

**Face
to
Faith**

August 2023 No.105



Seeking the Way of Kami and People

With cherry blossoms in full bloom, we had the annual Tenchi Kane No Kami Grand Ceremony at the Grand Service Hall in Konko, Japan. Reverend Konko Hiromichi, Kyoshu, Spiritual leader of Konkokyo, officiated the service. He expressed our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for a gift of life bestowed by Tenchi Kane No Kami, the Divine Parent of the Universe.

Reverend Iwasaki Michiyo, Director of Konkokyo, gave an address during the Grand Ceremony. After expressing his gratitude for the service by Konko-sama, Reverend Iwasaki shared a conversation he had with the Reverend Konko Heiki, the 5th Konko-sama.

The 5th Konko-sama once told Reverend Iwasaki about “The Way of Kami and People.”

Reverend Iwasaki learned that Konko-sama referenced the Founder’s teaching to Kondo Fujimori, which says “The word shinjin (faith) is not written with the kanji characters for belief and heart. I write it with the kanji characters for kami

and man.”

With Konko-sama’s words, Reverend Iwasaki thought about the difference between “belief and heart” and “kami and man.” Reverend Iwasaki claimed that trying to understand Kami from a human point of view would become “belief and heart.” However, the kanji characters would become “kami and man” if people try to understand themselves from Kami’s point of view.



Reverend Iwasaki noted that the Founder renewed his life when he encountered Tenchi Kane No Kami at the age of 42. The Founder started practicing “kami and man” faith. Reverend Iwasaki

claimed that the Founder started his new life, and the Founder began to fully accept Kami’s words. The Founder gained Kami’s eye and awareness of human’s lack of judgment and foolish actions. In this way, the Founder encountered Kami and himself at the same time. As the Founder’s thoughts and awareness lessened, Kami’s existence grew larger. Following Kami’s instruction, the Founder

started to live his life and established the mutually fulfilled relationship of Kami and People.

Reverend Iwasaki shared a mediation from Kyoshu Konko-sama. Konko-sama once taught a seeker, “Let us seek what kind of kami Tenchi Kane No Kami is, and what kind of faith Kami would be pleased with.”

Reverend Iwasaki pointed out that Konko-sama understood the Founder’s “kami and man” faith. Reverend Iwasaki then suggested that we should seek Tenchi Kane No Kami and find faith to please Kami. By doing so, Reverend Iwasaki understood that we will follow a life according to Kyoshu Konko-sama’s teaching: “Being aware of

the favor, paying back the favor, practicing faith, and receiving the blessings should be the way of our lives.”

In closing, Reverend Iwasaki emphasized the following theme of this year:

Using our Founder’s story about Kami-People as a reference, write Kami-People Interrelated Faith Story. Practice faith by seeking and actualizing the way of Kami and People as the child of Tenchi Kane No Kami. Accept Kami’s Wish in the 140th anniversary year of the Founder’s passing.

He concluded his speech by extending his prayer for each person to actualize the “Way of Kami and People” in their daily lives.

Arigato makes flowers bloom in your heart

On April 2, 2023, Reverend Tsukamoto Michiharu delivered a sermon at the Grand Service Hall, Konko, Japan during the Tenchi Kane No Kami Grand Ceremony. He is from Konko Church of Kurumi, Ehime, Japan. The title of his sermon was “Arigato(thank you) makes flowers bloom in your heart.” In his sermon, he shared one of his experiences when he was serving at his church.

About 15 years ago, a woman, around the age of 40, came to visit our church for the first time. I invited her to the mediation place. The purpose of her visit was to make a request based on her husband’s bad habit. She angrily said, “Please make my husband stop gambling!”

She further explains that he wasted so much money on excessive gambling. Initially, his parents paid for his debts. However, when he accumulated more debts, even his parents stopped helping him. Yet, he never stopped gambling. He comes home late every night from gambling, and they always quarrel.

She asked me, “Please pray for my husband to stop gambling.”

I prayed earnestly. Then, the words came into my mind and I replied, “There are two ways to immediately stop him from gambling. Either his death or getting him severely injured so that he cannot gamble. Which would you choose?”

The woman replied, “No. None of them are good.”

I then said, “Get divorced and live with your child.” But, she said, “No. I cannot get any job because my eyesight is not very good. I also feel sorry for my child.”

I wondered what to do. Obviously, her husband had a gambling addiction. However, this was not recognized as an illness 15 years ago. Therefore, I did not think hospitalization was a viable solution.

I asked her, “I understand your husband’s bad behavior now. But, does he have any redeeming qualities?” She immediately replied, “None.” Then, I said, “That is not true. Your husband had worked for your family with good health. If he got sick or injured, he could not earn any money. Have you ever said arigato (thank you) for his work?” She said, “Never.” I said, “Well, your husband’s actions are unacceptable. However, he comes home to a demon-like wife who blames him. Do you think he was comfortable coming home to a place where he could not get any peace of mind?” She became speechless and asked, “What should I do?”

I suggested that she find her husband’s good qualities. I also added, “He cannot control his gambling addiction right away even if you immediately start practicing faith. Please understand that



his change in habit will take a while. His fixation for gambling is a result accumulated after a long time. A shift in his actions will take at least three to five years. Our Founder taught, ‘After practicing faith for ten years, anyone can receive divine blessings.’ Starting today, please leave all your negative thoughts here. When you return home, find your husband’s positive attributes and thank him. Let’s start practicing faith!”

The lady listened to my words sincerely and started coming to our church every morning. Around 8 o’clock in the morning, she comes in to complain about her husband’s behavior for one to two hours. I always listened to her and said, “Leave your complaints and anger here. Do not bring your negative thoughts back home. Find positive attributes about your husband.”

For the first two years, she brought in all her complaints. In the third year, her husband started coming to church and gave thanks. He sometimes

cut tree branches at the church. Ten years later, her husband returned all his debts and stopped gambling. Their child got married. The lady became happy with a smiling face.

Her smile is Kami’s smile. Kami waited for a long time for her smile.

Our Founder taught, “Those who practice faith eliminate their offenses. But those who idle away their time and do not practice faith, accumulate offenses.” The lady lived her life without expressing appreciation and joy to others. Kami’s sorrow was deep.

However, she started practicing faith. She started directing her thankful and joyful heart to Kami and everything surrounding her. Her happiness made everyone happy. Her husband changed his lifestyle, and her child is enjoying a happy marriage.

Let us practice faith and make our Divine Parent happy!

“That’s Not Right!”

Reverend Horio Yasuji and Mr. Inenaga Zenjiro, Yasuji’s elder sister’s husband, expressed their gratitude for receiving blessings.

Zenjiro stubbornly refused to enter Konko faith for a long time. However, his periosteum caused facial inflammation, and his doctor gave up hope. Then, he clung on to Kami and recovered from his illness.

Yasuji also received blessings by recovering from an illness. Although his father disagreed with him in becoming a minister, he decided to serve for Kami. Later, his father understood Yasuji’s faith, expressed appreciation, and passed away peacefully.

After the 10th Memorial Service for Yasuji’s father, they shared their thoughts. They said to each other that their lives were spared, and they were content with whatever that may happen in the future. They felt so grateful for receiving the blessings.

However, after overhearing what they said, Reverend Yasutake Matsutaro said, “That’s not right!” He continued, “What you were talking about seems very grateful. I also thought in the

same way before. However, let us take borrowing money for example. If I borrowed some money, and as a result, I managed a successful business, I might say, ‘I am happy. I don’t have to borrow any more money. I will be fine no matter what happens to the business in the future.’ The borrower is satisfied, but what about the lender? How would the lender feel without repayment for the original borrowed amount or interests? You said that you received blessings from Kami, and you are fine with whatever the future holds. However, how about Kami who bestowed the blessings. You are not fulfilling Kami’s Wish. When I think in this way, I feel that I have to live long to pay back the favor, even if the returned favor is small.”

Reverend Horio felt in awe at that time. Twenty or more years later, Reverend Horio said, “Reverend Yasutake told me that he tried to pay back the favor. But he realized that he received more favors than paying back. My debts kept increasing. I am grateful, and I am in awe. Hearing Reverend Yasutake, I was in awe, too.”

We are grateful when we receive blessings. However, are we acting appropriately after receiving blessings?

To Receive the Blessings of Life from Ancestors to Descendants

October 10th of this year marks the 140th year since our Founder, Konko Daijin passed away. Ten years before his passing, our Founder received the following revelation on October 10, 1873:

“Though they live between Heaven and Earth, people are unaware of Kami’s blessings. Shrines, temples, and homes stand on Kami’s land. Unaware of this, people only examine the Days and Directions and commit irreverences to Kami and encounter hardships due to their accumulated offenses. They are to practice faith and receive divine blessings. Tenchi Kane No Kami has sent Ikigami Konko Daijin to the people to give blessings and teachings and to have them prosper forever. Kami is Kami because of man, and man is man because of Kami. Both continue to uphold each other.”

Reverend Iwasaki Michiyo, the Director of Konkokyo, addressed Konko Daijin’s revelation during the annual Spring Memorial Service in Konko, Japan. He explained, “Although we are allowed to live within the Tenchi, Universe, we don’t know the blessings of the Universe. We are



allowed to live on Kami’s land. This is the Way of the Universe. Yet, not knowing Kami’s favor, we are lost in greed and selfishness. Thus, we suffer the cycle of misfortunes from our ancestors.”

Then, Reverend Iwasaki proposed to change our way of life by seeking and receiving Mediation. Through Mediation, he stated that we could receive three blessings: the blessings for our immediate needs in our daily lives, the blessings to change the way of our lives, and the blessings that continued from the ancestors to the descendants.

Then, Reverend Iwasaki concluded his address by suggesting that we should change our way of life from our ancestors to our descendants to make Kami happy.

His speech made us realize that we must follow Kyoshu Konko-sama’s teaching: “Being aware of the favor, paying back the favor, practicing faith, and receiving the blessings should be the way of our lives.”

Let us practice faith to receive the blessings from our ancestors to descendants and prosper forever.

VOICE OF THE UNIVERSE

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After being saved from a desperate situation or misfortune, everyone says that they will never forget the blessings they received. However, people tend to be unaware of the divine blessings that they receive daily.

Regardless if people are alive or dead, they are always receiving Kami’s blessings.

(III Jinkyukyogoroku 90:1-2)

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When practicing faith, there are more blessings which cannot be seen than those which can be seen. The blessings you unknowingly receive number more than the blessings you knowingly receive.

If you think about it, you will come to realize the many divine blessings that you have received. If you can do this, you are a true believer.

(II Tsugawa, Haruo 14)



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