

Konko Church of Chicago
Monthly Service December 03, 2023

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 2023. I hope each one of you is in good health & excellent spirits on this beautiful winter morning.

On November 12 the Konko Church of Gardena held their Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremony, commemorating 140 Years since the passing of the Founder and the 70th Anniversary of its Establishment. It was filled with Kami's awesome workings and around 90 worshippers witnessed this solemn & beautiful service.

I flew to LA on Thursday, Nov. 9 to help Rev. Uzunoe prepare for this important ceremony and flew back to Chicago the following Monday night.

Our founder had a strong conviction about the *true way of Konko*. On Jan. 16, 1883 (the year of his passing) he told his son, Hagio:

Today, I'll tell you about the name Konko. Konko means, 'golden light shines.' The 'Kon' comes from the 'Kane' in Kane No Kami. The 'ko' comes from 'hikari,' meaning sunlight. Sunlight provides the world with light. Therefore it means that the entire world is being blessed by Kane No Kami's light shining throughout the world.

He continued; *I'll tell you this little poem that Kami revealed to me:*

*The true way of Konko
makes the world bright,
shines through Heaven,
and will last forever.*

For the first time in human history, he showed how a person living an ordinary life becomes a living kami through his deepening of faith in Kami.

Kami had also revealed to him:

*For the sake of people and to help those in need, you
will be reborn as a kami. This is to allow people to
recognize the eternity of Konko Daijin's divine virtue.*

And also,

*Ikigami Konko Daijin will live and work forever
as a kami. This will also be the eternal virtue of Ikigami
Konko Daijin.*

This *true way of Konko* has been revealed to the world. How pleased **Kami** will be and how blessed **we** are!

In order to walk the *true way of Konko*, it's of vital importance to realize the following teaching of Kami:

Everything that happens is Tenchi No Kami's doing. This includes major upheavals.

To help us more clearly understanding this important message, I would like to share a recent e-mail exchange I had with Ash, who is an earnest Konko believer living in St. Louis with her husband, Patrick.

I sent her a birthday greeting on Nov. 6:

Hi, Ash! Happy Birthday 🎂 During my morning prayer service I sincerely prayed for Kami's wish for you to be fulfilled. Then I prayed to receive Kami's message to you opening the Wagakokoro Sacred Book. I received this part of Rev. Otsubo's mini-teaching: *'Develop a faith which was for immediate needs, to faith which will hold true in this life as well as the next.'*

Then I realized this would not only be a message to you from Kami, but also one to me **from** you & Kami. This is the first time for me to realize a teaching as such that I received for someone.

She replied:

Hi Sensei!! Thank you for 'happy birthday!' I had a great day yesterday. Patrick woke up early and made me French toast and tea, and then we relaxed. For dinner, he took me to an Afghan food place, which was super delicious. It was an easy-going day, but I was really grateful for it.

I believe this teaching is very fitting, since I didn't want anything in particular this year. I just wished to relax with Patrick's company. I didn't ask or wish for anything special like gifts or a big cake or a big party this year, but I accepted everything that happened as special.

My teaching also helped you, too, so I can't help but feel appreciative. If this is your first time to see it like that, then I feel like I shared a gift without trying! What did it make you think about? If it's difficult to share or secret, don't worry. You don't have to say!

This was my next message:

Hi, Ash! Thank you very much for your kind reply.

It is not a secret, but it is difficult to explain abstractly. However, I think it better explain it abstractly than concretely. That is because I don't want to force anyone to do something for it for me.

Anyway, I will try to share it with you even though it may be abstract. Shodai teaches us, *'With a single heart, it all comes into being.'* When something happened, I finally realized that I

had only vaguely believed in this teaching. In fact, through my single heart nothing has *come into being*. Then, instead of relying wholly on Kami and doing my best to deepen peace & joy in my heart until it *all comes into being*, I relied on immediate needs.

Thanks to realizing the lack of my faith through this happening, I now am doing my best to direct my heart to Kami each & every moment to develop my heart toward the heart that it *all comes into being*, that is, the faith that will *hold true in this life as well as the next*.

Then Ash sent me:

Ah, I think I understand.

A moment-to-moment faith. An example I think might be when one is starving, their immediate need is food. So they ask Kami-sama for food and have faith that food will come. However, if food doesn't come, faith becomes weakened because the prayer seems like it wasn't answered.

However, an even stronger faith is not even asking for food, even when you're starving, because you trust already without thinking that Kami-sama will take care of it. You focus instead on the bigger picture.

What do you think?

Here was my thought.

Hi, Ash! Thank you very much for sending your deep insight about Kami's doing.

As you know, Kami instructed our founder as follows: *Everything that happens is Tenchi No Kami's doing. This includes major upheavals.*

The stronger faith is to absolutely believe in this statement. I think it OK to ask for food when we are starving. However, if food doesn't come, we should know and think that it was Kami's doing through the bigger picture of Kami training us to deepen peace & joy in our heart through this.

Kami revered Konko Daijin's life of faith so much that Kami has said to us:

There is nothing you cannot receive through a request. Request through Konko Daijin. You can receive divine blessings for all your requests.

Therefore, we must first realize the importance of receiving Konko Daijin's Mediation. Then, through Ikigami Konko Daijin's Mediation let us practice faith to pray to Tenchi Kane No Kami and deepen peace & joy in our heart through each & every happening with pleasure and walk the *true way of Konko*. Through this we **will** manifest the work of Kami, receive blessings, and carefully convey the gratitude we have received -- to others. If we can do this, the Wagakokoro era will naturally be spread in the world.