter gathering. Join us at New York Center where we will take part in the annual year end cleaning and have a fun activity in the afternoon. This will be our last gathering for this year. Thank you for supporting TSA this year, and we humbly ask for everyone's warm support next year, too.

## NEW YORK CENTER

Due to various circumstances, the annual, year-end Rice Cake (Mochi) Pounding event will be canceled this year. Please inform those friends and acquaintances who place orders for mochi that the event will not be held.

On December 26 (Sun.) from 9:30 a.m., the New York Center Year End Cleaning will be held. We ask for your help in *hinokishin* on this day. A presentation on the upcoming Hawaii Convention will also be held at 1 p.m.

## Bulletin Board

### BIRTH



11/12 Akio and Noriko Koeda from Virginia welcomed their firstborn daughter, Akali. Congratulations!

### VISITOR



11/16 ~ 17 Rev. Motohiro Fukaya, Staff Minister of Kawaramachi Grand Church for a mission visit to Garden State Fellowship (the Miranda Family)

## Tenrikyo Hawaii Convention 2011



One World, One Family  
Enriching Our Relationships  
with Joyous Faith

Date: May 28 to 30, 2011

Place: Hilton Hawaiian Village Beach  
Resort & Spa

For more information, please visit the website:  
[www.tenrikyohawaiiConvention2011.com](http://www.tenrikyohawaiiConvention2011.com)

## New York Center Upcoming Events

December 5 (Sun.)

- December Monthly Service 10 a.m.  
Opening Talk by Hidetoshi Sasaki  
New York Center Staff  
Sermon by Takao Fujimoto  
Staff Minister, New York Center  
After the reception:  
Staff Minister Meeting, Women's  
Assn. Monthly Meeting, Drum and  
Fife Corps Practice, Joy Workshop

December 17 (Fri.)

- Holiday Bazaar Preparation 9 a.m.

December 19 (Sun.)

- Holiday Bazaar 11 a.m.~2 p.m.
- Service Dance in Manhattan 11 a.m.  
(at TCI)

December 26 (Sun.)

- 26th Day Service 7:15 a.m.
- Year End Cleaning 9:30 a.m.

December 26 (Sun.)(Cont.)

- TSA Winter Gathering 11 a.m.
- Hawaii Convention presentation 1 p.m.

January 1 (Sat.)

- New Year's Day Service
- Grand Service Preparation 2 to 3 p.m.

January 2 (Sun.)

- Spring Grand Service 10 a.m.  
Sermon by Rev. Toshihiko Okui  
Minister, New York Center  
After the reception:  
Staff Minister Meeting, Women's  
Assn. Monthly Meeting, Drum and  
Fife Corps Practice, Joy Workshop

Judo Classes (every week)

- Saturdays 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. and  
Fridays (adult class) 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Gagaku Practice

- December 18 from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

## PROGRESS

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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 the original and true Parent of all humankind who not only created humankind but has nurtured and protected human beings ever since.

God the Parent created humankind so that by seeing us live the Joyous Life, God could share in our joy. The living of the Joyous Life is, therefore, the purpose of our existence. Since God the Parent is our Parent, we are all God's children, and thus we should realize that we are all brothers and sisters.

We are taught that our bodies are borrowed from God the Parent and only our minds belong to us and, by the proper use of our minds, we will be able to live the Joyous Life.