

Be A Pioneer of Salvation

Rev. Watanabe's Message, President-Izunome Kyodan
December 22, 23, 2011 Meishu-sama's Birthday Service
Hall of Worship, Atami, Japan

Good Morning! Welcome to Meishu-sama's Birthday Service!

We have solemnly completed the Service earlier, and I felt grateful for what we have been blessed with through Meishu-sama's Divine Light, and for the happiness we have been granted. I also earnestly prayed that we continuously be used for the Divine Work of spreading the Light throughout the world.

We have heard, earlier, a wonderful faith experience from Mrs. Miyoko Nakamura from Kyushu District (Mrs. Shigemori for Hiroshima District on the 23rd). Thank you.

I would like to introduce to you the overseas members attending today's Service.

2 people for Korea
9 from Thailand
1 from Sri Lanka
3 from the United States
29 from Brazil

In total, we have 44 people from 5 different countries. Please welcome them.

Dawn of a New Era

This year is nearly complete. Time flies very quickly doesn't it? Reflecting upon this year, many significant events have occurred. In Japan, there was a devastating earthquake and tsunami in the northeastern area; a nuclear plant disaster and a prolonged recession. In countries overseas, a financial crisis in Europe and in the United States; flooding in Thailand; a large earthquake in Turkey; a hurricane also in the United States, and political violence in the Arabian sector was observed. I would say all of these natural disasters, financial and political upheavals, were various forms of purification.

I think the severe purifications that have occurred in the world were symbolic physical manifestations of the spiritual transition from Night into Day. Through these events, God has been trying to show us true love, a sense of justice and Divine Wisdom that will be required for the coming New Age.

Observing such disasters, many people naturally felt that "I want to help. Let me do something for those suffering." Such emotion moved many of you to take action, and you traveled to the stricken areas to help remove debris, mud and arrange for emergency supplies to be delivered. You collected donations for them. All of these were acts of Makoto (True Love).

Witnessing the accident of the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant and the situation involving the radioactive contamination, we felt rage as well as a sense of injustice that was aroused in our hearts.

The accident has awakened us to reconsider nuclear energy and to seek natural, alternative energy sources such as wind and geothermal power. My feeling is that out of this tragedy, love and compassion for the victims, a sense of justice and an insight were manifested for creating a new way of life. These are inspirational messages from Heaven that exist deep within our hearts.

What, then do we do after we receive such important messages? I think that it is to deeply reflect upon what we can do for others, and act upon it without hesitation. Leave ego and selfishness behind and have the happiness of others as a priority. Take action. This is, I believe, what Kyoshu-sama taught us at the Grand Autumn Service, the way of returning to Heaven, and the way of ending the activity of the Age of Night.

The Importance of Putting Our Love into Action

I recently heard a good story of putting our love into action regarding a minister who resides in a District in Eastern Japan, Mr. K.

On November 12th, Mr. K was heading to the Albuquerque Airport in New Mexico, United States, accompanied by Minister S from IHQ to meet Dr. Larry Dossey to discuss "Scientific Research on Prayer and Johrei."

One hour before arriving in New Mexico, Mr. K saw an elderly American gentleman coming out of the airplane restroom and he suddenly collapsed in front of him. Mr. K, with the aid of some passengers, immediately helped him off of the floor, but the man once again went into an unconscious state.

A flight attendant witnessed the situation, and called for a medical doctor's assistance if any were available among the passengers. Two doctors, a male and female, responded to her plea.

While the doctors were examining the gentleman, Mr. K was giving him Johrei from a distance of three meters. Seeing that the doctors were puzzled, not understanding the cause of his fall, Mr. K came closer to them while continuing to channel Johrei. Soon the man woke up and was conscious for a moment which surprised the doctors. This was only momentary, however, as the man again fell back into unconsciousness.

The female doctor asked Mr. K, "Thank you for doing this, but what is it?" "It is called Johrei, a Japanese healing technique," Mr. K replied. She said with a smile, "Oh! I've heard of it through one of the books written by Dr. Andrew Weil!" She had been one of Dr. Weil's research assistants while doing her residency after graduating from her M.D. program.

After that interaction, she felt comfortable letting Mr. K continuously give the unconscious man Johrei, so he kept channeling with confidence. After 30 minutes passed, the man awoke and said, "Thank you, I am feeling better now. " Right about that time, the plane was ready to land at the airport, and as soon as it touched ground, the man was taken to a nearby hospital by a waiting ambulance.

Mr. K was thanked by the flight attendant, and received words of praise from the doctor who said, "I want to know more about what you did to him." The accompanying Minister S, briefly explained Johrei, and gave her fifteen minutes of Johrei at the airport lobby. After the Johrei, she seemed to be moved by the experience and said, "Wonderful! I felt my spirit was awakened. Would you teach me how to do it? I work in a hospital in Albuquerque, but I want to learn it to help people in the community to restore

their health, while continuing to awaken my spirit.” After the ministers suggested to her to take the introductory course and gave her their contact, they parted ways.

Later the doctor sent an email to Mr. K and Mr. S, and she said, “We would not have met each other if this situation had not occurred on the airplane. This was a gift and opportunity from God, I believe. I am looking forward to learning more about Johrei soon.”

After completing their business in Albuquerque, Mr. K and Mr. S boarded a flight traveling to Los Angeles. They sat together across the aisle from each other. A visibly upset disabled elderly gentleman who had been argumentative with the flight attendant sat next to Mr. K. Mr. K talked to the elderly man right away, and forged a friendship with him. He began giving him Johrei. Seeing what Mr. K was doing for the man, the passenger sitting next to Mr. S asked him, “What is he doing?” “That is called Johrei, and healing process from Japan,” Mr. S replied. The man asked again, “I am a therapist who does English massage, but I suffer from a migraine. Is that effective with headaches?” “I think so,” Mr. S replied, and he proceeded to give him Johrei.

Both Mr. K and Mr. S gave their recipients Johrei for about one hour until they arrived in Los Angeles. After receiving Johrei, the two Americans showed their interest and one said, “I felt better. I want to know more about Johrei.” Mr. K and Mr. S explained about Johrei and left them their business cards. Mr. K was very happy because he found the flight attendant who had been earlier yelled at by the elderly gentleman feeling better, and she approached Mr. K to shake his hand as showing her gratitude. Later, Mr. S received a grateful email from the massage therapist stating that he would like to take the introductory course.

Reflecting upon this experience, I take for granted that it is a natural response for Johrei ministers to act in this way; however, I was still impressed by Mr. K’s “nimble footwork” to handle those situations. I personally know Mr. K, and Johrei for him is a way of connecting with others. I thought these situations sounded exactly how Mr. K would respond.

When you suddenly encounter a situation of a person purifying, are you able to give him/her Johrei immediately? It takes courage and decisive action, thus it might be difficult for some people.

Good Deeds are Necessary to Create Happiness

Meishu-sama said in his Teachings entitled, “My True Feelings”:

“My thoughts are always centered on how I can help others to become truly happy.” If we follow this Teaching and become a person who can always think of others being happy, we can naturally take immediate action when it is needed.

For those of you who daily strive to become a person who can practice Meishu-sama’s Teachings. It might be “a piece of cake” to do so; however, for those who think that you have not reached that level, I would like to encourage you to make the New Year be your year of action. If you act with love Meishu-sama will always be there for you. If you do not act, nothing will happen. Neither others nor we will reach a state of happiness.

Although we speak
Of love and compassion,
Our words are little more
Than wind blowing through the trees
If not turned into deeds.

As Meishu-sama described in his poem, he taught us that the words of love and compassion would be in vain without deeds. Alain (1868-1951) a French philosopher and journalist, living in the same era as Meishu-sama, wrote this passage in his book in 1928 entitled, "About Happiness (Propos sur le Bonheur)."

"It is easy to become unhappy and remember only complaints and negativity. All you want to do is just sit like a prince, waiting for someone to please you." "If you want to be happy, you must make some effort. The attitude of being an indifferent bystander, leaving the door open to passively let happiness in and to do nothing will only lead you to sorrow."

Alain clearly stated that a person who simply waits for happiness and does not create steps to achieve it, will become the opposite, unhappy. In other words, happiness cannot be created without doing good deeds.

Be a Pioneer of Salvation

I think that everyone here was guided and connected to Meishu-sama through someone who put their deep love and faith into action. Through this process you received prayers and the thought that you will become happy and achieve salvation. Thus, you are on this path now.

I have a question for you. Are you happy? Does anybody feel happy? It is Meishu-sama's birthday today. Let us shout out loud and say, "Yes!" so that Meishu-sama can hear your joyful voice and feel your happiness. Let me ask you again, "Are you happy?" Now Meishu-sama can hear you and is happy.

Looking carefully at our present situation regarding happiness, we find that there were people who gave us Johrei and connected us to the spiritual path. This is true in the case of today's testimonial regarding Mrs. Nakamura. It was these people of faith who she encountered at the PTA meeting at her child's elementary school. I am sure you are grateful to those who have guided you. If you are a second or third generation of this faith, these guiding people could be your parents or grandparents. Your grandparents were also guided by someone else such as their friends or acquaintances. Everyone has someone who first introduced Johrei to him/her. Starting with Meishu-sama as the source, many became Johrei pioneers in different areas, and each became the first person to initially introduce Johrei to another person.

Reflecting upon our past process, each one of us had such a person. On the other hand, the first person for those who we will meet in the future will be each one of us. In order to show our repayment of kindness and God's Love received from our guiding persons, we should become a "Pioneer of Salvation" for the people we will meet in the future, and guide them to this heavenly and happy state by connecting them to Meishu-sama.

A Lay-Minister's Happy Story

As I previously mentioned at the Grand Autumn Service, Kohda Rohan wrote about three kinds of effort necessary to maintain and expand our happiness. One is Sekifuku (Saving Happiness) caring about our own gifted happiness, Bunpuku (Sharing Happiness) and Shokufuku (Planting Happiness, the most important of all).

In Brazil, I spoke about the importance of Shokufuku, Planting Happiness, and being the guiding initiator or Pioneer of Salvation of someone so they may become happy.

One Lay Minister, after hearing my talk, reflected upon himself that he could have been the Pioneer of Salvation more if he was not so concerned about the possibility of negative results and the outcome it might have on his reputation. He was determined to change himself to be a Pioneer of Salvation, who could guide others to this path so that they could be connected to Meishu-sama and become happy. He prayed daily that he could receive opportunities to meet those who had a spiritual affinity with him.

Soon after this declaration, he was presented an opportunity, and he was able to give a person Johrei. A wonderful blessing was granted. Due to this blessing, many people were drawn to him and they were guided to this spiritual path. Through the action of guiding others, he has become a cheerful person whose life has become more positive and happier in correlation to the gratitude of those he has guided and supported.

I have heard of many similar testimonials in Brazil. Through hearing these experiences, I feel that when people truly pray for the happiness of others, and then take action, God will grant many more opportunities for us to grow to be Pioneers of Salvation, the initial guiding person for your family and friends.

After returning from Brazil, one of the first testimonials I heard in Japan was the case about Mr. K. This made me happy as well.

Conclusion

Many people around you will be connected to Meishu-sama and become happy, subsequently this happiness will create other happiness and a prototype of Paradise on Earth will be eventually manifested if we become Pioneers of Salvation like our old pioneer ministers. Keeping this in mind, we should keep reaching out our hands of help to family members, neighbors and friends.

Step by step, we have been doing Practice of Sonen, Practice of Gratitude, and Practice of Making Others Happy. After accumulation of these virtues in the past years, the next step we should take will be to become a Pioneer of Salvation so that we can guide others and foster their faith to be a person who has a deep love and compassion for others and who is strongly connected to Meishu-sama.

I would like to conclude my speech today with my sincerest prayer that you may receive abundant blessings from God and Meishu-sama, and that all people on Earth may find connection and unity. I am so grateful for what you have done for Meishu-sama in this past year. I hope you will have a wonderful and hopeful New Year.