

## **BECOME A RESIDENT OF PARADISE**

A message by Kyoshu-sama

(The fourth spiritual leader, Yoichi Okada.)

Annual Ancestor Service, July 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010

Hall of Worship, Atami Sacred Grounds, Japan.

Greetings to you all at today's Annual Ancestor Service.

I have a deep sense of awe and respect when I speak about God as being alive forever. The central idea of God's work of creation is to nurture human beings to become His true children. I believe that this is His eternal truth and love. I also believe that 'messiah' is the most fundamental and divine name, because, prior to the Creation, God first prepared the prototype of human beings in His thought and named it 'messiah.' Therefore, the word 'messiah' itself is the embodiment of His idea of giving new birth to His own children. The word, with this idea of messiah, permeates all His creation. With this word, everything is prepared in Heaven and created in order to fulfill this intent. All human beings are, both spiritually and physically, united with God by the medium of this divine word. Therefore, we are all destined to become His beloved true children. Anyone who recognizes this fact, devotes himself/herself to God and serves Him completely potentially deserves to be called messiah if and when God acknowledges and accepts him/her as His own child. These children can be called saviors, because they are, as being God's true instruments and representatives, sharing His boundless love with everyone and everything. We are granted God's own soul and consciousness along with His breath of life so that we can be in His constant nurturing.

God accomplished a major conversion called "the turning from Night to Day." He changed everything to be new. God caused Meishu-sama to be newly born as His true child. Meishu-sama became our ideal and role model.

We are all connected to Meishu-sama. We are receiving God's nourishment so that we can be newly born, along with everything in the universe, and all of humanity and their

parents and ancestors. At today's service, I express my gratitude for God's profound love and infinite blessings and offer my praise to God who is with Meishu-sama.

Izunome Kyodan members are doing their best in practicing Johrei and other aspects of Meishu-sama's teachings on a daily basis and I am grateful for your efforts. I understand that you are doing "Sonen Practice" and "a little gesture of kindness" with the goal of becoming a bright example of a resident of paradise. Meishu-sama must be very pleased with your efforts.

### **Our Ancestors Exist Within Our Consciousness**

Today we are having our Annual Ancestor Service but where do our ancestors live? Our ancestors must live in the spiritual realm but where is that spiritual realm found? When we say spiritual realm, our understanding is very vague. We think that the spiritual realm must be somewhere out there or somewhere outside of ourselves.

Meishu-sama said that the spiritual realm is a world of consciousness. The spirits of our ancestors do not exist somewhere out there, apart from us, but within our own consciousness and thoughts, where God and Meishu-sama are at the center.

Meishu-sama also said that each one of us is the sum total of our numerous ancestors. Therefore, our ancestors exist in our consciousness and thoughts, and at the same time, are alive within us at present, in all the tiny cells of our physical bodies as invisible yet intense genetic information. The spiritual realm and our physical world do not exist separately, in separate locations, but they are woven together. Both are governed by God as one.

I now realize that I should adjust my previous concept about life. Up until now, I thought of life primarily as the life of my physical body. When I say I have a life, I thought of my life as from the time I was born until I take my last breath. When I use the expression "my life was saved," I thought of my physical life and health. Concerning the salvation of our lives, Meishu-sama gave us an important teaching.

At today's monthly service, we chanted three poems by Meishu-sama.  
The first verse says:

To save humanity is to show the teaching that life is eternal.

In this verse, Meishu-sama is teaching us that it's very important for human beings to know that we are eternal beings and that this knowledge leads to our true salvation. I think that to know that our life is eternal means to know that our life is not ours but it belongs to God.

Human beings think that their lives are their own, and therefore, think that life is limited only to this visible physical world. Thus they have created their own image of death, the end of their lives.

God is eternal and God is our life itself. Once we know that our life belongs to God, and recognize it honestly, then we can definitely say that “our life was saved” in the truest sense.

### **Our Ancestors Are Alive and Growing Within Our Consciousness**

During the Ancestor Memorial Service, we chanted another set of three poems. The second verse for the ancestor service by Meishu-sama says:

By repeating the process of birth, death, and then re-birth countless times,  
Human soul lives forever, eternally.

When Meishu-sama said that the human soul lives forever, eternally, we should understand that human beings are given the eternal life from God.

How about the life of our ancestors? We are their guides for our ancestors. But we are influenced by the preconceived traditional idea that the spiritual realm is the world after death, and we usually think that our ancestors are dead. Because we all are connected, we all share the same ancestors even though we tend to think that our ancestors are *our* ancestors and other people’s ancestors are *their* ancestors. We think that they are separate and different. However, we need to understand that all our ancestors’ lives are God’s life, and belong to God, just as our life belongs to God.

We are together with our ancestors. And Meishu-sama has prepared a path through which we can be freed from the dark world of death and brought to live in the light of salvation. In this sense, the true “our guide” for our ancestors is Meishu-sama who is always with us, and we are being used as Meishu-sama’s instruments and representatives.

Since we are now in the Daylight Age, I believe we should serve in God’s work with the conviction that our ancestors are not really dead. Our ancestors are still vividly alive and keep growing within our consciousness and within all the cells of our physical bodies. They breathe the spiritual breath of life from God together with Meishu-sama.

Since we are together with our ancestors who are alive within us, we should not believe that we gradually decline and diminish, as we get older. Rather, we are revived each day to become newly born, along with our ancestors. With this conviction, we will take a step forward daily.

## **We Are the Vessels of God's Virtue and Love**

God prepared our souls in heaven and released us to the world. God loves us because we are His own children and He wants to welcome us back again. This love of God is the essence of all *love* in the world. Because of this love, God created everything in the universe. If so, God's love exists in everything in the universe; God's love exists in all of us; and God's love exists in all humanity and their ancestors in the spiritual realm. God's love exists in those children who will be born to earth in the future.

God, through his love, has connected us to Meishu-sama and has been nurturing us since our very beginning. Because of this fact, I believe that we can be grateful for God's love and can practice love for others.

It is important for us to ask God, through Meishu-sama, that all may be forgiven, purified, saved, and revived, especially those ancestors and many others who perhaps have not felt God's love. We, together with ourselves, guide them and place them in God's hands. We also wish to be allowed to serve in God's work of sharing the love of God, who is with Meishu-sama, with all and everything.

In our human nature, we often feel that our individual personality and self is ours. So we tend to think that we do something by ourselves and often forget to do everything "together with" our ancestors and "together with" other people. I believe that this attitude of doing everything "together with" others is an essential part of love for others. This attitude is the way to praise God's virtue.

Only God possesses all virtues and all virtues come from God. God forgave us for our past mistakes of being arrogant and for having regarded God's virtues as our own. God guided and welcomed us to the bright new world of the Daylight Age. Even though our human ego has many flaws, God lets us experience our ego as ours. God is trying to nurture and raise us above our limited idea of ego. This is one expression of God's great virtues. We are only serving as the vessels to reflect and express God's virtues, together with Meishu-sama.

Accumulating virtue means to return to God our ego and human mind and offer it to God as God's own virtue. It also means to return our souls to God since they are the divine particles from God. In this way, God is leading us to return to the original world, the world of paradise.

The third poem we chanted for the July monthly service today says:

Good deeds, clearly visible to everyone,  
Cannot be compared spiritually

To those done secretly, without fanfare.

They are heaven's true treasures. [Prayer Book, page 73]

How our minds work is not visible to other people. Our minds belong to God and God knows all our thoughts. We can recognize our minds, our hearts and everything that is happening in them as God's virtue. We can be grateful for everything that happens within us. We will be guided to have a better communication with God and be better attuned to God's Will.

### **Paradise Already Exists Within Us**

Last month, we had our annual Paradise on Earth Service. Our motto is to construct paradise on earth, a world where there is no disease, poverty and conflict. I believe that this construction has to be done first in the minds of each one of us. Meishu-sama composed this verse: "Freedom of choice is given to everyone. Through our thoughts we can create heaven or hell." [Prayer Book, page 53]

That fact that we have souls within ourselves, divine particles from God, means that paradise already exists within ourselves, the paradise which is the original world.

Meishu-sama also wrote a brush calligraphy that says, "Paradise on earth exists within my heart." Meishu-sama lives at the center of consciousness of each one of us and is working actively in us.

We don't need to seek and find paradise somewhere outside of ourselves. Rather we need to believe that Meishu-sama lives within us, that paradise exists within us, and recognize this as a firm fact. Because paradise on earth exists within each one of us, Meishu-sama said, "Each individual person has to become a resident of heaven, and the time has come when all of us can achieve this."

We need to remember that, from our very beginning, we lived in that paradise which is the original world. In order to remind ourselves, we can direct our thoughts to Meishu-sama constantly and focus on Meishu-sama always, with the idea of immersing our whole body, spirit and soul, into the paradise which is at the center of our life, at the center of our soul and our consciousness.

We are now aware that all of humanity has been given this wonderful blessing, the turning from Night to Day. We can be grateful, together with everyone and everything, that we are being nurtured and raised up for our own growth and perfection during this new phase of time called the Daylight Age. We would like to do our part to be of service, even a little bit, in God's plan of building paradise on earth within each one of us. By doing this, we can respond to the wish of Meishu-sama, who said when he founded our spiritual group

in 1935, that “first an individual person has to be saved and become perfect,” before paradise can be established in the world.

In concluding my message for today’s service, I pray that you will be blessed with peace and health in your days ahead, absorbing God’s spiritual breath of life and receiving Meishu-sama’s guidance. May God’s work of new creation flourish and thrive. Thank you very much.

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