

Monthly Service

December 11, 2022

Good morning! Happy Sunday in this *new* week of Kami's blessings! And thank you very much for joining today's service. This is our monthly service for December 2022. I hope each one of you is in good health & excellent spirits on this beautiful winter morning.

Now, I adore Shodai Oyasensei more than ever and wish to be as close to his faith as possible. Until now, I had got up at 3:13 am, but that meant it was past 3:30 am before I could sit in front of Kami's altar. So, from November 23, I have decided to wake up at 3:00 am And from 3:30 am, I can sit upright on the mat-seat in front of the Kami's altar to prepare my heart for the silent heart-to-heart prayer at 4:00 am.

At 3:30 am, Shodai Oyasensei entered the waiting room, where he was preparing his mind for his silent heart-to-heart prayer before Kami's altar at 4:00 am. And he said, "His silent prayer in front of Kami's altar would be like meeting a lover. I would be most grateful for such a 30-minute waiting time in the day."

Remembering details of the waiting room of KC Airaku, I now sit upright on the mat-seat for 30 minutes as if I were sitting opposite Shodai in front of the hanging scroll handwritten by the third Konko-sama. It was written as follows: "Great favor of heaven and earth." 「天地の大恩」 <tenchi no daion> And then I am seeking what kind of prayer he was offering at that time.

I am now spending my grateful 30 minutes, and then I am praying from 4:00 am in silent prayer bursting with feeling.

One day after I started waking up at 3:00 am, people in the USA had Thanksgiving Day. It was Thursday, Nov. 24. It is even good to say that it is the biggest holiday of all in America. On that day, we received the best of the best, a day of Thanksgiving.

With the virtues and mediation of our Founder & Shodai Oyasensei, the entire Takeuchi family gathered at Donghoon and Hiroko's house to enjoy a day "filled with laughter and joy" amidst the prayers of Tenchi Kane No Kami. Donghoon's mother also came, so it was really a gathering of all of us.

One teaching of Shodai says: "Kami gladly and joyfully participates in joyous gatherings." 「喜びの集いに、神和し給う」 <yorokobi no tsudo ni, Kami washi tamau> It was such a gathering of my entire family.

In that afternoon, rain had been predicted, but it did not come. In the back yard Donghoon was able to grill the ribs, sausages, corn, and sweet potatoes. We were so

blessed, without any rain. I ended up drinking and eating too much. I was reminded that I had yet to change my "self" and that I still needed to renew myself at this point.

This reminds me of the time when Shodai Oyasensei was inebriated, and I could not help but be moved by his appearance at the time. This is because, although Shodai Oyasensei loved to drink, I could not help but feel that it was for the sake of saving others, even if he drank too much.

The young ministers in Osaka area asked Shodai to have his lecture and give his speech in Osaka for the great development of Konkokyo. So some of them visited KC Airaku beforehand. After the important meeting Shodai served them dinner. Japanese sake was also served. We trainees were also accompanied with them and exchanged cups of sake with each other. All of the young ministers in Osaka went beside Shodai and wished to exchange a cup of sake with Shodai.

Therefore Shodai exchanged sake with them one after another. Watching that scene, I was worried a little bit that Shodai would drink too much.

We trainees left earlier, because they started to eat dinner. After a while I & another trainee were asked to come to the place they had eaten dinner, where Shodai was alone & inebriated and could not walk by himself.

We took him to his room and returned back to our room. There unexpectedly and suddenly both of us were moved to tears together. Both of us thought Shodai had got drunk for the young ministers in Osaka to have their best time of dinner at KC Airaku.

I know that we human beings tend to drink and eat too much. But it was a day that made me reflect on how I would like to get as close as possible to Shodai Oyasensei.

Time flies so fast. It is already December, the last month of the year, 2022. The coronavirus pandemic has not yet been stopped, in spite of all human efforts. Even so, let us deepen the unbreakable peace & joy in our heart even during this pandemic & through everything that happens in our daily life, like our Founder & Shodai Oyasensei has shown.

In my heart, every move of Shodai Oyasensei is imprinted. Shodai showed me the heart of Wagakokoro in all aspects of human life. I have seen firsthand how a person who has developed a Wagakokoro would live such a life.

From now on I wish to do my best to get closer to Shodai, even by imitating his way of being. In this way, I want to seek his heart. I believe it will be the best way for me to develop my pure & unbreakable peaceful joyful heart.