



# Morning Sermon

by Rev. Shohei Tsuda

## Episode 4

If you practice faith wholeheartedly, even your most distant cousins will receive divine blessings.

January 4, 2021

Good morning. We have been able to welcome the 4th of January (Reiwa 3). There is a teaching by the Founder that goes: “If you practice faith wholeheartedly, even your most distant cousins will receive divine blessings.” This is what Rev. Fujimori Kondo was taught by the Founder. In the Kyoten scripture, this phrase actually begins with “You know Kondo-san.”

*“You know Kondo-san. If you practice faith wholeheartedly, even your most distant cousins will receive divine blessings.” (Gorikai I Kondo Fujimori 36)*

In the beginning of one's faith, usually a personal issue or one's parents, children, husbands, work related matter, or other problems may become a catalyst to start believing.

There is a phrase called “Goshin-en” (divine arrangement) and there are people who are born into the Konkokyo faith. They may be able to put their hands together in prayer without giving it much thought. But if they really intend to have faith, there has to be some kind of wakeup call for them to genuinely turn their heart towards Kami. Despite the fact that we may have divine connections depending on the environment in which we were born, it is not the same when it comes to establishing a connection with Kami. I believe that establishing a strong connection with Kami-Sama usually starts with a big incident that acts as a catalyst for people to seek help from Kami-Sama.

It is good for an individual to receive personal divine favor. But the Founder says that not only you, but

even your most distant cousins will receive divine blessings.

In terms of blood ties, not only parents, siblings, and family, but also cousins, and I don't know to what extent, but everyone who is related to you or has a connection with you, will all begin to receive divine blessings.

So, what exactly does this teaching imply when it says that even your most distant cousins will receive divine blessings? When you think about it, faith is an individual thing. Even if it's a sibling, a family member, or a parent and child, there is a difference between receiving blessings through practicing faith for each individual.

It's case by case. In the case of young children, parents should have faith and receive blessings for their children. It makes sense. But when the kids grow up, they need to learn to have faith and receive blessings for themselves, otherwise it will not lead to blessings.

So, what does it mean to "Be single-hearted in the pursuit of faith, or to believe in Kami wholeheartedly that even your distant cousins will be blessed?"

Does it mean that if I become a believer, even my distant cousins can receive blessings? Is that what the teaching is saying? Or does it mean that if I have single-hearted faith, the circle of faith will expand around me and those people who are influenced by my faith will become motivated to start practicing faith and receive blessings?

Hmmm...what do you think? I have a feeling that it could be both. Here's another teaching from the

Founder,

*“Farmers know that a single seed can result in bushels of rice. 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.” (Gorikai I Yamamoto Sadajiro 66-3)*

When one person has true faith, a thousand or ten thousand people will be blessed. I will use Kyoso-Sama as an example of how he started out as a single person who practiced true faith. Starting from there, let's think about this way of faith and how Konkokyo has been spread.

One individual, Kyoso-Sama had true faith. That's why thousands and tens of thousands of people got blessed from that one influence. It is correct to say that thousands, tens of thousands, and billions of people have been blessed over more than a hundred years.

This has been possible because individuals have actually been continuing to practice the faith. However, if people come to Kyoso-Sama's Hiromae to ask for help and prayers, as I have mentioned yesterday—the Founder has repeatedly said that people cannot be saved by that kind of faith. I am sure there were many people who could not be saved even with Kyoso-Sama's mediation. In this case, I am pretty sure that the reason why those who can't be saved is because they themselves didn't have the kind of faith that would allow them to receive blessings and be saved.

When you think about it, if you practice true faith like the Founder, you don't have to limit yourself to blood relatives. Whether it is one or two people, friends or acquaintances who are connected to you, as long as you have true faith, the people around you will start to believe and they will be able to receive divine blessings.

When it comes to comparing bad faith with true faith; no one would want to follow someone who practices a bad kind of faith. But for people who practice true faith and receive blessings as a result—others may witness that and try to practice that kind of faith because they too want blessings.

"If you practice faith wholeheartedly, even your most distant cousins will receive divine blessings." This teaching means that if you are single-hearted in your faith, your faith can be conveyed and be passed down to the people around you, and the faith will begin to branch out further and further, and they too can receive blessings. That is probably what the Founder meant when he said how even the people around you can be saved. I think this makes total sense.

If one person has true faith, a thousand or ten thousand people can be blessed. Hmmm, I guess that's true. Just because Kyoso-Sama practiced a true faith, it didn't mean that everyone was saved. However, everyone can be saved with the kind of faith that Kyoso-Sama had. Kyoso-Sama practiced a true and diligent faith. Then Kyoso-Sama taught us his faith, and we learned from them, modeled after them, practiced them, and became more and more proficient. And because of this, many have been able to receive divine

blessings. I understand this, and I think it's spot on.

There is a saying that goes, “One grain becomes 10,000.” What does this mean? It refers to rice. If you sow a single grain of rice into the soil, and that grain of rice grows, that one grain of rice can become 10,000 grains.

As I earlier mentioned the teaching on how a single person’s true faith can save a thousand or ten thousand people—in that sentence, the word "farmers" was followed by “If a single grain of rice accumulates, it becomes numerous bushels.” I’ve researched the word “koku” before.

One-koku<sup>1</sup> of rice is equivalent to 10-to, and 10-to is equivalent to 100-shō, and 100-shō is equivalent to 1,000-gō. (koku, to, shō, and gō are also the units of volume)

Let me explain it further. Have you ever wondered how many grains are in one cup of rice? When we cook rice, we measure the rice using the 1-gō cup (100 cc cup). 10-gō is 1-shō. 10-shō is 1-to. 10-to is 1-koku. I wondered how many grains of rice were in a cup (1-gō). I found that there are approximately 6,500 grains in a

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<sup>1</sup> Editor’s Note: About Measuring Rice

One bushel of rice is equivalent to 10-to in lower units, which is also equivalent to 100-shaku or 1,000-gō. In Japan, one cup of rice per meal and three cups of rice per day is generally considered to be the amount consumed by an adult. So one bushel is considered to be roughly equivalent to the amount consumed by an adult in a year, and has been converted as a standard (1,000 cups of rice/3 cups of rice per day=333 days). The Japanese unit for area, the "反", was originally defined as the area of a rice field that could yield one bushel of rice.

cup of rice according to one of the rice shop websites.

1-shō is 10-gō. 10-gō is 65,000 grains. 1-to is 10-shō, or 100-gō. In this case, it would be 650,000 grains. If you ask me how much 1-koku is, it would be 10-to, or 1000-gō of rice, which is 6,500,000 grains.

I haven't ever grown rice in the fields. Someone offered a kit for growing rice in a Styrofoam planter, so I got curious and tried to grow it. One bunch of rice begins with 3-4 rice seedlings. When a bud sprouts from a single grain of rice, it is called a seedling. Put three to four seedlings together to make one bunch.

If I were to sow one grain of rice; how many grains can grow from just one grain of rice? Generally, it is said that one grain can produce about 500 grains in the first year. There are some instances where people have harvested 1,000 grains of rice. But on average, it is about 500.

How about for the next year? Suppose you sow those 500 seeds. Five hundred times 500 equals 250,000 grains. At this point, the number has already increased to 250,000. In two years, one grain will be producing 10,000 grains. And if we sow 250,000 grains in the third year, and each seed produces 500 grains, we will have 125 million grains.

As I said earlier, 1-koku is 6,500,000 grains. Then, 125,000,000 grains would be about 19 to 20 koku. It's a calculation, but one grain will grow to about 20-koku after three years if the grains are diligently planted every year.

If the Founder's faith was a single seed, how many people would have come to believe his faith from that seed over the next hundred or so years? I don't know if anyone has ever done that kind of math. There must be a tremendous number of people who have received blessings for their faith.

If we look back to the beginning, one person, Kyoso-Sama, set a beautiful example for us. Our Founder, Bunjiro Kawate, as one individual had true faith and also left us the teachings so that we could model Kyoso-Sama's faith and receive blessings even after a hundred or so years.

However, it's hard to know which teachings apply to your situation. That's why there are different worship halls all over the country through Kami's divine intervention. By saying that, Kami will let people know the blessings of Heaven and Earth by letting Konko-Daijin be born in every country throughout the world.

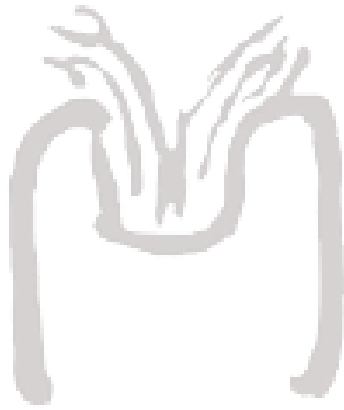
As for Amagasaki Church, it has been 124 years since the first generation Rev. Kazuta Tsuda established it. It also means Rev. Kazuta Tsuda had modeled a true faith and passed it on to others, and countless people have been blessed through this connection. Still, it's hard to say just how many people have had connections and received blessings with this church in its 124 years of history. However, many people practiced faith. In that sense, even if we are not like Kyoso-Sama or the first generation sensei, the fact that we are alive today means that we should pass on our good values to those around us, whether we are at work or anywhere else, or to our families. The 4th Konko-Sama (Rev. Kagamitaro



Konko) said, “Pass on the good things to others, and stop the undesirable things in its tracks.” That is what faith is all about. Faith is the most valuable thing to pass on.

If you practice faith, you will receive divine blessings. If you genuinely and seriously practice your faith, it may take some time, but you will receive blessings from Kami. I think that everyone here is realizing this, and that is why you are continuing your faith. In that sense, since you are the ones who got to receive this true faith, please don't let it stop there. Relay it not only to your family members, but also those who have been divinely connected to you and those whom you want to share your faith with and people who come to seek the true way. There are many people who have difficulties in this world. I hope that even one or two of them will come to believe in the true way of faith.

For today, I would like you to be encouraged to practice your faith, and to receive a day's worth of blessings from Kami-Sama. It is great that you have come today.



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