

# What Arises from Salvation

## ~As we Hold the 2020 Spring Grand Ceremony~

(Foreword for the May 2020 issue)

The (Spring) Grand Ceremony for *Tenchi Kane No Kami* (the Divine Parent of the Universe) was held at the Konkokyo Headquarters on April 5th, 2020. This time, we held the Ceremony differently, but I would like to encourage us to thank our Parent *Kami* for the fact that we got to hold the grand ceremony anyway.

I humbly and sincerely thank all of you, Konko believers, ministers and ministers' assistants, at each local Konko church, for your understanding and cooperation for this spring's Grand Ceremony at the Headquarters; you kindly worshipped the Ceremony from afar, considering the prevention of the new-type Corona Virus infections the most important. Thanks to your sincere cooperation, each of us was blessed through this time's Grand Ceremony.

The infection of COVID-19 is still rampant all over the world and a great number of people are in great anxiety. In the April-5th Ceremony, we thanked our Divine Parent for our daily wellbeing and prayed for the serenity of the deceased spirits of the Corona Virus victims. We extended our prayers to infected people so that they would get well soon. We also prayed to our Parent Deity for the fierce spread of COVID-19 to calm down as soon as possible.

Uncertainty still surrounds us regarding this new-type Corona Virus, yet Ikigami Konko Daijin's Sacred Mediation is being performed at the *Konkokyo* Headquarters' Central Worship and Mediation Hall on a continual basis. This place is open to every single person, and it has been this way since the era of our dear Founder. This is, without doubt, an invaluable asset for all of us, Konko believers.

A long time ago, in 1921, a large wooden worship hall was completed in the Sacred Grounds of *Konkokyo*. The completion of the large wooden hall was the ardent wish shared by the entire Konko community at that time. 4 years later, however, this wooden worship hall burnt down. People of the Konko community, they were in huge shock, being tremendously saddened. The late Reverend Matsujiro'o Ishibashi, the founding minister of Konko Church of Kurume, is said to have remarked, "Things that exist physically are subject to get burnt down and/or be broken. As for that large wooden worship hall, it was our faith in our Divine Parent that gave birth to the building. As long as our faith does not get burnt, we could build even more gorgeous a building by receiving a divine blessing from our Parent *Kami*. This time, I want to serve our Divine Parent as much as I can, and I come over to the *Konkokyo*'s Sacred Grounds, being excited and highly motivated each time."

Our senior Konko ministers were tremendously passionate even when they faced an unprecedented situation. I am deeply impressed with these ministers, because their faith in *Kami* kept them passionate. Today, the Headquarters' Central Worship and Mediation Hall is in need of much, much money, because its air-condition system is in malfunction at present. This circumstance reminds me of an episode of a senior Konko minister.

This senior minister of *Konkokyo* had a daughter, who needed to receive a surgery on her leg. For his daughter's leg surgery, this minister needed a large sum of money, but he just couldn't afford it. In those days, the *Konkokyo* Organization was moving forward to the construction of the Konko Headquarters' Grand Service Hall. The minister was worried and in a deep thought as to what actions would please *Kami*. At that time, he received an instruction/guidance:

"It is needless to say that we are not planning to construct this building in order to advertize *Konkokyo* by building a huge building. The most important purpose for us to construct a new building is to make a hall for people to be saved. For people who are already practicing faith in our Parent *Kami* and also for those who may enter our faith in the future. In our faith, *Konkokyo*, we do not intend to make anything. In our faith, things, such as a new building, are completed through money, which are offered by Konko members. Konko members donate money because they are aware they have just received blessings from *Kami*. In our faith, no one is forced to donate money. Nobody is told to offer it. In our community, money donations are always made spontaneously, and this is exactly how things are completed in *Konkokyo*. You say that your daughter needs to take a surgery on her leg. Your daughter's leg will hopefully get better thanks to the operation, and that will mean salvation to you both. Right now, the most important project for your family is to let your daughter take a surgery on her leg, isn't it?"

This episode clearly shows us what is important for *Konkokyo*. And this story personally reminds me of the words by the late Reverend Mitsutoshi Sato'o, a former Chief Administrative Director of the Konko Headquarters. The Rev. Sato'o said the following things in the twilight of his life, "What truly matters in our faith (*Konkokyo*) is the Sacred Mediation performed by Konko-*sama* and worshippers. As long as these two elements are with our faith, *Konkokyo* will continue to have infinite chance to prosper."

Because we are currently walking towards an uncertain future, now is the very time when we must not forget the most important, fundamental essence of our faith. This time's "unusual" Grand Ceremony is allowing me to realize the importance of this thing.

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(by the Rev. Terunobu Yamashita, an Executive Minister of Konko HQ Administration)