



## Happy Birthday Konko-Sama!

The Reverend Konko Hiromichi turned 55 on June 28, 2021. At 8 a.m., the Konkokyo Headquarter ministers and their families, seminary students, and believers gathered at the Main Worship Hall.

On behalf of Konkokyo, the Reverend Iwasaki Michiyo, Chief Administrative Director, wished Konko-sama a happy birthday and expressed his appreciation at the mediation place.

Rev. Iwasaki:

“Since you succeeded the former Konko-sama on March 27, you have been carrying out the work of mediation, a practice our Founder began and continued by his successors. We are grateful for your leadership and for guiding all head ministers, ministers, ministers’ assistants, and believers, as well as the work of all Konkokyo-related organizations.

At the Tenchi Kane No Kami Grand Ceremony where you prayed to Kami on your succession, you addressed: “As a fellow Honbu Hiromae trainee, it is my wish to receive mediation from past Konko-samas and seek

to embody Founder’s faith, every day.”

As believers of Konkokyo, we honor your aspiration expressed in these words you offered us. We too will sincerely strive to embody Founder’s faith, seek Kami, and become connected to Kami. Please guide us and mediate our renewed determination.



Konko-sama, please stay strong and healthy. Please guide us and pray for all believers and people of the world. Please pray for world peace and salvation of humankind.”

Konko-sama replied with great resolve:

“I am honored and humbled. I express my heartfelt appreciation to the sources of my life – my parents, ancestors, and the Divine Parent of the Universe. I am also aware of my shortcomings. I am thankful for this divine favor that allowed me to renew myself. I fervently wish to serve, more than ever. Thank you very much.”

As we celebrate Konko-sama’s birthday, let us take this opportunity to renew our hearts and faith.

# Kami Reaching Out to Us



**T**he Reverend Iwasaki Michiyo made a presentation for the Konkoyo Japanese Believers' Association. Due to the pandemic, the Association decided to hold

their gathering online and made his presentation available on the web. His presentation is available until the end of September (see <https://aiyokakeyo.konko.jp>).

The title of his speech was “Kami Reaching Out to Us.”

In his opening address, Rev. Iwasaki shared his thoughts on the significance of the Konkoyo faith. He stated, “There are many religions that help people receive blessings and make them realize the divine workings. However, not many faiths guide people to touch Kami’s heart. But Konkoyo, the faith of our Founder Konko Daijin, does.”

According to Rev. Iwasaki, we could feel Kami’s thoughts by following Konko Daijin’s faith. When we receive blessings, we know that Kami is also pleased. During hardships, we feel encouragement from Kami. Sometimes, Kami even scolds us to move forward. Therefore, Rev. Iwasaki said, “I love Konko Daijin’s faith.”

He questioned, “What would happen after we understand Kami’s heart?”

He recalled Konko Daijin’s teaching, “Faith is manifested when the follower and Kami become very close. Faith will fade if this bond becomes weak. Stay close to Kami.” (II Okida Kisaburo 7)

Referring to this teaching, Rev. Iwasaki pointed out that we could “become very close” to Kami by following Konko Daijin and understanding Kami’s heart.

Konko Daijin taught, “I was the first to receive such divine blessings. You can all receive divine blessings in the same way.” (I Tokunaga Kenji 2-3)

After introducing this teaching, Rev. Iwasaki focused on the moment of “receiving such divine blessings.” That moment is when one becomes close to Kami. In fact, our Founder was the first person who became very close to Kami. Our Founder realized that Tenchi Kane No Kami wanted to be close to people.

Motivated by Kami’s benevolence, our Founder started mediation. Rev. Iwasaki claimed that receiving various blessings such as recovering from illness, gaining good human relationships, or being financially secure is not the only importance. Becoming close to Kami through mediation is more important than the blessings we receive in our daily lives. Our Founder promised that we can all receive divine blessings in the same way, and Rev. Iwasaki encouraged us to become close to Kami.

On October 10, 1873, our Founder received the revelation called “The Divine Message.”

Rev. Iwasaki pointed out that Kami’s wish clearly stated in the “Divine Message” which reads, “They are to practice faith and receive divine blessings.”

He said, “As the Kami Prayer reads “many people, who are lost in greed and selfishness without knowing the way, suffer the cycle of misfortunes.” Thus, Kami wishes for people to practice faith. However, Kami is not simply wishing people to receive blessings. Kami wants us to also practice faith. Our practice of faith is necessary, and this is what Kami wishes.”

He pointed out that only practicing faith could change our troubled lives to a blessed one, and he emphasized the importance of practicing faith based on Kami’s wish. We will not receive divine blessings from the faith practiced by our own selfish thoughts. Rev. Iwasaki explained the Founder’s faith when the Founder was 42.

This event marked a turning point in the Founder’s faith. Our Founder practiced faith by checking the Days and Directions when making his request. His personal requests were granted through his faith. However, the more he practiced faith, the more he encountered misfortunes. He was losing family members one after another.

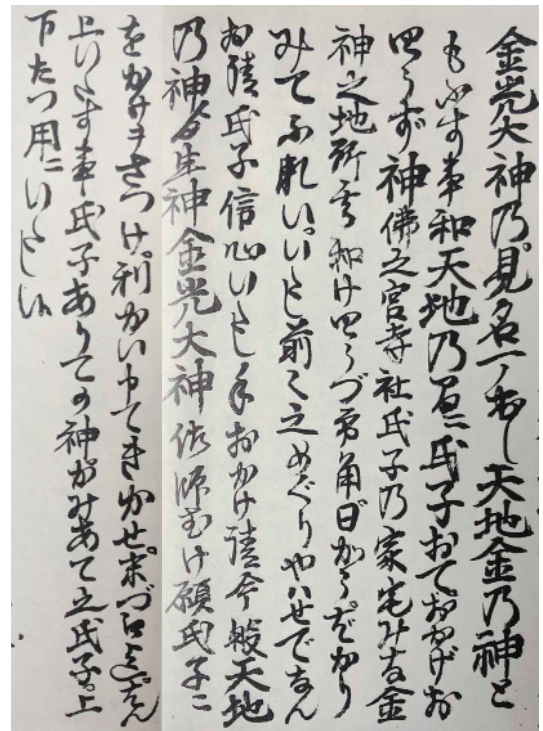
Finally, he became critically ill. At that time, he encountered Kami and realized the difference between his faith, which was based on teachings by humans, and the faith that Kami wanted us to practice. Our Founder learned that the critical illness was not a difficulty. His illness was a divine arrangement which altered a deadly fever to a throat ailment. Kami tried to save the Founder after Kami acknowledged Founder's sincere attitude.

Rev. Iwasaki stated that our Founder changed his perspective through this experience. The Founder decided to follow Kami, so he can be saved. Thus, our Founder followed Kami's wish. This is why the Divine Message was stated: "They are to practice faith and receive divine blessings." This was how our Founder was reborn.

Kami's desire was for everyone to change their lifestyles. Kami has instructed everyone differently and helped us practice faith by changing from our own faith to Kami's faith.

Thus, Tenchi Kane No Kami sent Ikigami Konko Daijin as our mediator so that we could receive blessings and teachings. Therefore, the Divine Message urges each one of us to learn from Kami by receiving mediation and practice faith. In this way, we are able to become close to Kami.

The previous Konko-sama once said, "People are connected to Kami vertically, and people are connected to each other horizontally." This is how Konko-sama defined the relationship with Kami. Rev. Iwasaki understood that he could feel Kami's feelings and become close to Kami through making this "vertical connection."



Divine Message received 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.

### VOICE OF THE UNIVERSE

72 - Right now the world is a human-centered world. All things are done by people's own strength, and many people are going against my teachings. Those who do as Kami states will become a kami. Long ago, there was a kami-centered world. Now it is a human-centered world. Because of this, I will teach people how to return to a kami-centered world. Difficulties and sufferings are caused by people's own heart. Whether or not they can live in a peaceful world also depends upon their own heart.

(Oboe-cho 24-25-1, 2, 3)

73 - This Earth and everything else belong to Kami. Yet you think that they are yours. You think by using money you can manipulate things, without asking Kami. Therefore, your admonishment will not be irrational. Ask Kami for permission to borrow Kami's land and apologize for your past irreverences. Then, you will be able to build without any problems.

(II Mimura Sano 2-2)

# How Human Beings Should Live

Lectured by Reverend Fukushima Yoshitsugu

**K**onko Daijin described our society and world as nin-yo, or “human-centered.” This is a world in which human beings live their lives relying on what they think their own strengths are, and where their own conveniences and desires determine their activities. In other words, they forget or exclude Kami, and thus, act against Heaven and Earth, and consequently face various sufferings. The opposite of being human-centered is to be kami-yo or “Kami-centered.”

Kami reveals that a human-centered world leads to a chaotic world. Konko Daijin wrote about this revelation which can be found in Oboe-cho 16-3 and states, “An earthquake struck on February 6 at around six in the evening. Kami-sama said, ‘I, Tenchi Kane No Kami, am disturbed. The world is chaotic.’” Physically sensing the tremor caused

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No Kami, am  
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(Oboe-cho 16-3)

chaos of the human world as figurative, he revealed the shortcomings of a human-centered relationship between people and Kami or Heaven and Earth.

Another message from Kami, written on June 25, 1880 (Oboe-cho 24-5-3), states, “All people, regardless of age or profession, act irreverently toward Heaven and Earth. Living things, even animals and birds, are suffering from this irreverence and are reacting against them. I, Tenchi Kane No Kami, shall teach people living in this Universe how to apologize for their irreverence.

Konko Daijin to understand how much Kami was disturbed by the chaotic world. Therefore, using a natural phenomenon and the

There is nothing we can do for those who go against the teachings of the toritsugi mediator, Ikigami Konko Daijin.” The human-centered way of people living between Heaven and Earth, or more simply, their irreverent attitude towards Kami would influence all creatures, which in turn would affect the human world. It makes life more difficult and disastrous. Kami conveyed to Konko Daijin how people can renew themselves, and thereafter, Konko Daijin could reveal this to all people through mediation. However, Kami can do little for those who continue to pursue a human-centered life.



Kami expects us to live a life as revealed in Konko Daijin’s teachings, but there are times when Kami’s will is not fully conveyed through Konko Daijin’s words. This was a concern for Kami and may be a reason the message of “I, Tenchi Kane No Kami, am disturbed,” was provided. Despite this cautionary message, people ignore, dismiss, and do not take the caution seriously, which creates a problem in our way of living. It prevents our ability to awaken spiritually.

Human beings have conducted themselves and acted freely based on a human-centered set of wishes and conveniences. The most important role of Konko Daijin as Kami’s messenger was and continues to be to refocus our perspective towards a Kami-centered view instead of a human-centered one. To fulfill this role, Konko Daijin continues to convey the relationship between Heaven and Earth and human beings, using words and figurative expressions to assist people’s understanding. We believers have to prepare our minds to realize the true meanings of life from the profound words of Konko Daijin.



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