



IZUNOME NEWS

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Pilgrims from Portugal and UK visiting Kyoto Sacred Grounds - February 2009

PRAGMATISM (TEACHING OF MEISHU-SAMA)

When I was young, I liked to study philosophy. Among the various theories and doctrines I found, I was drawn to "Pragmatism" as advocated by Williams James, a famous American philosopher. Pragmatism could be defined as "the principle of philosophy in action." According to James, philosophy is simply a mental game if we merely expound its theories. It must be put into practice in our daily lives to be of real value.

I thought this theory was interesting because it was very practical and expressed a characteristic spirit of America. At that time I sympathized with it and tried to apply the philosophy to my work and to my daily life. As a result, I received a great deal of benefit from it.

Later, when I took up a spiritual path, I began to think that we should apply this principle of "philosophy in action" to "faith" as well. In other words, we should apply the principle of "faith in action" to our daily lives. Imagine how greatly we would be benefited by adapting it to every aspect of our lives!

Politicians would be led to do their work honestly, with no iniquity. They would conduct the affairs of government selflessly, in the best interests of the people, so they would be trusted by the public and administration

would go smoothly.

Businessmen would manage their affairs on the principles of honesty and integrity, and so would win the trust of their customers.

They would treat their employees with love and consideration, and in turn their employees would work faithfully for them; naturally, business would steadily expand.

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Educators would teach their students with firm conviction, and so would be respected by their pupils and would have great influence upon them.

Government officers and company employees would work on the basis of faith, so they would show great efficiency and as a result would win promotions in their work.

Artists would express the highest creative inspiration, which would cause strong spiritual vibrations to be emitted through their works, and these would exert a benevolent influence on the people who viewed their creations.

Entertainers would express their faith through their work, as a result showing dignity and grace in their performances. This would arouse the aesthetic and noble sentiments of their audiences.

However, entertainment should not be stiff-mannered and as formal as school textbooks. It is of no value unless it is interesting and amusing, causing audiences to laugh and feel

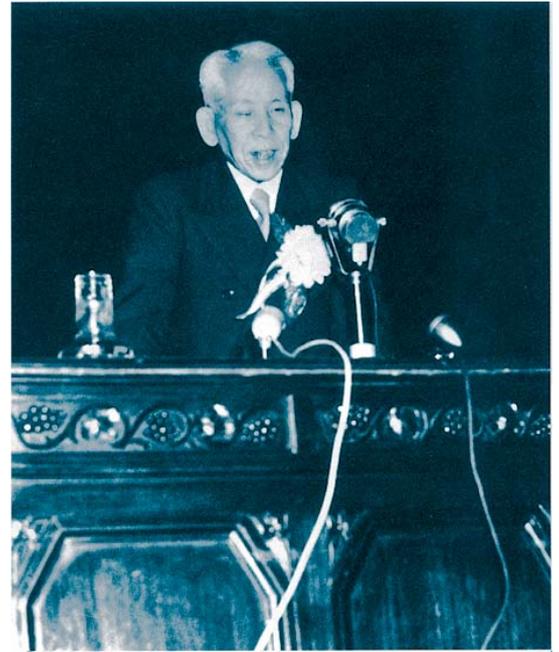
happy.

In whatever profession or circumstance a person might be, he can change his fortune and fate for the better and thus contribute greatly to society by expressing his faith in action.

You should always remember, as you put this religious pragmatism into practice, that if you make a show of your belief by being too fanatical you will be viewed with disfavour. Especially fervent believers often fall into this category.

There are some who wear their religions like badges, not knowing that such an attitude makes an unpleasant impression on others.

Ideally speaking, a believer in God should have no trace of religious fanaticism about him, should act no different from any ordinary person, should be virtuous and respectable, full of love and consideration for all in speech and



Meishu-Sama - Hibiya Public Hall 1951 - Tokyo

action. In this way he will make a favourable impression on those with whom he comes in contact. The manner in which he expresses and practices his faith should be refined and well-balanced, free from any dogmatic attitude. Anything extreme or crude is to be avoided.

We sometimes observe the followers of certain religions who are so extremely fanatical that people wonder if they might not be mentally disturbed. Such people have a tendency to be so captivated by their subjective points of view they do not care at all if they annoy or cause trouble to others, and their homes are usually gloomy. As a result, society begins to have doubts about the value of their religious convictions. In such cases, those who are in the position of giving guidance to these believers should be held responsible for their attitudes. Spiritual leaders should give this point careful attention.

*Meishu-Sama,
January 25th 1949*

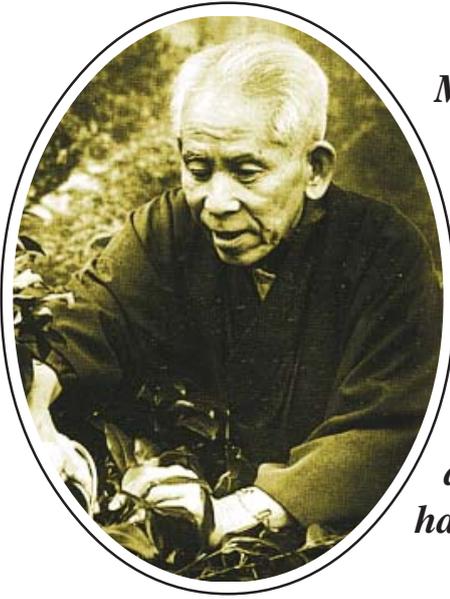
P R A G M A T I S M

Messianic Temple Atami Sacred Grounds



A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF MEISHU-SAMA

PART 1



Meishu-Sama (The Lord of Light), founder of our church, was born Mokichi Okada on 23rd December 1882 in Tokyo, Japan. He was born to a poor family of street merchants at a time of severe hardship in Japan.

In this first issue of Izunome News, we are presenting the first part of the series "A short biography of Meishu-sama". The subsequent parts will be published in the forthcoming issues.

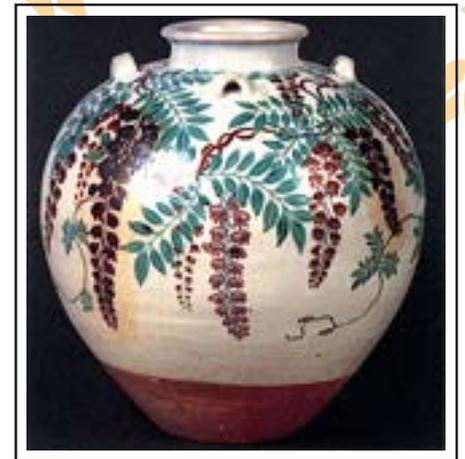
CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

Throughout his infancy and adolescence, the young Okada has suffered from ill health and was affected by many different illnesses.

One of the most remarkable aspects of his character, was the fact that, in spite of his generally poor health and being stricken by poverty, he was always finding ways of helping and making others happy. He could not possibly stand anyone's suffering without being compelled to help, regardless of his own condition. His unselfish nature has manifested itself since a very young age, as Meishu-sama described himself in one of his teachings:

"(...) Since my early years, I have

loved to make others happy - so I am always centred on the thought of how I can help others to become truly happy.(...) As soon as I get up in the morning, my first concern is the state of the members of my household. If even one of them is not feeling quite up to par, I too become less than happy.(...) I believe one of the things that helps me most in being able to enjoy the happiness I feel today, is this mental attitude. For this reason I am always saying and writing: 'Unless we make others happy, we ourselves can never become truly happy'.(...) The greatest goal of our Church, the realisation of Paradise on Earth, can be attained when this way of thinking has spread and is shared in the minds of all the people on Earth.(...)"



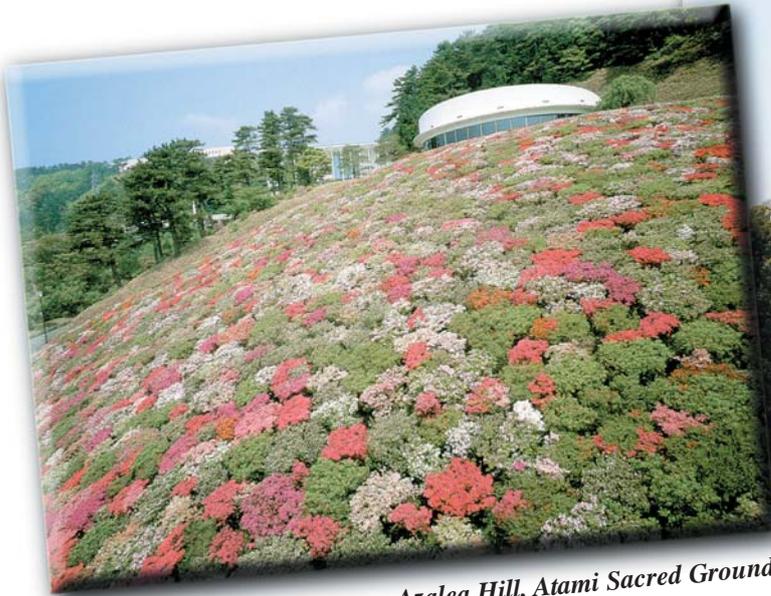
THE LOVE FOR ARTS

Since childhood, Meishu-sama loved art and aspired to be a painter. His passion for arts was such that, in spite of the hardship he was constantly going through, he managed with great effort to enter an arts school at the age of fifteen. Unfortunately, shortly afterwards, he was affected by a serious eye infection which left his right eye blind and was forced to abandon it. His love for arts remained throughout his life and became particularly important as a means of developing spirituality - an essential part of the ideal world preached in his teachings."(...) Paradise on Earth must be a world of eternal, peace, free from all conflicts, where truth, virtue and beauty are manifested in a perfect manner.(...)"

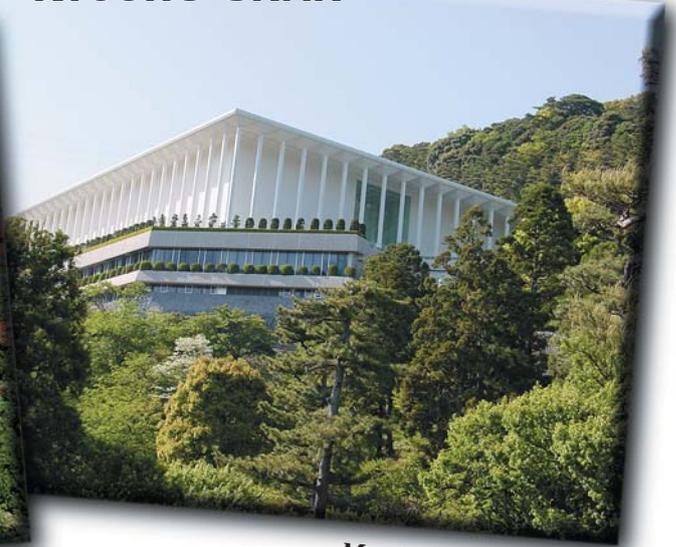
To be continued

PILGRIMAGE TO JAPAN SACRED GROUNDS

LET US TAKE PART IN THE PARADISE SERVICE WITH
THE PRESENCE OF KYOSHU-SAMA



Azalea Hill, Atami Sacred Grounds



Messianic Temple, Atami

From June 6th to 17th, a group of Johrei missionaries accompanied by Min. Eduardo de Souza will travel to Japan to take part in the Paradise on Earth Service of June 15th with the presence of Kyoshu-sama. The pilgrims will visit the Sacred Grounds in Atami, Hakone and Kyoto. They will also visit Mount Nokogiri (where Meishu-sama received God's revelation about the Transition from the Age of Night to the Daylight Age) and the birth place of Meishu-sama, in Hashiba. Within the Sacred Grounds the group will visit, among others, The Komyo Temple, Shinzan-so; Kanzan-tei; Sanguetsu-an Gardens; Nikkoden and the MOA Art Museum.

Every year thousands of Johrei members and visitors from all over the world pilgrimage to the Japan Sacred Grounds. The Sacred Grounds have been built by Meishu-Sama as prototypes

of Paradise on Earth - a world of eternal bliss, free from disease, poverty and conflict. They are filled with the light of salvation, a place where God's Plan is manifested.

Meishu-Sama teaches us that we



Mount Nokogiri

are the *sum total of our ancestors*. Hence, when we visit the Sacred Grounds, we do so as their Representatives and they will also be visiting with us. The Sacred Grounds are the birth place of our souls and there we will find ourselves imbued with an atmosphere of supreme bliss, of truth, virtue and beauty, together with the Supreme God's benevolence permeated in the ground. Visiting the Sacred Grounds is a great step in the messianic faith.

During 11 days the group will have an intense program where they will dedicate, study, attend lectures and prepare for the Paradise on Earth Service, the highlight of the pilgrimage.

For more information about the programme and how to take part in the pilgrimage, please contact Min. Erico Tavares at the London Johrei Centre (see contact information at the bottom of the page 1)

THE PRACTICE OF SONEN OF GRATITUDE HAS COMPLETELY CHANGED MY WORKPLACE

My name is Lucia Murphy, I am a Missionary of the London Johrei Centre and my main current dedication is to serve as the Missionary in charge of the Clapham Home Johrei in South London. Today I would like to share with you my recent experience regarding Sonen of Gratitude.



Over the last four years, I have been working for a major financial company in the City as a Security Officer, and I am now a Junior Manager in my area. I should add that my job requires a great deal of responsibility. As part of my duties, I need to ensure the security of everything and everyone in the company's main building, where around 15,000 people work.

As a result of the current worldwide financial crisis, my company has been going through difficult times. This led to many radical changes being introduced at the workplace and many situations arose which I perceived as unfair and unjust toward the employees. This made me feel very bad as a human being and, also, as a messianic member. This feeling was particularly strong for the fact that, as a Manager, I was expected to implement and enforce such changes upon the employees under my supervision. Such bad feelings started to build up and at some point, more recently, I felt extremely bitter and revolted deep down. I was fighting with myself. I was wondering what I could do to stop the injustice I saw. But, as a Manager, I had no power to make the necessary decisions. As a consequence, I started to think very seriously about quitting my job. With all this conflict in my mind, one day I decided to go to the Johrei Centre to speak to the Minister about what was going on and ask for guidance.

At the Johrei Centre I started

reporting to the Minister all the wonderful experiences I was having through the Practice of Sonen, the many experiences of members and non-members whom I was doing Sonen for and, also, the permission of guiding new people to our Church. After that, I started reporting the serious problems I was facing at work, and told the Minister that these problems were piling up and creating a hell-like situation for me. I also told the Minister how difficult it was for me to truly believe that all those people who I saw as unjust have a Divine Essence. And that it was also difficult to believe that they are all connected to me because they are my ancestors. When I finished, the Minister asked me some questions about my workplace. He asked me if I had my own room, my own computer, a telephone; if the building was nice, if it had a beautiful decoration; if I used to meet many important and powerful people daily, and so on. Then, I answered "Yes" to all those questions, even though I was so confused that I could not have a clue as to why he was asking me that. Then the Minister asked me how many times I have been grateful to God and Meishu-Sama for

my work and all those good things that it gave me every day. I can tell you that, at that very moment, I felt the deep Love of Meishu-Sama, as if he was telling me off in a most pleasant and lovely way. I felt so ashamed of myself, because I recognised that I had never been thankful for any of that

The Minister, then, gave me an important guidance: He asked me that from that moment on, I should only do Practice of Sonen of Gratitude and leave everything in God's hands, so as to completely detach from that problem. He also told me that, according to Meishu-Sama's Teachings, as a Manager, my own sonen has a great influence on the sonen of all those working under my responsibility and on my workplace in general. Hence, by changing my sonen to one of gratitude I would contribute to the happiness of all my work colleagues who were all experiencing a very difficult period.

On that same night, when saying the Amatsu-Norito prayer during the Service for Salvation of the Ancestors, I sincerely asked Meishu-Sama for forgiveness and thanked Him from the bottom of my heart for my work and everything that I was receiving from it. As soon as I arrived back home that night, I prayed again before my home



Lucia Murphy with Min. Nazih Gerude at Clapham Common Home Johrei

Altar and apologised to Meishu-Sama once more.

From this point on, I could feel that a real change had occurred in my sonen. As a result, I stopped seeing my work as a heavy burden. On the contrary, I started to look at it with a positive attitude. I could now see the Paradise in it as, through the problems I faced there, I was having a great opportunity to attain spiritual growth. I began to feel deeply grateful for my work, especially for all the things that I did not like. All this happened within a few days only!

Then, another great miracle occurred: Quite unexpectedly, all the proposed changes which I considered to be unfair were cancelled by the senior management of the company. I soon realised that the hand of Meishu-Sama was definitely behind all this.

After all, how could they have changed their minds so quickly, if they were absolutely determined to make those changes?

On another occasion, shortly after what I have just mentioned, I wrote a report to my superiors about a situation that was making the company lose great sums of money and putting many priceless lives in danger. This report reached one of the Chairmen of the company, who promptly sent me a letter full of compliments. He also told the Director to commend my sincere efforts to save many lives and my commitment to the company. This was a great lesson to me: Now that I was truly grateful to the senior management, the Director himself was expressing his

gratitude for my good work for the company!

Now I fully understand that a small change in my Sonen, to a Sonen of Gratitude, brought Light to many areas of the company I work for. I know that it is the Messiah's presence that allowed this to happen.

I would like to thank the Minister for his patience with me, after all these years. Above all, I am deeply grateful to the Messiah Meishu-Sama, for having manifested Himself through the Minister's guidance. Now I can feel even more the Messiah's presence and protection in my life.

Thank you very much indeed, Messiah Meishu-Sama!

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PROGRAMME - LONDON JOHREI CENTRE - MARCH 2009

Activity	Day - date	Time
General cleaning - preparation for Monthly Service	Friday - 6/3/2009	All day
Meeting for Missionaries	Saturday - 7/3/2009	1-3.30pm
Monthly Thanksgiving Service	Saturday - 7/3/2009	6pm
Ikebana Sanguetsu class	Saturday - 28/3/2009	3pm
Monthly Prayer for Salvation of the Ancestors	Saturday - 28/3/2009	8pm

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Regular opening hours: Monday - Friday 9am-9.30pm
Saturdays 9am-8.30pm

For Johrei Assistance (outside the London Johrei Centre) please contact:

- Raphael (North London) - 07725981991
- Lucia Murphy (South London) - 07966910482 / 02086710664

For emergencies or outside London area:

- Min Eric - 07771722369 / Min Eduardo - 07791045662



Altar room - London Johrei Centre

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