

2021 Autumn Memorial Service

Good afternoon, everyone! Happy New Day, Week & special “Thanks” for joining today’s service. This is our annual Autumn Memorial Service of KC Chicago for 2021.

Since this year’s annual Spring Memorial Service, we have had seven *Newly Departed souls*:

Mrs. Sanae Kano, an earnest Konko believer in Japan,
Mrs. Gweneth Lambros, mother to Greg Lambros,
Stark Tori, friend of Artemis Comfort
Rev. Nobumichi Kitamura, head-minister of KC Akiyoshi in Japan,
Rev. Michihiro Yuasa, former head-minister of KC Seattle,
Rev. Fumie Takahashi, mother to Noriko Konko, who’s Rev. Kiyoji’s wife,
Mrs. Chidori Shima, a dedicated member of KC Airaku

When welcoming these Mitama spirits to today’s service, I have asked Shodai Oyasensei & Our Founder to lead them to the world of peace & joy in the next world, that is, the world of Ikigami Konko Daijin.

As we honor all the virtuous Mitama spirits such as Konko Daijin’s successors, disciples & ministers who made great contributions to the Konko Faith, and ministers & believers, who devoted themselves to propagating the Konko Faith in North America, I cannot help but think what they did their best to manifest while they were alive in this world. What I’m getting at is I wonder -- what they thought was the essence of their Konko Faith.

To answer that, we need to examine our founder’s *life of faith* through his own writings, that is *Memoirs of Konko Daijin* and *Record of Revelations* which covers his birth and all the way up until 19 days before dying.

When he was a farmer, he lost many members of his family. At age 42 he was stricken sick so severely that the doctor did not think he would recover. But his life was spared through his sincere & conscientious faith in *Konjin*, the most fearful deity in those days. He discovered that *Konjin* was not an evil deity, but one who would save people. This was his first encounter with *Tenchi Kane No Kami*, the most benevolent deity.

Since then, he had a strong desire to understand Kami’s heart. Two years later on Oct. 13, 1857 his brother, Shigeemon was possessed by *Konjin* and requested our founder to build *Konjin*’s shrine. Even though it was a request from a mad man, he accepted it, saying, “*I will do whatever I can.*” Kami was very pleased. And later, Kami told our founder it was **Kami’s first request**. This was the origin of his faith. He himself wrote of it as the start of his faith and the beginning of receiving blessings.

The next year on Jan 1st, he visited Shigeemon's newly-built shrine to convey thanks and New Year's greetings. Kami imparted, "Bunji, you have followed My words and revered Me as Kami. I am pleased." Through these words of Kami, I believe Konko Daijin could not help but realize the importance of acceptance. Since then, he did his best -- to respect -- whatever would happen -- by sincerely following -- Kami's instructions.

Then, he was able to receive the *Divine Call* in 1859 at age 46. Then, after ten years of training his acceptance (1868), Kami provided the founder with the divine name of Ikigami Konko Daijin.

Five years later the Meiji government ordered Konko Daijin to remove all of the altar fixtures. He was totally denied any way of connecting people with Kami. This was the greatest ordeal in his life. Even so, he respected it as Kami's wish and looked deep into himself. Then, for the first time in human history *The Divine Reminder* was disclosed to our founder. At that time Kami spoke about his acceptance saying, "You have shown sincerity even to the government."

And the following month, on April 4, Kami reveals the keywords for examining the faith of Konko Daijin. Kami told him:

Everything that happens is Tenchi Kane No Kami's doing. This includes major upheavals. Konko Daijin is the very person who had done his best to accept each and every happening as Kami's sacred doing and would deepen his peaceful, joyful heart to the fullest. Such faith would naturally bring him the conditions for human happiness. It's so stated in *The Divine Reminder*.

Therefore, we can say *total acceptance* is the essence of Konko Daijin's faith.

The other day Massimo in Italy sent me the following message:

"Dear Sensei, you fought against the sense of injustice through student movements in your university days. How did you end up accepting it within your heart? How did you overcome the doubt that acceptance can be mistaken for weakness, something which people in most parts of the world think? I think telling this experience of yours will help people understand the real meaning of acceptance. It is the reason why you lived what you lived.

If I were in your shoes, I would probably always speak about this. You mention this sometimes in your sermons, but I have the impression that you've never deepened this topic very much. Acceptance is one the most important pillars of Konko Faith, so I don't understand why you don't talk about this very much.

I apologize if this message might not sound respectful, but this topic is really important to me."

This was how I replied:

“In my sermons I have always tried to do my best to convey the most important concept of our founder’s faith and Rev. Otsubo’s faith, that is, “Everything that happens is Kami’s doing” and “All is divine love.” However, I have not spoken enough about how they reached this stage of their faith. That is, their total acceptance of daily happenings led them to realize this stage of faith.

As for our founder, he had devoted himself to respecting each & every happening since *Kami’s first request*, that is, to build the Konjin’s shrine through the request of his possessed brother, Shigeemon, in 1857.

As for Rev. Otsubo, he accepted every happening no matter what, especially for four & half years from 1950 to 1955.

Through this message of yours I keenly realized the importance of conveying the significance of total acceptance in our faith. Thank you very much! From now on I will try to deepen the importance of total acceptance and deliver it in my sermon as well.

While I was fighting against any discrimination & injustice by joining the radical student movements, I had an impressive dream. In that dream I thought only praying and not acting was being a coward. It means, at that time I thought only praying or only acceptance was a sign of weakness, as you wrote that some people think acceptance would lead to weakness.

However, through that dream I made up my mind to once again return to KC Airaku. And to Rev. Otsubo I asked many questions, such as: “Are the problems of pollution or racial discrimination the workings of Kami?” Or “Is human suffering from natural and man-made calamities the will of Kami?”

At that time, I thought we humans should & could solve such problems by ourselves. It was our responsibility. It proves at that time that I could not yet accept those problems. However, no matter how hard we humans have tried to solve those problems – with only our own human power – it would raise but other problems, even if those problems seem to have been solved. I eagerly sought for the proper way to seek human fulfillment.

After I became a trainee under Rev. Otsubo, I came across this teaching of our founder:

‘On this very day pray with a single heart.

Divine blessings are within your own peaceful & joyful heart.’

If people lose their belief in this teaching, Konko Daijin taught us,

‘The world will be in turmoil and the glory of Kami will be gone.’

In other words, when people believe every moment in the truth of this statement,
that is: *'On this very day pray with a single heart.*

Divine blessings are within your own peaceful & joyful heart.'
the glory of Kami will appear and true world peace will be attained."

In order to accomplish peace and justice throughout the world – Kami's arrangement or workings definitely need to be the foundation. And in order for Kami's glory to appear – there is no other way but to deepen the peace & joy in our hearts to fill this world with the peaceful, joyful hearts of people.

Total acceptance is the key to develop unbreakable peace & joy in our heart.

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All the Mitama spirits who made such great contributions to the Konko Faith, had dedicated themselves -- in their daily lives -- to manifest this total acceptance – which is the essence of Konko Daijin's faith. I truly wish to inherit the enormous passion of those Mitama spirits. And I am burning with the desire to manifest our Founder's faith to the world.

Thank you!