

Dear Oyasama,

Thank you very much for being here today at Straub Medical Hospital in Hawaii. Today, I was honored to have you in our presence while my uncle and reverend performed the Sazuke on my Dad. Tonight is the first night that my Dad is in a deep sleep and doesn't wake to smallest sounds that surround him. Thank you for helping ease his pain and allowing him to sleep peacefully.

I also wanted to thank you for the times in my life where you appeared. When I first heard about you as child, I really thought nothing much. You were just some super woman who started our religion and was a magician at healing people. In high school, I never really believed in Tenrikyo and could not understand that you really exist in this world as the Everliving Oyasama. I found it strange that they feed you every day. To me Tenrikyo was just a belief that my parents and grandparents believed in, so I'll just followed along.

In 2000, I entered Oyasato Fusekomika to learn about Tenrikyo in Japanese. I really wanted to find out whether I would believe in Tenrikyo for myself and not simply because of family. After completing Shuyoka, I remember reading a book that mentioned if you believe in God, you will see and feel God's blessings and presence. However, if you don't believe a God, you will not see and realize there is a God. Upon hearing this, I thought about you, Oyasama.

A few months later, we went to Chiba for Missionary Training. On my 2<sup>nd</sup> day, I thought about you and said to myself, "If I first pretend you exist, maybe I will see or feel your presence." From there our missionary, Mrs. Y, my Korean friend, and I visited this one house. Before we entered garden, I stopped decided to clap 4 times and bow. I pretended that you were here with us and we would enter this house together. As we knocked and waited, no one appeared. We decided to leave the house and continue down the street. However when we returned back on that same street, we saw the man return home.

We got excited and revisited the house. About 2 hours later, we truly felt it was meant for us to be here and we got to perform the Sazuke. A few months later, this man returned to Jiba with Mrs. Y for his first Besseki. From this experience, I felt your presence. Thank you Oyasama for being there.

I started to continue to pretend you exist on my missionary training days and realized each time I sincerely did to pretend you were here, something happened! I was able to receive a donation, talk to someone about Tenrikyo, or even do the Sazuke. From this point I started to think that you do exist and told myself, "If I believe you exist, I will feel your presence."

The next year in 2001, I visited Nishimukai Branch Church in Wakayama. My friend from Brazil had an amazing experience there. We did missionary work and went into a follower's house. They treated us with deliciously large strawberries. Then my friend performed the Sazuke on this kind grandma who could not move her neck. She always had to look sideways. While my friend was performing the Sazuke, I remembered that you, Oyasama is here to help us with the Sazuke and so I quickly grabbed an open zabuton and placed it by the grandma's side. After, my friend talked a little about Tenrikyo to the grandma and she was very happy to have us as guests for the day.

That night we danced with 12 Chapters in strong spirits for that grandma and during our dinner, the grandma's son came dashing into the house and seemed speechless and in shock. He bowed his head

and thanked the reverend and us for the Sazuke. Miraculously, after many months of not being able to move her neck, she was able to move her neck a few hours after the Sazuke was performed! My friend and I could not believe it and celebrated. Thank you very much Oyasama for your salvation and being there. From that point, I felt your presence and believe you exist.

A few days later, we were doing missionary work and we had a reporter from the "Tenri Jihou" following us. For some reason while waiting at a house, I looked down a narrow path leading to only rice fields. There I saw a flash of some woman in a kimono waving me over saying, "This way," as she disappeared over a hill on the horizon. Some strange feeling told me, I must go down this path and left the group doing missionary work. As I walked to the point where I saw the woman in the kimono standing, there was absolutely no one in the entire rice fields except this one old man walking gingerly in the rice fields. I knew I had to talk to this person. So I walked over to him and we talked about 20 minutes. I offered the Sazuke for his leg illness numerous times because I felt there was reason I met him. Unfortunately, he declined every time. I still felt your presence again and asked if I could talk until we reached his house. He said it would be fine.

At his house, because of his condition I offered to take his laundry down and fold them. He was very grateful for this Hinokishin and I asked him if I could explain just a few minutes about Tenrikyo. He agreed and after speaking a little about it, he cried. I told him that I need to leave now because I'm a student and need to return to my group. He replied, "Wait, before you leave, please do your prayer for me." I was surprised and begun performing the Sazuke. During the Sazuke, the group and the reporter arrived to join. A few weeks later, this man and I were on the front page of Tenri Jihou. Thank you very much Oyasama for being there and guiding me to this man.

Through many years after this experience, I have continued to believe you exist and thank you for the many times you have blessed me with your guidance and presence while administering the Sazuke. I especially appreciate your blessings during the missionary work done with friends in Chiba and with the Oyasato Seminar students in Aichi. I hope they all felt your presence with me just as I did.

Today in 2013, at 1:00 am in the morning, I sit next to my Dad's bedside in the hospital typing in the dark. I think of the many times you, Oyasama have supported me with your presence. I may not know what may happen over the next few days, weeks, or months with my Dad. Three years ago, we thought that all could be lost with his high stage of cancer and I remember praying numerous several times, planning special trips to Jiba to visit you. By some miracle of prayers and blessings, he has survived an extra 3 years at we could appreciate. We're hoping he has the blessings to be around for at least a year to see his children get married and possibly to see his first grandchild. I know you will be here by our sides praying with us, however should God the Parent and you believe it is time, I cannot thank you more for how you have helped my dad survive these last years with cancer and blessed him with your guidance and loving care. He is a great father who dedicated a lot of his time to helping others.

Oyasama, from when I thought of you as the super woman who magically healed people and started our religion to what I now understand as the Everliving Oyasama, thank you very much for your support and presence. I look forward to every month being in your presence during the Monthly Services at Tenrikyo Hawaii Mission Headquarters, as you sit there watching us perform and sing the Service in joy.

Sincerely, David Inouye, Age 32, USA, Higashichuo Grand Church