

April Monthly Service 2023

Good morning, everyone! Happy New Day, New Week & special “Thanks” for joining today’s service. This is our monthly service for April 2023.

Today is April 9. Fourteen years ago this day, I was appointed as the head-minister of KC Chicago by our Principal Mediator, Kyoshu Konko-sama. Since then I have had an earnest desire to spread this faith through deepening the peace & joy in my heart. That is, I wish to embody the *Divine Reminder* and demonstrate that the opening to this faith is in the heart of my *Wagakokoro*, as it is stated in the *Divine Reminder: Kami’s blessings begin within our own peaceful joyful heart.*

To attain that, I have tried to keep the *Divine Reminder* in mind each & every moment, and accept with gratitude every happening as Kami’s Sacred doing. Honestly speaking, I have often failed to do so. However, recently I have a much stronger conviction of Kami being the immortal parent of us humans and only wishing we can fulfill our lives with HIM and realize everything that happens is HIS SACRED doing for the development of the human heart. More than that, I personally realize without Kami’s blessings I am not able to do a single thing, not even develop my own heart. Therefore, I now feel that throughout these years of faith practice Kami has laid the foundation for my piety, that is, for me to deepen my unbreakable peaceful joyful heart.

As you know, this year Konkokyo celebrates the 140th Spiritual Birthday of our founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin, and the 150th Anniversary of the birth of the *Divine Reminder*. I now can't help but feel Kami's great desire to manifest the *Divine Reminder* in this world, that is, to establish the *Wagakokoro* era in the world. For that, Kami has led me during these years to realize thoroughly two of the most important concepts of faith, that is, ‘*ALL IS DIVINE LOVE*’ and that ‘*we humans have no power, no talent, no abilities before Kami.*’

I also feel Kami has led my wife to build her faith foundation during these years to work together with me to establish the *Wagakokoro* era in this world. Through Kami’s great arrangement my wife, Kanako, was able to fly to Japan and attend the 20th anniversary memorial service for the Mitama spirit of Mrs. Isoe Otsubo, wife of Shodai Oyasensei. It was held on Wednesday, March 15.

Isoe Ookusama (honorary Japanese for Mrs.) was not such a brilliant lady, spoke very little, and had a rather tragic upbringing. As a child, she was quite sickly and closed herself off from others. But, of course, after meeting Shodai Oyasensei in Beijing, China her destiny drastically began to change.

After the war, her husband, Shodai, a merchant, sought the true way of Konko. And Kami led him to become the head-minister of KC Airaku. During those years,

Isoe Ookusama saw herself the worst of women who could not do anything. So, with such realization, as the first believer of Shodai's, she quietly accepted all events trying to polish her heart, and deepen her peaceful joyful heart silently. Then later she received the blessings for improving of her destiny, her weak constitution and personality. And then she lived in a world of bliss where, feeling herself unworthy, she would always say, "Thank you! It's too much for me!"

Isoe Ookusama's way of life was like the soil, where every happening was used as fertilizer for her own roots, enriching the soil of her heart. I cannot help but think that she is truly the greatest demonstrator of the teachings of this faith. At the same time, she showed us that any ordinary human being can become a *living kami*.

On March 15 female ministers from Brazil and all around Japan came to attend her 20th anniversary memorial service with many believers of KC Airaku. KC Airaku used its ceremony hall for the first time in three years, having not used it due to the pandemic. The huge hall was overflowing with worshippers who admired and yearned for her so much. I heard everyone could not help but feel the greatness of Ookusama's way of living. My wife, Kanako was one of them.

1978 on Oct. 3, Ookusama had spoken for the first time to the second *women's believers' conference*. She was asked to give a greeting for the conference assembly. She is quoted saying: "I can only hope that the *Divine Desire* that has been exchanged between Kami and Oyasensei will be fulfilled. I would like to increasingly acquire the faith of the earthly nature of the universe, the faith to resolve every happening in silence." It was short and brief, but had summarized her life and influenced the conference quite a lot.

Coming back to Chicago, Kanako is now strongly determined to follow the faith of Ookusama. She flew back home on Thursday, March 30. She wrote a message on **airakuU** to express appreciation for her stay at KC Airaku. Her last words were: "From here, together with Masanori Sensei, we shall ask ourselves, 'What would Shodai Oyasensei do in such a situation? What would Ookusama do?' And we will keep this in mind."

Her determination made me feel that our hearts were united and that from this point on, we would be able to head straight for the fulfillment of Kami's Wish to establish the Wagakokoro era in this world.

I now desperately wish to develop peace & joy in my heart to the extent that it resonates throughout Heaven & Earth and enriches the world. For this, I will solemnly devote myself to a life of faith development as far as the limitations of my physical and spiritual abilities.