



Morning Sermon

by Rev. Shohei Tsuda

Episode 5

Don't perturb yourself with the past.
Value the present and look forward to the future.

January 5, 2021

Good morning. We have been able to welcome the 5th of January (Reiwa 3). Lately, I have been talking about the importance of practicing faith. How do you go about practicing faith in detail?

We practice faith and we can receive divine blessings. Being saved is not as simple as just praying or having someone pray for us. In the past, I have spoken about how it is essential to create a vessel within our own hearts to receive blessings. What kind of faith do we need to practice? What exactly do we need to do to create a vessel in our hearts?

That will become the core essentials of the practice of faith, so it's not as simple as you doing one simple task and it's all good. To give it to you frankly, the message that our Founder, Konko Daijin and Kami-Sama have left for us is the Divine Reminder (Tenchi Kakitsuke).

If you understand the Divine Reminder in-depth, it takes you to the core of the faith from which everything else stems. In the Divine Reminder, you will often notice the phrase "Kongetsu Konnichi" (On this very day). That phrase becomes very important in the practice of faith.

"Ikigami Konko Daijin, Tenchi Kane No Kami isshin ni negae, Okage wa wagakokoro ni ari, kongetsu konnichide tanomei" (Ikigami Konko Daijin, Tenchi Kane No Kami, Pray with a single heart. The divine favor depends upon one's own grateful and happy heart. Pray on this very day.)"

The phrase “Kongetsu Konnichi (within the Divine Reminder)” is a message with only several letters. The Tenchi Kakitsuke has the divine name, “Ikigami Konko Daijin”, and the name of the deity, “Tenchi Kane No Kami” and mentions to “Pray with a single heart” and “The divine favor depends upon your own heart” and “Pray on this very day.” It’s a really short message. That is why there is a lot of depth in each phrase of the Divine Reminder.

Each part of the Divine Reminder becomes important in building our vessel to hold blessings.

However, if you look into the word “Kongetsu Konnichi (On this very day),” the Founder has taught;

“Look forward to the future without saying negative things” (Gorikai III Shinkun 2-46)

Don’t have negative thoughts about your future. Look forward to the future. In another teaching, he says

“Don’t perturb yourself with the past. Value the present and look forward to the future” (Gorikai I Shimamura Hachitaro 44)

Don’t suffer yourself with the past. Value the present and look forward to the future. The Founder said “Don’t suffer” rather than say “Don’t make it your suffering.” The message reminds us not to suffer. This very day is important. The Founder didn’t say “Today

is important,” he said “This day is important. Look forward to the future.”

“Don’t have negative thoughts about your future; look forward to the future.” People may worry about the future and wait for terrible things to happen. People shouldn’t be thinking about bad things that happened in the past and suffer. It happened in the past. This very day is what’s important. Look forward to the future. Don’t say negative things about your future and wait on it. That’s talking about your future. Don’t suffer with the past. This happened in the past. This very day is what’s important.

I am talking to you about the past, present, and future. If you really think about it deeply, you will understand. The Founder said to the believers, don’t say negative things about your future and wait on it. But when are they waiting on this future? It’s now. We look forward to the future, but when exactly are we looking forward to the future? Isn’t it now? The Founder said to look forward to the future at this very moment. Don’t say negative things about your future and wait on it now; look forward to the future now. Don’t suffer over things that happened in the past. “Don’t suffer” he says. When is he referring to? It’s now. Don’t suffer over something that happened in the past and suffer about it in the present. This very day is important. Look forward to the future. So, when is the future? It’s now. You have to look forward to the future at this very moment. Don’t say negative things about your future at this very moment and wait on it. We need to look forward to the future at this very moment. Don’t suffer

at the moment over something that happened in the past. This very day is what's important. Look forward to the future at this very moment.

The Founder mentions "Today" and "On this day." There is a difference between these two if you go into it in depth. The word "On this day" (Konnichi) was first used, then the word "Today" (Kyō) was used later on.

I searched the word "Today" in the dictionary. It said, "the day we are living right now; this day." The word "today" is used when we ask each other "What day is it today?"

When we use the word "On this day," in one definition, it is used in the same context as the word "Today." The other definition describes it as "This era." It can be used when we say, "Nowadays." It's described as "The world affairs in this era." Then there is another word called "Present times" (Genzai). Genzai is another word for "Now." "I am in existence on this day thanks to you." "On this day" means the present.

The word "Konnichi" (On this day) has phonetically evolved into the word "Kyō" (Today). The Founder uses the word "Kongetsu Konnichi" (This day).

"Konnichi" means "Today, This day." It's the word used to describe "Today" when we say yesterday, today, and tomorrow. This is Konnichi. The word Kyō evolved through the emphasis on the word Konnichi.

But in reality, the word Konnichi means "nowadays" or "present times" or the "now now." If you study the term Kongetsu Konnichi used often by the

Founder—you can search this in the Konkokyo glossary. I have searched it in that book as well and I remember that I left a note on that word. When I look back at the definition of Kongetsu Konnichi, it states that it is “today” or “this day.” He proved that this very day is a good day. The Founder didn’t consult the days and directions to choose the best day to direct his heart to Kami. He taught that it was this day, this very moment that is the best moment to be in the presence of Kami to pray. He taught people to pray today, now, on this day.

This is something I didn’t realize, but there is a patron god in Otani. In our area, there is the Hachiman Shrine which worships a patron god. In Otani, there is a shrine called the Kamo Shrine where their village patron god is worshipped. When it was a festival day, there were wood-reinforced, square lanterns that were lining the entrance of the shrine. On the paper lanterns, the words “Kongetsu Konnichi” (On this day) were written. Here at this place, we have paper lanterns that are hanging outside, but these were the wood-reinforced square-shaped lanterns that were placed on the ground. Our lanterns have the 8-petaled Konko crest. But these square lanterns with the words Kongetsu Konnichi lined the entrance of the shrine. And if you ask why those words were written on the lanterns of the Kamo Shrine, it meant to say that aside from the ordinary mundane days that go by, the villagers wanted to take this very day to dedicate to the deity.

It’s a festival, celebration, a good day that is held just once a year. Some people took that word as a

specific day to spend one-on-one with the patron god. Out of the 365 days of the year, they take one or two days and consider it the most important days of the year and use the word Kongetsu Konnichi on the lanterns to celebrate those special days. Those words that were inscribed on the lanterns made the locals, and the villagers in that area aware of the very special day to honor the patron god at the Kamo Shrine. The Founder was from the Otani village, so he most likely got those words from that shrine.

Speaking of special days out of the 365 days of the year, it would be likable to the Grand Ceremonies we celebrate in Konkokyo. Our Founder emphasized that it's not just one day out of 365 days of the year that is important—but in fact, all 365 days of the year, whenever, wherever are days which we can spend together with Kami-Sama. So, if you are going to pray, you must face your heart to Kami-Sama and pray on this very day, today, now, at this very moment. Now is the moment you have to be in connection with Kami-Sama. So, it's not just the day of the Grand Ceremony; it's now. Kongetsu Konnichi (On this day, this very moment) is a very short message that becomes one of the key phrases in the Divine Reminder.

If you take the message we went through earlier and define it in detail, the “Don't say negative things about your future and wait on it; look forward to the future” and the “Don't remember bad things that happened in the past and suffer. This day is important; look forward to the future.” I'm going to say it again,

“Don’t say bad things about your future and wait on it at this very moment.” Look forward to the future with Kami-Sama on this month, this day, this very moment. Don’t remember bad things that happened in the past and suffer at this very moment. This day is what’s important, this moment is what’s important. This very day, the present cannot be a more special day to be in the presence of Kami-Sama. It’s a bright sunny day. Look forward to the future right here, right now, and be excited for what’s ahead.

We may become worried about what will happen to us in the future. There isn’t a time machine that can show you what your future holds. We also cannot go back in time to redo our past. We are not in the world of Doraemon. So if you really think about when is the time to be living, you can’t go back and relive your past. You also can’t live in the future. We can only have our physical body in the here and now. We can’t go back to the past. I’m not saying not to look back at your past. So what does it mean then? I say this quite often. I’m not telling you that looking back at your past is a bad thing to do. If looking back at your past makes you appreciate the present, then you should look back at your past. You know when they say “Now that I remember, I can laugh about it.” If you can tell yourself that you received these kinds of blessings and that kind of blessings in the past and can truly be appreciative of the past and enjoy the moment because of them, that’s good. If you can truly appreciate this moment, that’s a good thing. When you remember things in the past and you laugh, you are laughing about your past in the present.

That's what it is. What's ahead of you is the future.

Don't look forward to the future and wait on it. We may think "Oh man, I bet this is going to happen, I bet that is going to happen." You are thinking about negative things about the future and making this moment feel uncertain and dark.

However, seeing the future in a negative way is not a bad thing—but that's if it will benefit you now. If you can think about the future and enjoy the moment and be excited about the present, that's a good thing. I mean, if you can appreciate the present, then it really doesn't matter how much you look into the future. Looking at the past or looking into the future isn't automatically a bad thing. If you can look in the past and live in the present, it's ok. It's not bad to look into the future if you can live in the present.

This is about the future. You may wonder, "I wonder how tomorrow will turn out. Tomorrow is my date. Tomorrow is my field trip." If thinking about those things makes you feel excited, you should go right ahead and think about your future. This is being appreciative at the moment. Humans can only live now. There was never a case of being able to live in the past. And you can't live in the future either.

The future is an accumulation of all the moments you have ever lived. Right now, as I speak, this is moment by moment. I can't go back even a second in the past. Nor can I go ahead a second faster. I can live only in this second, this moment, this very day.

Let's take for example 3 minutes ahead, 5 minutes ahead of this moment. It will be an accumulation of all

the moments that took place before. Each moment accumulates to become the 3-minute future, the 5-minute future, the 1-hour future, the 1-day future, the 1-month future, the 1-year future, the 3-year future, 5-year future, 10-year future, 100-year future. There is no other way to reach these moments without the accumulation of all the moments that came before.

So, if you think about it, you would really want to create a good future for yourselves. I mean, of course. Who would want to create a bad future? We practice faith so we can welcome the future. The present moment is so important. If you make an effort to make the present a really good moment, your effort and decisions to make this a special moment, moment by moment, 3-minutes ahead of you, 10-minutes ahead of you, 1-hour ahead of you, 1-day ahead of you, 1-month ahead of you, 1-year ahead of you—will create a better future for you. Having fun now, being happy now—your accumulation of these many moments becomes your future. I'm pretty sure it will develop into something good.

Living in the moment with Kami-Sama. Praying about your future to Kami-Sama at this moment. Be excited about your future at this moment. Be mindful and practice being happy, grateful, and enjoying good times now. When do you live? We live in this moment, right?

The Kamo Shrine with the words inscribed “Kongetsu Konnichi,” the one day of the year where people live with Kami—the Founder realized it was wrong just to believe that one day is the most important day. We can't just go about doing whatever we please

and live without Kami-Sama. We who are allowed to live between Heaven and Earth were originally living day by day, minute by minute, second by second, side by side with Kami-Sama. That is the way to live as a human being. That is what the Founder has stated. He really emphasized, “live in this moment, live in this moment.” He actively emphasized this phrase. He said “Now! The time is now to live with Kami. Now is the only moment.” He didn’t say to live in the past or the future. He said “Now.” “Now is the time to practice faith. Now is the time to live with Kami. Now is the time to pray to Kami.” The phrase Kongetsu Konnichi has very been emphasized often by the Founder. Now is really the time we need to be making that connection with Kami-Sama and with Konko Daijin-Sama.

There may be people who are experiencing hardships currently. But we should be living moment by moment with the full support of Kami-Sama and expressing our gratitude. If you think about it, we are thankful because of things that happened in the past. People who have received divine blessings are thankful and happy at this moment for blessings they have received in the past.

Prayers are basically for future matters. Prayers are our uncertainties. And so we take those uncertainties, our worries for which we don’t know the outcome, and have Kami-Sama take care of them and turn them into divine blessings at this very moment. It has to be now. We don’t live in the future. We live in the moment. Now is what’s important. It’s this very moment that creates the future ahead of us. Even 1-hour ahead

of you, 1-year ahead of you, try to unravel the string of events that led up to those moments. The future is basically a pouch of events. If you open the pouch, you will see a collection of moments that have just been piled up into it. How we lived each moment will determine how our future will be shaped. You open the pouch and you will see many many moments.

Ikigami Konko Daijin and Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama, praying with a single heart, was mentioned in the Divine Reminder. We need to receive mediation from Ikigami Konko Daijin, receive teachings, and receive prayers. And we need to be mindful of those practices and really face our hearts to Tenchi Kane No Kami. Live together with Kami-Sama. Pray with a single heart. It's these moments that will shape the future 1-hour ahead, 1-day ahead, 1-year ahead of you. If you unravel the strings of your pouch of a whole year, you will see a bag full of moments in the whole year of 365 days, 24 hours in each day, the minutes in every hour and every second in a minute. Now, if your life is full of worries and anxieties and you were to unravel its string and take a peek into that pouch, you'll see a bag full of moments where you were worried, uncertain, anxious and hopeless. Looking into that kind of pouch, how do you expect your future to turn out good? It'll be like opening a bag of candy and scattering it all over the place. The Founder would tell you "Are you living in the moment? Were you really living moment by moment with Kami-Sama?" The Founder would really wonder if you were really practicing faith?" Isn't that what it means? That's what it means to practice faith.

That's what the Founder asked the followers that came to worship. Praying and being prayed for is not the key here. It's you living moment by moment with Kami-Sama. To give thanks where it is necessary. Hand over your worries and anxieties to Kami-Sama. This moment is important. We can only live in the present. Even if we pray for the future, the future is only an accumulation of the present. So how are you going to live in this moment? You are going to live together with Kami-Sama, on this very day. The Founder really emphasized the importance of living in the moment.

The Founder has encountered many hardships, such as the prohibition of propagating the faith. He was no longer allowed to pray. He couldn't even listen to people's requests. And it was in those difficult times, that he encountered the Divine Reminder and he handed it to the people who came to worship. It was during that time when he had reached the dead end that he received the Divine Reminder. It was the *Kongetsu Konnichi* (On this day, this moment) that is really important in that message. Now, this moment. Not the past; but now. Not the future; but now. Now is so important.

Live in this moment together with Kami. It is in this moment that we are with Kami. Being mindful of that, that we are living together with Kami-Sama leads to the way to live in harmony and mutual interdependence with basically everything.

Today, as we welcome Reiwa 3, January 5th, from this day forth, moment by moment, this time we have

right now, day after day. If you take your pouch and unravel the string, your 1-hour with 60 minutes, and the next moment you open your pouch, it's an addition of a minute with 60 seconds. And so you have your collection of moments. If you are always mindful of living moment to moment with Kami-Sama, Kami-Sama will always be by your side. Just like if someone always calls my name. I will come to their calling. That's what it's about.

Today I have spoken about Kongetsu Konnichi, this day, this moment. Let's continue to be motivated in the practice of faith. It is great that you have come today.



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