

Kyoshu-sama's Message
Membership Meeting
Higashi Ward Community Cultural Center, Hiroshima
May 3, 2018

Good afternoon, everyone.

I am truly grateful and delighted that you, the members of the Western Japan Region, have invited me, my wife, Mayumi, and my son, Masaaki, to Hiroshima and to this wonderful meeting.

I would like to thank Reverend Furutsu, Director of the Western Japan Region, for the sincere greeting he gave me just now. And I wish to extend my deep gratitude to Reverend Shirasawa, President of Izunome Group, who has just announced, with a very firm, strong and definite voice, that Izunome Group was officially established as of two days ago, on the 1st of May. Members who have been involved in the establishment of Izunome Group must have gone through great hardship and for that I would like to offer my heartfelt gratitude to them.

With assistance and support from Su no Hikari Kyodan (Church of the Light of the Lord), I am certain that Izunome Group will fulfill its mission entrusted by Meishu-sama. From here on, I myself am determined to move forward with Izunome Group and with President Michio Shirasawa whom I trust.

When I first started as *Kyoshu* and succeeded the sacred work of Meishu-sama, I thought of how great it would be if there was even just one person in the whole world who wished to walk with me. But now, my soul trembles with joy and gratitude when I see, in front of me, so many of you who are determined to move ahead with me.

Just now, we heard the greeting from Mr. Yano, chairman of the committee of this membership meeting, and the faith experience from Ms. Yuki Gondoh, member of Hakata Church. I was deeply moved and encouraged to know how seriously you study my words and put them into practice in your everyday lives with the aim to grasp the true message Meishu-sama left for us.

Together with all of you, I will continue to walk on the path Meishu-sama has prepared for us – the path that leads to true salvation. I would like you to know that Mayumi and Masaaki share the same feeling as mine in wishing to move forward with all of you.

When I look back on my life, I think I believed in a God who existed somewhere quite far and distant from me. Since Meishu-sama was my grandfather, I naturally came to know the existence of God through reading his teachings and through practicing Johrei. But my image of God was very vague, especially because we cannot hear His voice and see His form. In short, I

think I believed in God simply because I felt I had to do so.

For a long time, we were preoccupied by what was happening around us and found it difficult to truly turn our hearts to God. Even when we were able to think of God at times, we usually thought of how God was going to fulfill our wishes and needs and had seldom thought of what God's wishes were and what He was thinking. Yes, it is true that we exclaimed to the world that our mission was to "construct a paradise on earth" and "save humanity" but our understanding of what a paradise was and what salvation was were quite limited. I think we were wishing to create a paradise for humans, not for God.

I only needed God when I was in trouble and I thanked God only when my wish came true. My prayer, my faith, and my gratitude had been selfish. They were human-centered.

But Meishu-sama came into this world. He came to open our hearts, turn our eyes to the true God and led us into an entirely new world. He made us realize that we were human-centered, selfish and not obedient to God. At the same time, Meishu-sama taught us that the light of God is within us and that our life is in fact the life of God. Meishu-sama reconstructed our hearts into humble hearts and directed us to the true God. He urged us to realize that our true mission is to serve God's wishes and not human wishes.

Meishu-sama also let us know that the heart of God is not here to punish us but to forgive and save. God is not going to punish us for our disobedience as we have imagined this to be our destiny. Rather, God, out of His love and grace, decided to forgive all of our shortcomings, all of our human-centered ways, and all of our disobedient hearts so that we could be His children. How deep is the love of God!

Meishu-sama was born into this world in 1882 as Mokichi Okada. His life, as you all know, was filled with difficulties and hardships. But in the middle of his life, he found God – he came to realize that God in fact lives within him, within each one of us. Meishu-sama devoted his life to spreading this truth to as many people as possible. He surrendered his life to God.

Then, in 1954, a year before he left the earth and while suffering from the pain of a brain stroke, Meishu-sama announced that he was "born anew." He emphasized that "it is different from rebirth or reincarnation," but that he was "newly born as a Messiah." Through this, Meishu-sama became a true child of God who could serve in, succeed and carry out the divine work of God.

God the Creator lives.

He lives within each one of us. But it is nearly impossible for us to perceive this and say out

loud, “God lives within me.” This is not something we can understand with logic and reasoning.

The purpose of God’s creations is to bear His own children, that is, for us to be newly born and become His children. Meishu-sama left us many things – the teachings regarding the construction of paradise on earth and the salvation of humanity; many other teachings and hymns; Johrei, Nature Farming and Art; his living examples. But there is only one wish of God that permeates through all of these teachings and activities, and that is the Will of God to make us be born anew as His true children. God prepared politics, economics, religions of the world, science, various philosophies and theologies. God prepared them for one reason, and that is to make us be born anew as His true children.

Everything comes from God. Every word comes from God. He is the origin and Creator of all. God wants to manifest Himself through all of His creations. Everything exists for God. We exist for God. God wishes to manifest Himself through us.

Meishu-sama was born anew as a child of God. And now, in heaven, with God, he is serving in His work to manifest His Will to all. We can be a part of this holy work only if we want to be. God wishes to use us. He needs us. He needs each one of us to advance His divine work. Each one of us is entrusted with a mission to serve in the divine work just like Meishu-sama is doing at this moment.

We should not just rely and depend on Meishu-sama and pray for ourselves. We must rise and wake up to who we really are and why we have come to this earth. We have come to this world to follow Meishu-sama – to follow Meishu-sama and be born once more as true children of God. That is why Meishu-sama was born anew as our example and predecessor. Let us not waste what Meishu-sama has achieved in this world, what he has left for us in this world.

This is not an imaginary story. This is the truth Meishu-sama left for us. God already decided that He would make us His true children well before the creation of the universe. Now, it is up to each one of us to decide whether we want to live on this path set by God and Meishu-sama. Even if you feel that you cannot make this decision, ask God to make you be able to grow into ones who can make this decision. Nobody can make this decision for you. Each one of us has to make up our own mind, by our own will, to accept this truth – the truth that we are born into this world to become true children of God.

Do not live in a small, small dream. Why not aspire for something big? Otherwise what is the point of coming into this world? We can be a child of God! We can acquire eternal life! We can serve in the divine work of forgiving, purifying, saving and making all things new! Nothing is greater than being able to become a child of God. I am overawed when I think of the great blessing God is trying to bestow on us.

When Meishu-sama announced that he was born anew as a Messiah, he delivered a speech to his followers. The very first words he spoke at the time was, “On my part, I have become much younger.” He did not just say, “I have become much younger,” but he included the words “on my part.” I believe that Meishu-sama was casting a question to us, “how about on your part? Have you become younger like me?”

Has anyone voiced out a reply to Meishu-sama? Have we told him that we also were able to become younger thanks to Meishu-sama? Let us respond to Meishu-sama now, shall we?

On my part, I have become much younger, too! Thank you, Meishu-sama!

We are now made new and young, together with Meishu-sama. So let us return to heaven where Meishu-sama lives. And let us serve in the ever new divine work of saving everything and everyone.

May the grace of God be shared with all.