

Complete Version

Peace & Joy

IN Konko Teachings

A Translation of author,
Rev. Soichiro Otsubo, Founding Head Minister
& Rev. Katsuhiko Otsubo, Head Minister

NOTE: This is but a rough presentation. Although a complete version, it includes new material that hasn't received careful scrutiny which a proper edition requires. Any imperfections, mistakes or poor translations are all my doing. I pray that future checks and corrections would better clarify the intended spirit within these KONKO TEACHINGS.

Rev Richard L. Dusek
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2014

TRANSLATED FROM

和賀心教典
[BOOK OF WAGAKOKORO TEACHINGS]

PUBLISHED OCTOBER 16, 1987
KONKO CHURCH OF AIRAKU
KURUME, JAPAN

COMPLETE VERSION

DECEMBER 2014

PEACE & JOY IN KONKO TEACHINGS

TRANSLATING EDITOR

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RECEIVED MUCH
DIVINE AND HUMAN ASSISTANCE

REVISION WORK

REV MASANORI TAKEUCHI
KONKO CHURCH OF CHICAGO

JAMAL LEKI-ALBANO
& OTHERS

Introduction

Rev. Soichiro Otsubo (1914-1994) even as a merchant avidly believed that the founder of the Konko faith had never spoken any falsehood. Throughout his preaching Rev. S. Otsubo demonstrated and led his congregation in developing the joy and peace of true faith through his life.



Rev. Katsuhiko Otsubo at left mediation seat of Airaku Church

PEACE & JOY IN KONKO TEACHINGS is a translation of the 1987 Japanese book 「和賀心 教典」. For each entry, first the Konko teaching is given. It is followed by short writings done at different times concerned with that particular Konko teaching. This same pattern was how it came to be made.

Starting with the Konko Teachings, one taken in order each day, Rev. S. Otsubo would write briefly while seated in mediation during midday prayers for summer faith practice. It began as a 50-day period prior to the Third Konko-sama's birthday (August 5th), and became the month of July. It still continues today. Each summer's writings are done at the mediation desk in the same way.

Translation was a five-year project of mine that began after the 25th Anniversary of the Konko Church of Airaku. At that time I was still working as a university teacher. My decision to enter Konko Seminary added another year to complete the project. An early version had come out in the summer of 2003. From then, it has undergone much study and revision through the expert guidance of Rev. Masanori Takeuchi of Konko Church of Chicago.

In this *COMPLETE VERSION* is included all the *writings* accompanying each of the teachings of the previous **Konkokyo Kyoten** (1928). This compilation represents years of work by many who sought to convey Rev. Soichiro Otsubo's earnest aim to realize the true joy of faith embedded in Konko Teachings.

Along with apologies for any insufficiencies in these translations, I add my earnest wish that more people might discover that inner peace & wonderful joy while approaching the Divine Heart. It is called, the *Peaceful Joyful Heart* or *Wagakokoro*.

May you each find truth, goodness and beauty in your efforts. It's paramount for human beings & the Divine Parent.

Hands in Earnest Prayer,
Rev RL Dusek

Outside entrance to Airaku Church



Complete Version

Peace & Joy
IN Konko Teachings

ORIGINALLY
Written in Japanese
1968 – 1986

author



Reverend Soichiro Otsubo
Reverend Soichiro Otsubo

Founding head minister of
Konko Church of Airaku
Kurume, Japan

The Divine Call

RECEIVED

November 15, 1859

*A divine request for the founder to mediate full-time
It marks the founding of the Konko faith*

Added to the collection of Sacred Teachings in 1933

With the completion of this sacred staff, I (Kami) will end your farming career. Please understand. When you are out farming, the person at home has to go out and call you whenever someone comes to give a request. And after you relay the request, you have to go back out again. You have to keep going in and out of the field. This gives you little time for farming, and the worshiper must also wait for you. Both you and the worshiper are being inconvenienced. Won't you stop farming? When you were gravely ill at forty-two,

the doctor gave up hope. Everyone worried about you. You prayed to Kamis and buddhas and were blessed with complete recovery. Regard this event as your death. Dispel all desires and assist Tenchi Kane No Kami. Also, your wife should consider herself a widow. This is better than being a real widow, as she can still talk to you and discuss matters. She should take the children with her to do the farm work. There are many people like you who have sincere faith in Kamis, but still have many problems. Help these people by performing mediation. This will help Kami and save people. Man exists because of Kami, and Kami exists because of man. Thus, Kami supports man as Kami's children, and man supports Kami as his parent. There will be eternal prosperity through this mutual interdependency.

We must not overlook the faith the founder had before he received the call from Kami. It is the finest, unparalleled, intimate relationship with Tenchi Kane No Kami. Therefore he was able to quit his occupation and give assistance to Tenchi Kane No Kami. Saving man is to save Kami. Both Kami and man will be fulfilled. This is the will of Kami; it's what we must have engraved in our hearts -- "Everyone will become forever prosperous. As a parent cares for a child and a child cares for the parent, people will be saved by this mutual relationship of Kami and man." We believers must not forget the spirit of the founder when he staked his life to accept the divine call.

"When people forget their hardships they tend to become aristocratic. Religiously speaking, this is the most horrible thing. Succeeding one's parents is not inheriting their house or estate. It is inheriting the way one's parents dealt with hardship."

An excerpt from the words of Rev. Kaneshiro Nagai

Written 7/22/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The Konko Religion, the religion prior to other religions, was born in the world of man for the first time since the beginning of the universe. The 'Divine Request' that was given to Konko Daijin from the heart of Kami was at the same time stern and gentle, but gentle and stern. It is, namely to "regard this event as your death" and "dispel all selfish desires;" it's that "your wife should consider herself a widow -- this is better than being a real widow, as she can still talk to you and discuss matters." The ultimate request of Kami is the manifestation of the Airaku world* to save and fulfill both Kami and man.

Written 7/ 1/1978 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

NOTE: 'Airaku world' is where Kami and man meet together in prayer, rejoice together in gratitude, and delight in mutual satisfaction. It's a world in which Kami and man commune together, both Kami and man being fulfilled, both prospering. It is the ideal faith in the Konko religion.

Reverently reading this divine call, I couldn't help feeling that Kami is discharging sacred blood in this earnest prayer to save mankind. By no means is this divine call only for the founder alone. As the message of those who have entered this relation with Kami, I wish that each and every one will definitely receive this divine command. Kami, may the pursuits of man be truly fervent.

Written 7/30/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

Tenchi Kakitsuke

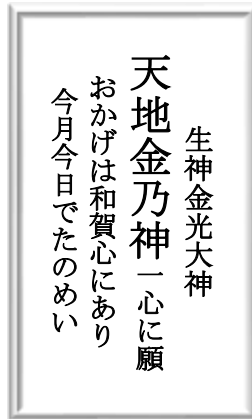
RECEIVED

April 11, 1873

A divine instruction to awaken one's faith

Added to the collection of Sacred Teachings in 1954

This version adopted in 2009



Ikigami Konko Daijin Tenchi Kane No Kami

Isshin ni negae

Okage wa waga kokoro ni ari

Kongetsu konnichi de tanomei

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.

‘WA-GA KOKORO’ [one’s peace and joy] is the fundamental principle for the happiness of mankind. Even though seeking the mild heart of WA (harmony) and the joyous heart of GA (celebration) is life’s desire, not one of us has known the way. The founder is the person who has taught and expounded on the way so that everyone can understand it. A world of light is there which is never obstructed and what’s more will open endlessly.

What gets in the way of WA-GA KOKORO
includes being proud, being filthy.

Written 7/23/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Saying it’s sincere, even single hearted, but if it doesn’t communicate with Kami, it cannot be called single-hearted sincerity. Wagakokoro is the spirit-heart which inter-connects with Kami. Blessings are not received; they are what are produced. It’s the joyous communication between the believer and Kami. This joyous communication is the spirit which even climbs to heaven.

Written 7/ 2/1978 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

“Blessings come through one’s Wagakokoro.”

The various trials and tribulations of the founder’s whole life were for this single phrase to be made clear. Also the arduous training that Rev. Soichiro Otsubo is undergoing now proves this very point. Through the extraordinary trials and training of both men we come to attain, as in this line of *Tenchi Kakitsuke*, a simple but sure way to divine fulfillment. Throughout our whole life, we devote ourselves more and more to receive the steadfast Wagakokoro.

Written 7/31/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

Admonitions:

Toward True Faith

Earliest issue by Konko Shinto Church in June 1885

*First issue in 1900 by
Konko Faith Headquarters*

Printed 1928 in the collection of Sacred Teachings

Dictated to Sato Norio by the founder during 1882 -83

1 Being born into Kami's world, you should realize the blessings of Kami and the world.

The world of Kami is the world of man. The emperor would indicate the leader of the country, the leader of a period. It's talking about understanding the blessings of our world. If disorder arises and there's no way to identify people, then man and the world would not succeed.

Written 6/16/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

By understanding the blessings of Kami one will understand the blessings of the world. When practicing faith we proceed from being conscious of the life we're leading to conscious of what has been obtained. When we reach the level of 'obtaining,' for the first time one feels life is surely moving according to the laws of the universe. The most important divine blessing to grasp is to realize that we are given life, not that we are alive.

Written 7/24/72 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Study the way of ways; walk the way of people exalted. Where the world of people and the world of Kami are realized, you will know you're fully in the midst of divine virtue. Mount Koya used to be prohibited for women pilgrimage. Times have changed. Now everyone is allowed to climb. What's recorded in the private books of the temple is: Observe the authority of the times.

Written 7/ 3/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Human happiness is not through learning of the human world. If a happiness of soap bubbles were possible, it would disappear in a moment. It is just something unstable. When the world is perceived as Kami's, there is an eternity of happiness to be received.

Written 7/ 1/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

2 *Even though you realize the blessings of heaven, you should also realize the favors of earth.*

When you understand the great favors of the earth, the favors of heaven can be acquired naturally. To do that, it's necessary to realize the nature of the earth and to train to follow that nature of the earth. The nature of the earth is to eliminate the self. But furthermore it is to diligently work with such a nature. To be bathed in heavenly blessings you must know the nature of the earth and receive it within yourself.

Written 6/17/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

By realizing these favors, then we must reciprocate something for them. Just to comprehend the ideas is the same as to realize the blessings of heaven but not those of the earth. Although we respect the Kami of the universe, unless we respect the true workings themselves, the way to truth will not open. By training thoroughly to respect the process of life and accept everything as sacred events and circumstances, you will naturally become aware of the great favors of heaven and earth. This is because you are respecting the work of the universe.

Written 7/25/72 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Seen lying in between the limited and infinity are the hard to resolve sufferings of humans. What in the dickens is the reasoning behind this? The founder, Konko Daijin, has clearly shown through example how to realize the truth of heaven and the spirit of the earth. "By understanding Kami's blessings, you will live a peaceful and stable life. You will have descendants and gain wealth. You will receive divine blessings from year to year, and then from generation to generation." Namely, it's "The Benevolence of the Universe." It opens to the world of joy for heaven, earth, and man as one; it brings to life the melody of sun and light.

Written 7/ 4/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Understand the heavenly nature and the earthly nature, take up the spirit of the nature of the universe, and then for the first time you are able to realize the blessings of the universe. No matter how delicious, if your body is ill, you won't be able to eat or enjoy it.

Written 7/ 2/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

3 *Do not be disrespectful to your parents by forgetting all they did for you when you were a child.*

It is something quite different from respecting one's parents morally. Really it's to have one's parents become pleased. To realize this, here is a teaching of Konko Shijin: "There are some who respect their parents but not Kami, and thus have no filial piety. There are some who respect Kami but not their parents, then later show filial piety." *Written 6/18/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

On the desert of the moon
 came traveling
 two camels from afar.
On the saddle in the front
 was a prince;
On the saddle in the back
 was a princess.
The two came along
 traveling
 in line.

These are the words of a song that grade school children sing. Though it's quite poetic with a lot a feeling, it's just speaking about the desert of the moon. What is there is but a world as dry as dust. Morally, and also literally, it's impossible to have a home of abundance without your parents being well respected. The young by and by must also grow old. To illustrate with the hand: Though the thumb is short and not very well shaped, without it you cannot pick up any real object.

"When you wish to show respect, your parents are gone."

Written 7/26/72 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

There is, "The bad relation between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law resounds throughout the universe." Without filial respect good faith absolutely cannot be developed. Since respect for one's parents is the fundamental basis of faith, we wish to be a parent that is beloved by the child and a child in which the parent can believe.

Written 7/ 5/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Shigemori Tairano fell into the dilemma: "Without respect, you won't be devoted to what you desire; without devotion, you won't have respect for what you desire." True filial piety is not anything like that. By having this faith, you'll be respectful and also devoted, and the way will open to fulfill both.

Written 7/ 3/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

4 *Follow true faith while knowing the true faith.*

Words of Konko Shijin: “Instead of doing ten good things, stop doing one bad thing.” The true way is a simple thing such as this.

Written 6/19/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Between heaven and earth flows a single stream of life. That one stream of life is manifested as each and every human creature. The realization of just such a life is the faith which knows the true faith. A certain faction or policy is said to be dangerous; however, what is truly dangerous is the way of life of those who don't have faith. To not have faith is what can cause you to reject the great way of the universe. Salvation for the present age is by teaching broadly this true way of faith to peoples of the world today. This will also fulfill the wishes of Kami.

The teaching is truth.

Written 7/27/72 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

CONCEPTS TRANSFORMED

The faith of the Konko religion is practiced in order to obtain virtue. True faith is the way that leads to the divine virtues. Spiritual training is required for this. That most people complete training only to obtain blessings (divine response to prayers) is regrettable. Not to mistake the objective, true faith (the way of truth) is what brings enjoyment, gratitude, and delight. If you are not pleased, or not grateful, think that you're mistaken about the true way and really need to reevaluate your actions.

Written 7/ 6/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Carpenters and plasterers practice repeatedly what the master has taught and then can be admitted into the world as proficient craftsmen. It's the same with faith. While one practices observing the teachings of Konko Daijin and not acting contrary to them, true faith can be understood and true blessings will follow.

Written 7/ 4/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

5 *Do not say something nice if you do not sincerely believe it.*

Especially during an unwavering single-hearted prayer both heart and mouth becomes one significant unit. It is also the time for the budding of truth. What nourishes this is spiritual training and applying the teachings.

Written 6/20/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Speech is unrestricted, but when you say something which is not sincere, the freedom of the heart is reduced. After saying something you feel something's missing. This is when you need to reflect on what you have said. The saddest thing is when you lie to someone.

Written 7/28/72 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

I wish my prayer to contain: May today be a day I reach accord with the sacred heart of Kami.

Speech, Act, and Thought
Tuned to the rhythm of the universe
Resounds exquisitely
With the heart of Kami.

Pray with the single heart of the child singing: Little paper monk, paper monk,
May tomorrow's weather be fine.

Written 7/ 7/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It is taught to be sincere in what you say and what you do. Taken strictly, no matter how clearly Konko Daijin may iterate it, unless there is proof, it would be just mouthing the words. When following the teaching by experimenting and seeking proof, then what is the spoken will reflect the true meaning of Konko Daijin.

Written 7/ 5/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

6 *Do not ignore the difficulties of another person after having experiencing similar difficulties.*

Through one's own experience of difficulty it's useless just to realize that others are in difficulty too. It must come to prayer or deeds to save them. *Written 6/21/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

At the place of the minister who was sick and received blessings, the sick receive blessings; where another trained in money matters, many are saved who have financial concerns; at the church of the minister who's undergone training in human relations and conquered them, many people with similar relational problems are saved. It is because each one provides mediation with the actual sensation of having undergone that particular problem. One's personal difficulties come alive. Faith is really something sacred. *Written 7/29/72 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Even to save a soul, if it's done through obligation or human sympathy, then neither party will be genuinely saved. It's a divine sensation. Upon taking up the divine heart, you'll guide the soul. We are allowed to help Kami do the saving of souls. That is where people are saved and we ourselves are saved. It's the way that leads to divine works (the miraculous workings of Kamis and Buddhas become manifest). Faith is to comprehend what is really true. *Written 7/ 8/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Also there's the proverb, "Pinch oneself to know the pain of others." For your faith, raise and foster a divine heart which includes the heart of love and benevolence.

On a snowy day
There's someone's child
Picking up a barrel

Written 7/ 6/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

7 *Anger casts a cloud over one's heart.*

Realize your vanity when you are angry. You get angry because you don't see yourself as bad and you feel it's alright. When your heart's cloudy, blessings are not mirrored. A saying of Reverend Masao Takahashi: "What you see; what you see; is yourself that you see."

Written 6/22/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

A world without anger is a world without dissatisfaction or deficiency. A world without anger is, indeed, a world where benevolence is exercised for the multitudes. A world without anger, in other words, is the world of Konko Daijin. A world without anger passes into a world of joy and ease, and extends to a world of infinite blessings.

Written 7/30/72 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

By accepting it as divine love I can express gratitude. By accepting it as discipline my heart becomes more and more robust. By thinking of the heart of the one confronting me, I can't but offer a prayer. Thinking that there are many people around the world such as this one,* I am sad. I feel it as the sadness of Kami. With such thoughts I pray more deeply and more broadly. With sincerity it becomes the most grateful.

Written 7/ 9/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

* *this one*: a person who becomes irritated and suffers from the smallest of things.

Oyasensei: "State simply: How do we receive this teaching?
And why must we not get angry?"

Wakasensei: "Since getting angry is when we're not modest,
from that point we're cut away from Kami's work."

Mitsuaki Sensei: "Because when angry we have a small heart,
blessings are stopped."

Mikisaburo Sensei: "We cannot interact with every act
or each part of the process."

Eishiro Sensei: "We wish to receive all of Kami's
workings with a broad mind."

◇ By asking people, anger erupts.

By asking Kami, graces thrive.

◇ Open the way as a foolish simpleton.

Written 7/ 7/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

8 *Do not hurt yourself through intolerance or aggression.*

It's like walking barefoot on a gravel road. Wear the shoes called, faith, and you can walk on it easily.

Cutting a round egg straight and square
Saying words that are polished and sharp

Written 6/23/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Perfect and complete! It's the situation like the full moon that is just brilliant as midday. Out of the dark of night just a crescent moon shining, then a half moon and gradually it grows to a circle through divine blessings. If that didn't happen, we couldn't speak of brilliance. Ikigami Konko Daijin is that brilliantly shining, perfectly circular radiance.

Written 7/31/72 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

“Cursing others is twice as useless.” (Hokaibo)

“By killing the master, you've killed the parent.” (Akechi Mitsuhide)

Faith is to kill your own self. Invigorate your parents; give life to your surroundings. It's to treat oneself as fruitless. By becoming this crazy, you put life into others; becoming a fool, you give life to yourself. Through congratulations and congratulations the way has opened.

Written 7/10/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

With all one's heart you intend to renew, but meet failure repeatedly. Pitifully you hate yourself. This is what it is to attack oneself through intolerant aggression. You have to actually renew.

Silent with the heart
To give up drinking --
Raising chrysanthemums

Written 7/ 8/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

9 *Do not behave improperly upon seeing other's misconduct.*

Seeing something bad, strong faith is necessary so as not to be drawn into it. Seeing someone without any faith, there are people who lose their faith. It's like causing a chain reaction.

Written 6/24/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

“Among scarlet you become red.”

Within a rotten society before you know it your heart has become rotten. Red appears to be white, and white is seen as red. It's horrible. The source is self-love. Today I provided mediation for a lady. On her way home from church the other day she witnessed a child bad-mouthing her parent with all kinds of malicious gossip and was surprised by how mean it was. Concerning her husband and children, she recognized that she herself was just like that, and after vowing to Kami from her heart to change, she overflowed with tears of great joy from the bottom of her heart.

Written 7/ 1/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Wishing to take up the faith of the soil

Whatever you see or hear, by taking everything to fertilize the roots of your spirit, you then will be able to live such a splendid and colorful life. To her husband who feels that seeing the mask of a female demon would be bad for the development of the prenatal child, the pregnant wife says that every day she reflects on whether there might be such a terrifying feeling in her own heart.

Written 7/11/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

- In a proverb, “See the guise of others, and mend your ways”
- The elder Rev. Sato imparts, “Upon seeing someone's craving, don't add to it with your own cravings.”
- Observing the parent's behavior, the child develops.
- As in practicing archery you set a target to practice with, so for faith your aim is Ikigami Konko Daijin.
- Don't go mad trying to harmonize with the universe.
- Picking inside the ear \ with an ear pick \ basking in the sun

Written 7/ 9/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

10 *Do not strain yourself by rushing things, but wait for the right time.*

What it means to have faith and await the right time is to receive the greatest blessing. There is the teaching: "If your receptacle is bad, blessings will be lost." Kami will give you the time to complete your receiving vessel. In this way you need to cherish the process of life more.

Written 6/25/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

There is a way in the universe; there's a melodious rhythm in the universe. One should know the way and master how to live in tune with the rhythm. While wishing to travel to Tokyo, boarding the line for Kagoshima will put you in the opposite direction. It is because you don't know the way. By rushing things, getting confused and impatient you won't be able to hear the rhythm of the universe. To live according to the divine will is a way of living where you get rid of your own way and act in tune with the rhythm. The founder has taught the way to live joyfully, thankfully and faithfully while following the way of the universe and tuning your ear to listen for the rhythm of the universe.

Written 7/ 2/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Asking a child picking violets the way to go home,
The flowers point the way for me to go.

The rhythm which the natural universe performs is the spontaneous rhythm which indicates the true way for regular human happiness. Faith is the experience of living in tune with that rhythm. I want to nurture the sense of the physical and spiritual feeling of my relation to the universe, to really feel the process itself as essential.

Written 7/12/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Just as by being prepared with rain gear, you don't need to rush around when it starts to rain, one should develop the posture for faith, too. While aiming for joy and ease, the right time will surely arrive. Before and after this point, things will happen with amazing timing.

Written 7/10/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

11 *Do not be lazy in your work or live extravagantly when you are healthy.*

As in the teaching, “You cannot control your life the way you want. Know that your life is of Kami and the world,” doing your work faithfully is serving Kami and the society. And it also provides training for you. Konko Daijin teaches that training is doing your work. If you are extravagant you will definitely ruin yourself, since a mismatch with your position breaks the rules of the universe. What the founder himself did teaches and admonishes us. *Written 6/26/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Don't think of relaxing; be given the chance to relax. In the cool shade of the hot summer the cicada spends its time acting as if it's so cool. During the summer the ant works industriously intent on preparing for the winter season. *Written 7/ 3/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Picking inside the ear \ with an ear pick \ basking in the sun

Relaxing or being lazy are each naturally different in meaning. Since permitted to indulge in pleasure, you can appreciate it gratefully. With such a spirit Kami joins in together and harmonious joy comes about. You can act freely in a melody of light and brightness. It's the unrestraint world of Konko Daijin. Without any obstacle it opens into the world of brilliant light.

Written 7/13/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

In society there are people who work earnestly at their jobs, but end their life in misery without the means of support. For those who practice the faith, take this teaching as from the founder, by applying it there will surely be prosperous blessings. *Written 7/11/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

12 *Those that practice faith should have a sincere faith.*

- To be a man of truth.
- Try not to become a fiend for righteous consideration.
- Without real training, genuine faith will not come about.
- The major point for true training is not to be dissatisfied with nature's work and to accept it naturally.
- Genuine faith is accompanied with living joys and living blessings.

Written 6/27/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The very working of the universe is true. At the same time it is the great love of Tenchi Kane No Kami (The Divine Parent of the Universe). In this world Kami's singular purpose is none other than to love the people of Kami. Sincere faith is to realize the Divine Will, turn to Kami submissive and faithful, and pursue and how to realize the Divine Heart. The words of the Most Reverend Setsutane Konko: "True faith is to receive the great blessing of ease."

Written 7/ 4/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

As one thing serves for all the others, the spirit (diligence), which soothes and rounds off rough edges, is itself the major support of a 'Wagakokoro' for a life of faith. It will lead without mistake to the true way, and at the same time, will bring about the aim for sincere faith. The response will be an expression of true blessings.

Written 7/14/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

A famous Masamune sword is said to protect oneself, whereas the Muramasa blade, though excellent for cutting, is not considered that famous. Also in faith, just because your prayers are answered doesn't mean it is true faith. The founder expounded on how to save oneself, how to save others and how to save Kami, too. He taught the way to be happy, to develop the Wagakokoro in one's own heart.

Written 7/12/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Instructions of the Faith:

General Principles

First issue in 1902 by

Konko Faith Headquarters

Printed 1928 in the collection of Sacred Teachings

Teachings received from the founder by Sato Norio

1 *On this day, pray single-heartedly. The divine favor depends upon one's own heart.*

“Carrying a heavy load on your shoulders or back may be burdensome, but practicing faith is not. It is easy. Practice faith while you do your daily work.” You should feel there’s nothing more grateful than the faith you have and continue to work over in your heart the teachings you receive every day. This is how you can feel closer to what Kami is doing and develop a peaceful, joyful heart while receiving blessings one after another.

Written 6/28/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When it’s not calm, when it’s not secure and you are lead to feel thankful is what is called the peaceful, joyful heart.

By just pursuing the one peaceful, joyful heart
Whenever and for whatsoever
You can express apology and appreciation.

Written 7/ 5/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

At ease and Wagakokoro are two sides of the same thing.

Pursuing a Wagakokoro (peaceful joyful heart), you’re at ease; the content of ease is the peaceful “wa” and the joyful “ga.” The joy unfolds endlessly wider and wider; the peaceful “wa” is something inviolate and firmly established. Blessings, too, are infinitely great and progressing. The Wagakokoro is the key to human happiness. Amen!*

Written 7/15/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

* Amen = Ah, so awesome! Ah, so precious!

Ultimately the way of faith is to receive the blessings of ease. The peaceful joyful heart and the spirit of ease are developed parallel to one another. And they must be nurtured.

Written 7/13/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

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

First of all, it's to become joyous. In other words, become a fool, a simpleton. It's to become one who doesn't know how to doubt. For faith daily renewal is most important. "Living each day with the same happy heart you have on New Year's Day. When the sun sets, think that it is the last day of the year. When the sun rises, think that it is New Year's Day. If you are happy every day," you will naturally find the true way and see that you are in the midst of divine virtue.

Written 6/29/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Even those of weak faith or those with no faith must come to recognize the reality of 'being given life.' To practice faith is not just to eliminate doubt, but to actually broaden and deepen your understanding so that you come to believe you are in the midst of divine virtue. The way of faith is the way of Ikigami Konko Daijin's mediation.

Written 7/6/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

To receive blessings and demonstrate just how much divine work you have so that Kami will be recognized by the people who doubt or don't know of this deity is the mission for those who have received blessings. But really there are so many who lack the sensation of "being allowed to live in the midst of divine virtue" because, even though they have received blessings, they haven't taken up the practice of faith. Without the sensation, Kami is not able to become manifested.

Written 7/16/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Just as when using detergent the stains that wouldn't come out can easily be washed clean, by trying to take up the faith you'll begin to see blessings and come to believe in divine work. As you develop in faith, you'll realize genuine faith and become able to believe in the real deity. Even though you're amid the immeasurable divine virtues, without faith, you won't be able to perceive it.

Written 7/14/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

3 *Know that heaven and earth will be your eternal home while you are living and even after you die.*

It is with continual blessings that you first understand this teaching. Through this faith the view of life changes so much that the attitude toward life and death becomes something to be appreciated. The ultimate in faith is here. When we realize that through this world and the next the universe is our home, our souls swell up with joy and there follow blessings of relief.

Written 6/30/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Both paradise and hell, even the world under the ground or the bowels of the earth, are nowhere else but in the universe. Wherever it might be, it's the bosom of Kami. Again, when you are aware "there is in hell a house for you" (words of Shinran*), you are put at ease. In any event, we wish to have the joy of faith at least. By probing, perceiving and putting into practice the heart of heaven and the feeling of earth more and more like a fountain joy will gush forth.

Written 7/7/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

* The founder of Jodo Shin Shu Buddhism

It's said humans came from the soil and will return to the soil. Therefore, in the interim one should make that spirit of the soil part of how one lives. Thus nature and humankind join as one body, and one can live united in a unique and unparalleled world. Also, the actual sensation is born of being amidst the sacred guardianship of the universe.

Written 7/17/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Both body and soul must be under the care of the universe. Destruction of the natural environment -- it is the same as destroying one's own home.

Written 7/15/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

4 *Trust in heaven and depend on earth.*

People are complacent -- only turning to Kami when in difficulty; not even capable of trusting in Kami. Since we barely hear and do not understand the founder's teachings, we certainly cannot trust Kami. First one must apply the teachings.

Even windy, rainy days
Trust in heaven, cling to earth.
Endure –
Don't snap a joint, you young bamboo.

Written 7/ 1/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

“Trust and Depend”

This is the real posture of a believer looking for Kami. In order to trust, courage is needed. As for depending, where do you do what? We depend on prayer to reach the place where there are no anxieties, no worries. By seriously getting down to training, unbelievably anxiety and worry disappear. Such a posture is called, in the real sense of the words, “trust and depend.”

Written 7/ 8/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Trusting and depending is the response of prayers to the heart of Kami.

THE HEAVENLY WORK OF TRUTH
THE EARTHLY DEPTH OF RESPECT

The unconditional spirit to give without quitting is itself the heavenly work of truth. The heart bowed in gratitude that accepts in entirety is, namely, the earthly depth of respect.

THE GENUINE EARTH
THE HEART OF WATER

The spirit of accepting the blessings provided by heaven is the ‘real earth.’ The spirit which never stops flowing down, and which complies with the receiving container is, namely, the ‘heart of water.’

Written 7/18/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

By trusting, mildness is born. Through dependence, strength develops.

Written 7/16/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

5 *Kami is the parent of us all. Faith is the same as showing respect to your parents.*

It goes without saying that Kami is the parent of all creation, not just mankind. “Faith is the same as showing respect to your parents.” There is nothing but to pray “may I please be raised to a complete believer.” And there is nothing other than such devotion. *Written 7/ 2/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

1. Parental respect is to have one’s parents feel at ease.
2. On top of that, if they are pleased, it’s the greatest filial respect.
3. For that purpose, first one should understand the parents’ heart.
4. Make it one’s pleasure to please one's parents.
5. In this way, by practicing faith what becomes clear, indeed,
is that “Kami is the ancestral parent of us all.”

Written 7/ 9/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

1. With the heart of filial piety come here to worship.
2. With the heart of filial piety receive the teaching.
3. With the heart of filial piety follow the teaching.

There’s no end to filial piety. Receiving limitless blessings is really the sensation that our Parental Deity just keeps growing. By experiencing spiritually and bodily that “Kami is the parent of us all,” one becomes endlessly grateful. *Written 7/19/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

This is a teaching that plainly illustrates the unique nature of faith in the Konko religion. While practicing faith a world of blessings is opened where a person can’t miss feeling “It’s the parent, indeed, our Parental Deity.” One has to take up the faith with the feeling of filial devotion.

Written 7/17/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

6 *There is neither day nor night, near nor far for Kami. Pray with a sincere heart anytime, anywhere.*

It's not the approaching of blessings; instead, it's the approaching of Kami. Once I became so thin after fasting and more fasting that my parents were quite worried. So I prayed to Kami asking to become fatter. In reply I received, "Get a haircut and go home." Returning home after the haircut my parents were pleased and said it seemed I had filled out a bit. Now I have become as fat as this. Whatever you pray for what is important is afterwards. Then you must wait, while praying for Kami's design and arrangement. The blessings are either early or late.

Written 7/ 3/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The more simplistic a matter is, you should pray even harder. By considering something serious, you naturally take it up with real earnestness. A heart of prayer is the point that's important. Being far but near is the relationship between Kami and us. It's something like this: Even by getting to the station, if you're careless you will miss the train.

Written 7/10/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

You can't say that this is enough, that this is it. The feeling you need is that it's insufficient, that you're not finished. Though we can't do enough, though we can't get it done, Kami covers for us making it seem as if it's been done. We can receive such blessings as if "there's neither day nor night, near nor far." The important point is the content of your faithful prayer.

Written 7/20/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Wherever you are, by feeling you are in Kami's company, you get the sensation that "Kami is together with me" and your prayer reaches closer to Kami. *Written 7/18/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

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

“Do not have impurities in your heart.” Impurity is a non-achievement, that which is not attained. To wonder if blessings will come is to put impurities in the heart.

A peach tree with
Carp in a pond
almost stagnant.

Written 7/4/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

This mediation was given to a lady. She had come to pray for a sickness of the private part of her body. Since after giving her a packet of sacred rice and telling her to enshrine it at the affected area, she said, “It’s too priceless to put on an impure place.” I then replied, “With that priceless spirit you’ll be able to place it there.” Speaking of what’s dirty, there’s nothing dirtier than the human body. What’s important is a humility that apologizes. Even when putting it on upper parts, it’s important to have the feeling of putting it on lower parts. From The Divine Parent’s standpoint, there is neither upper nor lower.

Written 7/11/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

If you hesitant to throw away the worthless, needless things around the house, you’ll not be able to put the house in order. There are also things within your spirit which you must get rid of. Especially if you can’t get blessings, then unless you get rid of impurities of the spirit, you won’t succeed in getting true blessings. Tackling your attachment and affection for things, aim to put the spirit in order, and you will be able to sense everything as pure and beautiful and valuable. Wondering if there would be blessings is itself an impure spirit.

Written 7/21/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

A consciousness of divine wrath or sin is what impurity is. You should be aware of the great benevolence of divinity.

A teaching of The Reverend Kagamitaro Konko:

“If you’ve the time to get divine wrath,
then here, I’ll give you blessings.”

Written 7/19/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

8 *Do spiritual training rather than ascetic practices.*

Within Routine Conduct

Whatever your practicing it's important to emphasize your routine conduct. Particularly for faith negligence is forbidden. Spiritual training is to polish and renew the heart, and at the same time to always have Kami in mind. This is spiritual training.

The words of Konko Shijin: "Without ascetic practices spiritual training is impossible."

If I have to remember you
My love must be shallow --
Without trying to remember
But never forgetting you

Written 7/ 5/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

- Spiritual training is like closing the translucent sliding paper doors.*
Ascetic practice is like closing the storm shutters.*
- Ascetic practice is like forging the body.
Spiritual training is to purify the soul; it is to forge the soul.
- Starting with ascetic practice conclude with spiritual training.
- To endure with the body is ascetic practice.
Enduring with the heart's spirit is spiritual training.
- Within ascetic practice there is spiritual training;
Within spiritual training there is ascetic practice.

Written 7/12/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

* Storm shutters are closed to keep out burglars. * While paper doors are to keep out drafts.

You're irritated;
You feel disappointed.
Spiritual training is when
This is practice for feeling grateful.
Because every single thing --
It's the divine prayer,
It's divine love.

Written 7/22/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The moon doesn't shine on its own.

It receives the light of the sun.

As exemplified in "a monkey can fall out of a tree" and "the centipede can trip," I feel I have the ability that I can do it. That is the basic principle for ascetic practices. There isn't a thing I can do. I am given what's needed to do it. When we are aware of our powerlessness is the basic principle of spiritual training.

Written 7/20/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

9 *There is no place on earth which does not receive the virtue of [Tenchi] Kane No Kami.*

Blessings are so plentiful throughout this whole world of ours. This is because we can pray at any time, from any place and for anything. Since there's no greater sincerity on earth than the work of Tenchi Kane No Kami, we will receive blessings if we are sincere and pray single-heartedly. "Pray for physical well-being, diligence in your work, rich grain harvests, and for your horses and cows. Pray with sincerity for everything." The way of faith is to pursue sincerity. It's to study how the founder lived.

Written 7/ 6/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When in Rome, do as Rome does; when practicing the way of faith, unless you follow the way, there will be no blessings. By practicing sincere and conscientious faith, the great benevolence of the earth will be the first thing you will learn. Practicing faith with a heart like the nature of the earth, you then will gain faith which like the earth doesn't become agitated when confronted with something. Without following the way of faith, its particular type of gratitude will not be received. Such is the gratitude of the sincere, conscientious faith in Kami.

Written 7/13/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

A peacock is beautiful. The peahen is meager and even dirty. However, it is the peahen that gives birth. I think we can say the earth is filthy soil. We and the earth are coated with the soil. The founder, feeling its nourishing and enriching work, was a person who experienced the virtues of the earth. It came from such faith which was so sincere nothing could exceed it.

Written 7/23/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

'Kane No Kami' must be taken as a shortened form of 'Tenchi Kane No Kami.' Once I received the message: "Tenchi is the surname; Kane No Kami the proper name."

Written 7/21/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

10 *Do not defile Kami's ground.*

“Though you are surrounded by divine virtue, you will not receive blessings unless you have faith.” To be trusted by Kami one must not take Kami lightly. If you’re rude you’ll be treated rude; if respectful you are treated with respect. Just not defiling the earth is not enough. You should act with respect. When someone is disrespectful, take their place in asking Kami’s forgiveness. Then let it be purified. Such a faith brings Kami’s trust. Become an adherent of faith. To realize it dispense with logic. Purify the earth. Oh! Isn’t it magnificent? It’s just like hearing the voice of the earth. The earth, like a mother’s body, is giving birth to every single thing. *Written 7/7/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Since I was constantly told as a child not to defile the ground, without even knowing how, I could accomplish it. When I was in training at Fukuoka, I not only kept from defiling, but while receiving instructions from Kami, purified the ground I passed. Faith is not some type of reasoning. Even our flesh must return to earth sometime. It’s the spirit of beautifying the place you return to.

Written 7/14/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When I hurt myself as a child my grandmother would put dirt on the wound while chanting, “Konko Sama, Konko Sama.” Unless you always worship the earth as precious, believing the ground is the sacred body of Kami, it is something which cannot be done.

Written 7/24/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It’s common sense for the believer of the Konko religion. A diamond is a valuable jewel, but as its value differs according to size, so the Konko religion, though lucid and insightful as it is, will manifest its valuable enlightenment by the relative weight given to its reception. It’s necessary to check how one receives the majesty of the earth.

Written 7/22/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

11 *From now on, you need not be concerned with the Days and Directions. Follow the faith that Tenchi Kane No Kami has taught.*

“Following the faith taught by Tenchi Kane No Kami” is to establish the way of the universe. This is just the way that leads to such blessings. It opens to a broad, free universe. What is really difficult is to get away from any determined thought that could be mistaken. No matter how difficult it may be there is a way. By following the way it is easy to reach the goal.

Written 7/ 8/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Even those without faith know that they are provided with the life they have. But they cannot believe it, even though there’s no room for doubt. Faith is to practice believing in that. Your doubts and tenacity toward superstition can be removed, and you can experience divine virtue overflowing in this world. To “follow the faith that Tenchi Kane No Kami has taught,” is to actually realize that you are provided with the life you have, which is the starting point of happiness.

Written 7/15/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

From the constricting inconvenient ways of the world, which feels something not harmful as harmful and teaches the fearless as fearful, revert to the original state of human beings. It is the way to freely enjoy the pleasure of communing with the universe, whereby both Kami and the believer are fulfilled. It can be said that what Konko Daijin has taught is the religious spirit which precedes religions. Through such faith let’s emerge from the constraining precepts of religion. And then revert to what has been taught.

Written 7/25/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It’s a teaching that proclaims to the world that the Konko Religion is a true religion. It’s the Divine Will to crush the man-made superstitions which like a T-square (measure) are placed against nature.

Written 7/23/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

12 *You cannot control your life the way you want. Know that your life is of Kami and the world.*

The more you realize it is not your body, you cannot but treat it with more care. The idea of such a saying as “consider the body light as a feather” is very much mistaken. Realize that this is gravely offending to Kami. Treat your body, which is a gift from Kami, with care. Devoting yourself publicly, socially and humanly will serve Kami and the world. It’s the spirit of “if only man will be saved.” It’s also the spirit of work, which eases others.

Written 7/ 9/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When you see that we cannot budge an inch without receiving the consent of Kami, you’ll know your life is not controlled the way you wish. It is the same for the spirit, too. To reverently join together with the Divine Heart of Kami is to be able to have your life and your spirit freely put to use at will. You also may receive blessings as freely as you please.

Written 7/16/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

A problem arose when the song, ‘Naniwabushi,’ was performed in the Kabuki Theater. But the Kabuki Theater doesn’t change from being a Kabuki Theater. Even though the emperor was proclaimed a human emperor, it doesn’t change him from being the emperor. There is a time for the age. He was determined “no matter what happened to him,” and the decision was reached to end the war. Thus we might say all of the Japanese people are indebted to him -- since every citizen was resigned to die instead of surrender. When praying for peace and prosperity in Japan, we pray for salvation and welfare of the emperor and all the citizens of the nation. Therefore the emperor is the focal point for the Japanese people.

Written 7/26/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

By realizing the benevolence of Kami, you can finally live a life that serves to repay these divine graces. Feeling the benefits of one’s country, you take up a spirit to be of service to society and will be able to fulfill the job of a citizen.

Written 7/24/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

13 Food is made and provided by Tenchi [Kami] No Kami to sustain one's life.

Food is the most important thing man is given from Kami. However, though it is provided for man's life, many are eating and drinking to ruin their life. This includes overeating, overdrinking and complaining. In food is found the power to live, the basis of body and blood, and the source for ending life.

Written 7/10/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Food is for sustaining one's life. Grain, vegetables, seafood, meat and various drinks all are from the bounty of Kami for sustaining life. There is nothing that excludes meat or prohibits alcohol. When eating a bowl of rice gruel after having fasted, such appreciation, deliciousness and energizing vibrancy flows throughout the body. This is where Kami's favors are felt.

Written 7/17/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The teaching is teeming with universal qualities that are honored by anyone everywhere. Food is where we feel the intercourse between divinity and humanity made simple, and words of gratitude being mutually shared. Since it combines divine blessings and people's labor, one should partake of it with appreciative gratitude. However, forgetting that, one feels dissatisfied, eats and drinks too much, and loses divine blessings. Not to forget this is essential for faith.

Written 7/27/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Since all food is granted as life sustaining energy, it needs to be received as 'sacred food.' For example, the idea that what was offered to Kami cannot be offered to Buddha (various sea products) is a bias view brought about by man.

Written 7/25/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

14 Do not say it is a miracle when you receive divine blessings by practicing faith.

Even without faith, blessings are provided to people throughout the world. These blessings and the divine blessings of this teaching are different. When you set your heart on receiving blessings and sincerely depend on Kami single-heartedly, you are able to get blessings which are thought miraculous.

Even if you have canned food, without an opener it is of no use. The divine blessing is to be given a can opener. Thus to open the can is not a miracle. This is the type of blessings which we should manifest.

Written 7/11/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Each day we are being provided with a living in the midst of the great miracle of the universe. There is summer and there's winter; there's day and there's night. Everything in the universe is a great miracle for us.

Today Mrs. Kumagai sought mediation about what happened to her yesterday and today. When she decided to telephone someone, she received a phone call from that person. Realizing she had missed the bus, she's given a ride in a car which happens to come by. After getting into the car it started to rain. And upon arriving here it stopped raining. Throughout her daily activities she feels like Kami is working things out just for her alone. She says she doesn't deserve such divine work free from any and all error.

When you're given to follow faith, then you are given just such blessings to experience. I feel blessings such as these are minor miracles. But without receiving these blessings, you will not realize the actual sensation of the great miracle.

Written 7/18/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It can't be called a living religion if blessings through belief in Kami don't appear which are thought miraculous. Upon gaining blessings if our spirit here doesn't come alive, we won't be able to experience the real blessings (the blessings which Kami is preparing for us) coming next. It is from there you are able to realize the true way, aim to be a true person, and live in a world where divinity and humanity join together-in-ease.

Written 7/28/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When you want to buy something, if you don't pay 100 yen for a hundred yen item, then you won't be able to obtain it. If you pay 500 yen for a thousand yen item you cannot acquire what you want.

Written 7/26/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

15 It is strange not to receive divine blessings when practicing faith.

Let's take this teaching quite naturally.

“When people suffer from sickness or hardship, they are helped by Kami.

Practice faith and remember to be thankful to be able to save people in distress.”

In the variations of time as I and others and all living things are changing from moment to moment, all activities have become blessed. Therefore, while respecting these natural workings, we just have to express our sincere appreciation. As in the principle, five plus five equals ten, when we and Kami both depend on each other and pray together for faith, then it's natural to receive blessings. When not received, realize it's our miscalculation.

Written 7/12/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Kami just can't help but pray for man to be saved; man wishes to be saved. With both facing each other, there's no convincing way man cannot received divine blessings. Work at polishing and renewal. Pray single-heartedly. Never neglect to examine one's own heart to see if there's anything that could hinder the divine blessings from this relationship between both man and Kami. Trust in Kami. And that is where divine blessings are realized.

Written 7/19/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Blessings are not just what you want to happen. Sincerely praying single-heartedly will definitely bring a reply. Until you feel the response, you must single-heartedly renew your posture. The response itself is the blessing. Yesterday Reverend Yoshida officiated for the first time at the funeral services for the 50-day ceremony for someone. Afterwards deeply moved he mediated that it was revealed to him how each and every deceased soul has received blessings. He said he now realized that even a person like himself can receive blessings by depending on Kami single-heartedly. I told him not to forget such a spirit.

Written 7/29/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Clap and the resounding blessings you are able to receive are the way of faith. I always tell the believer who comes the first time with a request that since the signs of blessings are visible, continue to depend single-heartedly in Kami. However, most people don't continue the faith afterwards.

Written 7/27/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

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

It is said, “even a small worm has a soul,” and if there is something miraculous about a departed soul we tend to worship that. The religious situation in Japan is such that even a fox or badger is revered as a kami. However, not to despise does not mean to worship. When you pass by the place of minor Kamis and Buddhas it’s important to have a heart to bow.

- It’s to have a broad mind.
- Actually it’s to include them all within the Kami of the universe.
- Don’t criticize the faith of others.

The point of this teaching is not to despise anything. Any despising is not accepted by Kami.

Written 7/13/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The worst audacity of us human beings is that we conclusively decide the strong and weak points of all Kamis and Buddhas (religions). Within the vast and ever eternal nature of the universe I feel there is nothing more ambiguous than the conclusions made by the tiny speculations of man. It’s not just the Kamis and Buddhas. Since philosophy, science and medical science are in the process of advancement, they are not the genuine thing. However, they should not be treated lightly. Since, in all matters, from one truth the next truth is being pursued, then there should not be a conclusion.

Written 7/20/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The way of faith is putting into practice the firm belief that this is true, that it’s the truth; then it will certainly prove itself. Toward those who think that it is fine with belief in low humble things, with a heart of Kami pass on a sincere wish for something much truer. It’s not to despise others, nor belittle them. Checking against your own spiritual standards and adjusting it when right or wrong, you will be able to say, “My life’s true story is told by courtesy, kindness, and love.”

Written 7/30/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

To despise is arrogant, which Kami detests. It isn’t enough to just say, “I’ll be humble.” We must really desire a heart of humility. There’s no other way than to strengthen that intent.

Written 7/28/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

17 Those that practice faith should be aware of the true virtue of Kami.

In order to realize the true virtue of Kami you should actually come to an understanding of the way of the universe, seek the endless depths of the teachings, and perceive their broadness. Such joy and delight you should know. You will be able to get an understanding through your body and spirit of the great abundance of divine virtue in the universe. Through the virtue of Konko Daijin and the faith of the mediator miraculous blessings are manifested. The true virtue of Kami will not just be mentally understood, but that we are given life amid Kami's virtues, will be fully felt. Then man is happy.

Written 7/14/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Tenchi Kane No Kami is The Divine Parent of us human beings. And all people are the children of the Kami who has given us life in the midst of this divine virtue. It is impossible to live separate from Kami. Through man's faith in Kami, divine work is manifested. Since Kami and man are related as parent and child, you can enkindle divine trust by practicing faith with filial respect. That is what is called the virtue of Kami which mankind can receive from Kami. A saying of Reverend Matsujiro Ishibashi: "It's because divine virtue is the trust of Kami." *Written 7/21/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Without spiritual training you will not be able to feel true divine virtue. You have to receive divine virtue, not just know about it. Although you may be in the midst of divine virtue, unless you have spiritual training, you wouldn't feel it. Where true divine virtue is felt is born a spirit that's gracious for divine bounty. When applying oneself with such a gracious heart to train the spirit, anyone can be sure of receiving divine virtue. Upon acquiring it, one finally gets to know true divine virtue. The conclusion is, for understanding divine virtue, begin by training the spirit and finish by training the spirit.

Written 7/31/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It's said that those who truly like fish want the head. Those who only want the meat cannot be said to be real lovers of fish. With faith, too, those who are only thankful with blessings are proof of their inexperience. You take the problem which an ordinary person can handle and receive it as the Divine Will. One is able to understand the Will of Kami and reach real divine virtue.

Written 7/29/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

18 *Do not be tormented by succumbing to selfish desires.*

- Just like the fairy tale of the sparrow whose tongue was cut out, there are people suffering. There must be quite a number throughout the world.
- Without physical form, that is virtue. Virtue is not at all a burden; it can be taken into the next world and passed on to future generations.
- Throw out your tiny desires and live for huge desires.
- In this world the thing of greatest strength is to get rid of your desire.
- When you follow the way it's possible to remove desire.

Written 7/15/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

- The emptiness, the sadness of succumbing to selfish desire.
- The reward of selfish desire is reaping what you sow.
- Carnal love will crumble from its base.
- The joy of austerities.

Written 7/22/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

I want to live in a world of wealth and honor. Whittle down one's body and one's heart. Offer it to heaven and enrich the earth with it. Faith is to seek for the unlimited. Prior to such an aspiration clear away your wants and desires. The heart of attachments is what torments the body. True faith discards small wishes and lives for huge desires.

Written 7/1/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Having selfish desires, one cannot speak of true spiritual awakening. What it is to believe in Kami is to take away selfishness and to reduce personal desires naturally. Then at last there is the world of spiritual awakening.

Written 7/30/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

19 Seasonal changes are beyond human control. Leave everything to time.

Whether it's hot, cold, rainy or sunny, it is Kami's arrangement. We can say it's beyond human control and also it's a manifestation of divine benevolence. Faith is to join with the Divine Heart; it's to be faithful with all the various things that occur. That is what here at Airaku particularly we speak of as "to respect the process." Since it meets with the Divine Heart, there will definitely be blessings. Essentially the very heart of what makes up Kami's work is compassion for all of Kami's children.

- Floating clouds and flowing waters
- There's nothing else but to trust and depend
- There's no other way to accomplish anything than to persevere in faith.

Written 7/16/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

There is a state of being as free as you please. To live in such a world is the ideal world of those practicing the faith. The sun and earth, the moon and earth, each have gravitational forces which pull against each other. In this way just as heavenly bodies move in perfect order, we must also practice "leaving everything to time" so as to receive the blessings of being able to manifest the exact identical work of nature. By relying on that, there is a world that's orderly.

Written 7/23/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

With human strength or intelligence, the hugeness of nature cannot be surmised. Even before this year's rainy season, a dry season was reported on TV, but in various places there has even been flood damage due to rainfall. There is a reason in the universe even for disasters, consequently, there is no natural activity opposing them. So it's essential to leave everything to time. Indeed, what should accompany the heart of the universe can be said to be the way of being with Kami. In order to live in the blessed world of being with Kami, one has got to leave it up to time; and for realizing the great Divine Love.

Written 7/ 2/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

By not complaining about the things which are beyond the strength of humans, you will not go against the Will of Kami. The way of living according to the ideal spoken of at Airaku Church is the most virtuous human way to live. Therefore, the way is opened for the greatest blessings for human beings.

Written 7/31/84 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

20 *Man cannot completely comprehend the matters of the universe. You should be filled with awe.*

“Many place their trust in Kami, but Kami places trust in only a few.” First, come to know the work of the universe and believe that that work is for creating a happy society for Kami’s children. Then receive such tremendous divine love. You must become trained to be one in whom Kami can place trust. Though it’s beyond the sight of human eyes, by opening the inner eye you gradually come to know the workings of the universe. Reckless action is the most terrifying. To open the inner eye is accepting divine virtue. But sometimes recklessness, like a blind man not fearing a snake, can lead to something marvelous. However, without noticing you can fall into a big manhole. It’s awesome, really awesome.

Written 7/17/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The words of the Reverend Setsutane Konko: “That of the universe is quite unattainable through human powers.” Heaven, earth and man as one body -- this is the aim of practicing faith. “That of the universe” can be compared to the water of the sea. We are something like a drop of water. But when a drop of water flows together with the water of the seas, the drop becomes like the water of the sea and the water of the sea becomes like the drop of water. That is when you will witness awesome powers becoming manifested. By the way, the posthumous title for the founder is: Jinriki Odoshi no Mikoto [the majestic lord of human powers].

Written 7/24/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Around smart people you'll see there's no Kami.
After feeling divine wisdom, then they'll understand
Kami's grandeur and strength.
There's nothing more fearful than living
Without realizing that Kami's profession
Is divine work.
The eternal soul of people continuing on
Without awakening
Is so sad.
People living in the world of material things
Is quite terrifying.

Written 7/ 3/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It's said the future ahead is black as night, but by turning on the light of one's heart, it's no longer dark. When there's a light in the heart, one's antenna goes to work. You are able to get around dangerous spots. When you realize the true love which is embracing you, the light of the heart becomes so keen.

Written 7/ 1/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Instructions of the Faith:

How to Develop Faith

*First issue in 1902 by
Konko Faith Headquarters*

Printed 1928 in the collection of Sacred Teachings

Teachings received from the founder by Sato Norio

1 The foundation of faith is to be in harmony with one's family.

This is the first thing that Kami wants us to do. It's that we should not have disharmony in the family. But it's not just to be harmonious. No matter what the situation is or what the circumstances are or even how different each family member's faith is, it is first Kami, second Kami and third too, and thus be wholehearted in praying to Kami. In daily life it is necessary to have the family united in faith. This teaching is a great source of blessings. *Written 7/18/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Just to know the teachings given to us by the founder is not enough. The teachings are worthless unless our way of receiving them leads to blessings. It's also exactly the case with this teaching. Just to be in harmony with one's family, or to get along well, is not what brings blessings. It's that the family is united in worshiping. It's not the structure, nor the words. It's the heart which is always full of appreciation. *Written 7/25/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

As one building a room for tea ceremony follows all the essentials, being careful about its appearance and arranging everything so that the spirit of tea is a natural experience, so the first thing in the home of a person of faith is to place the sanctuary for reverence and celebration of Kami at the home's center, for building the atmosphere as a family of faith and, at the same time, the physical forms for family harmony, too. Aren't such measures as these just what is needed?

For the one who manages to be harmonious
Good fortune and people will come to follow.
Don't forget the dream for a Wagakokoro.

Written 7/ 4/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Where the father is gentle with the children there seems to be family harmony. The image of the father as one to fear and the mother as easy-going must be elevated. From morning worship to evening prayers of gratitude is the atmosphere that's important for developments within the family. Of course, the whole family should respect the elderly, or the statement won't hold.

Written 7/ 2/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

2 *Upon practicing true faith, clear away all doubt from your heart.*

Questioning things is a sign of progress. It's important to look into each one carefully and learn from the experience. However, you must never doubt that Kami is absolute. Essentially, questioning and doubting are different. There is but one way. By pursuing it single-heartedly then questions are resolved, the way opens and gives birth to absolute faith.

Kami trusts those who trust Kami.

Written 7/19/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

You cannot depend on possessions or money. In just the same way, you sometimes cannot count on your parents or your children or even your spouse. Eternal immortality is not of this world. We know that we cannot rely upon each and every thing of this world. And so, at last we put trust in ourselves. But we find that we cannot even rely on ourselves when we're sick or something. With faith that originates from there, you cannot stop seeking after true faith, and you also will experience having nothing but to place faith in Kami. Then, no matter what, you'll be able to see there's no room for doubting Kami.

Written 7/26/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Without receiving blessings can you understand Kami? Without receiving blessings can you realize unwavering faith? If there's a religion which degrades blessings, I'd say it is a deformed religion. As you gather more and more blessings you'll find Kami and establish your faith. First, be redeemed, and then practice faith.

If your doubts are cleared away,
What you have is the joy of realizing
It's purely Divine Love.

Written 7/ 5/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It's the heart which believes in Kami without doubt. By skipping the training, unwavering belief in Kami will not be born. By only listening to sermons and understanding with the head, true conviction will not come about. You need not follow the ascetic practices of fire and water. The proof of the teachings comes from spiritual practice, faith training, and the way of working at your job. Thus unwavering conviction is brought about.

Written 7/ 3/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

3 *A heart filled with gratitude is the beginning of divine blessings.*

Being thankful for the blessings you receive is not real gratitude. Since your heart is cleansed, you are grateful. That is true gratitude. Really being grateful is to see Kami's Heart, that is, a "heart-meeting." The joy of meeting hearts is true gratitude.

- Pray for your heart to speed up.

Written 7/20/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

A heart filled with gratitude is said to be a feeling which arises in the heart after you realize the reality of things. When you recognize that what you had considered up until just now as suffering is divine love, a joy wells up that never ends. Happiness or unhappiness is but a paper-thin difference.

From the peaceful, quiet depths

The waters of pure love come forth.

Let's draw it up and drink of it.

Written 7/27/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Unable to explain by logic,
The miraculous is clearly explained
By the concept of *airaku*.

When you're filled with gratitude is the time when on the inside you worship your own spirit, and on the outside the benevolence of the universe is realized. Your faith will grow larger and broader as you deepen it by worshiping your own spirit and awakening to the benevolence of the universe.

While holding the hoe and

Feeling the nature of heaven and earth,

Before knowing it, my emotions had swelled

Ever so naturally.

Written 7/ 6/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The first feeling one has when ashamed of crying one's heart out is the spirit of real gratitude which leads to real awakening. Faith is devoted to nurturing such gratefulness.

Written 7/ 4/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

4 *Receive divine virtue and acquire human virtue.*

Divine virtue as belief-virtue
Human virtue as concern-virtue

If you are sincere to others, human virtues are acquired; but without faith, divine virtue cannot be received. You need to practice faith to become genuine and receive Kami's trust. If you do everything with faith and receive divine virtue, then human virtues follow naturally. After obtaining divine virtue and then human virtue, finally there is human happiness. *Written 7/21/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

There are those who do something because they have the ability. There are those who give something because they have it. Such a way of life has limitations. Definitely it will meet its end. This is because it is egotistic. By removing egotism you'll be able to receive divine virtue and also acquire human virtue. *Written 7/28/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Those leading the virtuous type of life gain human virtue; by practicing a life of ultra-virtue, divine virtue will be received. Cultivating the spirit will open into the sphere of enlightened awakening. While in this world I want to attain divine virtue through true faith.

Respect is what is sincere.

Sincere is the spirit that can't stop
continuing endlessly to pursue the true thing.

It is divine virtue which is gained in this world and
can even be carried into the next world of the spirit.

The great virtues alone can even be passed on.

Written 7/ 7/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Said to be the greatest of grains, the rice plant, and even barley or wheat if allowed to take their own course will not come to harvest.

By just saying that human beings are Kami's offspring, one's life will have to end in grief. One cannot neglect endeavors to suppress selfishness and control personal desires. Through faith I pray for blessings to be able to demonstrate the value of being a child of Kami.

Written 7/ 5/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

5 *Practicing faith and gaining divine virtue will let you live a long life.*

A willow in the wind will not break. Since a weak person is particularly careful about his body, he'll probably live a long life; because with faith in Kami you take care of your attitudes, it's perfectly natural to be able to live long. Another way of saying it is if you'd like to be a multi-millionaire, you need to have faith which will get the virtue of the rich. Just like with a good stomach you can eat anything without getting ill, with faith you become better (meaning the heart becomes beautiful) so that whatever it is, you will not be ill-affected. Thus you don't get angry, you get by without worrying, and can even live a long life, and accumulate riches, too.

Written 7/22/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Through faith we must cultivate the strength to fully live out the life span given us by Kami. Whatever the trouble you're undergoing, the virtue of perseverance developed through faith is, indeed, the gift of living a long life. The founder has taught, "To be worshiped forever, even after death, is living a long life."

Written 7/29/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

"Life is among the guardianship of the universe."

This sensation leads you to the rhythm of life. I want to practice faith which applies rejoicing joyfully, delightfully, gratefully.

With sincere honesty

Live in the human world meritoriously;

Make returns on divine benevolence day in, day out

And fulfill one's life, one's life span.

Written 7/ 8/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The sensation of being sustained

And protected by The Divine Parent

I wish for concluding a lifetime

Written 7/ 6/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

6 *You should save yourself with your own heart.*

“It is good to have faith that is broad. Wavering faith is of no value.

Do not let your faith go astray. Stand firm with single-hearted faith.”

Neither your body nor your heart will be saved by misbehaving and going astray. By “standing firm with single-hearted faith” both your body and heart will be saved. Broad faith is to become a gigantic foolish simpleton. It is when you become foolish and simplistic that you can “save yourself with your own heart.” When you feel keen appreciation for the faith you have, you are then able to save yourself with this faith.

Written 7/23/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Belief is Strength.

It's the capacity to believe in Kami. The person who can carry 300 kilograms ... The person who can carry 600 kilograms ... The person who can easily carry 1,200 kilograms ... There's no technique or trick to it. It's genuine capacity. Even to save yourself, or to save someone else, if you don't have the strength to believe in Kami, no one will be saved.

Written 7/30/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

- True happiness
 through human strength
 really cannot be brought about
 without acquiring divine privileges.
- Follow the teachings,
 leave everything up to Kami;
 heart at ease, life's a pleasure.
- Praying together, being prayed for;
 polishing together, and being polished;
 nothing to equate with today's happiness.

(Verses he sent for his wife's birthday)

Written 7/ 9/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

As with the wick of an oil lamp
If turned down low, the light is dim
If turned up high, the light is bright;
If the human heart is turned larger and more enriched,
Then blessings will likewise be larger and more enriched.

Written 7/ 7/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

7 *Those practicing the faith need to be sincere in whatever they do.*

Since Kami speaks of unlimited divine blessings through Konko Daijin, listening carefully to what he says and following it leads to faith. And receiving the blessings, manifesting them physically, and sincerely conveying them to others is faith. It is sincere divine learning about how the founder lived.

Written 7/24/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It's to take on the ways of this faith, which is really to become a believer who overflows with charm. The content of which is faithful conscientious belief in Kami. It's to receive blessings of character in the family and at work. Because they constantly concentrate on thoroughly becoming a woman, the feminine attractiveness of actors devoted to performing female impersonation is so beautiful and ladylike; it's even beyond that of women. It is a matter of course that such diligence is necessary for those who aim to be sincere believers.

Written 7/31/73 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Actually sensing that one is being safeguarded one can't but act with sincerity. Not just by understanding it, but when it is felt the spirit that is formed is sincerity. No matter how fine a kimono, if the obi-sash wound around it doesn't harmonize well, the kimono is spoilt. Regardless how good a figure, if the shoulder and sleeve-length are too short, the figure is ruined. No matter how well the teaching is spoken, even of the Konko religion, if lacking in truth, then there is nothing but to say it's worthless. With everything, human relations or any matter at all, it should be done sincerely. With such intentions it's not anything particularly difficult.

- Body and spirit as one
- Even a full moon reflected in the waters
Is distorted by dashing, rippling wave --

Realize everything as the appearance of truth.

Written 7/10/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

There's the saying, "With victory tie on the warrior's helmet," but one mustn't leave the heart unguarded with thoughts that one's faith has become tranquil, or that everything is all right. When an interest coming from the heart becomes one with what it echoes on the outside, it becomes a symphony with rhythm, and gives birth to a superb drama between the believer and Kami. Without making it difficult, faith is the diligence to have it become one's body and blood.

Written 7/ 8/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

8 *If you follow true faith, you should put aside your physical eyes and open your spiritual eyes.*

In order to accept everything gratefully, if you let go of your physical eyes and use the eyes of your spiritual heart, you will see that every single thing is divine love and realize each one as a blessing. You also must open your spiritual eyes in order to have a life of true faith, a life of genuine gratitude. Opening your inner eyes is not for seeing the form of every matter or everything, but for seeing the reality of it. When a woman is pregnant she doesn't mention her problems, since they are for giving birth to something wonderful. When trying to give birth to a wonderful blessing, dissatisfaction and complaints will cause such blessings to miscarry. *Written 7/25/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

The world of the physical eye is a world centered on human thought. The world of the spiritual eye is the world centered on Kami. You should live in the spiritual world filled with joy, instead of the physical world full of discontent. Such a world is the divine request of Kami. It's not exaggerating to say that practicing faith is for opening your spiritual eyes. *Written 7/ 1/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

True faith -- how much it is thought to be a straight path, but by no means does it follow a single straight course. It also isn't anything sensible. It's rather a winding twisting road. By thinking true faith should be something straight, it becomes extremely difficult. Opening the spiritual eyes you will plainly understand, but until you understand, it's faith's practice. One of Santoka's lines is, "a straight path is lonely." True faith, not a path of thorns, is a joyful way where the heart rebounds. Be cautious, personal desires lead the way astray, reasoning starts you turning away.

Written 7/11/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Having opened one's spiritual eyes doesn't mean that feelings of pain and irritation are removed. But, the value you place on spiritual training will change. *Written 7/ 9/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

But not that pain and irritation is training, it's the sensation of one's faith where such training is for saving others. It's training where 'as much as you suffer people will be saved.'

9 *People do not know Kami's heart in the same way that children do not know their parent's heart.*

By realizing the Heart of Kami you are able to be respectful in life. By understanding your parent's heart you won't be unfilial. Pray that the parents' wishes will be understood by their children. Also pray that we can be led to an understanding of the Divine Heart.

Written 7/26/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

This, I sense, is where Kami's sigh is heard. Let us practice faith which will bring pleasure to Kami. Take up faith which responds to Kami's expectations. Even though electric current is running, unless a light bulb makes the point of contact, there is no brilliance.

"The parent for the child & the child for the parent," this is the point where true faith begins.

Written 7/ 2/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The happy life of parent and child
living in harmony, safe and sound is greater than
the pleasure of a fortune of 10 million.
Though compared to the intentions of Kami,
even less than a millionth
accept it as a sign of the genuine thing.
There is nothing happier than
the child whose heart so well
takes such care of their parent.
No matter how great a fortune,
there's nothing comparable to
the virtue of filial respect.
Realize when the intent of the child
meets the intent of the parent,
is the point one meets the Divine Heart.

Written 7/12/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

By realizing the favors of Kami,
You are saddened,
You are thankful,
You're delighted.
When you're able to take your
Parent's pleasure as one's own
Is when you've reached
The heart of your parents.

Written 7/10/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

* Being saddened is when you actually have realized the flavors of Kami. You are saddened by these favors because you know that you haven't sufficient faith. And you are thankful that, even insufficient as you are, you have received so very many blessings. Thus you finally become delighted.

10 *People without faith in Kami are the same as those who do not respect their parents, or those who are immoral.*

It is hard to tell how many people know nothing about the real world of man. Konko Daijin has taught the way to real happiness for the people of this world. Moreover, the happiness in this world “will be with you even after death and also passed down to future generations.” So sincerely has such a way been passed on to us, by being natural in such a reality, man can become happy. Let us actually prove it is a fact to be able to receive limitless blessings without end, by not limiting our naturalness.

Whatever, wherever

With a single natural heart

There's a way

to climb above the clouds

Written 7/27/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

If you are to have faith it should not be just for praying or for worshiping. You must learn to meet and follow the ways of faith, attain the way to blessings, and guide and instruct just about all the people throughout the world who haven't any faith.

Just being a parent

Guiding and instructing

Is what really sanctifies.

People will be saved

& Kami will be saved.

Written 7/ 3/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

We, human beings, compared to the huge spirit of the universe, are a small universe-like subdivision of the spirit. The more we humans know about our interconnection with the universe, we cannot but base our way of life on such a reasoning. This is what the founder taught about the Divine Parent and the human believer. In a sense the human being is the genuine child of Divinity, Kami's beloved child. When we take up our life with such a spirit, with feelings the child has for their parent, then the blessed sensation of “Hey, it's really our Divine Parent” will broaden evermore widely. Faith is to understand that. Setting that in motion is the way of faith.

In the world the root of suffering comes from people's hearts

not complying with the Heart of The Divine Parent

Written 7/13/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

As expressed in the teaching:

“People have often wondered why a man who is honest and like a kami or buddha is often afflicted with many misfortunes. There is a difference between a good, honest person who does not do wrong and a person who has received divine blessings through faith.”

... the content itself is different from the way of those taking the moralistic view or even that of filial piety. The way to make communication with the universe and how to truly respect one's parents will follow. The way of faith does not suffer from fate, is not caught in sin; ultimately it reaches a joyous world, the world of Konko Daijin.

Written 7/11/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

11 Eliminate selfish desires, and recognize true faith.

You must devote yourself to being a true person before you “recognize true faith.” To really “eliminate selfish desires” is to be a true person. Selfishness is your own wishes. Desires are seeking blessings over and above what you’ve been given. By devoting yourself to being a true person you will realize you are in the midst of Kami. *Written 7/28/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

“Sometime or other my wishes and my thoughts just
vanished. I became so very thankful and grateful.”

These are the words of the Reverend Setsutane Konko. Indeed, this attitude is of the true world where only those who are detached from selfish desire can get the sensation. It is where there is a world with blessings beyond one’s conception, beyond one’s desires. *Written 7/ 4/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

The pleasant feel of Kami’s powerful virtues
We cast off our wants and selfish desires
Truly in the embrace of Kami’s bosom

Not just hearing and understanding what is spoken, but let loose of personal wants and don’t be selfish. From there the true way will open. By oneself true harmony won’t be born. With true harmony one is given shining light. With shining light one will come to see the true way quite clearly.

Written 7/14/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The content of release from selfish desires is different from pursuits of renouncing self. Eliminating selfish desire is where our feelings become stronger and deeper; our desires will expand further and wider. It’s the desire or feeling of releasing one’s spirit. *Written 7/12/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

12 *Whether you save or kill yourself depends upon your own heart.*

It is taught that faith is to enliven each and every thing. This is because your heart comes to be full of lively joy. You will see that being a good person and receiving blessings through faith in The Divine Parent are two different things. The joy of faith enlivens absolutely everything, not just you. Dissatisfaction and complaints disrupt not only yourself, but also your whole destiny.

Written 7/29/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Throwing something away is deadening and to use it is enlivening. This is reasonable. If even the heart-soul is allowed to run free, you bring about enlivening activity not just for you alone, but for everything.

Written 7/ 5/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It's when the pleasurable joy of our divine-human faith gives life to the present and to the past. Moreover, it shines even into the future. You must realize that when the future is totally dark with the opposite spirit is when blessings are killed.

Killing yourself, you will also kill Kami.

Written 7/15/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The strong using their strength will hurt or kill people. There are those who use their strength to help the world, and help people.

Written 7/13/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

13 Overeating and overdrinking are the causes for becoming unable to eat or drink.

Though you know that you are hurting your body by overeating and overdrinking, it's quite difficult not to even with faith. It is teaching that those who have faith need to feel grateful for their food, that they don't deserve such good food.

- Know that whatever you neglect is irreverence to Kami.
- As sacred sake, it is grateful; but when it's a drink, it has become a whim.

Written 7/30/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Just by overeating the sumo wrestler becomes big and gains strength. It's after a meal that is essential. Even eating small amounts, by eating and sleeping, and eating and sleeping he'll become like a cow. The proper amount of alcohol is beneficial for you and everyone present, but by exceeding that level it spoils it for all of you.

Written 7/ 6/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

This teaching is not like any commandment which stipulates that you shouldn't eat this, or you cannot eat that. It gives you the teaching of Konko religion so simply and vividly. It is teaching the natural way for human beings to live. If you upset your system by taking teachings as the basis for fasting, it will really dishonor Kami.

Written 7/16/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Though anyone can understand this teaching even without practicing faith, and though it seems simple to carry out, it's difficult. When received anew as a teaching of the founder, it's a simple teaching that can become a living part of your body and blood.

Written 7/14/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

14 Food becomes medicine or poison depending on your heart.

First, it is taken gratefully. At the same time, if your physical condition isn't good, no matter how good a medicine it might be, it will become poison. This is not just for food. Whatever it is, depending on your heart of acceptance, it becomes a blessing or it causes you to lose the blessing. Pray for a good digestive tract. It is also necessary to pray for a sound spirit of digestion.

- A rotating spirit: It rotates your spirit away from wrong, so it can become good.
- It is faith which makes poison change to medicine.
- By accepting fate gratefully, it becomes divine virtue.

Written 7/31/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Each day is made up not just of good things, not just of easy things. The founder lived his life by taking delight in just such days by considering the dawn as New Years and sunset the year's end, taking the bad just as the good and persisting even when things were not easy. He even received the blessings of Kami admitting, "There's no test that can evaluate you." He took something poisonous as medicine, so to speak. You can see it's not just food that is being accepted.

Written 7/7/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It's important to have the spirit of not wasting even a grain of rice, or a drop of soy sauce. However, since some was left over, scraping the dish clean won't bring blessings.

When living for
the Divine request of the Divine Parent,
Even the smallest thing
should not be overlooked.

Written 7/17/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The relation of food and humans is something like that of a boat and its skipper. With the skipper a boat can be manipulated as one pleases; with the human being, food. The food manipulated by the body combines in harmony to give birth to fine activity. Break the harmony and you also break the body.

Written 7/15/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

15 Always be grateful for whatever you eat or drink,

It is said that food is a treasure. People are the only ones who can take it as something sacred. When the feeling of gratitude is gone, things are at their worst. In the faith, there's even the joy after death of being worshiped and becoming a kami. Also accumulating gratitude is the way to get virtue which only people are allowed to receive. Moreover, gratefulness is a privilege of the human race. There's nothing more pitiful than to relinquish these privileges. And at the same time it is an insult to Kami.

Written 8/ 1/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

While you should be grateful for what you partake, first of all, it is necessary to express gratitude for the healthy stomach which enables you to enjoy everything. And also, in order to be so grateful, you need to pray for the health of your whole body. As you partake and think of the favors of the universe, feel the gratitude naturally well up for the farmers and fishermen and those involved in processing these products.

Written 7/ 8/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Concerning food and drink, I first pray. May what I receive become the bases of my bodily functions, become my flesh and blood. And when my bodily wastes are removed, from the heart I offer a prayer of gratitude. It's this repetition of praying, receiving, and thanking. Since that is how it is, I can attain the real single-hearted sense of being thankful.

Since food is what is provided
by the Divine Parent
for one's life,
By accepting it heartily,
devotedly live it out
each day of each month

Written 7/18/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Deliciously Enjoyably Gratefully

Written 7/16/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

16 Pray for your good health.

I feel this teaching concerns people who are not in good health. It's saying, please become healthy. With a sickness or an injury it's necessary to take care of yourself. The doctor doesn't cure you; the medicine won't cure you. The cure is the work of Kami. The cure is just quickened by the doctor, by the medicine. Knowing this fact, you should pray for good health and complete recovery. "If people prayed before taking medicine, blessings would be quick. Instead, however, they take medicine before praying, so there are no divine blessings." You can well understand what's being taught.

Written 8/ 2/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It's not just praying to be comfortable. It's the single-hearted desire that you can't help but pray to be of service. Even when it's difficult or painful, if you consider it a sign of being alive, then you can be grateful.

Written 7/ 9/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

No matter how painful or tiring the managing of my health, I never let out a complaint. I received, "speaking of being tired or in pain will call the gods of death." Since then I've received blessings of not speaking of tiredness and pain. It's quite a good training I'm undergoing that I should express my gratitude. This goes just the same way for even money matters. By feeling or saying you're in financial trouble or "there's nothing worse than poverty," you won't escape the clutches of poverty. Receiving it thankfully, regardless of what it is, then there will definitely be a response from Kami.

Written 7/19/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The basis is taking everything of one's health as pluses. It's vitally essential to be discrete so you don't upset your remaining strength.

Written 7/17/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

17 Strengthen your body. Good health is the basis of everything.

What is it to strengthen your body? Nourishment is important and some kind of exercise is also necessary. Just as good health is the basis of everything, the heart is the basis of blessings. You need to pray for a sound heart while at the same time you must build it up. To do that first it is necessary to nourish the heart. Realize that everything, the bitter, the painful and the sad, are nourishment given by Kami. Receive them gratefully. To follow the teachings is a movement for the heart.

Written 8/ 3/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

To have life is fundamental.
With a side dish, sake comes alive;
With sake, the side dish comes alive.
That man and creation come
to be given life together,
Is the genuine way of living.

A verse by the Reverend Kagamitaro Konko

When you do it

Without the blessings and conditions

to do it,

You can't do a single thing.

Written 7/10/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It must be prayed for. However, the devotion to build it must also not be forgotten. Such devotion should aim for faith which becomes single hearted with the Divine Parent of the universe. The calm before a storm or the movement of clouds before rainfall, like a forerunner, is a portent of developments to come. With a loud voice or at times like a whisper, the work of the natural universe is actually kind. This faith has you pray for a livelihood that carries on an intercourse with the universe within the rhythms of everyday life.

Written 7/20/78 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Of course, strengthening your body and staying in shape is important, but, without allowing your health to become your ruin, never forget that everything should lead toward faith.

Written 7/18/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

18 *Be aware of worries and practice faith.*

It's to be one who gets by without worrying. Worries are to be entrusted to Kami. By just making requests for mediation and returning home without the response, we cannot be released from our worries. "If you practice faith and understand Kami's blessings, you will live a peaceful and stable life. You will have descendants and gain wealth." You will not need to worry. The way of faith is to know the way of the universe. *Written 8/ 4/68 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

On the good mountain (Mt. Yoshino)
Even by losing your way
You are among flowers

Believers seek the source of anxiety, but the Divine Request is for us to have faith and receive blessings. It's because you are worried that you rise up single-heartedly. When you can practice faith because of worries, the first thing that happens is you are put at ease.

Snow on the mountain;
Hail at its foot;
Raining at home.
It's the same everywhere
In the bosom of Kami.

Written 7/11/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Originally, faith began from the need to rely on and trust in something. As faith experience accumulates, firm belief in Kami is developed. It's important to train oneself strenuously to realize that as big as the worst worry, the blessings are even bigger. We wish for a Kami in which we can just leave our worries here at the mediation hall and go home.

The precious spirit of entrusting fully
Comes about through
Deepening one's faith in Kami

Written 7/21/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When your prayer becomes enlarged, then little worries disappear.

Written 7/19/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

19 Realize that people have limitations. You cannot see through closed doors.

This is the spiritual basis for faith. First, you should train yourself in faith in order to understand this. Moreover, you must enlarge and deepen the teachings. You can't do anything on your own. As you become more and more aware that you have no power, finally you are able to surrender unconditionally to Kami. This opens up a life relying on Kami, actually, an exquisite life of faith. In the words of Reverend Setsutane Konko: "It is taught to trust in Kami and Kami will trust in you."

Written 6/16/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

This must be understood. It must be made known to the vain human race. That you can do it is to be vain. You are provided with the ability to do it. Realizing that "without permission from Kami you cannot budge even an inch," gives an indication of our human error. And this is what will guide us to the most supreme blessings.

Written 7/12/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Kami's administration is not off by even the smallest fraction. By realizing even you are being provided a life in this divine scheme, there's nothing other than to actually live joining together with its activity for true faith and human happiness.

Although people cannot see through a paper screen,

We do see signs of being together with Kami.

Study how to live by respecting the process

And eternal life is to be given.

Written 7/22/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

What a pathetic way of expressing it. However, when you feel the extent of such a sad thing, it opens to the spirit that there's nothing else but to entrust yourself, that you can't help but be reliant. Might we say it is the first step for true faith?

Written 7/20/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

20 *Do not become lax in practicing your faith, even when healthy.*

The strength of the human body is not reliable. Being prosperous doesn't mean you can be at ease. In order to be prosperous, in order to be healthier, it's necessary to have the faith of gratitude. Like the moth (yourself) attracted to the light, when you're healthy, when you're prosperous and when everything is going well, the bug of conceit easily gets struck.

Written 6/17/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When faith is not progressing is when it is retreating. It is never standing still in the same place. When it's retreating, you can't feel grateful even when listening to an enjoyable talk. Even when receiving blessings, you cannot sense blessings as blessings. Your rivals, negligence and pride are the origin of serious injury.

Written 7/13/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Saying, "I speak to you in all sincerity."

Saying, "It's a blessing."

Saying, "Thank you."

We need to devote ourselves to practicing these staple manners. The further away we get from the church, we start to become lax. Though saying we won't forget, the farther we get, we lose sight of it.

Written 7/23/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The healthier we are, the greater our well-being, so we must practice faith to become stronger and more courteous. For that, we really need the determination to take the way of the mild, easy-to-wear straw sandals* of our faith (meaning to apply all one's efforts). It's because this faith follows the way of the gentle ease, or straw sandals.*

Written 7/21/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

- *Wa-ra-ji* is straw sandals, but written in characters meaning, *mild-ease-path*.

21 *Faith is to polish the gem in your heart.*

The gem in your heart is the divine nature which everyone has received within their heart. When it's polished, it will definitely come into being and begin to shine. Darkness disappears in front of light. There are many instruments to polish this heart lying all around us. One of the approaches in my faith is "polish with this; renew with that."
Written 6/18/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The aim of faith is to live in the world of brilliance. Where there is brilliance fear and apprehension disappear. Unless they're polished, diamonds will not shine. Also your heart will begin to shine upon being polished. Then relations within your family will brighten and you'll be able to brighten up the world. It's Kami's wish that man live in the world of brilliance.
Written 7/14/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Develop the content called for naturally through the heart. First, remove the filth from the heart; it's to wash and purify. When the heart sparkles then everything will seem to sparkle.

To polish the heart \ a grindstone is not needed.
Grind the anguish from \ within one's heart.
By polishing, it sparkles \ with precious brilliance.
The surrounding darkness \ is illuminated.
Even though some won't enter \ the world of brilliance,
Build the heart \ which prays for people.

Written 7/24/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

You are able to take up the heart, because at the same time as people are born into the world they are blessed with a divine nature. However, as we come to grow up our selfishness begins to sprout. Not at all like the divine nature, it corrupts and leads the way to wretched distress. At such a turning point in human life, true faith is what will direct you to the true way.

Written 7/22/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

22 *Young people should not allow evil ideas to invade their heart.*

The time of mental prowess is the most significant time for the body to develop. Any mistake and you get struck, get only physically powerful and use just brute force and violent action. This is because you forget to develop the heart. To become a responsible person of the world you have to have development. There is trouble if the balance is lost between intellectual, physical and spiritual development. Since young people look at things too easily, it's easy for evil ideas to invade. By coming to worship a bud of joy will definitely sprout. It's such a pity if it is mercilessly pulled up. Young budding faith is also easily infested by bugs. *Written 6/19/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

For faith you need to have a solid backbone. With a solid backbone evil ideas cannot draw near. Be very careful with your eyes, ears and mouth. Through the heart of faith you see, hear and taste. Commonly it's said, "See no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil." However, those who have faith will not go astray by anything seen or heard. *Written 7/15/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Young people! Foster the spirit for great achievements. Pray that you may respond to the divine request for humanity. There are tasks which only young people can do: The spirit to broaden the era of the peaceful joyful heart to every country on earth; Nothing other than to make the so called, 'frozen-heaven, frightened-earth' into a world of 'grateful heaven and joyful earth;' the rousing, burning fervor of young blood.

Hasten to comply with the principles
of the true dynamics of the universe
to fulfill the mission of birth as a human being.
Lead the young fellows to join together
with the strength of the teachings
and guide those gone astray.
Actualizing how we ourselves shine
in the brilliant light of truth
signifies the world of divine works;
it's the response to Kami's request.

Written 7/25/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

I wish for the spirit of youth,
Unbounded; freely at ease.
It's to aim for faith that's huge.
Problems are not troublesome.
Ill-behavior is not insulting.
Filthy is not impure.
The world of blessings even enlarges.

Written 7/23/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

23 *Conceit leads to major failure.*

Faith is not for becoming famous; nor is it for becoming wise. Faith is practice in becoming grateful. If your faith is for receiving blessings, after getting the blessings you become conceited. You won't be conceited with a faith which seeks the heart of belief, the heart of sincerity and the heart of Kami. However, to the very extent of our conceit, we wish to acquire blessings also.

Written 6/20/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

** When we're under the impression that something is true, it's conceit.

The posture that is necessary is to seek the truth beyond the truth.

** When we are conceited, we might be able to have breadth, but depth will be lost.

It's because we don't probe deep within ourselves.

Written 7/16/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

A Poem of the Most Reverend Kagamitaro Konko:

Since thinking this is all that will come of it,

Thinking anything bad will be forgiven,

Mistakes are made.

At the eye of a typhoon is a dead calm. It's at times of tranquil peace that you can progress in faith attentively. Take the poem by Rev. Kagamitaro Konko together with this.

Written 7/26/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It's when our faith becomes respected and we attain some repute that we might swell with pride. We must broaden and deepen our faith over and over again.

Written 7/24/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

24 *Be careful not to be tormented by you yourself.*

It's what is called the scruples of conscience. With a single heart, can I possibly live in paradise? Or because of my heart must I endure the pains of hell? Through faith we wish to receive true virtue and live in a world that has no suffering. A world where rules disappear is what I call, the uncommonly.* Where divine love is realized, there exists a fearless, problem-free world of paradise.

Written 6/21/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

○ 滅法界(*meb-bou-kai*, disappearing-rules-world) meaning uncommonly

- ❖ Carelessly saying something that need not be mentioned causes trouble. It is proof that demons live inside of us. While being careful, subdue the demons and then it's easy.
- ❖ Human nature is pessimistic; human conduct is mostly optimistic. As for human nature, we wish to attain divine nature and act with strict introspection.

Written 7/17/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

What I didn't yet notice before taking up faith now bothers me keenly. I use it to condemn myself. You talk of being ashamed. You feel you're in total darkness, that the light of faith has been cut off. I have really come to understand each and every nook and corner of the heart. By grappling with this I've sensed it's time to renew and my way of life changed. From then I well up with the joy of truly being able to be fulfilled.

Strong attachments and unrestrained desires,
Such extremes can only ruin body and soul.

Written 7/27/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The place for tormenting oneself is lost when faith is practiced in order to save one's self both in body and soul.

Written 7/25/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

25 *Give in to the people who go against you and leave it up to time.*

When you're strong enough to win it's quite difficult to give in, but with faith giving in becomes something of a joy. When that is done your faith is self-reliant. By waiting for the right time, you will have the experience of saving yourself and others, too. A principle of my faith is to value the process of life or to respect it. It is wonderful when this principle becomes a part of your faith. That is because I believe faith is to live in a world where Kami is constantly watching over you. The founding minister of Fukuoka Church was taught to "open the way by being a foolish simpleton."

Written 6/22/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Without true ability you can't win. There's nothing as pitiful as when you know you're losing and continue to face it. It's because your defeat is inevitable. When you win by losing, you should conserve your energy and wait for the right time. It's not enough just to wait it out.

Written 7/18/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

You can't dampen a heart burning with passion. Sprinkle it with the waters of blessings and then it settles down. By staying peaceful you'll realize that there isn't anything to dispute. Of course, the winning or losing in this teaching is not the outcome of a battle. One needs to pray for a good outcome, and even for enjoying the win or loss.

For enriching the spirit, one must first
Give the victory to the person confronting you.
By losing to the one confronting you and praying
Know that is how people first get relief.

Written 7/28/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Where exquisite joys flourish,
Riches and honors thrive.

The spirit to give in is noble. A heart which can pray for the spirit of those opposed to you is ever more grateful. At just such times the feeling one has is of exquisite joy. Exquisite joy is inevitably followed with success, riches, and honors.

Written 7/26/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

26 *Do not become upset and disturbed over the past.*

As faith is to become more grateful, all of the past should be the source of blessings. However, our temper flares just by remembering something. That is because the essence of our faith is mistaken. It's embarrassing. Since what we think is good becomes the source of our anger, Reverend Matsutaro Yasutake of Amagi has taught:

With a vengeance
Fight your righteousness
Every day and every night

Written 6/23/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

There are times we have become upset just from remembering something. Upon practicing faith, because of what happened we've gained understanding of faith, acquired strength and could express gratitude for what happened. We have suffered long and been vexed with regrets, but that has burst and vanished like a dream. The difference between those having faith and those not having it is keenly felt.

Written 7/19/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Since faith is to live bringing life to the past, the present, and the future, I wish to have faith which expresses gratitude for all things.

When you realize that
 this is a blessings and
 that is a blessing,
Before you know it
 the unlit darkness changes
 to a world of brilliance.
Through the inner eye
 the despicable is
Now seen as divine love
 along the broad path
 toward truth.

Written 7/29/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Worship the Mountain of Principle Nourishment

Use everything as principle nourishment for faith so your faith is able to express gratitude for everything. Then your faith will enjoy the present and be delighted with the future, too.

Written 7/27/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

27 *Do not speak nicely with hate in your heart.*

For our own reasons we sometimes are nice to others and sometimes hate them. Upon following our own wishes it's impossible to have good faith. To the greatest extent we must be centered on Kami and consider everything as from the heart of Kami. The people around us are all children of Kami. The saying "to slander with the mouth and praise with the heart" doesn't satisfy the heart of Kami. It's a warning that the mouth and heart are on opposite sides.

Written 6/24/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

- You see both good and evil inside your heart.
- Out of the heart of hate comes evil; out of the heart of love comes good.
- Kami always wants you to seek the beatific vision among the people you meet in every situation.

Written 7/20/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

There are many cases between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Instead of working on manner or form, it's pleasing to have a delighting heart.

More than exterior,
the interior is important.
Realize you should follow the true way
of the principles of faith.
For people, for the world, for the faith
praying and praying
forgetting about self.
So mean, one's heart
both front and back.
People realize it not,
but Kami sees thoroughly.
Exalted is to kill one's self
and up lift others.
Throw out the heart of self;
be one who serves.

Written 7/30/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Today I saw the bout between Konishiki and Tagaryu (Sumo wrestlers) in Tokyo National Stadium. As for their strengths: the 215 kilo Konishiki and Tagaryu who's different by a 100 kilo or more, it's impossible to match their power. This is where Konishiki was brilliantly defeated. Not just power, the victory came with skill. With faith, too, blessings are received through the skill of the spirit alone. In order to do it, one must sharpen the skills of the spirit by always keeping the focus on the heart. If you're focusing on the heart, your heart won't be able to do such things as to hate other people.

Written 7/28/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

28 *Those practicing faith always need to maintain Kami in their hearts.*

First, if you're not at ease and not happy, than you have stopped maintaining Kami in your heart. Assume that Kami has gone far away. And then you must pray to renew your spirit. It is said, "Kami is with us" and "accompanied by Kami." However, though you think you are doing it, just assuming it will not do. The point is Kami shall meet and accompany our Wagakokoro like a shadow.

Written 6/25/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Since I'm included in Konko Daijin's mediation, in other words, within the sphere of this prayer, I should never sense that I am removed from this great safeguard. It is to continuously maintain the joy of faith always.

Zendoji Mottaijima Kabame Tsunemochi Airaku

Written 7/21/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

NOTE: In **Zendoji** I was properly guided at our parental church. At first I felt a sense of preciousness through the miraculous blessings I received. Then whatever the problem I faced, I received it preciously (**Mottaijima**). In this way, eventually, the joyous flower of my heart (**Kabame**) came to blossom gloriously and from that time people have come to receive blessings. Such a spirit which always continues to maintain the joy of faith is **Tsunemochi**. Finally crossing over from there is **Airaku**.

Feel like you have an enormous sum in your pocket. Take care of it so it won't get lost. You neither want it stolen, nor your pockets picked. Maintaining the Kami you receive in your heart, Kami will be your guardian. When thoroughly receiving Kami, a true heart, the heart of love, will naturally become a part of you.

To live in the splendid world of
truth, excellence and beauty,
Enter the heart of genuine love
without sparing oneself

Written 7/31/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Even when electric current runs to that point, if the light bulb is loose, there will be no light. Similarly, faith that only accepts the Reverend Konko, will not lead to true blessings. With a single-hearted spirit you finally can get the heart set for maintaining its protection.

Written 7/29/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

29 *The Kami you hold in your heart can never be tarnished.*

It's faith that is not forgotten and lost; complete and harmonious faith; wherever we may slip or turn, it is faith where there's nothing other than joy. However, with only the faith we hold in our heart, still there are insufficiencies and dissatisfaction. We are already tarnished. It is because, even though we may be happy with our blessings, our joy for faith and practicing the teachings is still lacking.

If I have to remember you,
My love must be shallow.
Without trying to remember,
But never forgetting you.

Written 6/26/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

To realize all is vain,
that everything is for naught.
This is extremely difficult.
I look at it as every single thing exists.
It's to see things as sacred,
to accept all circumstances as sacred.

Through such a way, there's nothing that will tarnish you. It's simply that the things you have are solely for appreciation.

Written 7/22/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When realizing you are in the midst of divine love is when you are holding Kami in your heart. When you notice that what you thought was tarnished is a blessing is when you've been able to improve the image of dirtiness. Although Konko Daijin has taught how human beings should live humanly, we suffer by thinking the untarnished is tarnished.

The idea that it's dirt is dirty.

Written 7/ 1/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Convincing beliefs protect the heart.
Believe in Kami unwaveringly.
In meeting the process of events
Cultivate a powerful strength.
The spirit which is born is itself
What I want to maintain the heart.

Written 7/30/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

30 *You should be aware that Kami protects you in the same way as you love your child.*

Even when asleep
The paper fan moves ---
The parental heart

[A parent fanning a child during a summer nap]

This is a parent's true feeling. Whether we're asleep or awake, Kami's protection continues. When we perceive this feeling of Kami, our way of faith begins. As those who try their best to meet their parents' wishes are called filial, those who realize and satisfy Kami's desires are said to be genuine believers.

Written 6/27/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Since people are the children of Kami, it's no wonder that the suffering of people doesn't meet with parental pleasure. Recently, I have been talking about the banning of harsh training with water or fire, in other words, ascetic training. I cannot but speak out about this as I come to perceive more and more of Kami's Heart. Kami's request is something other than that. The teaching is that one should be aware of the keenly felt purpose of Kami's love for people.

Written 7/23/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

NOTE: At Airaku physical training was abolished from July 20, 1974.

Happiness can begin just by being able to feel your parent's joy within you. Faith, too, can become genuine by awakening to the Heart of The Parental Kami. When the aim of your faith is for blessings, it is evidence of only understanding the Divine Heart and not fulfilling it. By accepting every circumstance and situation as sacred, and each experience as divine is the real proof of reaching spiritual fulfillment.

Written 7/ 2/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When the parent thinks of the child and the child considers the parent, the greatest child-parent communication is possible. As in the deep relation between becoming a parent and being a child, the feeling of Kami is awe-inspiring. The more you realize it, the deeper and broader your faith becomes. Blessings, too, follow with it.

Written 7/31/85 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

31 *Have faith and do your work in good health. It serves you and the world.*

In the letter that I just received from Mr. Sadami Koutaki of the Osaka police, he says, "For the time being, I have postponed the matter concerning police headquarters, just as my mediating minister (Rev. S. Otsubo) recommended. Thank you so very much. Please take care of my mother and grandmother. Since taking this new job I have received my first biannual bonus. I'd like to offer some of it to Kami, though it's not much." His very way of life is to have faith and serve himself and the world.

Written 6/28/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Since it is Kami's Will for you to receive the blessings of health through faith and devote yourself sincerely to your work, the content of such must become service (serve Kami), work (serve things), and labor (put at ease). In that way it will serve the world and will also serve for you yourself. Unless the prosperity of the country leads to the prosperity of all people throughout the world, it will not suffice to meet the Divine Will. The absolute ultimate way is to place Divine Will at the center, in other words, it's entrusting your way of life to Kami.

Written 7/24/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

To serve you or serve the world need not be thought difficult. It's serving oneself. And then when working serves to make it easy it is nice. The control which makes it true for one era or true for another era is the real thing. There's this passage of Santoka's, "a straight path is lonely." Just the straight and narrow isn't interesting.

Written 7/ 3/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Yesterday I heard on the news that the emperor and empress were on a trip in the Fukushima area for their 60th wedding anniversary. I was filled with emotional joy when offering a prayer of gratitude.

Presently in Africa a crisis is reported for a hundred-fifty million people. Even now the Iran and Iraq war still rages on. It's so sad. I really wish to offer powerful prayers for world peace and the prosperity of humanity.

Written 7/ 1/86 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

32 *If there is an impurity, you should apologize for the impurity before making a request of Kami.*

When you sense an impurity, you should honestly apologize. It's because we are taught "upon apologizing, the desire to forgive is the parent's heart." As you gradually progress in faith essentially there are no impurities. The founder has taught, "Impurity is that which is not attained." The impurities which Kami hates are the requests of the faithful which end unachieved. Practicing faith wholeheartedly we want to receive the blessing that our prayers are achieved.

Written 6/29/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

That which is dirty is impure. It's namely selfish desire. Positively we want to live with truth, virtue and beauty -- a world of beauty without deceit, without evil, namely, a life which is full of the joy of being among Divine virtues. That is where a world without strife, a world without sickness and of course, without concern for money or possessions opens up limitlessly. The world of Divine virtue is a distinct universe without impurity.

Written 7/25/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

- The spirit of prayer so diverse, for a hundred people there's a hundred ways. I thus wish the content of my prayer to awaken my own faith, and deepen and raise that content boundlessly.
- Smell and fragrance are different. A smell stinks; apology is needed. From smells to fragrance and then aiming for odorless, I want to receive blessings whereby I give a scent of virtues.

From times of being rude, insulting, and even shamelessly impudent, you'll come to realize your impolite insulting self, and out of that an ever widening world of faith will open.

Written 7/ 4/79 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

In the initial stages of Airaku Church I was very strict about offerings. One time we went to gather bracken and there was an offering of bracken. And accompanying it was an offering of bread with it. Upon setting out the offering I received, "Return the bread" from Kami. The surprised believer told me, "Actually I've been discourteous. My husband told me as I was leaving home that just bracken would be fine. I feel that doing it would not be acceptable. Please express apologies for my insulting behavior." So the offering had to be done over again.

Written 7/ 2/86 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

33 *Which individual is more important -- you or someone else? All are human beings.*

Today is the Grand Purification Ceremony [The ceremony for safe driving and attainment of The Five Requests]. If today's teaching is carefully put into practice, I'm sure there would be no traffic accidents. We must devote ourselves to saving both ourselves and others. Even knowing that we are important and that others are too, by neglecting ourselves, we'll become irritable and pent-up. This results in hurting both ourselves and others. The primary aim is to seek the origins of our irritable and pent-up feelings and develop a feeling of gratitude.

Enjoy and appreciate

What you are now.

Then in the family

There'll be no discord.

Written 6/30/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

“Wow! It's wonderful to get along together.”

This is a handwritten phrase by the painter, Koji Mushano, concerning his own painting of a pumpkin, eggplants and green peppers. It's neither about someone else nor yourself, but the preceding stage. What's necessary is to appreciate each other's strong points and compensate for weaknesses. Boarding the same train at the same time is quite a miracle. Those riding along with you would at least like to be fully kind to each other. And those living under the same roof which are called, parent and child, husband and wife, wish to worship and revere each other. For the people living on the same planet Earth in this same era, we wish to inspire and save each other.

Written 7/26/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When someone of narrow views really takes up this teaching and devotes themselves to becoming broad and enriched, it will lead to some wonderful blessings. As how to go about it, when motivated with “if only people could be saved,” then all people are seen as the suffering people of Kami and the earnest parental heart (the sincere wishes of the parent for the child) naturally comes alive.

Written 7/ 5/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

34 *There is no one in this world that does not belong.*

Just one vegetable has some parts that are white and some parts green, though there is but a single root. There are whites, there are blacks and there are yellow colored beings with a single origin. Through the eyes of the Parent Kami of the universe they are all the same. They are the beloved children of Kami. If all the people of the world join hands together in friendship, it goes without saying, that the Parent Kami would be happy. It is also Kami's very request for mankind. It's only natural to pray earnestly for true world peace and the well-being of all mankind.

Written 7/ 1/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Really it's important to carefully consider whether the human being was created scientifically or made medically, or whether it was Kami's creation. Of course, even scientists or doctors don't feel that it was done scientifically or medically. But you can't make any objections about Kami having done it. By this reasoning, we are able to say that our parent is Kami alone. There's no such thing as anyone not belonging.

Written 7/27/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Just the thought that somewhere in the world there are bloody battles being fought is sad. I can't consider it as happening to someone else. When there are many people with such a thought, we can really consider strife between fellow men as ending. This will become the strong prayer to fulfill the Divine Will for achieving true world peace.

Written 7/ 6/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

35 *Do not have a deceitful heart.*

Know that looking only at what others are doing is proof that you have a deceitful heart. It's like to shine the light only in front of you while walking down a dark street. It's bright in front, but of course, where you are it is dark. It's desirable to have light to see both in front and in back of you. You also need light to see your own self. When you are able to grasp the invisible Kami, you have no deceitful dark spots.

A poem of the Meiji Emperor:
The invisible divine heart
is met by the human heart
in truth

Written 7/ 2/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When you accept more carefully that which you cannot see rather than what you can see and that which others do not see rather than what they do see, then from the depth of your heart you will blossom with such abundant gratitude. Isn't it through just such a way of life that your Wagakokoro comes to be developed?

Written 7/28/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Frankly, there isn't a natural phenomenon that doesn't have problems. The fundamental point of the Airaku ideal is to take the phenomenon as the working of Kami. With each natural phenomenon there's a rhythm so superb. Day by day, moment by moment, go with that rhythm. There's not the spare time to have a deceitful heart.

Taking nature seriously becomes
Giving life to nature

Written 7/ 7/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

36 *When selecting a spouse, do not be concerned about superficial qualities, but be sure of the sincerity of their heart.*

“An ill-matched couple is the cause of divorce.” No matter how compatible a couple is, it’s of no use if one dies early or there’s some discord. If you practice faith and enhance what you gain, your spouse will definitely improve. This isn’t just for human relations. By promoting the sincerity of the heart, all matters and everything will completely follow with it and come to be blessed even more. Without using human sentiment, it is necessary to seek mediation and proceed according to the process of Kami.

Written 7/ 3/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

I feel the sincerity that is necessary for them to be sure of “the sincerity of their hearts” is that each have belief and comes to believe in each other. There’s a saying, “The midwinter pine stands superb.” The exceeding beauty of the pine is that it endures without even a change of color no matter how cold it is. The spirit of the pine is what I wish to gain.

Written 7/29/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

To live in the world of “Airaku” (a world where both deity and humanity uphold each other), practice a faith which goes beyond the superficial qualities. Awaken to the way which leads to eternal virtues. Take care to go the right way, with the things you need. Realize to be misled by superstition is to mistake the way. Never lose sight of the true way for it leads to an eternity of happiness.

Written 7/ 8/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

37 *In a marriage proposal, instead of inquiring into the social status or family lineage, ask about the personal character of the concerned.*

When you receive Kami's blessings, you notice that you must first acquire permission for happiness or unhappiness. Since to be given permission depends on the heart, social status and family lineage have no connection with reaching happiness or unhappiness. Nevertheless people talk of status and lineage as they're concerned only with human appearance or vanity. It's silly. At the same time it also does not meet with Kami's Heart. No one can tell just how much tragedy has been caused by social status and family lineage from so long ago. After dropping our pride a beautiful character is born.

Written 7/ 4/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It is unbelievable how a human heart abundant with joy will invigorate others and make them delighted and refreshed. I wish to receive blessings of personal character not only in my family, but also in society where people encounter other people. I wish to make the family benevolent and society bright. I want to promote a way for each of us to be fulfilled and for others to be saved, too. For that purpose I must become one of those whose life follows the teachings.

Written 7/30/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Farmers with farmers, merchants with merchants, otherwise they won't see eye to eye. But, once motivated to do the work, a person unconnected with commerce deciding to become a merchant, or someone who doesn't know farming setting out to learn how, is so transformed by thoroughly becoming a merchant or taking up farming, that even such pleasures as that become a living part of them. There is a saying, "Birth is much, but breeding is more," but where one's nurtured is further influenced by the activities that are nurturing you. Personal character and family status are the same.

Written 7/ 9/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

38 *Do not think that you give birth through your own strength. Everything is done through the blessings of the Parent Kami.*

Even if you can select a warm place when it's cold and a cool place when it's hot, with human strength you cannot do anything about the hot or cold weather. In this way even when you devise a way for safe childbirth, ultimately you must receive the blessings of Kami. Just straining with human might will come to nothing. Even where it's possible, it only becomes unnatural. It's important that the blessings received are in accord with the work of nature. Since it's not forced, your blessings will last for ages. It is this way of reasoning that is true for all blessings.

Written 7/ 5/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Yesterday at the Tanaka's they were blessed with the safe birth of their first grandchild. That it was a girl seemed to disappoint her son, who doesn't practice faith. But Mrs. Tanaka, the grandmother, quickly came to mediate her gratitude to Kami and request that a name be given. For the name I received, "Rei" (for appreciation's sake). To give birth to a child has the meaning of expressing one's gratitude to Kami. The same day at the Morimitsu's home a baby girl was born. While driving to the hospital they were blessed with a save delivery inside the car. If we could give birth through our own strength, we would also be able to freely choose a boy or a girl. With just another ten minutes they could have made it to the hospital.

Written 7/31/74 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When the urge comes, even though you were not inclined, you can't but be moved to do it. Though you don't wish to, you give birth; though you want to, you cannot. The power to exert one's self comes about of itself. It is when you realize that all of the exertion is Kami's sacred working, that you get the feeling you just have to receive the blessings of Kami for everything.

The recent slogan is "Put Faith to Work." However, when you're based on the solemn way of Kami, then for the first time you are able to reach the true blessings of the faith you put to work.

Written 7/10/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

39 *During pregnancy, instead of wearing the traditional maternity band, wear a band of sincerity around your heart.*

We speak of the prenatal care that attends to the mental state of the pregnant woman. This is for nurturing the unborn child inside the womb. The thinking is that taking care of the mother's attitudes has an effect on the child to be born. This was taught by the founder more than a hundred years ago. Those who have actually received precious virtues and realized wonderful blessings are the very ones who have seriously taken such a troublesome thing as pregnancy with care and seen it through with complete sincerity. In order to give birth to something good, first, you should have a wonderful flower inside your heart.

Written 7/ 6/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It goes without saying that the person blessed with a pregnancy needs faith. But the husband, who provides half of the body, should not just leave the work to the woman, but should take on half of the work for this new life about to be born. That the husband and wife join together for this faith-work is not just for being blessed with an easy delivery. I consider it an absolute condition of Kami in order that you are blessed with a nice baby.

Written 7/ 1/75 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

What type of sash is this band of sincerity? It's to really embrace true faith. Here is where one begins to speak about the topic of genuine faith. We have seven children. My oldest daughter and oldest son were difficult deliveries. The third was a breech birth, but strangely enough an easy delivery. After the war, we then were evacuating from overseas territory. It was from that time that my faith got into a regular form. From my wife's fourth pregnancy, following the teachings of the founder, she stopped using a maternity band. We really depended entirely on Kami. Then we were blessed with four children one after the other. All four of these were such easy deliveries that neighbors were unaware. I feel I've come to realize that the band of sincerity is to really follow the teachings of the founder. I've come to the conclusion that the band of sincerity, that genuine faith is nothing other than taking up and following the teachings.

Written 7/11/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

40 *While giving birth, lean on Kami instead of leaning on anything else.*

While giving birth you totally depend just on Kami without considering the difficulties. In that way the blessing realized is that “giving birth is easier than pondering over it.” To be able to place your trust completely is the secret to Kami’s blessings. Since one and all things depend on blessings, relying on Kami just to receive blessings or just for giving birth is not true trust in Kami. In all matters you must always acquire practice in trusting Kami, so in time of need calm and trusting faith will become a living part of you.

Written 7/ 7/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

“In order to be able to take in even more thankful blessings”

Even though you seem to know and seem to receive it through daily faith, eventually when it comes down to you yourself, unexpectedly you discover you do not know. It’s not just when giving birth. Through everything that happens you will really see the extent to which you believe in Kami and entrust yourself to Kami. Since we wish to take in even more thankful blessings, clear out from your heart one by one everything you're leaning on except for Kami.

Written 7/ 2/75 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Rely On or Don't Rely On

I am relying on all of you believers. However, spiritually I rely on not a one. Single-heartedly I depend and rely on only Kami-sama. I’m saying that I leave everything up to Kami. But if my spirit is unstable, then it is proof that I’m still relying on other people, or things, or money. It means “the spirit leaves everything up to Kami, relying on Kami.”

Written 7/12/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

41 Abandon doubts and have faith. Divine blessings are in one's heart.

There are those who seem to have no doubts. When they practice faith and develop a trustworthy heart, they will be blessed. Also there are people with very serious doubts. Once they get Kami's blessings, they can get more faith than is usual. If the former is considered the faith of the founder, the latter would be the faith of Kasaoka's Konko Daijin. Those with neither doubt nor faith are worthless. People who half believe and half doubt have half the blessings. Those that doubt will find everything is wrong. Those who believe will find all are divine blessings.

Written 7/ 8/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

- It's not trying to pray, but praying.
- It's not trying to worship, but worshipping.
- It's not trying to receive mediation, but receiving mediation.
- It's not trying to listen to the teachings, but listening attentively.
- It's not trying to follow the teachings, but following them.

That is where the workings of Kami occur which have no room for doubt. From just such a faith what is brought about is that "divine blessings are in one's heart." *Written 7/ 3/75 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

With the intent to pray, there will be blessings. By renewing yourself and practicing faith, you'll awaken the spirit. You are able to obtain divine virtue by practicing faith with the intent to polish the gem in your heart.

Written 7/13/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

42 *You cannot control your life as you wish.*

You need to come here and practice faith when you're healthy. When you have control of your life you need to become aware that 'you are given life.' From when you realize that you are allowed to control your life, a precious graciousness for such divine favor wells up inside. When you recognize that, you'll then be able to be healthy all your life. When you cannot control your life as you wish, you must understand that your gratitude for good health is insufficient.

Written 7/ 9/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When the wish to be allowed to serve Kami for as long as you live is granted, then you are allowed to control your life. Realize that when you are allowed control, the joy of being allowed is what serves to help people of the world and is itself an act of gratitude to Kami.

A poem by the fourth successor of Konko Daijin:

When doing it
Without the blessings and conditions
to do it,
You can't do a single thing.

Written 7/ 4/75 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

I cannot control my body as I please, but with practice the heart can be freely used. Practicing joy to be continually joyful is faith. To follow rules and staying within statutes may appear rigid as you live following the teachings of faith. But as you acquire it, you are able to have a delightful and gracious life. It's to receive freedoms beyond freedom.

Written 7/14/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

43 Having or not having impurities depends upon your heart.

It was during the time I was a believer. It was when I was to visit the headquarters church with the head minister and his wife. Even though the minister's wife had brand new zoris, somehow the thong broke unexpectedly. At that time she praised Kami saying, "Oh, I have been blessed. If it had broken along the way, it would have been quite difficult." In this way the heart is purified from any fearsome evil. When a thong breaks as you depart, taking it as bad luck will bring bad luck. This is brought about by the heart.

Written 7/10/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When you're able to place the honorific character on everything, then there is no impurity and no defilement. For faith, courage is also necessary. It's for developing a carefree heart which comes from believing in Kami. Before reaching the carefree heart, even what is called evil demons and evil gods are to be averted. When you can accept everything as an honorable circumstance or event and with courageous faith, which is the carefree heart, then you are doubly strengthened.

Written 7/ 5/75 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

"The Oneness of Pure-Impure"

From Kami's divine view there is, in essence, neither pure nor impure. Since the faith is to master the way of living which takes the heart of Kami as one's spirit, the conditions will open for a grateful heart as each devoted step taken towards it brings 'realization' all the way up to enlightened wisdom. Kami also prays that we can reach control of our intentions and our pretensions. Without the solid foundation of Kami's Will, we tend to become lazy. There will be no problem, by carefully keeping the key point on the spirit of the soil, because the spirit is the measure of faith.

Written 7/15/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

44 *Whether or not your prayers are answered with divine blessings depends upon your heart.*

Dire straits
Are not made by carpenters.
Self-constructed
We ourselves are passengers.
Whatsoever,
With singleness be meek.
Beyond the clouds
A way is there to reach.

Though I pray and pray, still problems persist. I thus gaze intently at my own heart. There was lurking the source which prevented relief. It was quite a shock to me. That is where you begin renewing your way of faith.

Reverend Ishibashi, the founder of Kurume Church, has taught, "Board the ship of virtues and sail through this world." Since you make your own dire straits, through faith you'll also be able to make the ship of virtues.

Written 7/11/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

If we state this teaching from Kami's standpoint, whether or not blessings are granted depends on the Heart of Kami. That is where, as far as we are concerned, there is nothing but to give careful attention to realizing Kami's heart. Kami wishes to grant it; we wish to be granted it. Each of us is face to face. There's not a chance of blessings being missed. If there are no blessings, then something is hindering the relationship between the two of us. It must be cleared away.

Written 7/ 6/75 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

I have received, "With a single heart, all will come about." By saying this it also means that a single heart will destroy everything. Since it states that whether or not blessings are received depends on your heart, I feel it has exactly the same significance.

Whether you call it one's own heart or saying a single heart, what is this spirit that is able to receive blessings? It isn't anything like the blessings gained through coming to worship or performing religious austerities (ascetic practices of water or fire). Couldn't we speak of the blessings original to the Konko religion as those that come about through celebrating with prayer, narrowing down to only spiritual training alone, and placing all weight on the practice of everyday labor? Isn't this where we can, at last, speak of the type of blessings in this religion?

Written 7/16/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

45 *Being careful is the cane that prevents you from falling down.*

In *Selected Teachings of Konko Daijin #71* there is “receive divine blessings at home” and also “go to the Hiromae to train your faith when all is fine.” This is how to pursue ordinary faith. Always be sure that it’s not like going shopping for rice with a torn sack which needs mending. Though Kami may provide you with blessings, if your heart is torn, they will just leak out.

Written 7/12/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

There are those who moan, “I even asked that person to be my cane, my pillar, but” When you use Kami as a cane, realizing you cannot depend on people, and that possessions, money and scholarship are of no real value, then each and every single part of people, possessions, money and scholarship come alive. Since Kami becomes the motivating strength for human conduct a full spirited life is possible.

Written 7/ 7/75 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Some people no matter how many decades they may practice faith don’t get a cane, or a support. At the point where one must get faith’s power, if there’s a difference between those with faith and those without, “the cane that prevents you from falling down” will cry.

Just before the present prayers began in the mediation of Mrs. Ayabe from Hita she said that recently she feels Kami intimately everyday within the circumstances of each situation and human relation.

And here’s something from yesterday. Mrs. Ito from Fukuoka mentioned in her mediation that the other day someone had lamented that their husband wouldn’t bring home his wages because of a strange incident. She thought she might offer to loan her some money.

What I had said was: “Your kindness will not bring the person blessings. With such a spirit, turn to Kami.”

In mediating today she added, “There was a phone call from the person to offer her thanks because her husband had brought home 100,000 yen. The infallibility of Kami is awe-inspiring.”

Unless your faith is receiving such a Kami, it won’t be a cane in time of need.

Written 7/17/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

46 Look forward to the future without saying negative things.

By having true faith you will think of nothing other than good things and happy thoughts. When just needless worries and bad thoughts come to mind your faith is mistaken. You must realize you are lacking in practice and then take up your faith from that point. There's nothing besides a truly thankful heart to get rid of bad or evil thoughts. *Written 7/13/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

It's said that words also have a soul. We must use grateful words for good things to happen. The founder has taught that even within the family you should call each other politely. By speaking negatively, bad things will occur. By griping and complaining, more and more things to gripe and complain about will occur. Faith is the practice of believing in Kami and the practice of having Kami believe more and more in you. When you understand this you won't be able to say negative things. *Written 7/ 8/75 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Whatever the circumstances, through such a spirit of faith there won't be a forlorn darkness lying in wait. Wondering what might happen in the future is what it is to speak negatively. It's the basis for ill-circumstances. Whatever the circumstances, when it is taken as the basis for blessings, a chance for divine virtue, then you will look forward with pleasure. *Written 7/18/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

47 *Instead of thinking about the pain you feel, be thankful for the blessings now coming.*

There are no blessings while asking, “Why this?”

Blessings come when saying, “This way!”

This way to be nurtured!

This way to be polished!

This way to be renewed!

This way to purify offense!

After accepting those points, you come to “be thankful for the blessings now coming.” That is the difference between those with faith and those without.

Written 7/14/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It’s said that good medicine is bitter. Since you should feel that the more bitter it is, the better its effect, likewise, the more you sense difficulties, the greater your gratitude should well up. It’s because you realize that Kami’s purpose is nothing other than love.

Written 7/ 9/75 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Though I know it’s not easy to offer one’s gratitude when the going is rough, if you realize that everything is Divine Love, then even if you’re lying you have to express your gratitude. This is how the founder is teaching us.

There’s the proverb: From lies come truth.

Written 7/19/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

48 *The poorest people are those who know neither Kami's teachings nor the true faith.*

The First Time to Hear Kami's Teachings

The First Time to Know of True Faith

Things I did before I had faith I regret. Through my present faith I am receiving blessings and am now in ecstasy with my life. When you can pray for those you don't yet know to be blessed with such joy is when you can, indeed, say for the first time that you have come to understand this teaching.

Written 7/15/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The person who entered the gate of the university and went out the back says, "I went to university" or "I graduated." It's a humorous story. Even for faith, there are those who say they just passed through the gates of the church. They have neither the body nor the blood of faith. It's faith which slips right through. Unless you follow the teachings and practice the true way, even the blessings you receive will not lead to human happiness. There's nothing but to say it's both sad and pitiful. Since you want faith to be easy, then it's really pathetic. Unless you are permitted to take it easy, true happiness will not come about.

Written 7/10/75 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The more you understand the Sacred Heart of Tenchi Kane No Kami, the more you will come to see the state of misery and sorrow of all of those without faith. With the feelings that arise from this point, by participating in the activity being manifested, with whatever respect we can, we should bring even a little sense of ease for the Sacred Heart of our Parental Kami. This is where Kami and humanity first begin to work at their mutual interdependence; a world opens in which both Divinity is saved and humanity fulfilled. I wish to burn with the single-hearted request to reach the joy of our Divinity that purifies the world and awakens humankind, and never stop praying earnestly.

Written 7/20/80 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

- * Participating in a manifesting activity: Manifesting means the miraculous work that is indicated and manifested by Kami. It's to participate in that type of activity. To participate is to take part in such a project.

49 *Because Kami can neither be heard nor seen, the room for doubt has no limits. Abandon all doubt.*

For those with little belief Kami provides blessings to manifest divine powers. But to reach an understanding of faith, Kami guides us through various situations. Whichever one you go through, by progressing in faith without straying or quitting, virtue can be obtained.

See the grateful side of Kami

And at the same time

Know the fearful side too.

Written 7/16/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Since you wish to believe but are in doubt, Kami will have you see those types of workings. There are instances that by doubting more and more you see the reality of Kami. Also by facing Kami naturally, there are times you see signs of doubtless blessings. It is said that belief is strength; belief is light. If you have light there is no fear even in a dark place. If you have strength, even fright disappears. Though Kami can neither be heard nor seen, the works of Kami are manifested.

Written 7/11/75 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Saying you believe in the blessings (divine favors) you receive is not really true. As “faith is to polish the gem of the heart” and “daily renewal is most important for faith,” by carrying out the principles of the teachings, and receiving the blessings brought into being through your everyday life of faith, absolute belief in Kami will follow. There are many who trust in Kami, but only a few in whom Kami places Divine trust. The belief in which Kami has placed Divine trust is absolute belief.

Written 7/21/81 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

50 *Teach and pass on the true faith to future generations without losing or straying from it.*

The true faith is taught correctly in no other place except here at the place of mediation. You must pass on to your children and grandchildren a life oriented on the church and mediation. However you try, it cannot be passed on unless those doing the teaching receive the blessings of genuine faith without losing the way, without straying from it.

Written 7/17/69 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

A trickle of divine virtue drops into a stream, flows to the river and down to the sea. At that point it is not a drop of water anymore, but has become the water of the sea.

My grandmother's faith was simplicity itself. She valued the earth more than anything. Especially food, even a single grain of rice, she would rise reverently to her head. At prayer while reciting our names, the three names of her grandchildren, she would pray repeating like a chant over and over, "Please may these believers take up positions to serve the world."

Just such faith was passed on to my parents and transmitted to me. And thus we have the Airaku of today. Isn't the heart which receives the earth reverently and takes food reverently the very way of accepting the truth of the true universe? And wasn't my grandmother's prayer itself the same as that which Kami prays?

Written 7/12/75 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

There was a highly virtuous minister named Sen Katajima. A large stone basin had once been given as an offering. She prayed to Kami, "May such a number of people be drawn here that the water in this large basin would be used up in a day." There wasn't any response from Kami.

Upon requesting again Kami admonished her, "Why didn't you pray for the ones seeking true devotion?"

We can see that Kami is in search of true faith; that what will remain is virtue, and true faith. At the same time every day we have to pray for faith which will pass on to our children and grandchildren. I repeatedly pray that I may become a believer who serves Kami.

Written 7/22/81 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Selected Teachings of Konko Daijin

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*A selection of one hundred teachings
Received by the founder*

1 Now, hear the sound of the universe opening and be awakened.

There is no better time to hear the sound of the universe opening than when sickness or hardship persists. However, you cannot be awakened by this sound if you are not practicing faith. To be awakened is to find supreme truth. It is to comprehend the real truth. It is not something you understand from teaching or learning. What is required is single-heartedness and unwavering faith.

*Reverend Yasutaro Yukawa has said,

“The Divine Parent is the master. We are the servants.”

*Reverend Matsutaro Yasutake has said,

“All things are sacred.”

*I realize that everything that happens is divine.

The three of us who have heard the sound of the universe open in this way have been awakened. It is the way, open to unlimited blessings.

Written 7/18/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

In order to hear the sound of the universe opening, first you must clean out your ears. With something blocking the way or the inner eardrum ruptured, even a mighty voice yelling cannot be heard. The very diligence of sharpening yourself more, improving and becoming infinitely purer is certainly the best way of coming to hear the sound of the universe opening.

Written 7/13/1975 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Even reciting a thousand times, “Blessings are in the peaceful, joyful heart,” of *Tenchi Kakitsuke* will not bring actual blessings. We wish for what is unbreakable, not a thing that shatters easily; even if you try to destroy it, you won’t break it – the indestructible peaceful, joyful heart. When you hear the sound of the universe opening and are awakened, that is when you have realized everything is divine love. When we realize this, there is nothing but the object of gratitude and joy. At these times the suffering and difficulty is the manifestation of divine love wanting to be understood.

Written 7/23/1980 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

2 Divine virtue will be with you even after death and passed down to future generations. It can be received by anyone who practices faith. Divine virtue is never exhausted.

If you can't swim you won't dive into water. Even in the midst of divine virtue, without faith you cannot receive it. Just as knowing how to swim allows us to swim around freely, Konko Daijin teaches us so that anyone can understand the way of the universe, which is always working freely around us. Anyone willing will be able to do it. Receiving divine virtue is the same as getting the knack of swimming. Why don't we receive the blessings that allow us to swim around freely in this world and the next world?

Written 7/19/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

By really believing that everything is included in the sacred work of Kami, then even if people ridicule you or laugh at you or hit you or whatever the circumstances, you can take it by doing away with human nature and using divine nature alone. I feel that this type of faith is being taught in the phrase "divine virtue can be received by anyone who practices faith." It's what you may call, "by believing it is achieved."

Written 7/14/1975 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It's the greatest aspect of religion that divine virtue can be received by anyone who practices faith. The nature of the universe is the central point of the teachings that the founder gave for living in the world of divine virtue. To put it concretely, it is to respectfully accept the process of life. When you treat the divine workings with respect, you come to respect the Divine Parent. By considering only the enshrined form of the deity and disregarding the sacred work of our deity, you will not acquire divine virtue. Of course, the basis for this is that "faith is to polish the gem in your heart" and "for faith daily renewal is most important."

Written 7/24/1980 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

3 *Although people live between heaven and earth, they are unaware of Kami's blessings. Shrines, temples and houses all stand on Kami's land. Without realizing this, people consult the Days and Directions and are disrespectful to Kami. They suffer hardships due to these offenses. Tenchi Kane No Kami has sent Ikigami Konko Daijin to provide blessings and teachings so that mankind may prosper. Kami is Kami because of man, and man is man because of Kami. Both are fulfilled through this mutual relationship.*

Even while being in the protective bosom of Kami, we don't realize it and we continue to lead an anxious and restless life; as the parent and as Tenchi Kane No Kami, Kami is always watching and cannot let such a situation come to pass. Therefore Kami has sent Ikigami Konko Daijin to pray for prosperity and happiness for both the Parent Kami and the children of Kami. Kami's divine request indicates that the primary cause of unhappiness is man's misunderstood and miscalculated life and to eradicate these offenses. We must realize where the problems lie to have the peace of mind like a child who is in the parent's bosom.

[Refer to the morning teaching of July 20, 1969.]

Written 7/20/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Proclaiming from the start in a strong loud voice what Tenchi Kane No Kami has to say, it teaches us for the first time the way of prosperity for both Kami and man. These teachings point out logically, yet emotionally: the root of hardship comes from being unaware of the great blessings of the universe and of the way we are disrespectful toward it. Most noticeably this refers to "shrines, temples and houses all stand on Kami's land" and that "people consult the Days and Directions." However, it is not just that. While it indicates human misconceptions and misunderstandings, it is pointing toward a realization of an ideal world for Kami and people by continuously seeking to comprehend Konko Daijin's teachings.

Written 7/15/1975 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

For the blessings that mankind may prosper, Kami and man must each fulfill the other. Harmonize with the universe and communicate with it. This will open a world where blessings are brought about. This is the world of mutual prosperity for divinity and humanity. Ultimately, this is the place where the divine request is. When Kami's request is fulfilled in people and their request reaches the fulfillment of the divine request, then the joyous world will open the line of intercourse between divinity and humanity.

Written 7/25/1980 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

4 *Through Konko Daijin, Tenchi Kane No Kami's blessings can now be received. Through Konko Daijin, Kami has been revealed to the world. Konko Daijin works for the benefit of Kami and people. Follow the words of Konko Daijin carefully and practice faith. In an emergency, you need not say, "Tenchi Kane No Kami!" Just say, "Konko Daijin, please help me," and you will receive divine blessings.*

There is nothing more indefinite than praying to an invisible Kami through our invisible heart/soul. The only thing we have, the only thing we can depend on is Konko Daijin. Or we can just look to our minister. This is because Konko Daijin has given us teachings and because our minister brings out such blessings through mediation. This is the only thing that we have to believe in. The minister connects with Konko Daijin. Konko Daijin is connected to The Divine Parent. Therefore just to call on our minister leads to blessings.

Written 7/21/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

From Konko Daijin's own life experience we must find out how he recognized the essential qualities of mankind. That is where endless energy was drawn for sustaining man's life; it is also what came to be the teachings and proceeded to create the basic form of true faith. As a part of this true faith, he was moderate when indulging in worldly pleasures, and realized at the same time that harsh ascetic training didn't have much merit for the salvation of mankind, so through spiritual training he developed the way to sense the divine arrangement of Kami. Teaching this, he devoted himself to putting it into practice. Along with the most important part of this teaching, to "follow the words of Konko Daijin carefully" in our lives, we should exercise divine mastery of Konko Daijin's way of living.

Written 7/16/1975 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

To understand The Divine Parent through Konko Daijin's faith is to live in the world of Konko Daijin. I wish to aim for the special world of Konko Daijin where the way is clearly explained and feelings of thanks well up whichever way we turn, and where we devotedly seek daily joys and surprises through experiments in faith. Through Konko Daijin both Kami and people are fulfilled and the world is opened. This is why Konko Daijin is said to benefit both Kami and people. Above all else, I wish to live in the world of Konko Daijin.

Written 7/26/1980 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

5 *Until now, Kami has never spoken words for people to hear. Wherever people worshiped, their prayers were only one-sided. People can receive divine blessings if they pray single-heartedly, because Kami lives in their hearts. Practice faith in a living kami. Since the beginning of time, neither heaven nor earth has ever stopped its constant activities. The kami that Konko Daijin prays to single-heartedly is Tenchi Kane No Kami.*

In the living universe with a living heart and living teachings, in other words, through the living education (the Way of the Universe), the founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin, has established the way to become one with Tenchi Kane No Kami.

Yesterday man left his first footprint on the surface of the moon. It certainly is a victory for science. It's quite courageous. This courage is the result of belief in science, and efforts to expand the limits of human capability.

Through daily practice we can reach an immovable conviction by experiencing the unmistakable workings of Kami; and at the same time, if we take divine virtue scientifically and faith studiously, we can accomplish the same feat in our hearts as reaching the moon.

The founder has taught us the way to acquire strength in faith through studying. The founder can be said to be a great distinguished figure in the study of faith and also an unparalleled person who has undergone endless training and practice concerning faith and in acquiring the great virtues of the universe.

Written 7/22/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Instead of the self-satisfying type of faith, through Konko Daijin a clear path is opened that will expand into a world where both Kami and man are fulfilled in mutual joy and mutual satisfaction. As is taught "the kami that Konko Daijin prays to single-heartedly is Tenchi Kane No Kami," through this mediation of Konko Daijin, you are able to concentrate on the active workings of heaven and earth, cut off suffering from the cycle of misfortune, and receive divine blessings.

Written 7/17/1975 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

This teaching can be received either at a shallow or deep level. Compared with the convictions of religions whose prayers are only one-sided, this faith seems quite convenient and easily appreciated. However, we must understand these teachings and return home. When you realize the divine will in its depths, from there it becomes something so infinitely profound. When you feel the boundless and profound divinity in the virtues of "the kami that Konko Daijin prays to single-heartedly is Tenchi Kane No Kami," you will be taken into the unique world of Konko faith in which everything is divine love and which cannot be attained through a faith of one-sided prayers. Also the state of becoming single-hearted with Tenchi Kane No Kami will be opened to you.

Written 7/27/1980 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

6 *Although Kami cannot be seen, you are constantly walking within and through Kami's virtue. Even while fertilizing a field or walking along a path, you are in Tenchi Kane No Kami's hiromae. The whole world is Tenchi Kane No Kami's hiromae.* [*hiromae --- hall for worship and mediation*]

This would be the founder's view of Kami. Certainly we all must be within the midst of divine love. Though, and this is my own experience, recently I have been going through fearful times; it's like I'm passing a frightening place or walking over thin ice. That is because I have the feeling of fright in my heart. It's the time for me to renew, the time to polish. Every day I am diligently seeking such blessings as if walking along, within and through the midst of Kami, and like being in Kami's worship hall no matter where I am.

Written 7/23/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Since you realize through this faith the sensation that "you are constantly walking within and through the midst of Kami," you are able to have a thankful life of faith that becomes more vivid with each passing day. And it's not just that. You also receive divine virtue. The establishing of one's faith is when such a sensation has been achieved.

Written 7/18/1975 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

In whatever you do, faith is what makes you to feel grateful. In everything, when you taste the essence of what is happening and accept it as sacred, then all things become bright and vivid, and genuine gratitude gushes forth as divine blessings. Practicing faith is not a matter of what you can or cannot eat or drink. When everything we receive is a divine blessing and accepted reverently, Kami is happy for us, and we are happy as well. Remember, you are always in the midst of divine blessings.

From the depths of the earth

Flow quiet and calm

The pure waters of love;

Come, let us drink.

Written 7/28/1980 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

7 *Tenchi Kane No Kami is a kami that has existed since the beginning of time. This kami did not appear in the middle of history. The universe is not a passing fad. Something which is not a fad will not end. It is essential to have a heart like the heavenly, earthly and orderly universe. Even those without faith receive Kami's blessings.*

Even though the universe is not a fad and will not end, to give the universe life or to destroy it is up to the faith of the person. Whatever the era or the society, for the happiness of mankind we must try to comply with the true intent of Konko Daijin's way of mediation and not relent in our efforts to receive the works of the living universe. For that purpose it is essential to have a heart like that of the universe. The nature of the universe is giving silently, just accepting silently, and living each day with sincerity.

Written 7/24/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Having lost sight of true faith, the human world takes vices and brutality as a matter of course. The world's troubles have become quite acute. To overcome and eradicate such corruption and lack of faith there is nothing other than the movement of our founder's faith to bring about the age of Wagakokoro. About the present age, Kami has given the teaching "Frozen Heaven, Fearful Earth." The Divine Will is that this world comes to embody "Joyful Heaven, Delightful Earth." The heavenly, earthly and orderly nature of the universe is itself the embodiment of the Divine Parent. It is necessary to realize this embodiment in our hearts and actually practice it.

Written 7/19/1975 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The universe is not a passing fad and will not end. But there is no telling how much is changing all across this globe on which we humans live. Now our planet is undergoing stages of "frozen heaven and fearful earth." Even within this kind of situation, I feel that there are various changes that are occurring all over the world which are quite alarming. I think it is crucial that people realize the work that Kami is always doing for the human race, and take up a life that puts Kami at its center. Namely, from "the frozen heaven and fearful earth" to "a joyous heaven and delightful earth." To be able to accept such action, one must become aware of the blessings which "even those without faith receive" and apply a way of life aiming to make recompense for Divine benevolence. Thus you will hasten the movement to spread the era of Wagakokoro around the world.

Written 7/29/1980 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

8 Parents have more concern for children who are disobedient. In the same way, Kami has more concern for those with less faith. Practice faith and receive divine blessings.

In order to receive limitless blessings we must perceive ourselves as continuously disobedient children. We are lacking whole-heartedness in prayer, lacking pureness in our hearts; our sincerity, enthusiasm, and countless other good qualities which we discover in ourselves are lacking. It is from this discovery that such deep and infinite faith is born that we cannot but rely on the Parental Kami and feel unable to reciprocate enough; no matter how hard we try. Thus it is when we continue to perceive ourselves as disobedient children, that the Parental Kami can pour endless blessings through us.

Written 7/25/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It is the earnest concern of the Parental Kami for those who do not know the true blessings of faith, and those who do not have faith. Such blessings open up a life of which we always feel unworthy; it is to devote ourselves to such a life. Having faith allows us to see our limits and become aware of them. The more we see, the more we can do nothing but realize just how inadequate we ourselves are.

Written 7/21/1975 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Realizing our inadequacies is something to be thankful for. But, it could be a problem if Kami saw us as disobedient children. Practicing faith and not listening to teachings, or listening to teachings but not following or obeying them is the same as not listening to what one's parents say. This causes our parents distress. I received a revelation: "Look at the heart's spirit. Follow the teachings."

Written 7/30/1980 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

9 Tenchi Kane No Kami does not look down upon other religions. Those who practice faith should not be narrow minded. Have an open heart. Be broad-minded about the world. The world is in your heart.

When you realize that both Buddha and Christ are children of Tenchi Kane No Kami, it is necessary to practice your faith with a broad mind and in the spirit of “the world is in your heart.” Our primary aim is to ‘fulfill the Divine Request,’ to bring about the request of Tenchi Kane No Kami on earth. The Divine Request is brought about when the expectations that Kami has for us are fulfilled. This is how you first realize the blessing that both Kami and man are fulfilled.

Written 7/26/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When the heart is rich and full, whatever you see or hear will not harm it. The thankful heart you get through faith is a beautiful heart that's broad and fruitful. When small, petty concerns disturb you, you are anxious and not at ease. It is a sign you are lacking this thankful heart. It's something like soda that has lost its fizz. Although Konko religion “does not look down upon other religions,” as a believer of the faith the worst thing is raising a fuss among us about such things as who took whose believers. It's nonsense.

Written 7/23/1975 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

That is what you must train for. You need a faith that is silent and accepting. In other words, you need a spirit that is like the soil. This accepting mind becomes naturally expanded, broadened and enriched. You also come to understand the faith which can accept all things, the good and the bad. Those with great ambitions can receive some extraordinary works from The Divine Parent.

Written 7/31/1980 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

10 Should Tenchi Kane No Kami enter a shrine, the world would turn dark,

Just now Mrs. Akiyama sought mediation. When worshipping this morning she had asked for mediation with a matter concerning her child that had caused her to become dark and gloomy. She says that during her prayer to The Divine Parent she had somehow felt rather joyous in her heart. And soon after that, unimaginable blessings were received for the child. I then said, "More than the blessings you received for the child, the greatest blessing is that you became joyous, isn't it?" Such blessings are possible because The Divine Parent doesn't enter a shrine and continues to fill this world with divine work.

Instead of physical arrangements

Pray for spiritual arrangements

Written 7/27/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Vast and infinite divine virtue is overflowing throughout the universe. It's neither the inside nor the outside of a shrine. Kami is not one that cannot leave a shrine because of being enshrined. But also Kami cannot be closed up in a shrine. However, man has various feelings and concepts. With the sound of opening shrine doors, we feel our hearts being opened. When the lamps for Kami are turned on bright, the worshiper feels his or her heart swept clean. The point is to open and brighten one's own heart and soul.

Written 7/24/1975 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Kami is endlessly providing light and offering us relief and joy. The way of light is indicated to those who believe. Then a world of light will be open ahead. For people who doubt and can't believe, they can only feel their way along in the dark. When you decide to turn to Kami, you will definitely feel a reply.

Written 7/ 1/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

11 Since Kami is one with the universe, you cannot be separated from Kami.

As the universe is being maintained, man, himself a small universe, is being equally protected. Unless we realize the protection we receive and reflect upon these divine blessings in our life, we won't have the relief which people earnestly seek. To actually feel that you are receiving Divine protection, that you are within the Divine bosom, is a relief. Even getting the protective blessings of worldly riches won't bring the kind of protection that reaches inside to your heart. You will realize that your heart is also under Divine protection as you pray with a Wagakokoro.

Written 7/28/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

This makes the nature of Kami clear. The divine nature consists of truth, sincerity and trust. With these qualities Kami provides protection for the universe. Of course, mankind is also in the midst of this limitless divine love. The third successor of Konko Daijin has said: "It is taught that if the believer puts trust in Kami, then Kami will trust the believer." By this principle, if man is sincere then Kami will accept his sincerity. The exchange of sincerity and Sincerity is faith. It is also the way to reach divine virtue. Without true faith you will not even be aware you're receiving Kami's protection.

Written 7/25/1975 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

This teaching of Konko Daijin states that Kami cannot be separated from mankind. When you understand and come to realize that people can't live without Kami, the world of mutual reliance will open and Kami and mankind will be able to live together in joy. All of the teachings of Konko Daijin are the means to achieve this.

Written 7/ 2/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

12 *If you want to meet Kami, just step out of your house and look around you. The sky above is Kami and the ground below is Kami.*

“In the divine universe speak not of want” are the words of Reverend Ishibashi, the founding minister of the Kurume Church. That kind of spirit is what I feel was the basis for his receiving such great virtue. For years it has been said, “Swear on the divine universe” or “Heaven knows, earth knows and I myself know.” Without such a heart you will not walk the true path. Receiving the protection of heaven and the blessings of earth, every single thing between heaven and earth is nourished and developed. By realizing these virtues, all things will be thoroughly arranged.

Written 7/29/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

What we learn through the teachings of Konko Daijin is true faith. That is where you find the benevolence of the universe. Also, with such benevolence you can live a rewarding life. When you can recognize everything you see as the appearance of Kami and everything you hear as the voice of Kami, you’ll be able to sense, for the first time, that Kami is actively working throughout the entire universe. Every morning I step out onto the veranda and worship the universe. I feel the energy of the universe filling my entire body.

Written 7/26/1975 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Examine this faith and if it strikes you as true, come knock at the church gate. You will feel Kami by listening within you. Then when you receive blessings, you will be satisfied. The teachings numbers 10, 11 and 12 are the founder’s insights into the nature of Kami of which he became most certain. In other words, they present the founder’s clearest understanding of Kami.

Written 7/ 3/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

13 *Kami will give you the divine virtue to double your strength.*

What type of faith would offer double the divine virtue? This is the first thing that has to be considered.

A praying mantis* looking a little tired from the heat.

The sunflower* stem's so thick and unrelenting.

This is the insight I received from the "Praying Mantis" and "Sunflower" groups in our children's association yesterday. Of course, to be allowed to receive divine virtues you must take up the latter.

Written 7/30/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

- Since the praying mantis in the Chikugo area is also called, "Ya ain't pray'n, ya ain't pass'n," it is considered a faith for only receiving blessings.
- A sunflower faces the sun getting hotter and hotter. So this is considered a way of training the spirit to never let up.

Even with this scorching sun, many people are coming to pray every day for the summer training session. Though we are absorbed in this faith, it, in itself, is not the way to receive divine virtue. We are doing it to develop our hearts and prepare to receive divine virtue. We don't always have chances to receive divine virtue. In times of need, at the risk of our very lives, we need a faith which doesn't get upset and doesn't go astray. That is, we need a spirit which is free of cares, a heart which can accept everything. It's our last stance. This posture decides whether divine virtue can be received and it's only possible after entrusting everything to Kami. *Written 7/27/1975 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Worshiping single-heartedly and praying single-heartedly are merely blessings. To take up the teachings single-heartedly, you approach Kami and proceed on, so divine virtues are received. And even though your methods may not be perfect, Kami provides divine virtues as if you had done them perfectly. *Written 7/4/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

14 *Kami dislikes land which is uncared for.*

For the heart which has been deserted there are no blessings. Kami dislikes it when households are in disaccord. It is taught, “Blessings depend upon your heart” and “The foundation of faith is to be in harmony with one's family.”

If transport soldiers are front line troops,
Butterflies or dragonflies can be considered birds.

This poem is teasing someone about something trifling. For one's faith to mature there is no other way but to care for the heart. Namely, do practices which enlarge and enrich the heart.

Written 7/31/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Mismanaging one's resources limits Kami's workings in the world. When their selfish nature makes them believe they are not receiving enough return on their effort, they leave the place they are working. (Just as selfish farmers will abandon their crops if they feel the income is too small, believers who think they are not receiving enough blessings will abandon the faith training for their heart.) Blessings cannot be received when one is self-centered. For the life that puts Kami at its center, wherever one works is a sacred place. In such a place, Kami's will is satisfied and so is the faith of Konko Daijin.

Written 7/28/1975 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Since it is taught that Kami dislikes deserted fields and estates, we must always keep it in mind. Konko Daijin also says: “Even pouring water over you to train yourself will mean nothing by only pouring it over your body. Pour it over your heart. ... One cannot say that by pouring water over you makes you sincere and not doing it makes you insincere. Konko Daijin dislikes fasting.”

Ascetic practices lay the heart to waste.
Spiritual training will develop a rich heart.

Written 7/5/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

15 *Offerings made sincerely are accepted by Kami with pleasure, but Kami is not pleased when people are burdened with compulsory donations and contributions.*

By performing duties (offerings) for the church with a sincere heart, what effect does Kami's pleasure have on the people? I attended a monthly service at our parent church and in his sermon the Head Minister talked about Mr. Uchida, a board member of the Kurume church. Every day he gives monetary offerings for his health (his blood pressure is high), for business prosperity, and besides that a considerable amount is given for coming anniversary ceremonies. If he doesn't have enough, then he cuts back on meals for that day and continues his efforts toward these goals. Lately he has been asked to give talks at churches here and there. The day before such occasions as Grand Ceremonies, he and his children close their store and come to help with the preparations. He has been visiting the Headquarters Church every month for decades. Of course, his business is blessed with much prosperity. I eventually became quite moved when at last I heard the age of Mr. Uchida. Though his appearance and demeanor are so youthful, he is going on seventy-four. I felt that here indeed was a sign of offerings being made with sincerity. It is necessary for us to check once again the content of our contributions.

Written 8/ 1/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

I feel it's just because Kami is the Divine Parent. There is no way that the Divine Parent could be pleased with offerings that burden us. However, our situation is such that we cannot remain still when we think of the parental nature of Kami. This parental nature wants us to receive blessings and be nurtured by requesting our sincerity. We need to consider this teaching from several points of view. We wish to be of service to Kami by doing what will please and satisfy the Divine Parent.

Written 7/29/1975 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

What type of faith is it that meets with the grace of Kami? Today there was a Konko faith gathering in Yukuhashi held at Mrs. Horiuchi's home. Every day the number of morning worshippers coming to her home increases. A few days ago someone asked to replace the tatami-mat flooring for her, another came wanting to offer bamboo blinds (*misu*) to place above the sanctuary, and today there was a person who offered to make all of the sanctuary offering stands (*hassoku*). One cannot help but notice this grace of Kami for the Horiuchi's home. This, I feel, is because the daily faith of Mrs. Horiuchi is truly single-hearted.

Written 7/ 6/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

- "Being truly single-hearted" is when what you offer or do for Kami in any circumstance is absolute.

16 *It is said that death occurs without respect to time. In this faith, death is a respecter of time.*

This teaching means that we must become living examples that actually demonstrate that Konko Daijin's teachings are definitely true, and that he hasn't taught anything which is false. Similarly, the mediator must actually demonstrate that blessings occur just as Konko Daijin says by continuing earnestly to accept and receive the teachings of Konko Daijin.

Written 8/ 2/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The enlightened world is where you're able to perceive the regrettable as, namely, benevolence. Then you change from trying to accomplish something to wanting to accept it. This afternoon a special thirty-year ceremony for my younger brother, who died in action, will be held. Even with that, I am so awe-inspired by the depth of the Divine Will. However, with my human feelings I realize that was the year the war ended. Moreover, as his death was on July thirtieth, I can't help but feel if only he had had the blessing of surviving fifteen more days, he could have returned alive and safe. In this way, it's a senseless death. After my brother died, my family's faith changed totally into one that is very thankful. Thinking now of the divine favors which we have received at Airaku Church; I cannot help but feel that the regrettable is, namely, benevolence.

Written 7/30/1975 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The way of faith is found in a world full of benevolence. When you receive the blessings for some trouble, even something beyond hope, is when you have found the depths of the Divine Heart. Even what you may think of as hardship needs to be treated with importance until you realize it as Divine Love.

Written 7/ 7/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

17 *You may think that the bond between yourself and Kami has been broken. However, Kami will never break the bond with you. Be sure that you do not break the bond.*

1) One person came to worship this morning and said, "Since I'm moving seven miles away, I won't be able to come for daily worship anymore." I replied, "Without working on your faith yourself, you won't be able to come to worship even if you are nearby."

2) Speaking to a believer I made the comment, "You can come to the Summer Prayer Service at the parent church today, can't you?" The reply was a hesitant, "Well, today" So I said, "Since you intended to visit the Headquarters Church, then somehow just for today you should fit it in." (The next day this person had planned to visit the Headquarters Church, but didn't go for some reason.)

Just quitting one's faith does not break the bond. These are two examples of the same thing.

Written 8/ 3/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The Morning Glory \ is such a fool.
It winds itself tightly around bamboo
Which has no roots.

It's a song which ridicules those that depend on things without roots. There are times, even with faith, when you encounter something like "there is no God, no Buddha." However, by having faith in something with roots, you will definitely experience some of the living works of Kami before and after trouble arises, regardless of your deep despair. Thanks to these living works, you will not break the bond with Kami and continue in your faith. The important thing is when you begin to have faith you must check whether it is alive or not.

Written 7/31/1975 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Even without going so far as breaking this bond,
There must be many who are just about to break it off.
Complaints and dissatisfaction cut off blessings.

Written 7/ 8/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

18 *Though people call me (Konko Daijin) “kami,” I am not the only one. All people who come here are the children of Kami. To be an ‘ikigami’ is to have Kami born within you. I was the first to receive such divine blessings. You can all receive divine blessings in the same way.*

The Divine wish is that humans, who are all people of Kami, truly become divine people. This is the primary wish of Kami. Although we need to pray for all people on earth to unite under the spirit of the Divine Parent, I, myself, must first become spiritually alive. The first step then, is my own spiritual growth. Only then can I receive blessings for the spiritual well-being of those around me. It is taught that someone who awakens the spirit in one person is a divine person. “To be an *ikigami* is to have Kami born within you.” To awaken each one around me is, of course, to give birth to a divine person. If a hundred people are awakened, then you can be the divine person for one hundred. Someone once complimented me by saying, “Kami has blessed you with the ability to sing Japanese limericks.” I believe that this comment is to be taken and savored. Within one’s heart a truly wonderful feeling is born. This, of course, is what is called the birth of the divine person. Nurturing this feeling will lead the way to becoming a divine person.

Written 8/ 4/1969 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

In the heart is a flower garden. Seasonal flowers flourish. The way they flourish is through training in faith. The founder teaches, “To be an *ikigami* is to have Kami born within you.” There is joy under the blazing sun and even in the cold of winter, by letting the flower of joy bloom in your heart. Plant the seeds of joy so you’re joyful at any time and in any place. When the buds of joy sprout, apply the joy you nurture without bending or breaking it. Selfish desires will mercilessly trample down the buds of joy.

Written 7/ 1/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The Japanese globeflower
by the water spout --

While washing one’s feet

Silent and intent on
giving up drinking --

Growing chrysanthemums

- The Japanese globeflower bears no fruit. This poem describes the heart that realizes the necessity of divine virtue, even though it receives blessings.

- After realizing what takes away the life of faith, really renew one-self and be intent on cultivating a joyous heart (faith).

Written 7/ 9/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

19 *After Konko Daijin's physical form is gone, Konko Daijin will go wherever asked.*

Konko Daijin reveals a work irrespective of time and space, and free of obstructions. However we must meet Konko Daijin even one step closer. It makes it easier for Konko Daijin and is also a shortcut for us to receive blessings. To do this, you must discover the very limits of yourself and from there take off and proceed wholeheartedly.

Here is the sales pitch of a toad cream salesman:

“Surrounded on four sides by mirrors, the bullfrog, wallowing in his own filthiness and wretchedness, begins to drip and drip with greasy oil. Refining this oil we produce a special remedy for cuts.”

When we look at ourselves in the mirror of these teachings, our filthiness and wretchedness are reflected. This is quite a self-discovery. *Written 7/ 1/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

“That to which it comes and goes”

That is the place where the work of Konko Daijin's mediation begins. He comes to the place where he is called for help. It's not just when we ask for help, but we must also have him come when offering our thanks or when apologizing. *Written 7/ 2/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

These are words that cannot be declared without conviction beyond our human founder, a divine person (*ikigami*); these are unspeakable words. It's an actual proclamation or sworn statement based on insight and confidence that's fundamentally one with the universe.

Written 7/10/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

20 *Konko Daijin tells how he has received blessings from Tenchi Kane No Kami. For those who harbor doubts and do not listen to what Konko Daijin says, let them be. They're so darling. They will receive divine blessings when the time comes. You will understand this when you have children. Children who do not listen to their parents are most distressing. Parents can do nothing for children who do not listen to them.*

This is why we call Tenchi Kane No Kami 'The Divine Parent'*. It's not that "a lost soul is beyond redemption," but that this Divine request is from the depths of a parental caring. Though this teaching says "they are so darling,"* it does not mean 'pitiful'*. It expresses the very depths of The Divine Heart. Therefore Kami and humans can declare themselves as 'parent and child'*. After that, when you apologize you are forgiven, and when you cling to Kami you are blessed.

You should well understand the parts with an asterisk (*).

Written 7/ 2/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

This teaching does not only apply to those people who have no faith. Even while we are practicing faith, if we don't listen to these teachings or live by them, it is the same as ignoring our parents. Why don't we listen? It is because we don't "understand." This understanding shows us that we should agree with our parent's intentions and understand our parent's heart. If we do understand our parent's heart, we cannot disrespect it. By understanding the Heart of our Divine Parent we can do nothing else but practice faith.

Written 7/ 3/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

This religion did not come from meditating, nor was it brought about through miracles. In fact it is a genuine religion which came from the founder's dialogue with the universe. True religion, as written in kanji characters, is: to teach what the universe is indicating. In this teaching, Konko Daijin tells how he was blessed by these indications from the Divine Parent of the Universe.

Written 7/11/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

NOTE: What is described here is the insight into a unique aspect of the Konko Faith by the component parts of the *kanji* for "religion," which are: "Universe" or "nature" at the top, "indicate" directly below, completing the first figure, and the character for "teach" as the second figure. Together, they literally mean: "To teach what the universe is indicating."

21 *Practice faith. Practicing faith means to direct your heart towards Kami. Though you are surrounded by divine virtue, you will not receive blessings unless you have faith. Even a lamp full of oil cannot give light without a wick. Without light, the night would be dark. Without faith, the world would be dark.*

Belief is strength; strength is light.
Through belief, man is saved.
Light passes throughout the world.
The aspect felt in this life is
That the world is really dark.
In this era, as on a dark night,
With the strength of belief, with light
Let us serve society.

You must strengthen your beliefs by directing your heart towards Kami and by accepting that you will not receive blessings unless you have faith. In order to accomplish this, you must pray to Kami for all things and trust in Kami for everything. Belief will be born. This is “to direct your heart towards Kami.”

Written 7/ 3/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

From the world of man to the world of Kami
From the world of darkness to the world of light

In our way of faith “practicing faith means to direct your heart towards Kami.” It’s to train your heart to get closer and closer to Kami. From the joy and delight of casting off your wickedness, your selfishness, gradually the trouble is removed. With the very gathering of such people, there is the world of Kami and the world of light. Let’s make a ring of shining light! And then extend it far and wide! Let’s receive the blessing of changing the world for the better.

Written 7/ 4/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

There was a person who took Airaku ideal as a study in religion. This is how she thought about it. “Since it’s a course of study, I thought that preparation and review would be necessary. So without hesitation I decided to receive the teaching for the next day over and over again.”

It is said, “Taking the teaching this way, you grasp them through the heart and are able to get them.” Mustn’t this be the way one turns toward divinity? Thus you can’t avoid shining through the heart, and in the home, or even becoming a shining light for all around you.

Written 7/12/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

22 *Tenchi Kane No Kami sees everything in heaven and earth in a single glance. Kami bestows blessings equally. However, the blessings will be lost if the receiver is not ready. If you want to receive divine virtue fully, you must have a heart that accepts everything. In other words, you must have a heart that accepts even death.*

Receiving this teaching I feel that to acquire divine virtue is definitely not easy. At the same time you realize that the chance to acquire virtue is not something you always have. Since Tenchi Kane No Kami provides equal opportunity for acquiring virtue without distinguishing between persons, we must always have the receiving heart ready. The receiving heart is absolute faith. You must accumulate training in faith to just manifest a heart which actually accepts everything at the time without wavering and without rushing.

Written 7/ 4/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

If your faith isn't strong enough all the time, your heart won't be able to accept it when something urgent happens. The heart which trusts is at peace. Trust is born out of a totally accepting heart. Kami trusts those who trust Him.

“It's because Divine Virtue is the trust of Kami.”

(Words of Rev. Ishibashi, founding minister of Kurume Church)

Written 7/ 5/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Konko Daijin teaches us, “You must have a heart that accepts even death.” But this is quite difficult to do. However, each day by feeling the work of Kami, which doesn't miss even a minute or a second, you'll be able to develop a heart that accepts everything. In other words, it's living in rhythm with the universe. Kami has indicated to me the *kanji* character for *AKIRA*. It's written with sun (*hi*) on top and shine (*hikari*) underneath. One definition I found was a melody of sun and shining. The sun is Kami; shine is what our heart does through our practice of faith.

Written 7/13/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

23 *Faith is realized when the follower and Kami become close. Faith will fade if you stand in fear of Kami. Stay close to Kami.*

One must really come to like faith. There are many who appreciate blessings. However Kami doesn't always grant the blessings that we desire. When things don't go our way, we dislike faith. When you learn to like faith and learn to like the training and receive divine virtue, you receive blessings beyond your imagination. To actually become close to Kami is to really become the person Kami likes. It's to become your most appealing self.

Written 7/ 5/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Difficulties are the go-between for Kami and us. That is where communication with Kami begins. By the time you realize that these troubles are actually Divine Love, a relationship is born between Kami and you that cannot be broken, no matter how hard you try to sever it. When you receive the workings of Kami, accept them as they are and accept them completely; this blessed world of the very workings of Kami will come into being.

Written 7/ 6/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When you aim to tackle the problem, you begin to hate it and stand in fear of it. However, when you approach a problem with the teachings of Konko Daijin in mind, it then becomes a delightful problem that you can even appreciate. It guides you closer to Kami.

Written 7/14/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

24 *Practicing a faith which is forced on you by others is a faith which is not genuine. A faith that is not your own is easily lost. Practice true faith with devotion. People speak of practicing faith together. A stone that cannot be lifted by one person can be lifted by the combined strength of many moving in unison. Therefore, let all the members of a family join together in practicing faith.*

When you practice faith for a long time, you gradually develop habits and soon you're just going through the motions. It's because it's not devoted faith. Even of those seemingly devoted, most of them are devoted to just receiving divine blessings. By devoting yourself to true faith, mannerisms are not formed and superficial habits are not made, others will definitely follow and unexpectedly you are also able to practice faith together. Unless all members of the family join together in practicing faith, they cannot receive real blessings. When the family members are all joined together as one, the mediation of their prayer is easily conveyed. Kami is relieved and is able to provide blessings.

Written 7/ 6/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

I feel the joy of faith while absorbed in worship, and absorbed in prayer, and while tackling the teachings. Without this joy you'll only feel defeated from confrontations with nature. In just such a battle, real strength is gained. The combined strength of many who are powerless still amounts to nothing. However, by getting those who have even a little strength to call out in unison, a change can be brought about that is greater than anything imaginable. *Written 7/ 7/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

We should carefully consider where each of us places the pivotal point for our faith.

- It's said that humans are born of the earth and return to the earth. Thus the time in between should also be devoted to the spirit of the earth (soil).
- Respect each process and cherish it. Since the process itself is the natural work of the universe (Deity), we should trust in it without doubt.
- If you experience the way of living your life in absolute truth that is free of problems, you will be able to receive ever widening blessings and crucial divine virtues.

Written 7/15/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

25 *Have broad faith. Wavering faith has no value. Do not let your faith go astray. Stand firm in single-hearted faith.*

There is nothing broader than the universe. A faith that is broad is limitless. And from there is no wavering. Let us learn from the universe.

The Heavenly Nature: a benevolence that gives generously; it's giving unconditionally; this, indeed, is genuine.

The Earthly Nature: it accepts and accepts, nurturing itself.

We can say that taking up the nature of the universe, itself, for faith training is, indeed, focusing on broad faith.

The Truth of Heaven - The Warmth of Earth

Written 7/ 7/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

From personal matters to public, I would like to deepen my faith to a point at which I will be able to pray for the whole world. When someone asked the third successor of Konko Daijin, "Konko Sama, what is it that you pray for?" his reply was, "I pray for the entire Earth and all its inhabitants." Hearing this, the person was surprised and said, "But the entire Earth is too large." To which Konko Sama stated, "Yes, the large includes the small." As for this, that person was, indeed, completely overwhelmed. With large faith there is no confusion. If you are confused, you should realize that your faith is small, and proceed single-heartedly to find a way little by little to a larger faith.

Written 7/ 8/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Konko faith is broad and also profound. It expounds on the way to live with one's spirit as the spirit of the universe. Though we receive such grand teachings, there are many who minimize their meaning. To receive broad blessings and the virtues of the universe, one must comprehend, experience, and reveal the spirit of the universe.

Last night the grandmother of an acquaintance passed away. After coming back from the vigil, my wife said that since today was a *friend-pulling day** the funeral would be postponed a day. But, isn't this somewhat of a restrictive way to live?

Written 7/16/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Friend-pulling day: considered a day one's bad luck would affect one's friends

26 *You do not need anyone else to practice faith. You should practice faith by yourself. If you need someone else to practice faith, you will also need someone to die with you. However, no one is willing to die with you. To practice faith is to live day to day.*

Flowers will not bloom on a wilted tree. Blessings bear no fruit on a wilted heart. What it is *to live day to day* is not just being alive. It's to live never forsaking the pursuit of a vivid and truly grateful life. This way of life is indeed the practice of faith. Gratitude sprouts; flowers bloom; fruit ripens. Without any limits the universe is but giving and giving. The joy that's received! The pleasure that's manifested! There is nothing to approximate it.

“The blossoming flower within the monk, Kukai,

Is known by no one other than Amitabha.”

To have the greatest faith imaginable, like this joy between the Divine Parent of the universe and me, is indeed what it must be to practice faith on one's own. Don't you think so?

Written 7/ 8/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Just before the prayers began there were these mediations from two people. One dreamed of being killed; the other dreamed that she died. I responded, “You won't really reform unless you do it over again.” (To die means that the traits of fate die along with you.) *To practice faith is to live day to day* means to die day after day, in other words, to kill your selfish intent. After that, a faith is born in which “each day is new.” Your faith becomes original, without needing anyone else and not permitting anyone to imitate it.

Written 7/ 9/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

I received this message from Kami: “The craving for life.” This means an active search for life itself. I wish to raise faith to the point where I can honestly say that faith **is** my life. To do this it is necessary to grow constantly in understanding the real meaning of the truths our founder mastered: *To practice faith is to live day to day.*

Written 7/17/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

27 *People have often wondered why a man who is honest and like a kami or buddha is often afflicted with many misfortunes. There is a difference between a good, honest person who does no wrong, and a person who has received divine blessings through faith.*

What it is to receive blessings through faith is like writing a letter addressed to Kami; whether it was done in childish print or unseemly scribbled you will certainly be able to receive a reply. This means that even if a person is good or bad, or the writing is nice or poor, it makes no difference. For ages it's been said, "If you are on the path of truth, even without praying Kami will protect you." You will realize that such a saying is just self-serving words of man. If you don't pray, neither Kami nor Buddha will know.

Written 7/9/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Just because a person is a theologian or lives a very moral life does not mean that they understand or experience the blessings given by Kami. The divine blessings we are talking about are characterized by a feeling of gratitude which underlies the sense of 'ease' we experience. In other words, it is possible to live with a sense of heavenly paradise in both body and soul. Believers who achieve this state, taste life without poverty, strife or sickness and live in a world of truth, goodness, and beauty.

An excellent plot of Japanese ginger
Has butterburs sprouting with it
(Exquisite joyfulness / Sprouts with richness.)

Written 7/10/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It is said that the holy monk, Shinran, left these words, "Good people still pass into paradise; even more so do the bad people." I feel the words express the essence of the Heart of our Divine Parent. Irrespective of good or bad, if one can summon the will to ask Kami for help, the blessings that are received are the manifestation of the Divine Will to save mankind.

Written 7/18/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

28 *When a chronically ill person or a person suffering from the hardships of past generations receives Kami's blessings, it is like a well getting cleaned. If you get tired and stop cleaning after removing eighty or ninety percent of the dirty water, the well will remain dirty. It's the same in practicing faith. If you quit midway, you will not be able to eliminate the roots of the sickness or suffering. Take out the dirty water until the well is completely clean. Practice faith wholeheartedly with a cheerful heart for good health and prosperity until the roots of sickness and suffering are cut away completely.*

The truth which is evident has been expounded, but there are very few who are up to it. The way of faith is like preparing poison globefish for eating. It's essential that globefish be washed over and over again with water. If you wish to have the best delicacy ever, you must take the time and have the courage. So to be blessed with a thoroughly cleaned well, willpower and perseverance are important. Don't sit down after just a few blessings. What is desired is that blessings just gush forth.

Written 7/10/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It's the realization that "I have no power, no ability and no talent." Without depending on You, Kami, there's no way for me to reach blessings. Without receiving Your blessings I cannot move a single inch. There's no other way than for me to entrust everything to You, Kami. However, when I'm burning with desire to fulfill my role for Kami, the way opens infinitely for our mutual fulfillment, which cannot be blocked.

Written 7/11/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The deep feelings after getting through some trial with enduring faith become a powerful strength. It will also clear away accumulated offenses. The feelings perceived are brought about by our Divine Parent. Even though it's said that it's genuine and true, any truth lacking depth of feeling will not reach our deity.

Written 7/19/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

29 *Practice faith like a plum blossom rather than a cherry blossom. Cherry blossoms fall quickly. Plum blossoms endure the cold of winter and do not fall quickly.*

Just as the cherry blossom stands for a spectacular blessing, so I wish for spectacular blessings. In order to have such blessings, I must have daring faith like that embodied in the cherry blossom. In this way, the endurance represented by the plum blossom is essential. The faith of Airaku simply stated is:

To have cherry blossoms
Perfumed by the scent of plum
Bloom on the branches of a weeping willow.

The endurance of the plum blossom, the daring and beauty of the cherry blossom and the gentle submissiveness of the willow: These three essentials are, I believe, the faith and the blessings of Airaku.

Written 7/11/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Faith which just prays for tangible blessings is faith like the cherry blossom. Faith which prays for salvation of one's spirit receives Kami's divine virtue. By practicing faith like the plum blossom, the blessings received will have blossoms and fruits. Scratching because it itches is faith like the cherry blossom. Enduring patiently, although it itches: This is faith like the plum blossom. Divine virtue is attained while enduring.

Supernatural ability is faith like the cherry blossom.
Divine virtue from Kami is faith like the plum blossom.

Written 7/12/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Is the plum tree in bloom?
The cherry tree isn't ready, is it?
The likes of the willow tree --
According to the wind

Though this is a verse of a little ditty, I'd like to receive blessings like the brilliance of the cherry blossom and the faithful endurance of the plum blossom. And then as far as possible, as the willow moved by the wind entrusts itself to the wind, I must have faith dependent on Kami. To begin with, the faith of a plum blossom should be before that of the cherry blossom.

Written 7/20/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

30 Many place their trust in Kami, but Kami places trust in only a few.

In a store having proper price tags you can shop with ease. And it's also easy for those who sell. In such a way when this sort of thing is brought about between Kami and man, it is the first manifestation in the world of 'Kami being saved and man prospering.' When there is trust, there is ease; when being trusted, there is virtue. When you first set out to practice trusting and being trusted: become a child trusted by the parent, a parent trusted by the child.

Written 7/12/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It's said, "The lord and his men for three generations." However, I feel that with loyal affection for the lord and compassion for his men the words will for the first time take on meaning. By how you receive blessings, you come to find Kami and begin to trust in Kami for the first time. The more you recognize Divine benevolence, the more you raise in your heart the recompense for such Divine Love. Those who are trusted by Kami are people who have resolved to respond continuously to that Divine Love.

Written 7/13/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Within the very humanness of our human life is the true joy of living in a way which is completely connected with Kami. It is a world of exultation inside us. We rid ourselves of the mistaken idea that the purpose of faith is to become a wise sage. We discover instead, a way of living that is made stronger by adversity. That is why we pray to have a receptive heart which accepts and sees sacredness in all things while trusting the invisible more than the visible.

Written 7/21/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

31 Those who practice faith should feel grateful after having sat and rested on a tree stump.

What you realize by having faith is that everything is thankful. So you just have to express your gratefulness. There is never a case of there being nothing to be grateful for. This is where the way opens to true blessings. That is to say, “the way is never forlorn.” However, it is here I’m led to believe that I receive an over-abundance of blessings. It’s not just gratitude. I feel we must sincerely give thanks and give apologies, too.

Written 7/13/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Those who practice faith should feel the need to ask permission even to sit on a tree stump. Naturally when they stand up they will express their gratitude. It’s just like showing a ticket as you get on the train and again as you get off, and if you lose it you’ll have to pay again. Such care is needed in doing everything thoroughly.

Written 7/14/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

In the gangster world it’s said, one should be ready to repay the favor of an overnight stay and a good meal with one’s life. The founder has taught: “If you practice faith and understand Kami’s blessings, you will live a peaceful and stable life. You will have descendants and gain wealth. You will receive divine blessings from year to year, and then from generation to generation.” This is our indebtedness and responsibility to be grateful for all we feel throughout our lives.

Written 7/22/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

32 *People will receive divine blessings if they pray to the earth while picking their vegetables. Also, if those vegetables are boiled and eaten with a grateful heart, there will be no illness.*

It's not just women. It's not limited to vegetables. It's not just when eating. It's teaching how to meet the event of the moment. Whatever it is, pray for the matter at hand itself and accept that it has come about without blame. If you have a heart of prayer, there will be blessings. Also when you act on the matter, if you look to Kami with the heart to accept and take what happens just as it is as the Divine Will of Kami, nothing will harm you; rather, the matter will become the body and blood of your faith.

Written 7/14/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

- People in business, worship their customers. They are grateful to Kami for directing these customers to them.
- Farmers plant vegetable seeds. They praise the sprouts when they come up so nicely. They also give thanks to the source of the divine blessings of Heaven and Earth.
- I will be able to have a life of gratitude knowing that I exist because of Kami. In the same way, Kami expresses gratitude knowing that Kami is Kami because of people. Kami and people pray together and to each other; thus, the way of mutual reliance is opened. In any case, there is no other way in this faith than praying and receiving prayers.

Written 7/15/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

This is the first step of faith to experiment and prove. It is the feeling to worship the soil and the heart of joining your hands together in prayer to accept everything. We come to realize that the sources of blessings are here and there which we haven't been aware of until now. We come to understand that faith is to worship everything that happens and receive it.

Written 7/23/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

33 *Offerings will not bring divine blessings.*

Kami requires no offerings. And just giving these unneeded offerings has nothing to do with receiving blessings. However, if that offering is accompanied by a prayer for purifying one's self, or if it is showing tribute for Kami's grace, then virtue will be acquired. Even so, such tremendous works of piety should be brought about for all of creation everywhere.

When the person making an offering is utterly devoted,
The person who is mediating is, also, utterly devoted and
The person making use of that offering is also utterly devoted

Written 7/15/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Vividly Devoted

Offerings or money
are not what bring blessings.
Blessings (divine virtue) are attained
with a heart spent on giving so vividly.

Written 7/16/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It's like a mother unconditionally providing her child with milk, isn't it? Likewise we who believe in Kami must grow to be able to serve our Divine Parent unconditionally. When our unconditional comes together with the Divine Unconditional is where the world of "heaven, earth and man's oneness" will be opened.

Written 7/24/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

34 *Many people come to the Hiromae to worship, but only a few follow what they are told. After returning home most people just do what they want, and receive no divine blessings. On the way home, they lose Kami's teachings by distorting them to suit themselves. They then blame Kami. Even one word of Kami's teachings is priceless. Receive Kami's words in gratitude, and then your gift will be divine virtue so great that it cannot be loaded onto even a boat or cart. Renewing your heart is important. Believing wholeheartedly in Kami means there is no wavering.*

Colliding together is the reality of Kami and man. When it reaches the point that sparks fly, it is the first time you are actually able to come in contact with the reality of Kami. Take this 'Naniwabushi' verse:

The woman tells her customer
that she's in love.
The customer never returns,
but says he'll come again.
Lies upon lies
in the red-light district.
Without any shame,
even your social status
You've confided well in me.

It is from there that he wins her real heart, isn't it? In our case, there are certainly such things as lies and bargains with Kami, aren't there? Truly being single-hearted with Kami means not wavering.

Written 7/16/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Well, it must have been five or six years ago, but one day, all of a sudden I received this message from Kami: "From today you are not to drink cider; have coke or juice instead." Since then I have never drunk cider. I don't know why. And I haven't asked about it to Kami, either. It's just because Kami told me to. And still it is beyond irreverence not to obey Kami's teachings which, based on the way of the universe, have been, ever so earnestly and politely expounded as requested. Renewed and single-heartedly unwavering, divine virtue will be received by just attentively listening and practicing.

Written 7/17/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

For those of us practicing the faith, we are being taught something very important here: The importance of renewing ourselves from within, the need to follow the teachings, wholehearted faith in Kami is unwavering, among other teachings.

At the heart of blessings of Divine virtue
Kami is Kami through people
People are people through Kami
Together there is faith of Divine virtue

Written 7/25/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

35 *To renew you heart daily is the most important part of practicing faith. Live each day with the same happy heart you have on New Year's Day. When the sun sets, think that it is the last day of the year. When the sun rises, think that it is New Year's Day. If you are happy every day, there will be no discord in the family.*

What type of 'happy heart' do we have on New Year's Day? And also what type on New Year's Eve? Today I received blessings to attend the monthly service at the parent church. In his sermon the head minister spoke about the teaching received this month at the Headquarters' Church from the most Reverend Konko Setsutane. The words were: "Whatever it may be, if you don't accept it saying 'Thank you, thank you,' then things will not succeed." Must not this be the heart at New Year's and the last day of the year? We must pray that our families and all of society may live with this kind of heart. I think praying for true world peace is to have this prayer. Since it is taught that "for faith daily renewal is important," then from today let's really accept whatever happens by being so very thankful and receive the blessings of successful prayers. *Written 7/17/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Many worship the sunrise, but few worship the sunset. If you don't treat every night like New Year's Eve, you will not be able to greet every morning as you would New Year's Day.

Refreshed in the morning

Busy during the day

Thankful at night

The New Year's Eve feeling is the effort of doing what must be done today and not putting off until tomorrow. In order to receive the New Year's feeling of no discord in the family, you must stop blaming others. To worship everything surrounding you is how to celebrate the New Years' service.

Written 7/18/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

"With the same happy heart you have on New Year's Day"

"Think it is the last day of the year"

At first everyone believes if they can carry this out, discord in the family will disappear and they will receive blessings. But this is not so easily accomplished. The reason is we lack the three delights: thankfulness, preciousness, awesomeness.

Like the tale of Yoro Falls, when we set the intent on praying to please our parents single-heartedly, then Kami bestows us with a grateful heart. Amazingly we can easily do what we cannot usually do when we have grateful hearts. *Written 7/26/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

36 *Practicing faith in all the deities is practicing faith in excess. When asking someone to do a favor, if you rely on one person, he will do all he can to fulfill it. If you ask many, they will discuss how to fulfill your request and things will not go smoothly. When hiring carpenters, there must be a chief carpenter. Plants, also, have only one central core. If you practice faith with a single heart, you will immediately receive divine blessings.*

The way is a straight line.
You ask but one person, Konko Daijin.
Such “a single heart” is to resolve
That faith is one’s life

Written 7/18/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Kami is neither a god for curing sickness, nor for avoiding misfortune. Kami is a god of soul renewal. There are many kinds of doctors as well: general practitioners, surgeons, and pediatricians. Just as going to a specific doctor for a specific medical problem leads to faster treatment, when we realize that our Kami is the god of soul renewal we will cease to be confused. When you decide to pray for renewing your soul, a ‘destiny reform’ is enabled.

Open your heart-soul and pray wholeheartedly.

Written 7/19/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Although it may seem pious to worship the entire pantheon of gods, it amounts to no more than the dim light produced by a collection of fireflies (in a paper lamp). The single-hearted worship of one God is more like a lighted stick of incense which can sear through paper.*

Written 7/27/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

* ‘Kami’ has the same pronunciation as ‘paper’ in Japanese.

37 *Your lifetime is a training period of faith. It is like a scholar who has grown old and will wear glasses to pursue his studies.*

This morning Mrs. Yukiko Akinaga of Fukuoka came to worship and gave this account.

“The other day I had a dream. The elderly Mrs. Nakamura of Kitano was lying down at the mediation area. So I went closer and found that she was dead. Then *Oyasensei* quickly went up before Kami and when he prayed she was brought back fully alive.”

Just as in this dream of Mrs. Akinaga a situation concerning the faith of Mrs. Nakamura has arisen. Since her grandchild became sick her faith has recently improved more than before to where her daily worship is so much alive that it would be hard for young people to match. I think here particularly, since a lifetime is the training period of faith, I want to fulfill my life by training which is not withering, but that is alive and leads to great virtue. The training that is alive is a training which brings joy.

Written 7/19/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The life of a flower is short \ with no lack of suffering.

Without faith, this world is full of suffering, it is a world filled with pain. Even with faith, if prayer is pursued only for selfish reasons, then the training will certainly be painful. In the pursuit of faith, when there are difficulties, if you realize it is possible to acquire strength and divine virtue from them, then the hardship has a benefit -- it is possible to find joy in it. This is genuine training. Trying to take the easy way, there is no ease; but vowing not to ease up, there is paradise. Trying to be perfect is difficult. However, Kami is there to help you just as you are. In other words, this is the way of faith to join Kami as a living spirit, in this life, not the next.

Written 7/20/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

To this teaching we might add:

“It’s because this world is here for the next world.”

The origin of difficulty is something like an optical fiber cord which carries bright light between Kami and people. If you will accept it thankfully for training, it will shine and become divine virtue.

Written 7/28/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

38 People talk of removing impurities, but instead of removing those of the body, remove impurities of the heart and practice faith.

Just as you take the stiffness from the body by applying a strong massage, the same goes for the stiffness of the heart. You must practice the basis of the teaching very carefully and get to the truth. The heart will be purified to an extent you won't believe. Today there was a request by a person who suffered with a problem for the past two or three days that caused stiffness in the heart. As I told the person, "Since through such circumstances you are receiving the training for your faith, as you pray for help, you must also express your gratitude," soon after that she visited to offer her gratefulness. Because she saw the truth, the many days of suffering and the stiffness of the heart were just taken away. Since originally we are selfish with desire, we accumulate stiffness. Devoting ourselves to purifying selfishness is most important.

Written 7/20/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Exemplify thankfulness in your manner. Become deeper; grow larger; live as though you have died. The following teaching is said to be the content of the faith of Reverend Yumijiro Aramaki, the first minister of Mii Church.

Don't pile up impurity.
Don't pile impurity on others.
Be prudent.

Before speaking of removing impurity, what is essential is the training not to gather impurity, not to have it amass. To do that there is nothing else but to become larger, deeper and thankful.

Written 7/21/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When the chairman of the young men's group went to another church to help, he was told rumors by the Head Minister there that Airaku Church was not Konko religion, etc. Mediating this to Kami, I received the divine message: "In this heat the discomfort is so high let a cool breeze blow their way." In this way there is no chance of piling up impurities. Kami concluded saying it was "futile to defy."

Written 7/29/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

39 *The religious training of this faith does not involve traditional physical austerities. Doing your everyday work is religious training.*

The aim of the training in this faith is to direct your heart toward Kami and approach closer to Kami. If you put effort into doing your daily work, it cannot be considered performing religious training. While training through your daily work you must develop the spirit of being truly thankful, or the attitude that wishes only to save others. However, that is quite difficult to do. In order to get such a spirit of Kami, the spirit to serve, still traditional austerities and also spiritual training are necessary. When you realize this spirit, all of your everyday work becomes training and finally you are able to have 'training as work' and 'work as training.' Naturally, the point of religious training is not to become disturbed; to control oneself without getting burnt in the fire or washed away in the water.

Written 7/21/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

- ❖ All religious training to approach Kami, both physical and spiritual, is important. When we do every day work with such a spirit, we come to understand the divine meaning of our founder: "Religious training is doing your everyday work."

Living itself is not religious training; it's the contents. Your occupation is not for your livelihood; it's when you realize you are given this life and you truly make recompense for Kami's benevolence that for the first time your daily work is said to be religious training. It's not done just by working devotedly. This morning I received a phone call from Mrs. Ebisuura. She works in a hospital. It seems the directing doctor there is quite a hard person to get along with. Because of this employees don't stay on very long. So day after day her everyday has been disagreeable. Changing her attitude two or three days ago to accept whatever the director says just as if it were her minister speaking, she says that each day has become enjoyable and thankful. This very way of accepting must be exactly the religious training of your work. Don't you think so? *Written 7/22/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

When you do your daily work as a form of faith training, it becomes a way to receive divine virtue through it. Of course, this means that it is important to do our tasks as our spiritual training. It has been seven years since we've received the blessing at Airaku of abolishing all physical austerities. Since then, as we have focused on spiritual training, by trying to keep Kami in mind all day long, offering prayers on a regular daily schedule, and trying to do Kami's Will during every day work, our church has doubled.

By the way, trying to receive blessings through physical austerity is just like trying to raise money at a pawn shop. By keeping Kami's Will for us in mind all day long, at work as well as at home and in between, everything is arranged for us through natural blessings.

Written 7/30/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

40 *Carrying a heavy load on your shoulders or back may be burdensome, but practicing faith is not. It is easy. Practice faith while you do your daily work.*

Even saying “it is easy” doesn’t mean there are no difficulties. By perceiving that the difficulties, just as they are, train you in faith, then all of your daily work is training. In as much as one comes to feel truly grateful and precious about this, so the practice of faith becomes easy. Mrs. Kuboyama of Ohashi-machi stated in grateful meditation, “Everyday while pulling grass in the fields and wrestling with the weeds -- picking and pulling but still they come back -- I came to think that I have something like these weeds even in my heart, so without feeling the heat all day I could do the job.” I felt this is what faith is.

Written 7/22/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

For a good part of every morning the phone calls of gratitude and requests continue without pause. That everyone is receiving blessings is proof that there’s no rudeness or discourtesy about using the phone. Not only I but also the believers are at ease. However, that will not do for practicing your faith. When receiving teachings is enjoyable and you understand how thankful training is by growing to like faith, then faith is easy.

Written 7/23/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Tokugawa Ieyasu (the generalissimo who united the country and started the Edo or Tokugawa period of 250 years) thought of life in this world as a heavy burden to carry over hills and up mountains. Most of the people of the world think of it in exactly the same way. However burdensome it is, Konko Daijin teaches the way to receive the strength to be able to carry it with pleasure and gratitude. Moreover, it is a way that humans can learn as they work at their jobs, living their lives as human beings. With the spirit to try, anyone can live this way.

Written 7/31/1981 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

41 *Listening to teachings is not enough. Faith should be developed within oneself.*

It's said that working teaches one how to work. Also practicing faith until it teaches you to have faith is to persevere in faith. To a certain extent it's not too much to say that the teachings are indicating this. Faith teaches sincerity. A sincere heart is what guides you to the Heart of Kami.

Written 7/23/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Unless it's displayed in our conduct, just listening to teachings will not lead to blessings; we won't even know what we don't understand. Studying at such places as faith discussion groups there are those who neither have faith experiences to speak of, nor any questions to pose. If the teachings are put into practice, such experiences are bound to happen. To develop from within is not to develop reasoning, but to develop blessings. First it's important to develop times for going to worship and developing your offering. Depending on how you listen, your heart will open; depending on how you put it into practice, your inner eye will open.

Written 7/24/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Faithful is

to obey,
to obey completely,
to obey Kami's teachings,
to do as Kami wills.

Conscientious is

to turn towards Kami,
to turn that spirit (of faithfulness) towards Kami.
To do Kami's will is to be faithful.
To seek and seek again for the Heart of Kami is to be conscientious.

Faithful and conscientious is to truly serve Kami.

Truth is a way of striving to take up the Heart of Kami as one's own.

Written 7/ 1/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

42 *If you wonder why you are having troubles despite your devout faith, your faith has stopped. Think that it is because you are lacking in faith, and practice faith single-heartedly. Then you can receive divine blessings.*

1. From that point your faith is strengthened.
2. From that point your blessings are real blessings.
3. When you realize that you are lacking in every way, then you will be prepared for true faith.
4. At times like this, when you give thought to how the founder would have dealt with it, naturally a new way opens.

Written 7/24/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

For some time someone has brought a large arrangement of morning glories to my room every morning. It's eye-opening. Recently there is talk of faith becoming merely mannerisms. We need a diligent way of feeling a fresh joyous faith which is renewed daily, as when viewing the blooming morning glories full of morning dew every day. If it's only blessings from beginning to end, then in the heart arises the feeling, "How come?" When you are aiming for faith, then the lively heart wells up with "This is how my faith is developed."

Written 7/25/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Though we may "wonder why we are having troubles despite our devout faith," how well do we really follow Kami's Will? Doing Kami's Will is spiritual training. Going through it is the most basic training of the Konko faith.

The Mission of Spiritual Training

Konko Daijin followed what Kami said as his training. When this faith was presented publicly, it caused friction; at times it was blatantly rejected and even ridiculed. His wife objected saying, "People will laugh; it's unbecoming." Without a change of attitude Konko Daijin would reply, "I don't care about what people think. I just follow whatever Kami says, or else somehow things won't work out." Through such spiritual training Konko Daijin directed his heart more toward Kami to where he confirmed and realized his deep and unwavering faith.

(Excerpt from The Konko Kyoto Newspaper of July 1, 1982)

Written 7/ 2/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

43 *You cannot help but receive divine blessings even after death. Pray even at the moment of death.*

It cannot be done only with an understanding of the nature of faith. The saying “Pray even at the moment of death,” would be, in the case of a flower, the moment it falls and scatters. It scatters about and the next year it must then bloom again. Although we cannot help but pray, those who do are very few. It is because we don’t believe in the next world, even though we are clearly taught that “you cannot help but receive divine blessings even after death.”

Written 7/25/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Life is fragile, more fragile than dew on the grass.

Mrs. Kunika Hisatomi, who has passed away, received this revelation during her life. Life in this world is 50 years or 100 years. The world of the spirit I see as a limitless world of darkness. The bright world of light depends upon the light you obtain yourself. Therefore, it is precisely in those who hold the light, that we find this world of light. Thus while in this world we must really purify and nurture the spirit. Otherwise, just at the moment of death it will not suffice.

Written 7/26/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

That world, this world;
The human world, the divine world;
People are born into the world of man.
When we realize the uncertainty of the human world
And desire to be residents of the divine world,
There’s no other way than following the teachings even more.
This world is here for that world.

Written 7/ 3/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

44 Even a fox or badger would be happy to be revered as a kami. By being the masters of all living things, people should practice faith looking forward to becoming a kami after death.

Through the way of this faith comes the enlightenment of divinity. You become a kami not because you believe in Konko-sama. It's because you put into practice the way to become a kami that you are able to be revered as a kami. As you sharpen and polish those qualities of the mastery of creation, the insights for being a master are born. At the least, unless the gratitude and joy of true faith becomes a part of you and you begin to have faith which reveres your own heart, the joy of becoming a kami will not come about. Don't we even speak of the fox or badger in dramatized stories as the fox that spent a thousand years training on a certain mountain or the badger that received supernatural power? It is only natural that we are required to train for such a purpose.

Written 7/26/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The founder taught with the question: Can you become a kami in the next world without being a kami in this world? To become a kami is how to demonstrate the value of being "the masters of all living things." You need to remove your selfish desire. It's a world where supernatural power and divine virtue come together as one. You have the feeling of 'being allowed a life amid divine virtues.' "To become a kami after death" means that we devote our lifetime to the joy of directing our hearts and spirits toward Kami.

Written 7/27/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The faith of Konko Daijin is the way to attain kami-hood just as an ordinary person. You need not become a monk. You need not enter the monastery. Just by feeling the Divine Love which can't help but bring us happiness When you sense that loving feeling of our Divine Parent, you will pursue nothing other than the way of a kami.

Written 7/4/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

45 People say, "Do not trample the grain. If you stomp on it, you will become blind." The grain bows lower as it grows. When people amass fortunes or are called "Reverend," they tend to forget to bow their heads. Those who practice faith should become more humble as they receive more virtue.

However, the nail that juts out is apt to be driven in. Being arrogant is the worst thing. You may think that you will not suffer. Although Kami does not scold with a raised voice or extended hand, be careful. If you are filled with pride, divine blessings will surely leave you.

While wearing the suit of armor called hardship, you aren't able to move around and you can't raise your head. However, when you receive a small taste of blessings, you soon become arrogant and cannot lower your head. It's the foolish, pathetic nature of man. We do wish to receive virtue. When true virtue becomes a part of us, we naturally cannot help but be humble. In order to get virtue, we wish to live really taking the process of life importantly, watching our step without neglecting the 'grain' (what is important for the world; the very workings of Kami).

Written 7/27/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Receive divine virtue. But even by receiving divine virtue, I feel Kami's concern that we would not be negligent. In the 'Thoughts on the Predecessors' column of the KYOTO NEWSPAPER [Konko Believers' Newspaper] this is part of what was published about the late Reverend Matsutaro Yasutake:

"There were more than a thousand who were proceeding from the funeral at the church to the cemetery. On the day of the funeral, which fell between a rainy day and a snowy day, very fine weather was arranged for us all."

When I had read that much I couldn't help being seized with emotion that, for a while, prevented me from doing anything. There must have been snowy days and rainy days throughout the forty-five years of mediation of this famous minister. He practiced his faith by totally accepting each and every one of them as Kami's blessings. Was not this man a mirror reflecting how to really live this teaching?

Written 7/28/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Realize that faith is to polish the gem in your heart. You'll also come to develop graciousness. Sincerity will also appear. And your pride will disappear. Blessings will surely follow.

Written 7/ 5/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

46 *Being cured is not a blessing. Having good health is.*

To be able to eat and drink all sorts of delicacies is a blessing, but it's even more of a blessing when whatever you eat is delicious. It's been said, when in hell you need Buddha and on a dark night you need light. However, by practicing faith you open into paradise and begin creating a world which is centered always on Buddha. During meditations this morning a woman stated, "Since I began practicing faith I've come to find that all people around me seem so nice and kind." So I said, "Then you must already be surrounded by the Goddess of Mercy and Buddhist saints, right?"

Written 7/28/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Every night at bedtime prayers I offer the words of gratitude in the prayer:

Today has truly been a day to be grateful for.
Through Kami's favor I have divine blessings of good health,
a safe home, without calamities of floods, fire or theft.
I offer my sincere gratitude.

Moreover, every morning this is the content of the prayer I offer from the heart. One must pray for relief before feeling the pain. It may seem to be faith which is greedy, but unless you receive blessings, genuine faith cannot be manifested.

Written 7/29/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Develop a faith which was for immediate needs, to faith which will hold true in this life as well as the next. While coming here Mrs. Ito, leader of the Ku-no-ichi Meeting, was thinking that since she's come to know Airaku Church, her faith will now pass with her into the next world. Feeling this so keenly, she looked up to see the word for eternity (*bandai*) written on the car in front of hers. This moved her all the more.

Unless we believe in the world of the spirit, true faith is impossible.

Written 7/ 6/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

47 *If people prayed before taking medicine, there would be divine blessings. Instead, however, they take medicine before praying, so there are no divine blessings.*

When ill, the doctor; at death, the priest -- is a doctor or priest really alright? In times of need all people, even those without faith, cannot help but depend on something. How much weight you give to this need for dependence is whether you are praying before taking medicine or taking medicine before praying. "There are no divine blessings by taking medicine before praying" doesn't mean that sickness will not be cured. We can reach an understanding of this through the words of Reverend Hiroshi Takahashi:

"Seek mediation and then the good and bad things that happen will all be good.
Without seeking mediation, the good and bad that happen will be all bad."

The subtle effect of how mediation works is being taught.

Written 7/29/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It's not just for illness. The Divine Will tells us to focus on Kami for everything we do. This morning Mrs. Ryu of Fukuoka came to worship and offered her gratitude. The other day she received word from her daughter in Miyazaki that her grandchild had suddenly become sick and was asked to come as soon as possible. First of all she came here for mediation and to request prayers. Upon hearing this, I told her, "Just because you go to Miyazaki, doesn't mean she'll get better. Leave everything in Miyazaki to Kami; and come and pray with all your heart." So she made up her mind, came to worship every day, and today she returned to give thanks for the blessings she received.

Written 7/30/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Since we are taught, "Medicine is poison," we must pray for the divine blessing to transform the poisonous drugs into medicating drugs.

Written 7/7/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

48 *When your child is sick, do not become too emotional. Practice faith and leave the child alone as you would a disobedient child. Your child will be able to receive divine blessings.*

Between relief and conceit is a paper-thin difference. Even saying “leave the child alone” should not lead to negligence, and definitely not to self-conceit. Even the doctor who becomes able to operate on his own child is considered fully developed because his hand holding the surgeon's knife has gained confidence. With faith, too, when we confront not just a child's illness but all sorts of difficulties, if we can let it be and have faith, we will receive blessings. When you practice faith single-heartedly, you gain incredible courage and can receive the same quality of blessings. Really by reaching the point that you feel it is not your child, nor anyone else's, is the ultimate. This is the world for those who have already received divine virtue. *Written 7/30/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Because the teaching “Leave the child alone without a care to what might happen” means this is a situation where you must set aside your own desires and emotions, it creates plenty of space for the Divine Parent to work and help us. Moreover, “practice faith” is to grow more and more in your faith. I feel the number 48 means that our life is full of possibilities for blessings. If you always live with this feeling, you'll receive the Divine virtue of the Divine Parent without obstruction. *Written 7/31/1976 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

When my third son, Mikisaburo, was diagnosed for sarcoma my spirit was in a normal condition. The chances were ninety-nine percent bad. Such would be an expression of the care-free spirit. Through divine grace miraculous blessings were received. Later I wondered how it might have been if it had been a believer's son.

Kill selfishness and give life to Kami?

Or

Kill Kami and give selfishness life?

Written 7/ 8/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

49 *Faith begins with a fortunate encounter and a twist of fate.*

In the Kabuki play, even Ohan and Choemon have a fortunate encounter and a twist of fate. As for our faith, all of us should have something like Ohan and Choemon. If the only thing we encounter is comfort, blessings and obligatory courtesies; if Konko faith is only for this present world and Buddhism for the next world, then all that there ever can be is but sheer nonsense. It is said, "Fate is a strange and unfathomable thing." One's encounter of faith must be developed to the extent of being "unfathomably" grateful; to go only as far as "curious" will not do. I pray that Konko faith will hold true in both this world and the next.

Written 7/31/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Hardship gives birth to the twist of fate.

Blessings bring about the fortunate encounter.

"Even a chance encounter is karma from a previous life." Although this relationship is not among the deep relations of a parent to its child or a child to its parent, the disrespect for a parent or a child greatly hinders these deep relationships. Since we expressly have received the bond with the Divine Parent, ignoring it and straying from our relationship, naturally saddens our Divine Parent more than anything else. The founder combines and teaches that "faith is just the same as showing respect to your parents."

Written 7/ 1/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

There are people who miraculously encounter this faith, but quit midway without any feeling of exquisiteness (the joy of faith). They would even be able to get blessings which would sprout into prospering riches. It's pitiful. It's sad.

An excellent plot of Japanese ginger
has butterburs sprouting with it.

Written 7/ 9/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

50 Above all, you should enrich your faith. Practicing faith in everyday life is important. Rich soil will be productive without fertilization, and so it is with faith.

Though people say there is no such thing as a money tree, this way of faith provides not only a tree of money, but the way to virtue which fulfills every condition for human happiness. It is because, as is taught, "Rich soil will be productive without fertilization." In everyday life is where the roots must be enriched. These roots are the roots of the heart, the roots of the home*, and the roots of the universe. It is important to restore that which we receive from the universe.

Written 7/ 1/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

* The roots of the home mean parents and ancestors.

By comprehending the benevolence of the universe you naturally swell with feelings of gratitude. Your good deeds will be even more gallant. A large, enriched heart will develop naturally. For the large heart, there are large blessings; for the enriched heart, enriched blessings.

1. To restore that which we receive from heaven and earth enriches heaven and earth.
2. To sincerely serve the ancestors enriches the family roots.
3. Everything you dislike or hate enriches the heart.

Written 7/ 2/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

PRINCIPLE CULTIVATION FOR WORSHIPING THE MOUNTAIN OF DIFFICULTY

The essence of cultivating one's spirit is to single-heartedly train oneself by worshiping the very difficulties of life. One will be able to comprehend the Divine Will and be awakened to Divine Love. Faith is reinforced (unwavering) when one has received this Divine Love.

Written 7/10/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

51 People living between heaven and earth are Kami's children. If your body has pain or illness, working will be difficult. Pray for physical well-being, diligence in your work, rich grain harvests, and for your horses and cows. Pray with sincerity for everything.

This teaching indicates the posture for prayer. It states to “pray with sincerity for everything.” To seek sincerity is important. Why must we pray? It is because “people living between heaven and earth are Kami's children.” In order to perform your work as children of Kami you just have to “pray for physical well-being, diligence in your work, rich grain harvests, and for your horses and cows.” It's not merely for personal comfort. This teaches the essence of prayer in the Konko religion.

Written 7/ 2/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Just by being the Divine Parent, such is the request; just by being a child of the Divine Parent, such is what is requested. We pray for ourselves, for everything that will bring happiness to the children of the Divine Parent. It is like a small infant on its mother's lap suckling her milk; it's so pure and innocent. Praying sincerely is to know just such a way; it's praying with just such a heart.

Written 7/ 3/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The innocent prayer is like wishing to win the ball game in the vacant lot. It's the simple request of a person just trying to be happy as a living human being. Blessings of this kind are like getting a pacifier. We need to receive blessings which really become a living part of us. That is the meaning of praying with sincerity.

Written 7/11/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

52 *People who practice faith should not become upset. Do not be afraid regardless of how bad things become.*

“Waves rushing into shore, crashing together, each one a test of courage,” go the lyrics of a song. The same goes for faith. You must develop your faith to the extent of being unafraid and unperturbed in the face of any event that might occur. And when something occurs, the way you handle it will decide the blessings you receive. You also reach a new level of faith. It’s quite a shining moment to reach such a posture of faith in Kami. I want to develop a faith so firm that voices will resound, “Bravo!”

Written 7/ 3/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Whatever whenever something happens, no matter how well it is resolved as the problem-free working of Kami within the scope of Konko Daijin’s mediation, there are at times startling matters. It is teaching to “not become upset,” but this is where the ordinary man is more than a bit agitated. At such times you should turn to Kami and pray for soothing relief. Kami will provide blessings such that there’s nothing to be upset about. Even when you cannot control your trembling, Kami will bless you with calm as if you could. It is because of Konko Daijin’s guardianship.

Written 7/ 4/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Since it is totally dark
 you become anxious.
When the light of faith shines
 you have relief.
When you feel the great works of Kami,
 that is when the joy of faith
 wells up inside of you.
It’s this joy which makes
 the impossible possible.

Written 7/12/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

53 *When practicing faith, there are more blessings which cannot be seen than those which can be seen. The blessings you unknowingly receive are more than the blessings you knowingly receive. If you think about it, you will come to realize the many divine blessings that you have already received. When you can do this, you are a true believer.*

When you realize that that too was a blessing, all of your past comes alive with meaning. Even if you happen to have a problem at this moment, when you comprehend that it is in fact a blessing too, then you come to see that all-there-is is just Divine Love. Since the blessings we see with the human eye are but the tip of the iceberg, no matter how much we deepen our gratitude, our appreciation would not suffice. Let us aim to be true believers who realize that all of our past and all of our present are full of blessings.

Written 7/ 4/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Since we are taught, “If you think about it, you will come to realize the many divine blessings that you have already received; when you can do this, you are a true believer,” we then must aim to be true believers. To do that, you look to find where you are powerless. The feeling that “everything is a blessing” will well up and embrace you.

Written 7/ 5/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When seeing what happens through the theorem that “All is Divine Love,” we come to realize all the divine blessings we have already. In order to realize the great importance of those blessings, we need to deepen our faith limitlessly.

Written 7/13/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

54 *Without virtue, you will worry. With divine virtue, you will not worry.*

Just because you have divine virtue doesn't mean that you will not worry. It's just the content of the worries that changes. You will not have the worries of those with little faith or those without faith. It's not the worries of not being able to sleep at night, but just gracious and precious worries.

Written 7/ 5/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

To be able to entrust yourself to Kami whether it's a loss or a gain, whether you live or die is when "you will not worry." The receiving of Divine Virtue is to believe in Kami and having Kami believe in us. In our case we have so many worries. So we should seek after devout faith. Miraculously we can change our lives from a world of darkness to a world of brilliance, from anxiety we open into a world of relief. It is already the world of Divine Virtue. *Written 7/ 6/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Let me first receive Divine Virtue. Someone said that the Konko faith is the way of turning everything into blessings. At Airaku, we are taught the way of considering everything virtuous. Before anything else, begin by mastering the principle that "All is Divine Love."

Written 7/14/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

55 *While you are young, you will be asked to do work which pays wages, but when you get older, you will not be asked. In practicing faith, the older you get, the more virtuous you become. If you practice faith, your gratitude will increase with each passing year.*

As you remove 'self' year after year you become more grateful. If you're not feeling grateful, notice it is strange, remove that selfish character, then renew and practice your faith. You will certainly get a grateful heart. You are given rank not because you grow old. How grateful you become is your ranking. Faith is not practice for becoming great or wise; it's practice in becoming grateful.

Written 7/ 6/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Faith is the practice of removing your ego. With ego, even when receiving blessings, you won't feel grateful and you'll be unable to receive Divine Virtue. Even in practicing faith, until you devote yourself to removing ego, it will suck all the thankfulness out of you. If a grateful heart has not been developed, you must realize that your ego is obstructing you. There is nothing that torments you more than your ego.

Written 7/ 7/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

You cannot develop your gratefulness by only seeking blessings. By practicing faith realizing that faith is to polish the gem in your heart, you will naturally become grateful and gain more virtue.

Written 7/15/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

56 *As time goes by, this faith will become more widely accepted by the world. Practice this faith patiently.*

It's said, "A rumor lasts only seventy-five days." While patiently persevering, you will come to see through yourself and begin to understand your sorry self, your incompetent self. You will realize that to practice faith patiently is the time to taste how heartily you appreciate your beliefs and to acquire the virtues for persevering faith.

When you quietly are delighted
Blessings quietly are provided

Written 7/ 7/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

At the same time as "this faith becomes more widely accepted by the world," you should enlarge and broaden your heart-mind. As you patiently persist in the joy of faith, a fountain of joy will develop deep in your heart. It's regrettable to just forget in vain as time goes by.

ONE WALKS THE ROAD ALONE

Written 7/ 8/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Let us examine the case of Mutsuya Kimono Shop. The present owner was only twenty or so years old when his parents passed away. On top of that he continued to suffer hardships one after another. To make things worse, there was even an incident that could be called the Mutsuya Dispute. The rumor started that Mutsuya was done for. During those days he sought mediation daily. Whatever the matter was Oyasensei always said, "Shinjiro, it's for you to become bigger and enrich your heart." That was all he would say to him. So he entrusted himself to Kami and endured the unbearable. This resulted in Mutsuya prospering even today, some ten years later.

The same is true in the case of Mr. Shigeo Hisatomi. During some ten years of faith practice, it wasn't all good times. Various difficulties also continued. He was said to have the virtue of 'Jizo' and taught to devote himself to practicing the faith of the soil. And so, devote himself he did. He increasingly developed a faith of meekness. There were times when his relatives said that he was obsessed with Konko-sama. That he also accepted with a heart of the soil. So now the whole Hisatomi family is receiving blessings and prospering. *Written 7/16/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

57 *A metal cane will bend and a bamboo or wooden cane will break. Use Kami as your cane, and then you will be at ease.*

Don't rely on money; don't rely on others; don't even rely on your own self. There is not one thing that you can depend on. The only thing to rely on, you will realize, is just Kami. After that realization, single-hearted faith comes about of itself and you can live in the world of trust. Since it is taught "use Kami as your cane, and then you will be at ease," if you are not at ease, this is evidence that you are relying on something other than Kami. Money and possessions and people are all things which come to you from outside of you.

Written 7/ 8/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Today's society is a world of darkness. There has never better a time when true light was needed more than now. Though the founder has taught to "use Kami as your cane and then you will be at ease," gods that we can really lean on are scarce. With so many gods and deities saturating society, one can find neither a cane to lean on, nor light. Unless religion, as written in Japanese, is religion which teaches that which the cosmos (the Divine Parent of the universe) indicates, there truly can be neither light nor a cane.

Written 7/ 9/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

There are those who go on foot, those who go by bicycle and those who go by car. You will be at ease when you go in a carriage of virtue.

Written 7/17/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

58 *If someone calls you a thief, you should not get angry as long as you are not a thief. If someone calls you a beggar, you are not one if you do not go and beg. Kami sees all. Wear a sash of faith.*

From even a popular samisen song there's, "The look of the pine needle is so appealing/ The two even wither and fall together." If you have devotion of this kind, then your faith is true. However, in another verse it says, "The look of the maple leaf is without appeal/ The changing colors of the leaves announce the coming of fall*." This will not do. With even a small understanding of faith you begin to approach a turning point. Something is there, you are trembling. The sash of faith is not yet tied firmly around you. Faith is to be borne into the world where Kami watches over you and listens to you.

Written 7/ 9/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

* 'fall' has the same pronunciation as 'boredom' in Japanese.

The character for 'wishing' is written with the components, 'heart' and 'now.' By accepting 'now' in your heart, you receive Kami there as well; in other words, it's spiritual training itself. When you really look carefully at what makes you angry, you realize you actually should offer a prayer of gratitude.

While riding the bus to today's Summer Training Worship Mrs. Asae Imamura of Kurume, feeling angry with her son and dozing off, had a dream about a large building collapsing with a loud crash. By getting angry or being dissatisfied or disappointed you negate your hard-earned blessings.

Written 7/10/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

We have a bundle of wood. The rope around it is rather loose. But add a few more logs and it's firmly packed. "To wear a sash of faith" means to add such content to it.

Written 7/18/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

'Wood' and 'spirit' are homophones in Japanese.

59 *If you carelessly forget what you have learned, your teacher will gain nothing. If you succeed in life and say that your success is owed to your teacher, the teacher will be happy. Kami will not be happy if you lose your divine blessings. When you receive divine blessings, Kami is happy, Konko Daijin is happy, and you are happy.*

Self-centered blessings are such that it's easy to lose your faith and the blessings too. This would not make Kami happy. That's because you are practicing faith to benefit your lifestyle. When you come to realize that everything in your life is for your faith, such faith indeed is absolute faith. Just such a faith is said to be faith whereby "Kami is happy, Konko Daijin is happy, and you are happy."

Written 7/10/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Developing faith and having our faith developed should both serve to fulfill the Divine Will, so that human beings and Kami are happy and fulfilled. However, when that is not the case, then somewhere we have erred. Therefore, Kami cannot be happy, Konko Daijin cannot be happy and neither can human beings. It is then, that those who develop the faith of believers must first be developed themselves. This is where the mediator must reflect inwardly most deeply. It is when believers can always receive blessings that both the mediator and the believers will develop in faith. The Five Requests will be fulfilled when the desires of Kami and the desires of humans are achieved.

Written 7/11/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

THE FIVE REQUESTS

- 1 To be physically healthy
- 2 To have a peaceful home
- 3 For a thriving and prosperous family
- 4 To work toward furthering the truth
- 5 To help fulfill the Divine Will and create the Wagakokoro Era

"I'm here today because of the blessings of Kami."

From that realization, one can develop a true faith. ... Alas, so many are taking their blessings for granted and stubbornly going their own way.

Written 7/19/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

60 *The more blessings you receive, the more benefits you will gain.*

Blessings are what are in your heart.

Virtues are what Kami gives to you.

Also among the teachings of Konko Shijin there is: “Don’t think that blessings come from Kami. They come from within the heart of the believer.” However, Divine Virtues are not anything like that. The founding minister of Kurume Church has explained that Divine Virtue is the trust of Kami. You must have faith that Kami can trust. That is what real blessings are. There is no one who can win against those who have received virtue. *Written 7/11/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

First of all the minister has to show that he’s received blessings. To acquire virtue is the first priority, because one can’t compete against those who have virtue. In order to receive Divine Virtues, you must not try to force it out of Kami, nor force it out of the believers. But if you practice faith forcing the best from yourself, virtue can be acquired.

- Push aside blessings; take in training
- The one fishing; the one watching

The universe is generously giving without any limit. You need a posture for accepting it. You can’t accept it just by watching. *Written 7/12/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

The spirit becomes bountiful and large,
So blessings become bountiful and large.
It’s exactly as you receive more blessings
that you will gain more virtues.

Written 7/20/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

61 *Konko Daijin speaks about unlimited blessings from Kami. If you receive blessings by practicing faith and then sincerely give teachings to others with the same heart as Kami's, you too can walk the true way of faith. Passing on Konko Daijin's words without changing their meaning and helping others to practice true faith will make Kami happy. This will also make you a kami. You should not consider yourself above Kami, even if you become one.*

For the happiness of humankind, in whatever era it may be, this teaching is explaining the eternal, immortal truth in simple words that anyone can understand. First, **I** have to receive blessings myself. Faith is so wonderful that you are pleased to communicate it heart to heart, just as fellow sufferers pitying each other. You see that is how you become a kami and also how to show your appreciation to Kami. Feeling that my words are saving people would be feeling that I am above Kami.

Written 7/12/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

You can receive unlimited divine blessings when your heart is saved to the point that even physical blessings come your way. It can and should be conveyed for everyone to understand that blessings, without even requesting them, come as naturally as the divine favor of a warbler coming to perch on the Ume tree just as the blossoms bloom with a fragrant scent. For Kami's Will to be fulfilled, the first thing is that man be saved. This is what will please Kami the most. With this type of faith you will be able to receive Divine Virtue. And it will lead you to become a kami.

Written 7/13/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Living your faith is a life of service centered on Kami. From a faith which uses Kami, aim for faith which Kami can use.

Written 7/21/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

62 *An old saying tells us, "Let others do as well as you, but excel more than others." Therefore, when you practice faith in Kami, you should receive the divine blessings for yourself first. Then, help others. Practicing faith is the same as learning. It progresses step by step. You cannot become a teacher immediately.*

First we receive personal salvation, next true salvation as a part of mankind. Then when our hearts swell with gratitude for finding our true path, that is what is a Wagakokoro heart. With this Wagakokoro we pray for others, and a will to love our church so strongly that we cannot help but pray for it is then born. We pray for the expansion of the whole religious organization, and sincerely pray for the whole world. This is the faith which will fulfill Kami's Will. This is how we must progress in faith step by step.

Written 7/13/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The blessings received through faith will relax the spirit and make it strong. This is the blessing we speak of when saying, "You should receive the divine blessings provided for you." And from this source, in times of joy as well as times of sorrow, happiness flows in us. Water recedes; fire rises. It is the way of the universe. At times such a rhythm is born because we follow the way. Kami's Divine Virtue (putting us into Divine service) also follows us. Unless Kami takes us into that service, people cannot be helped. The earnest desire to be of service, transforms into sentiments of and for Kami.

Written 7/14/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Cast off the beliefs, morals, and common sense you've held until now. From there you can gain real salvation through Konko faith. What does it mean that, "you should receive the divine blessings provided for you; then you can help others?" First of all exalt the teachings of our founder to the point of believing them to be the greatest ideal for human salvation. The Airaku Ideal will show you how.

Written 7/22/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

63 *As you know, there is a saying that one seed becomes ten thousand. When one person receives divine blessings, a thousand or ten thousand people will be able to receive divine blessings. You should practice faith and become a good example for others.*

What would be called faith which “becomes a good example for others?” BELIEF IS LIGHT. It’s to enkindle the heart with the light of belief. With that light the dark side of your heart will be made clear. From that point you can truly renew. Also that light will make what’s around you shine brightly. And then the light will come to radiate far and wide. And those who bathe in that light, in numbers beyond count, will praise the joy of faith. It is precisely the one seed that becomes ten thousand. This is the type of faith I wish to practice. *Written 7/14/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Faith that is an example for others is like: No matter how difficult things are, when thinking it is Divine Love, tears of gracious joy are shed; in any situation whatsoever, it is faith that expresses gratitude. When that is possible you can receive the blessings of one seed becoming ten thousand.

Bitter persimmons/ are peeled and hung up.

Drying powdery white/ they turn sweet.

The important thing is when you are being peeled and hung up to remove the bitterness. It is at this time you shall find the depths of the Divine Heart. *Written 7/15/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

It is said to sow seeds of joy. You may think you have. But even then, if the seeds do not sprout, they have wilted. And so, you must undertake the teachings anew.

Written 7/23/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

64 *Konko Daijin did not have anyone he could ask for teachings. Many people come from afar to receive divine blessings, but you should receive divine virtue to pray on your own whenever the need arises.*

We seek mediation, receive mediation and return home. That is, our prayers are heard, they are also answered and we go home. To carry that out is to obtain Divine Virtue and become able to pray on your own. An older lady who had practiced faith for a long time just came to worship after three months. She had some relationship troubles. It was then I told her, "It may look like a problem, but it is a gift to you from Kami." She expressed her gratitude and said, "I feel easier after what you said today." Furthermore, accepting this as a gift from Kami, or a sacred event with praying hands of gratitude, is precisely how to receive the Divine Virtue to pray on your own.

Written 7/15/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Not getting what you are seeking is lonely and sad. At times you may even get mad. Realizing I'm without virtue, I search deeper and deeper for faith. And then my heart (inner eye) opens and I come to be able to live in a world of blessings beyond my desires and prayers. A world I never even dreamed of opens before me. This is what it means that with "divine virtue you are able to pray on your own."

Written 7/16/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

As a baby, your mother first chews your food before giving it to you. When you grow up you start to feed yourself, picking up the bowl and using chopsticks. This is how you're able to do it on your own. Since faith, developed traditionally, is something which anyone is able to do on their own, our faith never matures. You're thinking someone will always chew it for you, as if faith were baby food. If faith is not developed the right way, it never will grow. *Written 7/24/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

65 *You need not consult the Days and Directions. When you build a house, you should build it according to your needs and one of sound construction. An auspicious day is considered to be a day that has no clouds in the sky, is warm, and suits your convenience. Even when you check the calendar and it indicates an auspicious day, people will say that it is not a good day if it rains or there are strong winds. Know that there are no good or bad days under the sun.*

When attempting to do something, the heart which prays hoping for good things and not anything bad is following the Days and Directions. The heart that speaks no evil, thinks no evil and does no evil is continually serene. Above that, by realizing the true nature of the universe, the strength of a thousand people comes about. That gets rid of bewilderment and everyday becomes an auspicious day. Surely you will see “an auspicious day is considered to be a day that ... suits your convenience.”

Written 7/16/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

For those who take up the Konko faith there is neither the Days nor the Directions. It is like having a license to drive a car. Since you are driving without a license, you are anxious every day and must live in fear. Actually the Days and the Directions are products of the human heart and mind. Receiving daily mediation is something thankful and enjoyable. For those who take up the faith, every day is an auspicious day.

Written 7/17/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

For birds and animals there are neither the Days nor the Directions. It can't be that they only exist for human beings. We should understand that freedom of life is provided for all who live within the benevolence of the universe, recognizing that humans as well are one of those living things.

Written 7/25/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

66 *People are too self-centered. At birth, they have no concerns about lucky or unlucky days. They are concerned about such days only after birth and before death. They die without concern for lucky or unlucky days.*

We are like the flowing waters, flowing in and flowing out. The human reality of being born into this world and dying and perishing is the same for everyone, the intelligent, the virtuous and the mediocre. It is even a set rule of the universe. Consequently, even if one tries to live a “successful” life, it will be in vain. It is necessary to perceive the importance of this, and while in this world make the way of the universe a part of you; it’s to lead a life of faith which is in tune with The Way. This is where a truly fulfilling life will come into being.

Written 7/17/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Born as Kami-giveth

Living as Kami-giveth

Dying as Kami-giveth

During the life of a believer

These are the blessings we wish to receive.

They say that “boils and blemishes” cannot be willed away. But with faith, Kami provides the will. Pray for Kami’s arrangement while you live and when you die.

Written 7/18/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

There is no one who lived a more simple life than the founder. Moreover, basing our lives on the way of the universe is truly the way of the earthly spirit as stated in, “Give in to those who go against you and leave it to time.” It’s said that humans are born from the earth and return to it. In the meantime, to live in harmony with the earthly spirit, that is the essence for believers of the faith.

Written 7/26/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

67 *Nothing lasts forever. Each person should practice faith individually, or it will not continue for long.*

Just as the earth seems to stand still but actually continues its awesome rotation, seemingly nothing has changed but actually it never stays the same. Therefore, it is certain that blessings of even heaven becoming earth and also miracles of white becoming red can be brought about. So what is needed is faith that develops more and more gratitude for such workings. Consequently, the faith of each individual needs to attain full and vigorous growth. Without looking at others, proceed looking only at yourself. Open the world of just you and Kami. *Written 7/18/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

The blind, the deaf, all of us in each of our circumstances, each should realize their situation and practice faith. Since the blind cannot see, they counteract by developing a strong sense of perception to the point that the person with sight appears ill-suited; the deaf develop precision better than anyone in interpreting the spirit/hearts of others. It's really necessary to try the hardest to fully demonstrate the strengths we have inside of us. We must actually work at studying and mastering how to be delighted, how to be grateful. *Written 7/19/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Faith is to seek beyond the truth to greater truths. From endless inquiry and endless diligence opens the world of endless blessings. As relates to faith in further truths, there is evidence that the blessings of such further truth follow accordingly. When you add, you check your answer by subtracting. When you subtract, you check your answer by adding. Then you proceed with a firm answer in mind. It's certain that faith never stands still. *Written 7/27/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

68 *Do not hesitate to go worship during rain or strong winds. Enduring these hardships is training to receive virtue. No matter how diligently you may recite the words of prayer, it is equal to telling lies to Kami unless you do it with a genuine heart of sincerity. When you worship, you need not clap your hands loudly. Kami can hear even a small sound. When you pray, you do not have to do it loudly or in a peculiar intonation. Pray as you would talk to others.*

One of the teachings of the third Konko-sama is “For faith in Kami, enduring, no matter what, is the most important.” While practicing enduring faith, he was also advancing in virtue as we see in another of his statements. “Sometime or other my wishes and my thoughts just vanished. I became so very thankful and grateful that no matter how much gratitude I could express it wasn’t enough. I just continued apologizing for my lack of gratitude.” The Reverend Setsutane Konko also has stated, “In the beginning I was crying and crying all the while I endured.” Anyway, enduring faith, indeed, is the basis of all virtue. This is true for all the wind and the rain that you bear in life.

Written 7/19/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When speaking of endurance, it must be that of enduring faith. Unless it includes renewing and purifying from within the heart, it will not become “training to receive virtue.” Without being blessed with renewing and purifying parts of your everyday life, “it is equal to telling lies to Kami.”

From actions in faith come blessings.

From the spirit of faith comes virtue.

Written 7/20/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

6 -- Reward, meaning virtue

8 -- Meaning spread far and wide

First of all, this means to attain virtue. The blessings spread far and wide. All rains and wind become the source of gaining virtues. When we realize that rains or wind are Divine Love, we can accept them with gratitude as Kami’s wish from the bottom of our hearts. The heart to accept everything with gratitude is, indeed, genuine.

Written 7/28/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

69 *Practicing faith is not difficult. It is people who make it difficult. Even if you have practiced faith from three to five years, you can still become easily confused. If you continually practice faith for ten years, then you can celebrate with gratitude in your heart. Each day is the beginning of all the days to come. Therefore, receive divine blessings each and every day so everything will go well. You should practice your faith easily.*

Feeling that the blessings of each and every day aren't enough leads to an erring faith. Faith is practice in learning to celebrate your own heart to the fullest extent. Saying that practicing faith is easy is, for example, like learning to drive a car. If intent on learning, it is something anyone can learn to do. By not trying to learn, it becomes difficult. *Written 7/20/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Faith is difficult for someone who regrets the time for coming to worship and the need to offer money. By understanding that Kami allows you to go for worship, that Kami allows you to make offerings, then not only does faith become easy, it becomes something welcome. Continuing such faith for ten years, without any problem, you will be able to celebrate your heart. When you achieve a lifestyle of faith of this kind, you become able to live a life that is quintessentially unique and grand and even precious. *Written 7/21/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

People become skilled at what they really like. We need to like our faith. In order to do that, we should listen to someone who likes faith. To seek for the depths of faith is so pleasant, so joyful. With a heart that has hands clasped in prayer, there are no limits. Like the joint of a bamboo tree, each and every joint of your faith should be taken seriously. From that joint come new buds, and then branches. *Written 7/29/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

70 Since humans are the masters of all living things, they must practice faith which, as all things, follows the laws of the universe.

As the master of all living things we must be able to live our faith. When we raise our consciousness as masters, develop the virtue of masters and lead a bright life worth living, we can say we are “truly human” with “true faith.” Even cold-blooded animals, as snakes or frogs, are said to know when it's to rain or shine. A man lacking in spirituality is considered a beast in human form. He can only spread evil throughout the world. Before you pray to purify the world, the first importance is really to purify human beings.

Written 7/21/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Unless the diamond is polished it will not shine like a jewel. To exhibit the qualities of a master of living things, instead of just being called a master, one must perceive the laws of the universe, comply with them and continue to apply them in everyday life. Our founder, Konko Daijin, knowing the deep and vast teachings that were directly given by the Divine Parent of the universe, set them down so that everyone could understand them.

Written 7/22/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

If pepper is not hot, it is worthless. If man isn't considered worthy of being the master, to be a master has no value. The founder has taught us how to live as humans and masters of all living things. The very way that respects the work of nature is the way of life, unique and unparalleled, that follows the laws of the universe.

Written 7/30/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

71 *A hiromae is where to go to develop your faith, so train your faith well before you return home. You never know what might happen at night, so receive divine blessings at home and at your workplace. Those who have children or jobs cannot leave their homes or workplace to go to the hiromae. When a family member is sick, you cannot leave them. Therefore, go to the hiromae to train your faith only when everything is well.*

[hiromae --- hall for worship and mediation]

Let's take the example of the many spectators watching a baseball game and the athletes playing it. It is fun to watch, but it's even more fun for those playing the game. Making the most of daily practice to pit your abilities against that of your competitors is a joy in and of itself regardless of winning or losing. The same goes for faith. Don't just look and listen. Unless you can practice faith like an athlete, you can't expect the real blessings of faith. First is to practice, and second is also to practice.

Written 7/22/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

It is faith which explains the way of the universe from every angle without a spot being missed. This teaching explains so that through practice you are able to freely accept everything, like sometimes writing in print or semi-cursive, and sometimes in cursive. It cannot help but lead you into the world of unlimited blessings gratefully and playfully enjoying it. Like a fountain, unlimited blessings are spurting eternally from the depths of your heart's convictions. "To go to the hiromae to train your faith when everything is well" is emphasizing constant devotion at times even when there are no problems.

Written 7/23/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

You don't need any practice for a faith that asks to be scratched when itchy or rubbed when sore. You do need practice, striving whole-heartedly for true faith, in order to realize that both itchiness and soreness are blessings from Kami. Another teaching says, "You will come to understand that this and that have all been blessings. When you can do this, you are a true believer."

Written 7/31/1982 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

72 *Do not disrespect others. Doing so will not bring divine blessings.*

We really should see and accept everyone as children of Kami, but it's quite difficult. Nevertheless, since we count on Kami's blessings for our existence, somehow or other it is something we must truly work on. This is because in the teaching it is asserting that thinking lightly of others won't bring divine blessings. Therefore you delve and probe deep into yourself. That is where you clearly find your incompetent self, your dirty self, and your most 'regrettable' self. This is the vantage point from which you are to see others. You come to see everyone as more beautiful than your 'self,' so that even if you try to think lightly of them you would no longer be able to.

Written 7/23/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

In order not to be thought of lightly, you have to be careful about what you say and what you do. You must be careful because when you are thought of lightly, the person who thinks of you lightly will not receive blessings. When you think lightly of others, you put yourself above them. In order to fulfill both yourself and others, you should think of them as children of Kami and yourself as disobeying Kami.

Written 7/24/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

As it is said that thinking lightly of others will not bring divine blessings, it will bring divine blessings to think highly of others. Thinking highly of others is to revere the individuality.

For the radish wishes not the redness of the carrot.

For the carrot demands not the whiteness of the radish.

For the burdock is praised for its blackness.

For the turnip leaf is honored for its greenness.

The heart of nature! How big and broad!

The beginning of a heart that cannot help but think highly of others is a big and broad heart.

Written 7/ 1/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

The written character 'big and broad:'

- On top, the meaning "cosmos" or "universe"
- Next, what means "nature"
- And to "see" or "view"

Seeing the activities of the natural universe as the work of divinity
is really the big and broad heart.

73 *Do not be afraid to be different from others. You cannot practice faith without being different. A person who is different is one who has a pure heart.*

“A person who is different is one who has a pure heart.” A pure heart is intent on the truth, on being straight. People who do what is right to such an extent that they have to be called “different” are few indeed. Asking a student which is important studies or faith, he’ll say studies, of course, because it’s the duty of a student. However, the point is that studies must also lead to people’s happiness. And faith should be the foundation of that happiness. If someone put faith before studies, it would probably be thought different and weird. Faith and studies, studies and faith -- both become one. From there a world will open that has no antagonism between faith and studies. Such is faith. Faith is the heart which believes.

Written 7/24/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

“A person who is different” in this teaching is one who strives willfully to understand the truth. Just as we have parts of our body that we can feel and parts that we can’t, Kami feels the presence of those of us who demonstrate that we are truly ‘different.’ *Written 7/25/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

The difference between an eccentric person and a straightforward person is the difference of having your own way or devoting yourself wholly to Kami’s Will. “A person who is different” is one whose nature is changing from human to Kami by practicing faith. That is, a person who is different (変人 *henjin*) is one who is becoming Kami (変神 *henjin*). We would like to live a life that, while it may be mocked by others, it will never be mocked by Kami. *Written 7/ 2/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo*

74 *A heart that feels compassion is a heart of Kami.*

It's a heart which cannot be understood with the human mind. If pressed to explain, it's alright to call it a heart you pray for with compassion and love joined together, a heart overflowing with precious graciousness. To a person who said they felt disgusted upon seeing a cockroach and just had to kill it, I replied, "I too would kill it, but along with the intention to kill would also be the prayer that it can be reborn into something a little better." That our heart will get closer and closer toward Kami and come to receive the heart of Kami is the way of the faith. *Written 7/25/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

The heart of Kami is unconditional love, unconditional compassion, and unconditional sincerity. It's the heart that has to pray for your business competitors; the heart that has to pray for those who hate you or speak against you. The heart of Kami is the pursuit of this faith.

Written 7/26/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

An ardent wish fills the universe for the darling human people. However, the content of the Divine Heart is in no way meant as just a gentle stroke. A lion dropped its offspring down into a ravine, and raised only the ones who crawled back up. This is also one aspect of the Divine Parent's love for each beloved child. "All is Divine Love." There are no better words than these to perfectly describe the Divine Heart. If right now you feel any difficulties, it is this very time that the Divine wish wants to be fulfilled in you.

Written 7/ 3/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

75 *To kill others within your heart is a grave offense. Kami cannot bear such offenses. When one physically kills, the government will punish the person. Kami knows when one kills within one's heart.*

Since it is taught “to kill others within your heart is a grave offense,” our faith is to do the opposite of this. Then what is supremely important is that you first pray for the health of your own heart and acquire the strength of heart so as not to be hurt or killed whatever might happen. The strength that is left will invigorate the spirit of others. We often hear such things as, “Let’s spread the faith!” But even for this, unless we use the kind of strength “leftover” that I have spoken of today, our efforts will end in vain.

Written 7/26/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Criticism, argument, hatred, envy and arrogance are what injure and even kill the human heart. Since it is said, “with a single heart it all comes into being,” it is also possible that with a single heart it all breaks down. What we want to have is the WAGAKOKORO, a peaceful, joyful heart.

Written 7/27/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

We speak of killing people, but this doesn’t mean only *other* people. In some cases, you kill your own heart. This crime is probably worse than killing someone else. Another terrible crime is to kill one's destiny.

A good person is one who takes any and all matters for the better.

An evil person is one who takes any and all matters for the worse.

Written 7/4/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

76 *Is it not a real blessing that humans are able to save others? Oxen or horses cannot save an offspring that has fallen into the water. But if a person sees this, they can save the animal. When people suffer from sickness or hardship, they are helped by Kami. Practice faith and remember to be thankful for the ability to save people in distress.*

Saving people is a pleasure. It's something quite marvelous, isn't it? There are times when we are asked for help and we can help someone, times when though we are asked, there is nothing we as humans can do, and also many times when we believe we have helped someone but in reality, we accomplished nothing at all. The founder has said, "If man can only be saved." Naturally this is real salvation, salvation at its essence. We also would like to receive blessings, gain deep salvation of the heart and serve for the salvation of others.

Written 7/27/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

To a limited extent wealth and even possessions will help you; however, for profound and eternally enduring salvation, there is no other way except through true faith. Those who help others see a problem as their training, realize it is Divine Love, and receive it with real joy. By speaking to others with that spirit, Kami's miraculous works start from that point, and the way opens to mutually help each other. Thus you are able to lead the most purposeful life of faith.

Written 7/28/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

No matter the extent to which you find yourself blessed, true peace can only be achieved through Kami. A life of joy springs forth from where our wishes and Kami's Heart flow together. A drop of water becomes that of the mountain stream when it pours into it. It becomes that of the ocean when it runs into it. And our wishes and actions might be just such drops of water. However, when they become one with Kami's wish, we come to receive Kami's glory beyond our expectations. I hope each and every one of us who has the fortune of learning about this faith will burn with an honest desire to fulfill the mission of manifesting Kami's wish for a Wagakokoro era. The joy and peace that will be born from this is something unbreakable. That is true salvation; eternal salvation.

Written 7/ 5/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

77 *There are many who speak ill of others. If you are in such company, try to leave. Help people discreetly.*

Within foul language lurks the fascination of the mysterious. There's definitely something intriguingly devilish about it. The founder has taught, "If you are in such company, try to leave." However, we tend to join in the badmouthing and become buddies with the devil. It's like when one dog howls, then other dogs join in too. Like the saying "weak dogs howl," a powerful spirit must be fostered. "Help people discreetly." Pray for them discreetly. I feel that this is the work of those with faith.

Written 7/28/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Through faith which broadens the world of praying together, helping each other and guiding each other, there is no time to hear or speak ill of others. Listen not with your physical ears, but with the ears of your heart. You can't but pray for others.

Written 7/29/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Isn't it interesting that edifying teachings easily go in one ear and out the other, no matter how often you hear them, but foul language sticks in your head through just overhearing it? When you live your life on a lower plane, only vulgar matters interest you. The saying goes, "Don't give gold to cats," and I think instead, a small fish would be good enough. What is it now that pleases your ears, mouth, eyes, nose and body? You should consider it carefully.

"You begin to not want to do the things you've come to want to do,
and begin to want to do things that you hadn't wanted to do."

Words of Rev. Yasutaro Yukawa

(Founding minister of the Konko Church of Tamamizu)

Written 7/ 6/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

78 *Few have a heart that Kami can accept. Those whose hearts can be accepted by Kami will be blessed with good health, wealth, and wisdom for three generations, resulting in a strong family lineage. Those whose hearts are not accepted by Kami may have wealth as well as wisdom, but will get sick. Those who have wisdom and good health will lose their wealth. If they do not lose their wealth, their beloved children will die, leaving no heirs. Since these people are not aware of Kami's blessings, they are always lacking one thing or another. If you practice faith and understand Kami's blessings, you will live a peaceful and stable life. You will have descendants and gain wealth. You will receive divine blessings from year to year, and then from generation to generation.*

Since Konko Daijin teaches that by being aware of Kami's blessings and by understanding Kami's blessings you will have descendants, gain wealth and receive divine blessings from year to year, it's important to cultivate faith so as to understand Kami's blessings and Kami's graces deeply and broadly from the heart. First you must be taken as one whose heart is accepted by Kami. The key to that is to really know, and renew oneself. While concerned about other things or other people you become utterly empty concerning yourself. In order to understand Kami's blessings, this is the area to cultivate. Please concentrate on this.

Written 7/29/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

If our hearts are not accepted by Kami, even when wealthy, even with good health, and even believing yourself a good person will not allow us true happiness. Through your faith, first your personal character will change and your family status will improve. Since you realize the great benevolence of Kami, your heart grows day by day in the spirit to make recompense for such divine graces. Since Konko Daijin teaches that by receiving divine blessings and understanding those blessing, "you will live a peaceful and stable life; you will have descendants and gain wealth; you will receive divine blessings from year to year, and then from generation to generation," we need to become one of those that demonstrate such blessings.

Written 7/30/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

'Law of Ensei' [Pronounced, *in-say*, it literally means round life]

All workings of the universe are always trying to make things round. When such workings as making all round and the wish to become round combine together, we can receive the great glory of Kami. As is said in this teaching, "Being blessed with good health, wealth and wisdom," there are such workings in the universe to arrange everything. So why then, in spite of this, are we lacking one thing or another? To this Kami indicates that it is because we are not aware of what Kami's blessings are.

All 365 days a year are roundly blessed days. Everything that happens is a manifestation of Kami's love. Those who have understood this will be the ones who recognize Kami's blessings as blessings, and understand Kami's true grace.

When we believe \ Here, there and everywhere \ Is a world of blessings --
Though summer be hot \ And winter cold.

Written 7/ 7/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

79 *If you have a business, value both your suppliers and your customers. If others make a ten percent profit, you should make eight percent. You may think that it will be a two percent loss for you, but since you will sell more, you will earn more profit. Since your body will not wear out, work hard.*

Though it states, “If you have a business,” it’s not limited to just business people. This must be the mindset and thoughtfulness of those that practice their faith while aiming at genuine faith. Genuine faith is not sensitive just to the immediate future, but it’s progressing in faith centered on Divine Will. The genuine believer is one who isn’t satisfied with the immediate goal; he knows it is faith that is grateful, not the divine blessings. Genuine faith is when believing in Kami becomes, indeed, absolute belief. It’s the true way for the genuine believer to follow. *Written 7/30/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

There are no other teachings than this to simply teach what those with faith have to do. We can put this teaching into practice immediately when we intend to. However, we can’t do it so easily. We want to have courage and bravery within our grateful heart.

- One charming smile leads to two sales.
- One brave heart leads to immeasurable prosperity.

Written 7/31/1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Summary for Business Prosperity

- With a sincere heart, treat those well with which you have dealings.
- Don’t be swayed by your immediate desires.
- With Airaku ideal as your base and realizing your body won’t wear out, don’t neglect your duties. *Written 7/ 8/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo*

80 *Respect the elderly. People are not born before others because they wished it. All are born through the blessings of Kami. The earlier a person is born, the longer he has worked for society. Even young people can gain respect if they contribute more than usual. On the other hand, those who are already respected can gradually lose people's respect if they do unreasonable and thoughtless deeds. Those practicing faith should be aware of this.*

This is one of the aims for those who take up the faith. It's particularly appropriate for young people. In spite of our good intentions, this is something we tend to neglect. The purpose of an aim is to gradually be able to reach it naturally, without exertion, and have it become part of us. When I encounter an elderly person, I am taken by the impulse to take their wrinkled hand and rub and stroke it. I myself was not like that at first.

Written 7/31/1971 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Autumn, on a clear day.
Among the plotted fields --
A field of flowers.

Is the menu at your house appropriate for the elderly? Is the room planned for good sunlight, to be cool in the summer and warm in the winter? When parents take good care of the elderly, children and grandchildren will do likewise. This explains the mindset of those who practice faith.

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

The aging of the 'grief-or-pleasant' spirit --
hiding from winter;
The delight of the 'Airaku' spirit --
preparing for winter.

How do we choose to grow old? Our founder also taught, "If you practice faith, your gratitude will increase with each passing year." If you become old that way, not only people, but Kami will take good care of you, too.

Beautiful,
As the lips of a young girl
Sparkling with love.
Solemn,
As the lips of a holy man
Coming from the mountain.
In sunlight, new leaves shining;
During rain, young leaves delight;
Embracing a trembling heart
With joyous tears overwhelming.

Written 7/ 9/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

81 Do not feel complacent after climbing ninety-five percent of the way. Relax only after you have reached the top and climbed down the other side. If you relax before reaching your goal, you can quickly end up back where you started.

The blooming Cherry Blossom
Asked the Weeping Willow,
But the Plum Blossom replies,
“Faith persevering.”

For faith you need the bravery of the cherry blossom, the submissive quality of the weeping willow, and the persevering strength of the plum blossom. This is because this faith is to grasp the Heart of Kami and to accompany that Divine Heart. As you perceive more of the Divine Heart there's not a single thing that could not be the object of your worship. Being at ease after getting down the other side is when you have progressed as far as that. Then Kami is put at ease. It is that ease which returns to us. This occurs after you get down the other side. *Written 7/ 1/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Practicing faith for blessings won't make it through. Faith must have the means to be able to be delighted, joyful and pleased. Whatever you're doing we want faith which is in rhythm with the universe. *Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Living is painful and hard. It becomes pleasing, delightful and joyful by realizing we are given this life to live. Through selfish perseverance it's cruel, difficult and the cause of injury. By persevering in faith, Kami shields you front and back.

The Key to Mountain Climbing

Don't stray or lose the way
Don't rush or loosen up
Be thankful

Written 7/10/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

82 *The Ministry of Finance is like your mouth. If you do not feed it with taxes, you will not be able to sleep peacefully with only thin wooden doors to protect you. There will be disorder, and there will be no way to identify you.*

It's a sign of physical health when to the mouth it's delicious and you excrete it with gratitude. When you wish to be patriotic in return for the blessings from your country, know that the joy of national peace is manifested in the shape of taxes. For those practicing faith, not only should you pray for peace throughout the whole country, but it's important to have the heart to serve society and the nation. First of all, realize the blessings of the country. *Written 7/ 2/1970 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Its buds are picked.
Its leaves are clipped.
Even so, flowers bloom
on the tea tree.

When we are stagnate thinking, "I will not be picked, I will not be clipped," we meet an impasse. When we concede joyfully as a sign of gratitude and humility, we are bound for unlimited prosperity.

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

If patriotism is feeling the blessings from your country and showing gratitude for them, then realizing the blessings from Kami and showing gratitude for them, is how we give back to the universe. This return is a shedding of body and soul; it's giving back our whole being to the universe. Forced changes are hard to make; faith requires bravery. But this return should be done for the sake of gratitude. *Written 7/11/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo*

83 *Do not think of becoming rich in one year. The future is long. The small amounts you save will grow, but the money you gain in one stroke will soon disappear. Those who practice faith should not be greedy and selfish. You should not try to make money easily, as if you were grasping grain with a wet hand. You should become rich a year later than others.*

This can be said about everything. Especially the very worth of your assets without the backing of the universe will be unreliable. Though it looks the same, money not guaranteed by the nation is counterfeit. What is not guaranteed by the universe is the same as having counterfeit money. A time comes when you suffer the loss of such counterfeited funds. Spending without depleting the amount of 100 Ryo -- we have to pray to become rich in the virtues of the universe. Isn't the phrase, "a year later than others," somehow so exquisite?

Written 7/ 3/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

For those that practice the faith of the Founder, this faith must be practiced with the constant conviction that they are walking an ever expanding path toward fulfillment. Once on this path there is no longer any chance to be taken by a "greedy and selfish" heart, nor one that would "grasp grain with wet hands." We shall not stray from the path. There has not been an instance of thieves becoming millionaires.

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

I have more than you. I eat better food than you. I wear nicer clothes. I have higher status. This seems to be the standard of happiness in today's society. In other words, people have the illusion that happiness is in high places. A heart that gets rich "a year later than others" is a heart that flows to low ground. That is, as water flows to low ground by its nature, all facets of happiness will naturally be fulfilled by the heart flowing downward to low ground. Moreover this way is ever-expanding, ever-broadening without end.



Like the way water gathers into a depression, all the world's problems gather in this hiromae [worship hall].

QUOTED FROM:

Konko Daijin Oboegaki
Memoirs of Konko Daijin
Chap 23-5-1, p. 137

Written 7/12/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

84 *Don't be haughty with pride. Any undertaking, even a small one, will be considered prosperous if it continues over a long period of time. Even a narrow road will be considered prosperous if it becomes wider by being traveled on frequently. Do not let grass grow on your road.*

There are those who have continued in faith for a long time, but have not been blessed with prosperity. It's just that a very, very narrow way has been continually stretched out. For faith you must always have the spirit of widening the path you walk. To broaden the path you walk, is to broaden the faith we are taught. If you are unsuccessful, consider it proof that you haven't carried out the teachings, and then you must renew your efforts to receive the teachings anew.

As for the word 'way,' you need not go astray.

The way is nothing other than following the teachings.

There are many who only seek the way and do not carry out the teachings. By following the teachings there will be no imprudence.

Written 7/ 4/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

We can't help but be moved by that incredible power giving the vibrancy, luster and vitality gained through straining "heart" and "mind," though seemingly as dull-witted as a camel, actually putting it steadily into action, all the while making a boundlessly deep impression on us.

Even a narrow path is advantageous if it becomes wider by being traveled on frequently. Do not let grass grow on your path.

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Grounded in the way of faith, a pious and humble spirit will no doubt prosper.

Written 7/13/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

* Humility: the heart which tries persistently to obey the will of God,
gravely aware of its own frailty as weak, powerless and sinful.
[Interpretation of an entry in Kojien, Second Edition]

85 *Through divine blessings, women can undergo menstruation, pregnancy, and morning sickness without undue suffering. Even without a maternity belt, their physical condition can be excellent prior to giving birth and they can give birth easily. After childbirth, it will be unnecessary for the mother to have dumpling soup and feed the newborn goko herb tea. Instead, the mother should feed the newborn the first milk from her breast. The mother will have no headaches, sickness, bowel trouble, or other illnesses. New mothers need not follow the traditional taboos on impurities and food restrictions. They can lead normal lives.*

The woman tells her customer
that she's in love.
The customer never returns,
but says he'll come again.
Lies upon lies
in the red-light district.
Without any shame,
even your social status
You've confided well in me.

This verse is from the famous “Konya Takao” [the workman in a dyer who's with the top prostitute, Takao]. Reality touches people and reaches Kami. Even though the true thing is taught, it's quite difficult to accomplish. Though the true thing is taught even here, the conventions and ideas up till now prevent us from having the courage to put it into practice. By observing other animals giving birth and seeing how they completely trust in natural workings, we should be able to understand.

Written 7/ 5/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Knowledge in itself creates mistaken notions. The road which is said to lead to becoming a divine person can be narrowed and blocked by such notions. This is one of those teachings which cannot be carried out without discarding present conceptions.

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Though it is said “Use Kami as your cane, and then you will be at ease,” if you're not yet at ease, if you're worried or anxious, your reliance on others or your own abilities is strong. For faith, it is essential that reliance is on only one, the one.

< Teachings Konko Daijin gave to Risaburo Sakane >

“Don't lean on people. Instead, lean on Kami single-heartedly and you shall be saved.”

“To be a caretaker for Kami, you must do it with the Heart of Kami. People all do it on their own with a heart of man. Thus, they can only do what the heart of man can do. By doing it with the Heart of Kami, they could do what the Heart of Kami can do.”

Written 7/14/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

86 *Women are like the fields of the world. Fields must be well maintained in order to produce precious crops. What the chief retainer is to his lord's castle is what the wife is to her family's home. If the chief retainer is not good, the castle will fall; and if the wife is not good, the home will run into difficulties.*

Instead of saying, "I had nothing to do with it; it's your fault," we should take responsibility for all aspects of the household and treat them as our own, especially when problems arise. When your faith is such that you take on all such responsibilities willingly you truly become an excellent "chief retainer." This is how the home will really thrive. The field in "women are like the fields of the world" must mean the heart. The world means that it's a huge heart. Furthermore, it teaches that they "must be well maintained in order to produce precious crops."

Open the way by being a foolish simpleton.

(A teaching Reverend Shijin Konko gave to the founding minister of Fukuoka Church.)

Written 7/6/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

As women are considered not only the fields of the earth, but also the fields of the home, they should be beautifully flourishing fields. Their goal should always be "even more abundant, even more beautiful." To become good soil, we must pray to accept all problems, no matter how unwelcome, and thus, problems cease being 'problems.'

To an abundant spirit are abundant blessings.

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

NOTE: The character for being at peace/softening (*yawaragu*) is made of the radical meaning home and woman. If the woman of the house is not at peace, the household cannot prosper.

This teaching should be taken up willingly. As the foundation for successfully managing a flourishing home is the single heart of its matron, constructing or destroying true world peace is at the mercy of the feminine world. If the women of the world truly dedicate themselves to making their fields (hearts) fertile, households will be at peace and the country will flourish. However, in recent times it seems that more and more women have forgotten to "tend their fields" and only follow short-sighted fancies. It's disturbing and frightening.

Written 7/15/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

87 *It is said that the woman's womb is borrowed, but it is not. It is an everlasting treasure. During pregnancy, a woman should think that she bears the child of Kami and should take good care of it.*

It's what is called prenatal care. By thinking that one "bears the child of Kami and taking good care of it" is what is most precious. To take good care of it is to keep Kami in mind, and not feel discontented nor speak of defects; it's to take care of the heart-soul with kindness and appreciation. When you pray for the divine arrangement of the heart-soul and then give birth to a lovely child, you can truly say, for the first time you have "an everlasting treasure."

Written 7/ 7/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Never realizing you're neglectful and ungrateful
In oh-so many ways.
Give of yourself
To the seeking of forgiveness.
Recognize your Divine Parent
Does understand and will provide.
In your heart
Each day be grateful.

This way you begin the precious upbringing of the child you bear.

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Before adopting Kami for divine ways, one should adopt the heart for spiritual ways. As every human being is the master of living things, they have an everlasting treasure. Despite this, they often let this treasure go to waste. If you use it, progress is made; by not using it, retrogression. It's as if *Daikokuten**, endowed with the mallet of luck, just threw that mallet away to carry his heavy load with both hands. This is surely the stance of a person without faith.

Written 7/16/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

- *Daikokuten*: The traditional Japanese god of wealth and commerce, represented with a sack over his shoulder in one hand and a mallet in the other that has the power to turn things into riches.
- Rev. Katsuhiko Otsubo received this image of *Daikokuten* with his mallet thrown aside, using both hands to carry his bag.

88 Customarily, parents have given mirrors to their daughters upon marriage. The mirrors are not just for helping the daughter look pretty. When her heart is distressed or in pain, she can use the mirror to look into herself. In this way, she will present a pleasant face. This is to keep family harmony.

The face that you see in the mirror is itself your heart. When happy, a happy face; when sad, a sad face; the face when you're angry is precisely that of a demon. First, you must calm your own heart. Without settling your heart you cannot have family harmony. It's like the story of the one-inch boy who is swallowed by a demon and defeats it from within. Of course, this demon lies within us. It is just when you are so frightened and distressed that you have the chance to probe into your heart and discover the demon inside.

Written 7/ 8/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

In the face of catastrophe,
Human knowledge shown to be useless,
With the teachings as a mirror,
Each day the path will open
By sincerely and joyfully entrusting
Everything to Kami.

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

When your heart is distressed or in pain, you must look into yourself with the mirror of the teachings. You see that the cause of your distress and pain is found within yourself. You can try to escape your problems, blaming them on other people or bad luck, but this will not lead to a true solution; but, at the same time, just understanding the origin of hardship is found within, won't necessarily lead to anything. By trusting and calmly accepting these very problems to be the workings of Kami which serve only to teach and nurture, you will find your way to an ever-widening path of prosperity.

Written 7/17/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

89 *This faith can be propagated even with just an umbrella.*

- This faith can be propagated by sincerity alone.
- This faith can be propagated by getting a Wagakokoro.
- This faith can reach blessings with the single heart of Kami.

Achieving singular sincerity, Wagakokoro and the single heart of Kami is rather difficult. The ease and serenity that comes from a faith seeking the sincere, single-hearted Wagakokoro transforms every single thing into blessings. As taking an umbrella whether rain or shine puts your mind at ease, that peace of mind borne of a trusting heart will open the path for all.

Written 7/9/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

In the gloomy darkness, you need light. In a world of doubt and suffering, you need a guide to the world of illumination. The guide needs light. So we might say, “This faith can be propagated with just one light.”

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

In a world without faith, the physical is an asset; the material is an asset. For those who practice faith, the asset is a single heart. For those of us practicing faith, it is upon us to test and prove that, in fact, “With a single heart it all comes into being.” A heart that brings all into being... crosses generations, man-made boundaries, cultures and ideologies to vibrantly present itself at any given time or place: A Wagakokoro heart. It's the apex of faith, the Wagakokoro heart.

Written 7/18/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

90 *It is easy to have water run downstream but it is difficult to have it go upstream. Establishing the faith is difficult and takes more time because it is done by ordinary people. We will establish the faith through Kami's blessings. Even if you confront difficulties, your endurance will be rewarded with divine virtue.*

In a dream I had this morning someone was going to buy oil. The container was a wooden bucket. Since the hoops were loose the bottom had fallen out and the entire yard was stained with oil. The person was troubled and the shopkeeper was really annoyed. Even when practicing your faith, if the receiving vessel (the attitude) is not stable, then you'll defile the grace of the church and won't be able to get blessings. That is why we are being taught: "Even if you confront difficulties, your endurance will be rewarded with divine virtue." *Written 7/10/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Being ordinary our hearts break up into pieces wanting to do some of this and some of that, too. The way will not open by doing that. This is because it's selfish, our selfish desire. Gradually you'll begin to realize you are powerless. This is where Kami's true place of work is first met. Through your endurance you will train yourself to remove the selfishness and get rid of selfish desires. You will realize you are in the midst of Divine Virtue. When you understand the truth that you're among Divine Virtues, it's the same as having attained divine virtue.

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

In traditional religions, the idea of a flesh and blood human striving to become a god or Buddha is just as unnatural as "having water go upstream," and consequently, impossible for the common person. However, if we can lead a lifestyle according to the grand 'Law of Round Life,' the path opens up just as naturally as water goes downstream. That is, the human way of life is more naturally destined toward godliness than toward beastliness. In a word, we feel the rhythm of the rounding universe. The key to feeling the rhythm of heaven and earth is letting go of self-importance.

Written 7/19/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

The Law of Round Life: All the workings of heaven and earth are none other than those that serve to round. So when we make up our minds to live roundly we are then ready to fully receive Kami's workings.

91 *Those who established this faith underwent severe religious training. But people later need not undergo such training. They can receive divine blessings more easily.*

According to the founder the greatest happiness both for man and for Kami is when the nature of the universe [Kami], and the nature of mankind, the follower, becomes one praying together and maintaining each other's mutual existence. Our faith is the result of his search for the basis of this and his eventual acquisition of it through his sincere and conscientious practice of faith. We may say we can easily receive divine blessings and be taught the true way to happiness, but with just one miscalculation, one slip of the mind and the answer can come out wrong.

When a man and a woman unite, a child is produced.

It is always true that $5 + 5 = 10$.

Written 7/11/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

“Those who established this faith underwent severe religious training.” This is like the fisherman who goes out to sea, catches some squid, sets it out to dry and finally makes it into jerky. For those of us that come later, it's just a matter of chewing as much flavor as we can out of it. Basically, the extent to which we savor, as those who come later, depends on the extent of the sincerity of our faith.

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

“I kept asking myself: Isn't there a better way of life? Isn't there a better way to salvation? I ran astray any number of ways. I continued to suffer much. Finally for the first time I'm grateful that I am now able to speak with confidence and joy about this way to salvation, this way to live.”

[From the collected sermons of Rev. Soichiro Otsubo]

Today Mrs. Mieko Imura's grandson was born. He received the name of “Nobuyuki.” From severe religious training the ‘Airaku path’ of mutual exchange and fulfillment between Kami and people has come forth. This path towards “receiving divine blessings easily” is right before us, so it is of utmost importance that we “believe with full acceptance and practice faith with full acceptance.”

Written 7/20/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

92 *Kami is the same everywhere. There is nothing different about coming to worship at the hiromae of Konko Daijin. When people say that they have received divine blessings at one place but not at another, it means that the strength of the mediators of the hiromae is different. When you are a mediator between Kami and man, you should discipline yourself. You should not get up late in the morning. The time you rise will determine the time people come for prayers.*

What the strength of the mediator means is the strength of his or her belief in Kami. It's the strength of always praying and searching for the truth. The divine grace experienced varies in accordance with how great the mediator's spirit of measured, careful spiritual practice is when servicing at the altar. The way to light is said to be by accepting good things as Kami's blessings and not to blame Kami or others for bad things, but to apology for your carelessness. For those who follow the way of light, the way will open to shining brilliance.

Written 7/12/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Those who would observe Kami's way would do well to vow:

1. I shall rise before dawn.
2. I shall find a source of spiritual discipline in all things.

At first these practices can be enough to bring you to tears, but through perseverance you can rid yourself of vanity and desires. And even gratitude for that perseverance will run through you. The awesome power of Kami can never be experienced by one who envies greatness elsewhere.

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Why other people seem to receive blessings while you seem not to be is a question of how Kami's power changes to match the strength of the mediator. The "strength of the mediator" is the strength to diligently follow the teachings.

Three Principles to observe by believers of the faith:

1. Rise before dawn (heavenly nature)
2. Honor each and every occurrence in life (earthly nature)
3. Persevere through faith (orderly nature)

Written 7/21/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

93 *The believers who come to worship Kami regard the mediator as a representative of Kami. If Kami's representative is absent, people will say that Kami is absent, too. Do not leave the hiromae unattended. Dedicate yourself to faith. You should always keep the proper faith attitude in your heart. There are people from all walks of life, but Kami regards all people as equals. Since people are Kami's children, mediators should treat them all with the same regard and consider no one unworthy.*

As the samurai have samurai speech, tradesmen have trade language and in the red-light district suitable jargon, ministers should be like ministers and believers like believers in the content and manner of their faith. They say "content over form," but form, too, is important. In faith as well, when you wear the crested kimono with formal skirt for faith, then the heart is born which wears the crested kimono with formal skirt. Dressed in a light cotton kimono faith is only in a light cotton kimono. I want my faith to be impeccably attired; not only with formal skirt, but even the folding fan to match.

Written 7/13/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Training you feel you have to do is painful and tiring.

Training you can't help but do is a grateful delight.

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

"Continue to always hold the proper attitude," or dressed 'top to bottom,' means always aware of the child of Kami within us [receiving Kami's gift of life]; but also aware of the child of rubbish within us [the worst of ourselves]. When your heart is dressed 'top to bottom,' you will know gratefulness no matter the circumstance. And you will no longer need to consider others above or below you. When you are worried, discontent, arrogant, judgmental and the like, is when Kami is away from your heart.

Written 7/22/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

94 *Do not treat believers unequally. Even if some bring many gifts, do not treat them with any special attention. Only those with devoted faith are true believers.*

It's not to err in seeing everyone as Kami's people. But that's not saying you should treat adults and children as equals. To treat adults as adults and children as children is to "not treat believers unequally." To treat them in the same manner would be ridiculous. One government minister caused trouble by saying that the poor should eat barley. However, it was not necessarily a slip of the tongue. It's rather appropriate, isn't it? The essential problem is whether you see them or don't see them as Kami's people.

Written 7/14/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

If the mediator focused only on taking care of Kami, Kami will take care of the believers (meaning Kami will bless them). The believers then take care of the mediator.

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

I would like to practice faith so well as to earn special attention from Kami. To that end, I would like to establish the base for a true, honest & uninhibited relationship with Kami. When you really devote yourself to faith you start to feel the depth of Kami's heart. Today I received the theme for the believers' Extended Youth Camp: "Manifest Joy."

Written 7/23/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

95 *The world knows many who exploit religion to make a living, but Konko Daijin has never recited a prayer for profit. Never make a business out of Kami.*

There are gratuities for prayers and paper charms with price tags — it's just like commerce and merchandise. If those who are ministers of the faith are in such a situation in order to maintain their family's living, it is the same as making a business out of Kami. Thus it necessitates a fierce self-examination. Just now a believer offered the first-picked grapes. If it's offered with a gracious "grown through Kami's grace," that's wonderful. If what is said is "may it be sold at the highest possible price this year too," then this is just the same as using Kami to do business.

Written 7/15/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Desire less leads one to great desires.

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Born into this world for fifty or eighty years;
Working so hard just to get by;
Passing through this world
without a thing to show for it.
When feeling like that,
Thinking this life has passed in a dream or an illusion,
One must be seized more and more
by sadness, by loneliness.
Clearly see Kami's Will;
Awaken and live Kami's everlasting Will.
Now listen to the opening of the universe and be awakened.
And when we realize we are born into this world
for making clear this very point,
A feeling of leaping-for-joy wells up in us.

If the purpose of faith is only to satisfy our own desires, then we're "making a business out of Kami."
Let us become ever more aware of the purpose of this life, and awaken to the eternal wish of Kami.

Written 7/24/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

96 *It is a reflection of Kami's power when people criticize or speak ill about Kami. It is impossible to keep someone who does not understand this faith from criticizing it. People cannot predict the future. Others may soil your face, but do not become angry. Kami will wash your face.*

Because you have faith doesn't mean that you can always continue to hold the light. For example, just as the light of a firefly flashes, it turns off and on. It is at times when it is switched off that those with little or no faith object to this or that. They don't know that the time it is off is a prerequisite for the next time of light. Even at times when insults are given, consider it as the power of Kami and while you persevere, blessings will be received. "Kami will wash your face", is what is taught. When you get your face washed, the light of Kami will continue to radiate. Then even those who had objected to things about Kami will be awed by the majesty of Kami.

Written 7/16/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

To master faith you must pass through the obstacles by all means. As when climbing mountains, the higher you go the more your field of vision broadens, so the more you raise your level of faith the broader your spirit becomes. When you can hear the call of the bill collector as the song of a warbler, you've got it. That's when blessings are really imminent. *Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo*

Worrying about your face, your anger is revealed.

Worry about Kami's face; Kami's greatness is revealed.

Written 7/25/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

97 Praying to Kami with true intentions means that after clapping your hands and facing the altar, you will not turn around even if a spear pokes you. Your prayers will not reach Kami if you allow yourself to be distracted by noises and voices.

When a flame burns white-hot, that is the climax of faith. It's the posture for those who turn to Kami. I wish to practice faith such that problems cease to be problems. The unconditional love felt between parent and child is the kind of singular, passionate reverence we must show to Kami. People without reverence for Kami are far from knowing reverence of any kind. "A single heart in Kami" is the white-hot wholeheartedness needed to really understand Kami's divinity.

Written 7/17/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

They say the code of a samurai was such that if attacked by surprise and struck before unsheathing an inch of his blade, he was considered a failure and his salary withheld. But if he unsheathed his blade unprompted so much as an inch, it was considered the same as drawing it completely; which disgrace, the strict samurai code dictated, is repaid by ending his family lineage and taking his own life. In faith, too, our attitude before Kami has to be in earnest. Facing the altar, I pray to Kami as if I were sitting on a railroad track.

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Those who devoutly practice faith, upon receiving mediation, take to be blessings all that they should meet on their path. They do not turn back, but always proceed forward. If you become distracted by troubles or mutterings of those around you, your wholehearted prayers will not reach Kami. Understand that the entirety of the workings between heaven and earth are there to cultivate you and your spirit. Knowing the parent to be so dedicated to the upbringing of the child, the child, too, should be dedicated to its upbringing.

Written 7/26/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

98 *As your heart is the measure of your faith in Kami, be composed and confident when you pray. Ask Kami calmly and quietly.*

You will surely feel grateful when you devote yourself to turning to Kami each day, thinking, 'Today's a day of compassion.' or 'It's a day of love, a day of Kami.' When you are careless you lose composure when you need it most. 'Composure' may be said to be 'tranquility,' but we should take constant note daily of the condition of our spirit. We live our faith when we incorporate, regardless of the circumstance, a resolute spirit of discipline into our everyday lives. Taking the various problems that occur as the barometer of our heart, we should continue in pursuit of true faith.

Written 7/19/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

As when learning to write characters, it is important to practice each stroke carefully; so too, through the practice of precise, unhurried and serene prayer, a space for true communication begins to form with Kami, just as calligraphy eventually flows from the brush.

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

"Which way should we go, right or left?" We often come across this situation in our daily lives from tiny matters to grand ones. At those times most people tend to make that decision based on personal preference, pro's and con's, the common understanding of good and bad, and so on down the road to their own detriment. Actually at each corner Kami is signaling, "Now left, now right." We say following those directions is how we can live in rhythm with heaven and earth. This path is an ever-widening one. In order to understand those divine signals, a calm, quiet heart is necessary. The basis for this calm, quiet heart is one that accepts everything. Incidentally, if you still cannot distinguish divine signals, you will not err if you choose the less preferred, the less profitable way.

The Way of Virtue
Instead of Profit

Written 7/27/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

99 *To say that an uneducated man cannot help others is not true. You can save others as long as you have sincerity. You may have an education, but without sincerity, you cannot save others. Knowledge can be a barrier. Even educated people suffer. Though Konko Daijin is illiterate, many people are receiving divine blessings.*

“Though Konko Daijin has not much education, many people are receiving divine blessings.” That our founder could state this illustrates the perfection that his Wagakokoro had achieved. Civilization as developed through human intelligence will draw to a close. As we surpass capitalism, and with it surpass communism, there must be a revolution in which materialistic values give way to the spiritual, and the human spirit which has been focused on the external can turn toward Kami and self. Naturally, this cannot be accomplished through warfare, but only through Wagakokoro (the peaceful, joyful heart). The seventies must be the generation that moves us from the omnipotent scientific era to the Wagakokoro era.

Written 7/20/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

This is an excerpt of a letter I received from Rev. Tateo Suenaga doing missionary work in South America: “In the two months since arriving in Brazil, I’ve reached the clear realization that worldly knowledge and language and such are not all they are cracked up to be. Basically, I have experienced first-hand that foreign missionary work must be based on Airaku principles. Every day close to 100 people come to worship and the vast majority is not Japanese. What matters is rather how limitlessly big, beautiful and generous my spirit can become.”

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

Though it is said that knowledge limits and money destroys, knowledge, money and things do not have to be bad. It’s the illusion that knowledge, money or things can make you happy that can end up limiting you. It’s like my desk lamp. Just having it here doesn’t get the job done. You have to hit the switch – the switch of sincerity – and only then does this thing or knowledge or money start to serve a purpose. The stagnation (impasse) of material civilization may then just be that humanity, unable to access the true value of their ‘material,’ rather ends up crushed by it.

Written 7/28/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

100 *There is a folk song which says:*

*Oh, young pine!
You are the symbol of happiness.
You will grow,
Spreading your branches with lush pine needles.*

Konko Daijin teaches the way for the prosperity of your family and descendants.

The fulfillment of your children in itself is the fulfillment of the parents. Kami's fulfillment, as seen in The Divine Call, is actually the true fulfillment of mankind. "Konko Daijin teaches the way for the prosperity of your family and your descendants." The path spoken of here is that which connects the prosperity of your family and descendants to that of your country and to all the people of the world. One can say, without exaggeration, that herein lies all of Konko Daijin's teachings.

The path has been opened! Let's rejoice!

Written 7/21/1972 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

In a letter to Kami I wrote: "Teach me the way of prosperity for my family and descendants." Kami replied: "Pray for good health. For as much as you pray for it, you should not have late snacks. Pray for family harmony. For as much as you pray for it, you should never be critical of another."

Written in 1977 by Rev Soichiro Otsubo

This is proof that we are Konko believers. It's the conclusion to our Konko faith. However, for those who feel they practice the faith and yet do not feel they receive such blessings, some intense self-scrutiny is required. We are taught Kami will show us the path to prosperity for our family and descendants. If we do not follow this path, we can never hope to reach the destination. Nor will we reach our destination, if we start the path down the wrong direction. In this sense, the great teachings of Airaku principles are now made clear. What a glorious thing, indeed.

Written 7/29/1983 by Rev Katsuhiko Otsubo

AIRAKU IDEOLOGY

Airaku is a realm of interchange between divinity and humanity in which Kami and people pray for each other, rejoice in one another and experience mutual satisfaction; where both Kami and humans find fulfillment.

Ideology or ideals is the highest form of rational thought. We say that Airaku Ideology is the means by which any flesh and blood person if so inclined can happily, gratefully and even delightedly begin on the path to Wagakokoro, the path toward the Airaku realm.

*The
Peaceful,
Joyful
Heart*