



Practice Faith with Konko-sama

The Reverend Konko Hiromichi turned 56 on June 28, 2022. 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.

Reverend Iwasaki also expressed his congratulations and gratitude. “Since you succeeded the former Konko-sama last year, 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.”

He acknowledged Reverend Konko’s goals and accomplishment by referencing comments that Reverend Konko made in the past year:

“As a fellow Honbu Hiromae trainee, it is your wish to receive mediation from past



Konko-samas and seek to embody Founder’s faith and express the glory of Tenchi Kane No Kami every day. You emphasized acknowledging the blessings and returning the favor. We honor your aspirations. Aiming the next year’s 140th Founder’s Memorial, we would like to practice faith sincerely and renew our hearts for the Way of Kami and people to be actualized. Konko-sama, please stay strong and healthy. Please guide

us and pray for all followers 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 am thankful for the divine favor that allowed me to serve. I am 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.”

Following Konko-sama’s leadership, guidance and example, let us convey appreciation of Tenchi Kane no Kami’s greatness and be of service to all.

Appreciation and Sincerity to Strengthen Relationship with Kami

The following story was shared by Reverend Iwasaki Michiyo during the 3rd Konkokyo Conference held in Shikoku last year. (<https://youtu.be/L0DsmcJ31h0>)

Reverend Iwasaki introduced “Mr. A”, a member of Shizuoka Church, who started practicing faith based on appreciation and sincerity.

Mr. A was a once vice president of a company in Shizuoka. He had seldom worshipped at the church. All his requests to Kami were made through his wife, whose parents were believers. After he retired from the company, Mr. A started working as a business consultant. This was when he began attending the Shizuoka Church. At first, he observed how his wife practiced faith and said, “Konkokyo is a good faith, but it is my wife’s faith.” When Mr. A had a request to Kami, he made his request through his wife. Indeed, all his requests centered on results that would be favorable to himself.

However, a critical situation occurred in 2013 when Mr. A’s doctor diagnosed Mr. A’s left kidney as not functioning very well. Whenever Mr. A visited the hospital for treatments, his wife accompanied him to church where she asked for Toritsugi Mediation on Mr. A’s behalf. On one such occasion, Mr. A overheard a conversation at the Mediation Place about Reverend Iwasaki applying Sacred Sake to Mr. A’s wounded area. This was a new experience for Mr. A.

By the fall of 2016, Mr. A’s left kidney had gotten worse. After careful and extensive examination, the doctor found cancer on his right kidney, indicating that his right kidney needed be removed. Furthermore, Mr. A’s left kidney had deteriorated so much that he would be required to have kidney dialysis treatment as part of his treatment plan. More testing and analyses were needed, so Mr. A needed to be hospitalized.

At that time, Mr. A’s wife brought him a book to read. It was Voice of the Universe – Selected

Teachings of Konkokyo, which contained teachings about Kami’s Wish. Here was Mr. A – a person who had never attended service, never heard sermons, and never read church literature. It was the first time he had ever read the Founder’s teachings.

Reverend Iwasaki claimed that Kami changed His form to be the book that would give Mr. A an opportunity to practice faith. Knowing how studious a person Mr. A was, Kami reached out to him and had him read the teachings. In this way, Mr. A was guided to practice faith.



Mr. A said later, “I read the Founder’s teachings for the first time in my life. With each of the teachings I read, I felt like my heart was cleansed.” Mr. A finished reading the 400 teachings all in one sitting. He then realized, “The secret of Konko Faith is appreciation and sincerity.” He also realized that his wife reflected appreciation and sincerity in

all she did, and that he lacked these the most. He made the decision to live his life as his wife did.

Through the book, Mr. A firmly received Kami’s message and he was spiritually awakened. Until this awakening, Mr. A believed that things would go the way he wanted, much in the same way that the Founder thought until he was 42 years old. Such a faith leads people to suffer and eventually to find themselves at dead-ends. Kami sent messages to Mr. A so many times, but Mr. A failed to perceive Kami’s hidden messages. Kami had Mr. A’s wife bring the book to him in the hospital, so that finally, Mr. A was able to receive Kami’s messages.

Just as the Founder was enlightened at the age of 42, Mr. A changed his life. Instead of living a life based solely on his own thoughts and wishes, Mr. A decided to live based on Kami’s thoughts. Mr. A started to do self-training to live a life based on appreciation and sincerity. He expressed appreciation with his prayer, which he had not done

before. When he lived up to Kami's Wish, Kami's workings were realized through him. As he understood Kami's benevolences, Kami's workings were perceived, realized and acknowledged.

Mr. A trusted his doctor who had treated him for five years. However, Mr. A's daughter, who lived in Tokyo suggested that Mr. A should seek a second medical opinion. She recommended a doctor in Tokyo who are specialized in kidney ailments. His doctor kindly provided Mr. A's medical records to the doctor in Tokyo; however, the diagnosis and treatment options were the same. His right kidney should be removed, and the left kidney needed to have dialysis.

Having considered the advance technologies of the hospital, Mr. A decided to have his surgery and treatment in Tokyo. He then looked for another hospital where he could receive dialysis treatment in Shizuoka. During this time, Mr. A continued to practice his faith based on appreciation and sincerity. He made calls during his hospital stays, expressing thoughts such as "I had a good sleep last night," and "I enjoyed my meals today in hospital." He expressed appreciation and sincerity in his daily life. And in this way, his tie with Kami was strengthened. With his strong bond with Kami, Kami's working became evident.

When Mr. A was examined in preparation for surgery, the doctor found that Mr. A's left kidney barely functioned. Miraculously, by the time surgery was scheduled, Mr. A's condition improved so that he was only required to remove his right kidney. If we follow Kami and strengthen our relationship with Kami, Kami gives us blessings. Kami made another special arrangement for Mr. A. The surgery took place on his 84th birthday; therefore, Mr. A was convinced that Kami made him reborn on the very day that he received a gift of life; that is, Mr. A was embraced with Kami's special care, since he was reborn with appreciation

and sincerity.

Reverend Iwasaki related the impressive words he received from Mr. A on the day that of his surgery. Mr. A cheerfully said, "Good morning, Sensei! Today is my 84th birthday and for 84 years, Kami protected me. I would like to express my thankfulness." He continued, "Today, I have an operation scheduled. I have to say goodbye to my right kidney, which has worked for me for 84 years. I would like to thank my right kidney for its selfless 84-year service for me."

When Mr. A was discharged from the hospital, he went straight to the church. He was happy about the successful surgery and the fact that he did not need dialysis treatments. However, more than that, Mr. A said, "I realized Kami's benevolence and I was allowed to be reborn. I am so happy and thankful."

Since then, whenever Mr. A visited the church, he repeatedly expressed thankfulness for his spiritual rebirth. Not only his words, but also his behaviors changed. Today, Mr. A expresses his appreciation for the meals nurtured by the Universe. He truly appreciates Kami's workings even when he moved his bowels or urinated. One day, Mr. A said to Reverend Iwasaki at the Mediation Place, "Please don't laugh, Reverend Iwasaki. It may be my imagination, but when I said to Kami, 'I was able to urinate now. Thank you so much.' I felt that Kami responded by saying 'It is good for you!'" The 84 year old man shed tears as he realized Kami's affection. This is the best aspect of following Konko Daijin's faith.

Reverend Iwasaki concluded that Kami constantly reaches out His hand to everyone. Kami prepares and arranges matters before we do anything. Reverend Iwasaki urged us to receive Kami's benevolence, and to embrace and be embraced by Kami's blessings. Kami guides us to practice faith.

VOICE OF THE UNIVERSE

185 - It would be nice if people could appreciate Kami's blessings with the same intensity they have when making requests in desperate situations. People can readily make requests, but why can't they express their appreciation?

The people who express their deep appreciation by giving thanks ten times for each request, for example, are the people who sincerely practice faith. The more sincerely they practice faith, the more divine blessings they will receive.

(III Jinkyu 92:1-2)

Spreading Konko Faith in Europe

by Takuya Fujimoto

The internet introduced Konkokyo to believers in Europe through the Voice of the Universe – Selected Teachings of Konkokyo, which has been translated in many European languages.

In September 2021, Instagram were set up in Sweden for Konkokyo, and by December, a believer from the Spanish Canary Islands also created a Facebook page.

In October 2021, Mr. Eric L set up a Facebook page in France. About nine years earlier, he contacted the Konkokyo International Center (KIC) and visited Konkokyo Honbu (Headquarters) in Japan. He requested a service for his deceased father, after which he returned to France with his father's reiji spirit case. Last year, he contacted KIC again and asked Honbu to deify his ancestors, including his mother and father, through the Konkokyo's ritual. Mr. Eric L translated Prayers in French, and he set up Tenchi Kakitsuke, the Divine Reminder, in his room with the intention of spreading Konko faith from his home.

There are many who have a strong desire to spread Konko Faith in countries that are currently without a Konko Church. However, many European countries have strict laws against terrorism and radicalization; therefore, there must be officially recognized ministers who are authorized to conduct religious activities. Some advocates urged Konkokyo Honbu to develop an on-line preparation program, through which one could become a minister. However, KIC explained that practicing faith at Honbu, where our spiritual leaders have performed Mediation from generation to generation, is of foundational importance.

As I considered these proposals, I frequently pondered the difference between practicing faith and complying with regulations based on social needs. When I try to learn from what our Founder experienced, I begin to understand that qualification is a major concern when religion is introduced

to society.

Before the Meiji era, our Founder tried to acquire a certificate of priesthood from Shirakawa Office of Shinto Affairs. Kami revealed, "Please note that at our Hiromae, we cannot abide by the various requisites of the Shirakawa Shinto Office." (Oboegaki:15-1-4)

Kami taught that being committed to Kami at the Hiromae is more essential than following Shirakawa's rule and procedures to receive official recognition. Our Founder continued developing the relationship with Kami. This is a key concept we learn from the Founder's utmost reverence and sincerity to Kami.

Kami made our Founder go through hardship, a situation necessary for the Founder and Kami to establish Toritsugi Mediation. Kami sends a Toritsugi Mediator for people in need. Clearly, a certificate of priesthood is secondary compared to the primary requirement of having connection with Kami.

The arduous process for obtaining a certificate is unavoidable for missionary work. In the secular world, the title "priest" involves rules and regulations. Our Founder faced a demanding situation when spreading Konko faith, and we should learn from our Founder's faith. In Konkokyo, establishing a single-hearted faith and standing firm in that faith is of critical importance. Konko Daijin taught, "Faith that is practiced for three or five years can still easily go astray." (GIII: Jinkyu 172)

I am grateful for people who have a passionate desire to propagate Konko faith as Konkokyo ministers in their countries. However, at the same time, waiting for the right moment could be valuable in deepening communication with Kami. As a supporter, I must value the time to deepen my faith. In this way, I hope to convey to all people of the importance of seeking the Founder's faith and deepening our communication with Kami.



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