

2023-04-23 TKKGC Speech for Toronto

Good Morning Everyone! Thank you very much for attending today's Tenchi Kane No Kami Grand Ceremony here at the Konko Church of Toronto. I trust you are all enjoying the best of health & excellent spirits on this beautiful spring day.

Long Time No See! How wonderful it is to be able to see all of you after three years' absence due to the pandemic! I am also very happy to see some of the new-comers. It is always a pleasure to be in Toronto. It is an even greater pleasure to be asked to speak at this, one of the two most important celebrations in the Konko Faith: the grand ceremony for Tenchi Kane No Kami.

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*.

In commemorating these anniversaries, I wrote a poem for each one:

“What reason is it
The founder, Konko Daijin,
Has to us been sent
Is but for to fulfilling
The Way of Kami and Man”

「何のため 金光大神 差し向けし 神人の道 栄え行くため」

“In earnest I wish
To embody and pass on
The Divine Reminder
So as to truly reveal
The Divine Parent's Glory.”

「ひたすらに 天地書附 体現し 神のヒレイと なすよしもがな」

We hear everyday people all over the world are struggling because of world-wide turmoil, such as the pandemic, natural disasters, or wars etc. More than 100 years ago, our founder said, “*Though they say the world is becoming civilized, it is not. It is collapsing.*”

People nowadays live far more convenient lives in modern society due to technological development, but they tend not to realize their relationship with the Universe and with Kami. Too many are apt to live centered on material matters.

It seems as though we humans, with all our advantages, have forgotten the

importance of cultivating our hearts. Even though we have been aware of the vital importance of the heart, we have not yet learned how to develop our hearts in our daily lives. I've come to realize it is our hearts which are sickened & collapsing that is causing the heart of the world, in which we each live, to collapse. Some of the responsibility for that, falls on ministers & priests like me. We have failed to show the public an example of faith that is practiced single-heartedly to bring peace & joy to our societies.

As we, the Konkokyo welcome the precious anniversaries of this year, now is the best time to clearly understand the reason why Kami sent Konko Daijin to us, and that what Kami had revealed to him & entrusted with him was the Divine Reminder.

Looking at our founder in 1855, what happened to him at age 42? He was stricken with a serious illness. The doctor thought there was no hope for his recovery. However, he was saved by Konjin through his sincere faith in this deity, even though Konjin thought to be the most fearful deity at that time. He realized for the first time that he had come across the deity who would help people. Since then he did his best to seek & understand Kami's true heart with all his heart.

Then on October 13, 1857 our founder sincerely accepted the request of his younger brother, Shige'emon, who was possessed by Konjin and acting like a madman. The request was to build a house for Konjin.

Kami was pleased with our founder's acceptance of this request and later it became known as *Kami's first request*. He also realized this was his first blessing from Konjin, and the start of his faith. Since then he tried to respect each & every happening in his daily life as Kami's *sacred doing* no matter how difficult it would be. Through his efforts he always felt Kami near him and heard the Divine voice. He became closer & closer to Kami.

Then, he received the *Divine Call* on Nov. 15, 1859. After receiving the Divine Call, Konko Daijin began to mediate between Kami and people for mutual fulfillment. Without thinking of himself, day-and-night he did his best to fulfill Kami's wish for everyone to be saved and become a *living kami*.

Fourteen years later he was ordered by local officials to remove the altar fixtures and stop his mediation. This was the most critical moment in his ministry. Leaving the worship room and praying to Kami, he asked if there was any other way for people to be saved and fulfill their lives, without a place for worship or a mediator like himself. In reply, he received the *Divine Reminder*:

Tenchi Kane No Kami
-Divine Parent of the Universe-
Ikigami Konko Daijin
-Divine Mediator-

Pray sincerely,
With all your heart.
Be one with Kami.

Kami's blessings begin within
Hearts grateful and caring,
In harmony and joy.

Look to Kami always,
Now and forever.
On this very day, pray.

This Divine Reminder has become the central teaching of the Konko Faith. It has created a core of grateful and caring hearts, united in joy and harmony. In short, to demonstrate this Divine Reminder, or to deepen our peaceful & joyful heart, is the essential foundation for human happiness.

Two days before he received the Divine Reminder, Kami told him, "Konko, be reborn. Take your first bath in ten years." As this symbolized, Kami wished a new Konkokyo to be born through this Divine Reminder and all human beings to embody it to have their fulfilled lives with Kami.

As I mentioned earlier, this year we celebrate the 150th anniversary of *the birth of the Divine Reminder*. The time is now for each one of us to embody the *Divine Reminder* and to truly reveal the Divine Parent's Glory. Anyone can do it, at any time, at any place, when they really intend to do it, because the Divine Reminder was revealed in this world for that purpose.

One of our founder's teachings says: "About the Divine Reminder, Konkosama explained, 'It is definitely not a charm. Place it where it can be easily seen in the morning and evening. Remember to follow what is written on it.'"

To attain that, therefore, 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 that Kami is the immortal parent of us humans and only wishes we would fulfill our lives with KAMI and realize everything that happens is KAMI'S SACRED doing for the development of our human heart. More than that, I also realize without Kami's blessings I am not able to do a single thing, not even develop my own heart.

Then recently, Kami led me to listen to a speech by Rev. Mikisaburo Otsubo, whom I deeply respect. In the last few minutes he talked about a divine

dream he had which contained a powerful message for me from Kami. I (he said, Masanori Sensei) was in this divine dream and serving the best Omiki-san to worshippers after the grand ceremony at Konko Headquarters. When Mikisaburo Sensei drank some of it in the dream, it tasted strange to him or spoiled. It was neither sake, nor water. He thought, it wouldn't get him drunk.

Now, to that day I had been devoted to giving testimony that "*opening this Way lies in one's Wagakokoro.*" In other words, having *Wagakokoro* is how to *open the Way*. However, I wonder how much I have developed my own *Wagakokoro*, or a sense of "*thankfulness, humbleness, and awesomeness.*" We call Japanese sake 'Miki,' but can also call these three qualities 'Miki.' Since in Japanese, 'mi' is three and these three words have the suffix 'ki', such as 'Arigataki, Mottainaki, Osoreooki.' So I felt anyone drinking my *Wagakokoro* should taste these three 'Ki's': thankfulness, humbleness, awesomeness. And I wonder if I have been serving a good portion of my "*strange tasting Wagakokoro*" so far.

I know it is the spiritual basis for faith to eliminate one's selfish desires. So I have done my best to eliminate much, through respecting each & every happening as Kami's doing and, in that way, develop my peaceful joyful heart. Through Mikisaburo Sensei's divine dream, I keenly came to realize Kami was teaching whether I could successfully rid myself of selfish desires or not. It made me consider whether my selfish desires were still lurking in my heart and affecting such a *strange tasting 'miki.'*

From then on, I have returned to the starting point and redoing my piety. 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. 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.***'

Welcoming 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. So, in order to utilize the Divine Reminder in daily life, we need to keep the Divine Reminder in mind each & every moment, and respect each happening as Kami's Sacred doing, on this very day praying. Thus we can deepen the peace & joy of our hearts.

The *Divine Reminder* is a treasure that Kami has given to us. Kami sent us our founder to reveal the Divine Reminder. Let us silently try to accept

everything that comes our way, and ask Kami single-mindedly to let us deepen peace & joy in the heart through everything that happens. This is the practice of the *Divine Reminder*. Kami is single-minded in His desire for all people to become happy with a *Wagakokoro*. Therefore, when we can put the *Divine Reminder* into practice in our daily lives, we surely shall receive divine blessings that will surpass our expectations.

Throughout this year and beyond, I will do my best to embody the *Divine Reminder*, while offering the following prayer:

“May the history of human conflicts, whereby we are ruled by force, come to an end. And may the Wagakokoro Era, where Kami and humans worship, rejoice, and enjoy each other, become manifested. It is for this very reason that I ask You, Kami, to nurture my Wagakokoro, so it can resonate throughout the heavens and earth, and enriches the world to understand, ‘All is Divine Love.’ With my Wagakokoro I would like to help more Konko Daijins come to be born one after another in all the countries throughout the world, in every state of the United States and Canada.”

Let us respect each & everything that happens as Kami’s challenge to grow in faith. Whatever you do... do it .. filled to the brim .. with gratitude. Whatever happens .. no matter how difficult it may be .. receive it like our founder. This kind of faith training will not only please Kami most, it can build a foundation of mutual reliance with *Tenchi Kane No Kami*.

With guidance from Reverend Kishii, I hope you all commit yourselves to take up the spirit of great service in every moment of your lives, and demonstrate the *Divine Reminder*; manifesting mutual fulfillment between Kami & humanity right here ... in Toronto!

Thank you very much