



# Morning Sermon

by Rev. Shohei Tsuda

## Episode 12

Expressing gratitude in the heart for all the help received.

January 12, 2021

Good morning. We have welcomed the year 2021 in the Reiwa era today. Once again, we have received a new life from Kami-Sama and have been awakened. We start our daily life while being helped in every way possible. It really makes us realize how precious and grateful it is.

The word "arigatou" (thank you) comes from the phrase "aru koto ga muzukashii" (it's difficult to have something), and we say "arigatou" to express our gratitude. However, when we are able to spend our days in good health and mood, we tend to think that it is just a natural thing and not something difficult. This is where we tend to misunderstand as human beings.

Even though it is not always the case, we tend to have such misunderstandings. In that sense, when we catch a cold or slightly sprain our foot, we realize that we are in a slightly difficult situation and think "oh, this wasn't something obvious." Actually, it has always been like that. However, when we receive too much blessings and it becomes a natural thing, we tend to lose the sense of gratitude and it becomes difficult to feel it. It is a troubling thing, but I think that human beings have such a careless side to them.

However, it's not a good thing, and it's actually a starting point to accumulate irreverences without realizing it. The character for "burei" is written as "no appreciation," and if we accumulate irreverences from there, it becomes "burei." In that sense, even in the current social situation, with things like the coronavirus and the uncertain world situation in the future, it's not just a natural thing to be able to live today. We can once again feel that it is truly a blessing to be able to receive life today, including ourselves, our families, and our friends.

The Founder said,

**"Those who have faith should sit on a tree stump in the mountains and rest, but when they stand up, they should have a feeling of gratitude."**

**(II The person who recorded it is marked as unknown 23)**

In this way, he understands that "Those who have faith should sit on a tree stump in the mountains and rest, but when they stand up, they should have a feeling of gratitude."

"If you have received the faith of the Konko faith, then this teaching may sound familiar to you. It is easy to understand and quite symbolic. I remember hearing these teachings when I was young, and thinking "Oh, I see." I recall thinking "Ah, I see," rather than think "Why?" or something like that. As for this teaching, it's not clear who originally passed it down. The person who recorded it is marked as unknown. We hear of teachings by "Fujimori Kondo" or "Shinichiro Shirakami," but some were not famous individuals who passed it down. Nonetheless, it has been cherished over the centuries as a symbolic teaching representing the Konko faith.

This was greatly expanded and cherished by the 4th Konko Sama. The 2nd and 3rd Konko Sama and the 4th Konko Sama, respectively, followed, as did Konko Shijin-Sama and Konko Setsutane-Sama. Then came the 4th Konko Sama, Konko Kagamitaro-Sama. As the 4th Konko Sama, he held "Gratitude for all things" as extremely important. He was also a poet, and is said to have written ten poems a day.

Among these, "gratitude" is a theme that recurs frequently in the poems. Expressing gratitude for all is extremely important. When tracing back the origins of this theme, it comes down to a teaching passed on by the 3rd Konko Sama. Even if it's just one article from the one teaching, if it's cherished as important, that's enough.

That's because one teaching is something that varies from person to person and has many different interpretations. "This, if you ask why, the teaching is really like a thousand people, ten thousand people, all with many understandings. But if you were to compare the faith to a single tree, there's a tree, with roots, and a big thick trunk. There are branches, thick and thin, and then leaves as well. But the teaching is really just a single leaf. Even though it's just a single leaf, if you deepen your understanding of it, it will lead you to the thin branches, thick branches, trunk, and roots of the tree. Everything is connected. And that's what the famous 3rd and 4th Konko Sama understood, as they held dear the idea of showing gratitude to everything they received help from. And so, the faith was deeply ingrained in them.

When you go to the mountains and sit on a tree stump, well, back in the old days there weren't any trains, so you had to walk. You go to the mountains, find a tree stump, which when you think about it, the only thing that's necessary is the tree above it. You cut it down to process it for something. You cut it and knock it down, and the only thing that's necessary is the top part of the tree. To be clear, a tree stump is completely useless. It doesn't help humans in any way. It's the tree above it that's useful. You might process it for lumber, or make it a part of a forest reserve. Even though you think it out, the top part might still be useful, but a tree stump is completely useless. It has roots, so you can't take it with you, but you can't make anything with it either. It's useless, and not helpful in any way. But even if it's useless, and not helpful, you can still go to the mountains and rest on a tree stump. And when you stand up, you can have the feeling of showing gratitude."

Since I'm expressing gratitude, it means saying "Thank you. You've been a great help." Now, when you think about

it, what we really want is the top part. It's like humans are throwing away something that's useless and has no purpose. Or maybe, the tree was just in the way and had to be cut down. And since there was no way to move what was left, we just left it alone. But we sat down and rested on it. And if we rested on it, we were indebted to it, so we express our gratitude for being indebted to it. This is what is meant by faith. What's interesting is that the 4th Konko Sama always thought this way. When thanking someone, he would say "Thank you for your help." He wouldn't say "Thank you" to a passerby. You wouldn't suddenly say "Thank you" to a passerby while walking in Umeda. You might say it if someone pointed out that you dropped your handkerchief and say, "Oh, thank you." That might happen. So you say "Thank you" because you've received help. If you haven't received help, even if the other person is a human being, you won't say "Thank you." You say "Thank you" because you received help. So, the 4th Konko Sama thought that if you were being helped, why wouldn't you express your gratitude? He questioned why people wouldn't say "Thank you" to something that speaks or communicates, but wouldn't say "Thank you" to something that doesn't. When you think about it again, it's not about expressing gratitude to the same person, but about expressing gratitude because you've been helped. So, if you've been helped by something, it's strange not to express gratitude for each and every thing you've been helped with. Well, that's right, indeed, when you think about it."

However, humans are like this: if the person they are indebted to is another person and someone they can talk to, they say "thank you", but if it's not like that, they just use it as they please without saying anything. That's not right, is it?

And if we think a little deeper about "things," it is the body of Tenchi Kane no Kami, the object of worship, which

has been processed a little and taken care of. We are indebted to various things in this world and we process them to make them more useful for humans. We receive blessings from the Kami-Sama and use them. In other words, since we are indebted to the body of Kami-Sama, which is a part of the deity itself, showing gratitude to objects is the same as showing gratitude to Kami-Sama. This is really true, isn't it?

If we trace this back to the Founder's faith, it is said, "When you go to the mountains and sit on a tree stump to rest, you should have the feeling of saying thank you when you stand up." At that time, this may have been considered common sense, but it may have been thought, "Oh, do we really have to do that?"

Even if something is considered unnecessary and useless in society, if we have been indebted to it, we should not necessarily say something to it. Whether we speak or not, we should feel grateful to Kami-Sama for the blessings we have received and the indebtedness we have. Whether it is a person or a thing, it is natural to say "thank you" because we live within this world, rely on it, and are surrounded by things that have been blessed by Kami-Sama. This is the Founder's faith and it was something that was very important to the 4th Konko Sama as well.

The 4th Konko Sama has written many poems, but when I had the opportunity to see and read them, there was a teacher who kindly put them together for me to read. When I expressed my gratitude, the 4th Konko Sama explained that there were three main meanings behind his poems.

Firstly, expressing gratitude means giving thanks to Kami-Sama. The 4th Konko Sama also believed that it was important to teach others this concept, and he was grateful

to those who taught him, including Kami-Sama. He emphasized the importance of expressing gratitude not only to those who speak, but also to those who do not.

Secondly, expressing gratitude means showing appreciation for all things that we rely on, whether they are people (represented by the kanji "者") or material possessions (represented by the kanji "物"). The 4th Konko Sama believed that it was important to express gratitude to everything and everyone that we rely on, and he was grateful to those who taught him this concept.

Lastly, in the 4th Konko Sama's poem "Mono iwanu, mono ni mo sewa ni naru, rei wo iu kokoro wo to oshie tamawari" emphasizes the importance of expressing gratitude to even those things that cannot speak, and he was grateful to those who taught him this concept as well.

世話になる -> "to depend on someone" すべてに礼をいふ  
こころ -> "heart that expresses gratitude to everything" その  
まま神をおろがむこころ -> "heart that worships Kami as it  
is."

"Orogamu" means to worship, well, to worship, but if you express it very respectfully and carefully, it means to worship. "Heart that expresses gratitude to everything that depends on someone" is the divine body of Tenchi Kane No Kami, which I mentioned earlier. The body is the heaven and the earth itself. Whether we extract gold or iron from the mountain, taking wood from the mountain, digging soil and making something like pottery, it is all part of the body of Kami Sama. Therefore, expressing gratitude to something and saying thank you is the same as thanking Kami Sama.

It means to honor Kami-Sama. He is saying that worship and expressing gratitude are the same thing.

Another one,  
世話になるすべてに礼をいふこころ 神を現はし神になるこころ (Sewa ni naru subete ni rei wo iu kokoro Kami wo arawashi Kami ni naru kokoro).

This is also said with more depth. To express gratitude means to manifest Kami Sama and become a living Kami. He is going into detail about this. I think this is very interesting, so I will listen while feeling grateful for being taught by Kami Sama. So, this is about being grateful to Kami Sama, and it means that we should practice gratitude in our daily lives. The practice of gratitude is something that the Founder also said very well, but when someone says, "Please express your gratitude," it is natural to say thank you because we are relying on Kami-Sama's care. It is what I just mentioned.

Next, another thing is that expressing gratitude, just like this, can become a power that is not defeated by difficulties. There are times when humans feel like they are going to be swallowed up by difficulties, but they may become discouraged, anxious, and feel helpless, which can happen in life.

However, not getting swallowed up there, being able to overcome it, is the power of having a grateful heart. It's like a lifebuoy in the place where you feel like you're being swallowed up.

When you are introduced to it,

“You must not forget to express gratitude for everything you are indebted to. You must not give up on



having a grateful heart, and not let yourself succumb to the act of lamenting, which means expressing gratitude for everything you are indebted to.

Well, I think all of this is based on the personal experiences of the 4th Konko Sama himself. It's where he feels it. Well, I think that's what songs are all about. Since you probably don't have many opportunities to hear the 4th Konko Sama's poems, please listen to them a little on this occasion.

"Don't become a prisoner of mental stress and keep a grateful heart for everything you are indebted to."

When you worry too much, it becomes exhausting. 'Don't become a captive of mental exhaustion, and keep a heart that expresses gratitude to everything that you are indebted to.' Hold onto that heart, so that you won't become a captive of mental exhaustion. Well, just like earlier, don't succumb to despair, and don't become a captive of mental exhaustion.

And one more thing:

"A way of life that expresses gratitude to everything you are indebted to, brings peace to your wavering heart. "

And one more thing:

"The lamentation that I have now, after being indebted to everyone. "

So, Konko Sama speaking from his own experiences. Well, to explain briefly, even in current poem, there are times when you lament. You have to somehow endure that. For that reason, you express gratitude for everything that

has brought you this far, and for the current state you are in. You are asking for help to endure the difficult and painful parts. While expressing gratitude, you are asking, "Please help me endure this difficult and painful situation." I think this is what you are saying. The heart that expresses gratitude is very powerful in not being overwhelmed by difficulties and not giving up.

Another thing, the third one. Well, you are still saying that the heart that expresses gratitude is a force of salvation or help. It brings relief or rescue. "My heart was saved" or "Wow, that was really helpful" or "I feel relieved" or "I feel liberated" are all expressions of that. It's about being released or saved."

It says,

"Expressing gratitude in the heart for all the help received is a heart that helps us and stands up for them "  
世話になるすべてに礼をいふこころ 人が助かり立ちゆくこころ  
(Sewa ni naru subete ni rei wo iu kokoro hito ga tasukari tachiyuku kokoro)

" Expressing gratitude in the heart for all the help received brings light and enrichment to one's life. "  
世話になるすべてに礼をいふこころ 生活に光とうるほひもたらす  
(Sewa ni naru subete ni rei wo iu kokoro seikatsu ni hikari to uruoi motarasu)

"Cherishing in the heart for all the help received is a heart that helps one to thrive. "

世話になるすべてを大切に思ふころ 人が立行くころとい  
はん

(sewa ni naru subete wo taisetsu ni omou kokoro hito ga  
tachiiku kokoro to ihan)

This is also the same thing. Well, in that sense, it becomes a force of salvation and help. Let's express our gratitude for that. Certainly, when we are in pain, our field of vision narrows. Our heart also becomes firm. At such times, if we turn our hearts to the fact that we have received so much help and received amulets, and express our gratitude, that hardened and small heart will be loosened, released, and expanded.

It is said that gratitude is the heart of Waga Kokoro (our heart) and Jibun no Kokoro (my heart), so the heart is what makes the vessel, so what kind of heart is good? If we were to say, wouldn't it be better to have a calm, deep, and large heart?

However, it is not so easy. When we are in pain, tired, or anxious, our hearts become firm and small, and become squeezed. In that case, if we were asked, "If you were to compare that heart to a vessel, what kind of vessel would it be?" How would it be?

"Well, it's like shrinking and becoming crooked and having a hole in your heart, you know? If someone asked me, I'd probably answer like that if I thought about myself. But precisely because I tend to have such feelings, I express my gratitude and ask you to let me get through it. Not only that, but also because expressing gratitude means looking back at all that we have received so far, and realizing that we are surrounded by so many things for which we should be grateful.

It's not about saying that black is white, but about looking at the white things, the things we are grateful for, and seeing them for what they are. Even though there may be black areas right now, if you keep staring at them, they will become more and more rigid. Your head and heart will start to ache. But then, that heart becomes like a container, shrinking and becoming rigid and a little crooked. So, at times like this, in order to relax and soften your heart, to come closer to a joyful heart even just a little, stop and turn around and give thanks for what you have received, right here and right now. Kami-Sama thinks we are precious and loves us dearly. Kami takes care of me and gives me grace. Isn't all this Kami-Sama's deep love for each and every one of us as human beings?

In the midst of all this, we are supported by our livelihoods, and yes, there are times when we feel pain or itchiness, but it is precisely at times like this that we should look back at all that we have received and give thanks. Let's look at the part of ourselves that allows us to get through this, and let's cherish it and express our gratitude, so that our container of gratitude will become more expansive and deeper and more rounded. Then, we will be able to receive blessings with gratitude."

This is something that cannot be left alone. If you can leave it alone, it's a bit different from having faith. To have faith means to practice, and faith is a practice. You use yourself and your family as a practice book and practice.

If you think about it, it is a very important thing to stop and look back at the blessings you have received so far and express your gratitude, as it gives you the power to overcome difficulties and help you to be saved.

Well, basically, it's natural to say thank you because you are receiving help. Being without gratitude is already discourteous, and being discourteous is like stepping on someone's feet or kicking them, so it's not surprising that

you can't just keep complaining about what you don't have without thanking those who help you.

However, people easily become like that. That's why it's important to express your gratitude for being helped so far. If everything is peaceful, there are ways to express gratitude at that time, and sometimes you may not feel that way when you are struggling, but there are ways to express gratitude at that time. There is definitely a way.

I also had depression and such during my academic days, and I don't even remember how many times it was. I was like, "I want to die again." I couldn't even say thank you. I wanted to express my gratitude, but I couldn't. Even if I said it, it wouldn't come out. I was doing it while thinking it was better than nothing. Well, I think that was good, but my heart was not at all like that. Then, one day, I told the 5th Konko Sama about it. I said, "I can't even say thank you for everything I've been helped with." Then the 5th Konko Sama said, "There must be places where you can say thank you." That's what he said. Then I was like, "Ah, I see..." and I realized.

Well, I mean, it's not like I'm not suffering and struggling right now, but if you ask me if I feel any better than before, I can say that I do. Although I still can't express my gratitude fully because of the pain I'm experiencing now. However, when I think about the places where I can express my gratitude, I remember when I was eighteen and Kami-Sama helped me when I was in a difficult situation, and because of that help, I was able to come this far. So I thought to myself, "Oh, I really have been helped a lot. Even though I'm going through a tough time now, it's still undeniable that I have received a lot of help." Then I said, "Yes."

The 5th Konko Sama said that there are places where I can express my gratitude, so I thought about it for a moment and realized that it would be good to express my gratitude properly in those places. Konko Sama suggested that I should do that, so I agreed. And so, I thought that if I did it, I could do it, but the grateful feeling doesn't come up easily. Well, I can't help but feel depressed. However, it is a fact that I have been taken care of, so I can say thank you for that. It's hard to express it all the way, but that's the situation.

Even so, if I could just say where I can say thank you, there are some things that I received help with, so I was telling it to Kami Sama. Then, when I stop and look back later, I realize that saying thank you for the help I received is really powerful. It's not that simple to feel better about it immediately. But, aside from that, words have power, like the power of language, and when you say to Kami Sama, "I received help this way, and I received help then, thank you," the words "thank you" have power themselves.

On the other hand, words can hurt people. For example, if a parent says to their child, "You should just die," what happens? It's just words, but they can really hurt. Conversely, if someone says, "Thank you, thank you," or "You're a good kid," or praises you by saying "You did a great job," then you naturally feel happy.

Words carry thoughts, and "thank you" is one of those words. When you say "thank you" to Kami-Sama, who is the recipient, the word itself has the power to reach the heavens, resonate on the earth, and then reach me, who is a small part of this world. It reaches my spirit and my body.

Within myself, it's not easy to have a grateful heart. I may be in a state of depression or feeling like I want to die, and I feel trapped in those emotions. It's like drowning and

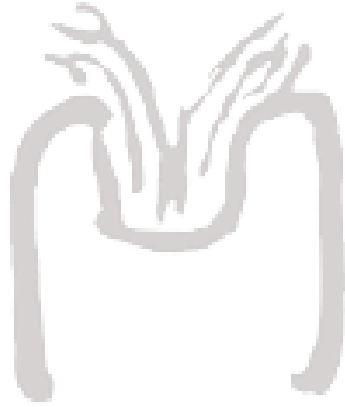
there's no way out. Even in those moments, I understand that it's important to show gratitude to those who have helped me. They deserve my thanks.

When I said I couldn't express my gratitude, Konko Sama told me that there are always things to be grateful for, even in the darkest moments. If I express my gratitude, my words may reach Kami-Sama, who has the power to help me. I realized that it's important to express gratitude for everything and everyone who has helped me. However, it's not always easy to express gratitude. Sometimes, when someone tells me to say thank you, I become even more hesitant. It's not a matter of just saying or not saying thank you. It's complicated.

It's important to find balance. It's not good to go to extremes or be too biased. The middle ground is essential. Expressing gratitude for what others have done for us is important as human beings.

Today, I am alive thanks to the support of others. I was born, I live, and I will die with the help of others. I am always living in gratitude, so I will continue to practice expressing my thanks joyfully and sincerely. I hope you all have a good day today, and let's all ask for a good day ahead while expressing our gratitude.

It is great that you have come today.



Morning Sermon  
by Rev. Shohei Tsuda  
Episode 12

January 12, 2021

Published by  
Konkoyo Amagasaki Church  
September 16, 2023

3-7-5 Higashinaniwacho,  
Amagasaki-shi, Hyogo-ken 660-0892  
Japan