

Good Morning, everyone! Happy New Day, New Week & special *Thanks* for today's service! This is our Tenchi Kane No Kami Grand Ceremony, 2020.

We all are born in the Universe. Tenchi Kane No Kami is said to be the three divinities: the Sun, the Moon and the Earth. We humans receive everything from these three divinities. Humans are born into the blessings of the Universe, live amid the blessings of the Universe, and die amid the blessings of the Universe.

Kami revealed to our founder as follows: *People are bestowed with the spirit of Tenchi Kane No Kami. Nittenshi-sama (divinity of the sun) blesses our bodies with warmth, while Kane No Kami-sama (divinity of the earth) blesses our muscles and bones. Gattenshi-sama (divinity of the moon) blesses our mouths with moisture, enabling us to speak. However, few have a heart that Tenchi Kane No Kami can accept.*

We all receive blessings from the Universe, or Tenchi Kane No Kami. Today we celebrate the Tenchi Kane No Kami Grand Ceremony. Therefore, first we need to really realize and be grateful for these blessings bestowed to us from the Universe. Then, we should understand Kami's wish for us to do our best to agree with Kami's heart, and serve Kami and people in the world.

Our Founder received the following revelation in 1882 on Oct. 14: *Those who have faith should not worry about the unexpected. There will be unexpected illnesses not only in summer, but also in winter. No one is aware of the blessings of Heaven & Earth which enables people to live. Kami shall have people become aware of the blessings of Heaven & Earth by having Konko Daijin be born throughout the world where the sun shines, in every country, without exception.*

Now the outbreak of the Coronavirus has shocked the world. Coronavirus is the unexpected illness. As Kami said to our Founder, we, if we are true believers of the Konko Faith, do not need to worry about the Coronavirus at all. I cannot help but realize how Kami now keenly wishes for Konko Daijin to be born in every country in order to let people become aware of the blessings of Heaven & Earth. Through this revelation of our Founder's, I believe, we humans should realize even the unexpected illness is Kami's blessing, or we should at least try to understand Kami's wishes through such an unexpected occurrence.

Through Kami's great arrangements I now exchange e-mail or LINE messaging with some young Americans and one Italian. The more I exchange messages with them and get to know how they are doing their best to deepen their faith, the more I realize they have such potential for becoming a *Konko Daijin* which Kami so wishes to have in every country, every state and all over the world.

Among them today I would like to introduce Mr. Massimo Claus, the Italian to all of you. That was because the editor of the Konkokyo Newspaper called me a few weeks ago and requested me to write about Mr. Massimo Claus and how we had been exchanging e-mails about the Coronavirus.

This year he is 56 years old and living with his wife, Laura, in a rural Italian town surrounded by trees. He has been a monk for many years and has helped many people. Thanks to that, he thinks that Kami has led him to Konkokyo, and now he is sincerely seeking the true way of Konko.

The first e-mail I received from him was last year, June 8. He introduced himself and said:

I learned through the Konkokyo that every hindrance would be a chance to improve and deepen our faith. It took me many years to understand this. Now, my deepest desire is to dedicate myself exclusively to the practice and study of Konkokyo to help people know about this wonderful path, because there is an immense need for Kami-Sama both in Italy and in the world.

From there we exchanged e-mails almost every other day. Then after a month he stopped e-mailing me. I didn't know why, but just sent him my sermons for our monthly services.

Then I received an e-mail again on Dec. 19. He wrote:

Please forgive my long absence. Laura and I have lived a very sad time. After the first loss, the following week we have lost someone else and this left us dejected. To that, has to be added the serious problem of my leg. I could finally walk normally again only a few days ago.

I tried to transform all this into a big chance of development, but I still feel a deep suffering inside. My encounter with the Konko faith has radically changed my way of thinking and living, but when I happened to live through all that we lived over the summer, I lost my way.

*Your latest email relieved me from my suffering and has made me see Kami again. Thanks for your presence and your sermons, which for me are very important. I would like to comprehend **Kami's** - **Will** - better.*

From there his motivation for seeking the true way of Konko has been on fire and we have been exchanging e-mail or LINE constantly. He has asked any-and-everything with a pure heart and has increasingly become more and more fascinated with the Konko Faith.

While the Coronavirus was ex-plo-sive-ly spreading in Italy, we exchanged these e-mails:

Here's my message -

New Coronavirus hit severely in Italy. I am very happy to know Kami grows a lot within you and fear goes away from you in this way. Our founder deepened his faith and faced as sincerely as possible to Konjin that was feared as the most evil deity in those days and turned Konjin into Tenchi Kane No Kami, the most benevolent deity. As such I am praying as hard as possible that I worship this Coronavirus with awe & modesty and cover it with my Wagakokoro so it turns into the light of Wagakokoro.

Kami now really wishes there will be such a person like Konko Daijin who never fears Coronavirus and changes it to the light of Wagakokoro. It will be done by not being scared of it, but respecting it with modesty, and in awe to pray for deepening Wagakokoro through it.

Massimo's message to me –

The Coronavirus in Italy has killed and is still killing many people. People are worried they'll get infected. Going out from home is like entering a horror movie.

I think that Kami-sama asked our founder to write the story of his life because it's just life that helps us to practice the faith and develop the light of Wagakokoro. So, Konko Sama's life is a great example for all of us on how to practice the faith in every situation of life. This moment we are experiencing is a great occasion to deepen our faith.

I believe Coronavirus is hitting our country very hard because great things will come after this. But we must have great humbleness and we need to learn to show respect even for what we don't like. In this, I think, one trains his or her faith, and makes his or her heart closer to Kami-sama's. When your heart is close to Kami Sama's even danger becomes His teaching voice. This enables me to not be worried. I am very grateful to Kami-sama to make me experience this time in Italy.

Furthermore I wrote as follows:

The novel coronavirus is shaking the world. I continue to seek Kami's wish through this coronavirus. This is the work of Kami's cleansing of the earth & humankind, the pursuit of natural purification of heaven & earth. And moreover, Kami wants to cleanse the human soul, which is to say, 'first renew the inside of the heart.' I cannot help but think of this outbreak of coronavirus in this way.

Furthermore, I really feel as follows: 'Kami wishes us humans to realize that we are powerless in nature, and that if we don't rely on Kami, we will not be able to live. We should overcome the human history of thousands of years,

'everything being done by our own human power and change it into a kami-centered world.' Therefore I really feel Kami wishes us humans to manifest the world of mutual fulfillment between Kami & humanity where Divinity & humanity meet together in prayer, rejoice together in gratitude, & delight together in mutual satisfaction.

Coronavirus is also deadly. Now is the time to start to develop the single-hearted peace & joy in our hearts at the expense of life. With that determination, may I deepen my peaceful & joyful heart to the extent that it resonates in heaven & earth and hydrates the world.

Massimo replied to me as follows:

Your words have opened my heart and they confirmed to me the mission that Kami has entrusted me with. I understood the wish of Kami-sama when I realized that. Since the beginning, I have considered the Coronavirus a great gift from Kami. I realized that, given the great fear in my country and the people who passed away, it was crazy to think of it that way, but in my mind I was sure that it was exactly that way. How could I have that certainty? Why didn't I feel any fear? I understood that Kami dwelled in my heart and was talking to me through my certainty. I call the Covid-19, "Sensei". I can't explain what I have felt and still feel.

Furthermore he wrote:

Many people write me asking me how I can have such a great heart. I reply with words of the Tenchi Kakitsuke. I realized that other religions, being human being centered, are not helping people around the world to understand the great possibility that Coronavirus is giving us. In this moment, people feel like they need some help greater than them. Konkokyo can show the way to help this.

Let us take this message as the opportunity to clarify the true blessings of Heaven & Earth and be of great service for Kami & people in the world.

Now is the crucial moment. Now is the Konko Faith's turn to help the world. The true value of Konkokyo is being tested. Let us all whole-heartedly be of Wagakokoro whenever & wherever; and then develop peace & joy in our hearts that will resonate in Heaven & Earth and influence our surroundings naturally.

**That is our mission. That is the opportunity we have been handed.
It's our choice, our chance, and our faith. May WAGAKOKORO
SHINE FROM WITHIN for all to recognize the light!**