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## Blessings through Interpreting Our Founder's Teachings

Good Morning, everyone! Happy New Day, Week & special "Thanks" for joining today's service. This is our monthly service for August 2020.

In KC Airaku every summer they have what's called, "Summer Faith Training". It's held every day through the month of July at 1:00 pm Japan time and 10:00 am on Sundays. After the prayers one of the trainees (last year it was a believer) and that day's mediator would give their own mini-interpretations to each of our Founder's teachings taken in order one by one each day.

It continues year after year. So, this year it started with the teaching:

***On this day, pray single-heartedly. The divine favor depends upon one's own (peaceful & joyful) heart.***

And for July 2, the next teaching was:

***Practice the true way of faith and eliminate doubt. You are allowed to live in the midst of divine virtue.***

This year I began making my own mini-interpretations. In order to do so, I had to keep each teaching in mind and direct my heart towards Kami as much as possible to get inspiration from Kami for my daily mini-interpretation.

It has been great faith training. I then asked three young Americans & Massimo in Italy to make their own mini-interpretations. I announced "*I will send mine to all of you every day. If you try, please send yours to me as well. You don't need to write it every day. Please do so when you receive some inspiration from Kami.*" The Americans were Ash & Artemis in Missouri and Seth in Virginia.

I believe they enjoyed making their own mini-interpretations. By doing it they each sensed Kami's work around them and each has deepened in their faith. Massimo tried to write his own mini-interpretation each day. Seth often wrote his. Ash & Artemis did it several times. Through their mini-interpretations I have learned a lot, such as, which teachings of our Founder especially impressed them, and how Japanese & Western ideas are linked with each other.

On July 7 the Founder's teaching was:

***The Divine Parent protects both pure and impure places. Do not have impurities in your heart.***

They all responded to this one. So I think this teaching has a special impact on those born and living in, so-called, Christian countries. I would like to share each of their mini-interpretations with all of you.

Here is mine: "*Heaven & Earth is a world of 'The Oeness of Pure-Impure.'* Pure-Impure is an idea that humans created. Impurities are made by our hearts. And also impurity is a non-achievement. Both are pronounced the same in Japanese. The non-achievement is what Kami dislikes the most. When we respect -- 'Impurity' or 'Non-achievement' -- as 'Divine Love,' -- immediately a world opens up -- where even greater wishes of Kami -- are fulfilled."

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This is Massimo's mini-interpretation: *"To me, this teaching is a hymn -- to a life -- lived with gratitude -- and faith. A life focused on Kami, instead of -- our convictions."*

When I posted this one on airakuU (a *Line* group), Rev. Aiko Ikejiri, the second daughter of Rev. Soichiro Otsubo, responded with the sign meaning, '**Amazing.**'

Seth's mini-interpretation was: *"Kami-sama's presence in all things means that everything is sacred. 'Pure/impure' is an illusion created by humanity. When we achieve Wagakokoro and accept all things as Kami-sama's love, we will see the sacredness in all things."*

Artemis's thoughts on this teaching are: *"I'm reading the teaching again and I agree with Ash. For the teaching on July 7, I think it is very free-ing to know that all places are sacred in the eyes of Kami-sama. I always think that it helps people -- who often worry about whether or not they are doing something wrong, or if they are somehow cursed or impure. It's nice to remember that Kami-sama doesn't think that way."*

Ash's mini-interpretation was: *"Because all is protected by Kami-sama, all things are sacred. In this faith, impure or pure things no longer apply. One should live, knowing all things under Kami-sama should be cared for with gratitude."*

Ash posted hers directly on airakuU. So I asked the members of airakuU to translate it into Japanese. It triggered good conversations among members of airakuU, and made for the best translation possible.

One minister even posted: *"I don't understand English at all. However, I saw many posts for making the translation better and felt the Airaku Philosophy was spreading around the world. That moved me to tears. On airakuU South America, North America, Italy and Japan are connected in real time. I would like to extend my appreciation to Nidai Oyasensei who started this airakuU."*

On July 16 our Founder's teaching was:

***Do not despise other deities when revering the kami whom you believe in solely.***

They all responded to this teaching. So I would like to share each of their mini-interpretations with you all, as well.

Here is mine: *"It is no exaggeration to say that the history to this day of humankind is that of conflict. Religions have been greatly involved in this as well. Why?"*

*That would be, because they are revering the kami -- whom they believe in -- solely. If the God whom we believe in, is considered to be 'the Only One,' collisions among religions is inevitable.*

*'Do not despise other deities.' What a truly deep religion!*

*Mr. Ben Vose, who taught my son, Mitsunori, in his elementary school days, has said, 'Konkokyo is a healing religion.' He added, 'Konkokyo has content that prevents conflicts between religions.'"*

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This is Massimo's mini-interpretation: *"Each religion states it is the only path to salvation. Mo-no-the-ist religions assert that God is one, but -- they believe that only their interpretation is the right one. All religions speak about love and compassion, but -- to have different opinions -- is a problem for them. Religion should connect us, help us understand and accept diversities, but -- unfortunately -- religion causes conflicts and divisions. Konko Daijin's words put order in our hearts and show us the natural way to follow and love Kami-sama."*

Seth's mini-interpretation is as follows: *"We are taught to bring harmony to the world and to help the people within it. Sowing seeds of hate in the name of religion only furthers the cause of hatred and disharmony, and does not help the world. We are living in times in which it seems there is nothing but hatred and dissention wherever you look. We must rise above that and be agents of harmony and joy."*

Here are thoughts Artemis had: *"I love that so much! It's a very different attitude, than in Christian countries...people will assume that that's how all religions are. When I found out religions can exist in harmony, without hating other religions, I was so happy."*

Ash's mini-interpretation is: *"Just like there are many people in this world, so are there many Gods and Faiths to fit in the 'spiritual opening' of the heart like a puzzle piece.*

*There is no such thing as one color that every single person likes or one season that everyone enjoys, because it is the way of the human heart to desire different things. This also makes the world more beautiful.*

*It is easy to think 'My god is the best!' because we love our god so much. But, this is not the way of Tenchi Kane no Kami.*

*Kami-sama's desire is not for all people to worship Tenchi Kane no Kami. Kami-sama's desire is to heal the hearts of people and bring about peace in the world. This includes letting people freely decide -- the faith that suits their hearts. To show love to Kami-sama, we must do everything we can to achieve this desire."*

As I mentioned at the start of this sermon, I did my best when making my mini-interpretation each day. Strangely enough, I had a great experience that it welled up in my mind each and every day when I tried to do so.

Thanks to that -- I have realized just how much Kami has led me to deepen my faith so far. I have extended my appreciation to Kami for that. And at the same time, I realized I should develop my faith deeper and deeper to communicate with Kami more freely. Thanks to this challenge of making my mini-interpretations, I have now -- even greater enthusiasm -- to practice faith ever more precisely -- so as to deepen the *peace & joy* in my heart -- more -- and even more.

Finally, to all of you I must say the most important thing of all. Through trying to write our own mini-interpretation, besides developing our faith, our relationships between each other have become deeper and deeper. It really is gra-ti-fy-ing and I appreciate it the most.