

**Kyoshu-sama's Message at Risshun (Beginning of Spring) Service  
Hall of Worship, Atami Sacred Grounds  
February 4, 2012**

Before I start my talk, I would like to say that we should not easily use the word "God" and utter the sound "God" lightly.

But still, I must, with a deep sense of awe and fear of God, use the word "God" and say that God ceaselessly imparts His eternal breath of life to each one of us and to every existence. We can breathe now here on earth because we have already received God's eternal and spiritual breath in heaven, in the world of our beginning.

Meishu-sama taught that as we human beings possess a part of the soul of God, a divine essence, we are a "child of God" and a "temple of God." What this means, I believe, is that we have been born with an opportunity to become a "child of God" or a "temple of God" who can be truly aware that God is with us and lives within us.

When we say, "we need to establish a paradise on earth," it means that we need to be born anew as a child of God. In truth, it is not us but God who wishes to have us newly born as His children. Wishing to create His own child was the very reason why God began the work of the whole Creation. We should know that it was Meishu-sama who responded to this wish of God and was able to be newly born as a true child of God, as a true expression and a prototype of a paradise on earth, as a Messiah.

Today, on this day of Risshun service, let us remember and believe with a firm conviction that, just as He nurtured Meishu-sama, God is also nurturing us every moment to have us newly born as His true children, Messiahs.

I understand that you members of Izunome Kyodan aspire to become "a pioneer of salvation" by actively practicing and propagating the work of Meishu-sama so that the light of salvation can be extended to as many people as possible. I also understand that you are trying hard to be altruistic and to cultivate a mind of gratitude. I deeply appreciate your sincere efforts.

It has been a great privilege to read your faith experiences. I was particularly touched to know that many of you are beginning to realize that your mind or *sonen* is

not for you to freely use but it is actually God's and it is a place through which God expresses Himself. I am certain that this realization is the result of your constant effort in trying to believe that God is behind all that happens in your life. I feel that, while you all have different experiences, different tasks to accomplish, and different emotions and reactions toward whatever happens in your life, Meishu-sama, through these experiences, is training you so that you would know what it is to truly thank and serve God.

Soon, the expansion and improvement work of the Kyoto Sacred Grounds, including an added tearoom, and the rebuilding of the Crystal Palace at the Atami Sacred Grounds will be completed. I sincerely thank you for your continuous contribution in maintaining and improving these prototypes of paradise on earth. To preserve them for and bequeath them to the future generations and to learn the heart of Meishu-sama who constructed these Sacred Grounds with enormous passion are, I am sure, the kind of tasks we must continue on.

I am truly grateful for all of your efforts, and I pray that Meishu-sama will continue to embrace you with his boundless love and guide you with his strong hand in whatever you set out to achieve this year.

Recently, I wonder what it is to "know God." Most of us have come to know God through His miracles – illnesses cured, poverty disappeared or conflicts resolved. Even though experiencing a miracle is a good way to come to know God for the first time, there is a danger in assuming that performing miracles is the only thing God does. We may start to mistakenly think: "if there is no miracle, God is not working." Or we may feel overly proud of the miracles we have performed, for example in our practices of Johrei, and ask God for more and more miracles. However, once you have come to know God, your knowledge of God has to progress to the next level and go beyond the point of just recognizing Him as a miracle performer.

This next level is to know that God is the one who is within you, encouraging and guiding you every moment to become His child. You may not hear his voice clearly. You may not feel his presence distinctly. But when you search or look at your heart carefully, you should know that God is always there for you.

And if you can sense, however subtle, the presence of God within you, it is because God, at that very moment, is calling you and sending you a signal to come back

to His heaven. So respond to His call and return to His heaven, not by yourself, but with the whole humanity, your ancestors and all creation in the name of Meishu-sama.

To truthfully “know God” is to realize that God is the one who is within you and always welcoming you to heaven. You should know that coming to this realization is in itself a miracle performed by God. It may not be the kind of miracles you have known, but it is a miracle that, if you always seek for it, will eventually lead you to become God’s child, a Messiah.

In his 1935 inaugural speech entitled, “Construction of the world of Great Divine Light,” Meishu-sama informed us that a “great light” or a “sun” would soon appear. In fact, this new “sun” has already risen and is shining brightly within us. If you can believe in Meishu-sama and willingly receive this light, I am certain that your soul will shine gloriously within you.

God’s light is like a circle and an aura. It is infinitely vast and surrounds everything with its radiance. Any darkness will vanish once the aura of God encircles it.

We once lived a selfish life, disregarding God and giving ourselves priority. We must come to know that our sins and darkness have already been encircled by the aura of God and forgiven. God’s judgment has already passed, and the whole humanity has already been saved and welcomed into God’s circle, the world of light.

When we imagine Meishu-sama’s idea of the “transition from night to day,” we might have been assuming that the age of night will one day end, someday in the future. But I say to you, in the name of Messiah Meishu-sama, that we already live in the age of day, encircled by the aura of God. And I say to you, it depends on each one of us whether the age of night can come to an end or not. The age of night ends at the very moment when you admit that it already ended. So, admit, now, that God ended the age of night for us.

If we were still in the age of night, how could all the illnesses, suffering and pain be regarded as “purification,” as the blessing of God and not as a punishment of God? If we did not live in the age of day, how could we perform the works of Meishu-sama such as Johrei? God never nurtures us in the age of night; He has always nurtured and will always nurture us in the age of day.

Meishu-sama, in his poems, called the people who are unaware that the age of day has arrived “miserable.” Meishu-sama wrote, “I feel sorry for those miserable

people who are unaware and asleep even though the age of night already ended.” Another poem reads, “Miserable are you, the lost sheep. Why do you not realize? Look. The long-standing age of night has already ended.”

Realizing that they are miserable, Meishu-sama wants to save them, the lost sheep. But how? He does it by making us feel the suffering, pain and darkness of those who are blinded and are still stuck in the age of night. They are the ancestors within you and the ancestors who are connected with your heart. You may think that the pain and suffering you experience and the darkness of your heart are only yours. No, they are your ancestors’ pain, suffering and darkness too.

You have sensed these negative feelings because God, through Meishu-sama, has sent light to you and your ancestors who were in the darkness, unable to get out of the age of night. So do not hold on to your darkness. When you sense a negative feeling, it is the very moment when God is encouraging you to proclaim an end to the age of night and start a new beginning. Proclaim this end to yourself and to your ancestors. Then, you will be saved, and the age of day, in actuality, will arrive.

When your heart is in pain and when you are in the darkness because of whatever problem you have, believe that God is with you, call out to Him and say: “God, it is your light that makes my heart suffer. This light is your blessing, a blessing that saves the suffering ancestors within me. I humbly, and with gratitude, accept your light and surrender myself and my ancestors to you in the name of Meishu-sama. Please, with your mercy, welcome us into your heaven as ones who are already forgiven and saved. Please, with your mercy, use me, my ancestors and all nature to accomplish your will. I, together with them, serve you.” To pray with these words is how you could respond to the love of God who makes you sense negative emotions with His light, and how you could proclaim an end to the age of night and start a new beginning.

You may think it is you who say these words and prayers toward God, but it is not. It is in fact Meishu-sama within you. That is why the words of your prayers do not need to be perfect or exact. Meishu-sama will assist you and complement your prayers in a way that best expresses your sentiments to God.

Meishu-sama wrote a poem: “Let us entrust ourselves to God’s care. We are only human, possessing little power.” Yes, we are powerless, and it is true we cannot achieve anything by our own efforts. We, however, have Meishu-sama with us. Wherever we are

and whatever we do – in our daily life or when we are engaged in the activities of the Johrei center – we should always tell ourselves, “May Meishu-sama assist me in my works and duties.” With Meishu-sama, let us live, work and serve God positively, cheerfully and with a heart full of peace and richness.

To close, I pray that the light and power of life that abundantly fill us and all nature may be returned into the hands of God through Meishu-sama and that God, who is with Meishu-sama, be praised forever.

Thank you very much.