

= Oyasato @-@ yakata =

The Oyasato @-@ yakata ( ??????? ) complex is a collection of buildings in Tenri City , Nara , Japan , that form an incomplete square 872 metres ( 2 @,@ 861 ft ) on each side surrounding the Divine Residence ( Oyasato ) , a structure sacred to the Japanese new religion Tenrikyo . The task of revitalizing the area around the Residence was informed by both religious prophecy and city planning , and construction began in 1954 on a project that continues today . The Oyasato @-@ yakata is a massive organizational undertaking that is understood by Tenrikyo adherents as a spiritual practice , creating a model city that reflects their belief in a Joyous Life . As such a practice it has involved the entire Tenrikyo community , from the volunteers who assist in construction to professors who plan the scope of future wings . Archaeologists have also excavated ancient artifacts beneath its foundations .

The complex includes Tenri University , Tenri Hospital , Tenri Seminary , the Besseki Lecture Hall , the Shuyoka , dormitories , and Tenri High School . Currently 25 wings of the complex are complete . The complete structure calls for 68 wings .

= = Origins = =

At the beginning of the 20th century , the teachings of Tenrikyo 's foundress Oyasama became popular throughout Japan . In the following decades , the most devoted followers coalesced around Oyasama 's residence in rural Nara , which she had perceived as the birthplace of the world , or Jiba . The six villages surrounding the Jiba slowly became filled with Tenrikyo ministers , mystics , and evangelists , and the area was urbanized . A popular international school ( now Tenri University ) and Tenri Central Library , built by followers , were also attracting a variety of people to the area . It was around this time that Tenrikyo 's Second Shinbashira ( community leader ) Sh?zen Nakayama conceived of creating a grand construction project as a testament to the loyalty of Oyasama 's followers .

In 1934 , Nakayama commissioned the famed architect Yoshikazu Uchida to draw up a blueprint for the area . Uchida arranged ten buildings around Oyasama 's Residence . A 50 @-@ meter boulevard would come out of the Residence on a north @-@ south axis , along which six school buildings would be lined up . Classrooms and large auditoriums would be built at the end of this boulevard . The international school and library were to be eventually integrated into this plan . In January 1937 , a middle school ( now Tenri High School ) was built according to Uchida 's plan , but as Japan mobilized for the Pacific War the plan had to be temporarily shelved .

In 1952 , after the war and Occupation , Tenrikyo Chief of Architecture Onz? Okumura ( ???? ) was asked by Nakayama to design a large Besseki Lecture Hall to accommodate 10 @,@ 000 people on the site of an old girls ' school . However , considering the location of the school , several hundred meters to the west of the Residence . Okumura thought back to an old prophecy of Oyasama , as recorded in Tenrikyo 's Anecdotes :

One day Oyasama was gazing out of the south window of Her room in the Nakaminami @-@ Gatehouse and looking at the vast expanse of bamboo thickets and rice fields . Suddenly She said to the attendants : " Someday this neighborhood will be filled with houses . Houses will line the street for seven ri between Nara and Hase . One ri square will be filled with inns . The divine Residence will become eight cho [ 872 meters ] square . "

Since Tenrikyo was at the time a tiny cult centered on a house in a farming village , the growth of Tenri into a city full of inns paralleling this prophecy was seen as miraculous . In the Osashizu these prophecies are repeated , with the admonition that " it will not do to think of small things . " The original idea was that the planned school buildings and classrooms would be the first part of an enormous central hub that would eventually fill eight cho square . But Okumura began to consider the relationships between the planned buildings and the Residence . If other buildings were placed directly next to the Residence , he reasoned , they would put the Residence in shadow during the sunrise , and metaphorically crowd out the importance of the Jiba itself . Thus , with Nakayama 's permission , he developed a new overarching plan for the school , library , and other Tenrikyo

buildings surrounding the Residence . His new plan , which arranged the buildings in a great square with open space on the inside , was dubbed the oyasato @-@ yakata , roughly meaning the " grounds of Oyasama 's Residence " .

In 1954 the Japanese government merged the six villages surrounding the Residence into a single city , which was dubbed Tenri City . In the same year , the Tenrikyo central church announced the construction of the first wing of the yakata . The continuing development of the oyasato @-@ yakata is currently overseen by a committee with a small office in Tenri Seminary .

= = Construction = =

The yakata was designed along the lines of Edo period tenement housing ( ?? ) , but modernized with reinforced walls , multiple stories , and balconies for emergency access . The result is a fusion between Western and Japanese architecture . Gaps were purposefully left in the ground floors for pedestrians , making the yakata a walkable space . The balconies and rooftops were also designed to please the eye at the ground level . At the same time , the roofs are visible from Oyasama 's gravesite north of the city .

As construction began , Tenrikyo followers founded the Oyasato Construction Young Men 's Association Hinokishin Corps , which volunteered time and labor to help build the yakata . The corps still continues their work today . By 1956 , one corner of the complex had been built at the cost of 23 billion yen , an enormous expense given the economic depression of the time .

When part of the foundations for the complex were dug in 1977 , an archaeological investigation uncovered prehistoric artifacts , as is typical during construction in Tenri . Although it was a sparsely inhabited village in Oyasama 's time , Tenri City lies on top of a confirmed cultural center of prehistoric Japan .

= = Timeline of construction = =

= = Influence on the city = =

Information theorist Nomura Masaichi , noting Tenrikyo 's description of the oyasato @-@ yakata as a realization of the prophecy of Oyasama and the Tenrikyo saying that " in the construction of form lies the construction of hearts " , refers to the ongoing construction as a " medium that combats decontextualization " , claiming that it gives renewed relevance to the teachings and introduces a physical context by giving them an active role in shaping the city , and that in time , the thoughts of Tenrikyo believers will come to embody the grand scale of the architecture .

One Tenrikyo elder has written the following on the subject :

" This vision of the Home of the Parent is not one of a world of concepts and beliefs apart from the actual world . It is a place where living beings can lead their lives , and place where they will have everything that is required for their lives . Yet it is not an ordinary place for living . Centered on the Jiba , it is a place to which the children return out of their longing for their Parent . Here , embraced by the love of God the Parent , they seek and cultivate the mind that is single @-@ hearted with God . Here , they savor the joy of Parent and children living together in peace and harmony . "

Taro Igarashi notes first and foremost its massive accomplishment in city planning . The ground @-@ level architecture can be compared somewhat to Karl Marx @-@ Hof , a massive tenement complex in Vienna , and the pilotis evoke Charles Fourier 's phalanstère , an architectural form specifically designed to evoke and construct an egalitarian utopia . However , the use of Japanese roofs in a modern city is quite rare , and the sheer size of the yakata makes it perhaps a unique megastructure anywhere in the world . Commenting on Taro 's article , the theologian Akio Inoue adds that the final interpretation , for the Tenrikyo believers who funded and built the structure , cannot be to inspire individual faith alone , but to " bridge the Joyous Life of the individual which determines the inner substance of faith and the world of the Joyous Life as an organized community " .

