

Monthly Service at Konko Church of Chicago June 19, 2022

Good morning, everyone! Happy New Day, Week & special *Thanks* for joining us today. This is our monthly service for June, 2022. In conjunction with it I would like to have the 5th year Memorial service for Rev. Setsuo Furuya who was my wife Kanako's father and passed away on June 17 at age 90, 2017 and the 50th day Memorial service for Mrs. Kimie Furuya who was Kanako's mother and passed away on May 6, 2022 at age 95. I trust you are all enjoying the best of health & excellent spirits on this beautiful early summer day.

Setsuo & Kimie got married on December 25, 1956 by Kami's wondrous arrangement through the Mediation of Rev. Toichi Miyamoto, founding minister of the Konko Church of Takanabekita. Kanako was born on Sept. 16, 1958 as their first child and Hisako was born on Nov. 19, 1960 as their second child.

At that time Setsuo worked for the Kyushu Electric Power Company. And as a newly wedded couple, he didn't take kindly that his new wife spent so much time going to church. Then one day, he fell down from the top of a telegraph pole at work. Miraculously he survived & for the first time he realized he had been saved by Konko-sama. He started being very grateful for his good fortune & proved it by going to church with a whole new attitude.

His labor union recommended he run as a candidate to be a member of the Takanabe town assembly. He served it as an assembly member for two terms. When he lost the third election, Kami had different plans for him. The South-Kyushu district wanted him to become a member of the House of Delegates of Konkokyo & he joined it at the headquarters.

Rev. Toichi Miyamoto died on August 17, 1973. His successor, Rev. Tadashi Miyamoto died on July 20th the next year. Setsuo played a role as a responsible officer at KC Takanabekita. Rev. Toichi Miyamoto always said, 'The responsible officers of a church all have to be in the same boat.' Setsuo always kept these words in mind. That was why he changed his way of life by working at the South-Kyushu Chemical Industry during the day & serving Kami & people at the church in the evening.

That caused Kimie to worry about family matters. Her cousin knew about it & told Kimie, 'There is a mediator in Kurume like a Living Being. Why don't you go with me to see him?' Kimie had a chance to visit KC Airaku on May 1, 1977. She was greatly impressed by Rev. Soichiro Otsubo, founding minister of KC Airaku. She also talked to Kanako about the good impression she had of me.

When Kanako visited KC Airaku the second time, I was serving at the Mediation seat. She naturally had a good impression on me, perhaps because she had heard of me from her mother. Thanks to that, Kanako became a good spouse of mine later and raised three precious children. In that sense Kimie was a benefactor of my life.

After graduating from the high school for girls, Kimie became an elementary school teacher. She was so generous and sincere as a teacher that she had well been respected by the students and served for a long time. She also helped Rev. Miyamoto to lead the Boys & Girls Association at his church.

It was around March, in 1978. When Kanako was 19, she told her father that she wanted to quit junior college & become a trainee at KC Airaku. Her father was very surprised to hear that & said, 'I will think about it if I have a divine dream tonight indicating it would be preferable.'

That night he did have a miraculous divine dream in which, in the garden of her parents' house in Oise, Kanako wept bitterly, saying, "money is unnecessary, social standing is needless." And there were banners put up that said, 'Peace throughout the nation!' ... & 'Safety for all people! True world peace!'

Then another day, Setsuo had the following divine dream, 'The rear wheels of a ragged wagon were almost broken. There he stood & asked a man if this wagon would reach its destination. That man said, 'it would definitely be alright because the front wheels were strong.'

Setsuo gave his permission for Kanako to be a trainee under the guidance of Rev. Soichiro Otsubo at KC Airaku because of these two divine dreams of his. Kanako became a trainee on April 10, 1978.

Kimie had the Heavenly nature of the Universe in nature. She had a strong desire of helping people and the same feelings as our founder of "If only people are saved." Once she realized KC Airaku was the place where people could deepen their faith and have their fulfilled lives with Kami, she brought many people to KC Airaku. Many people were attracted by her personality & her kind talks. Then there established the Takanabe gatherings at Miyazaki branch of KC Airaku. She has done her best to be of great service to Kami as a messenger of true way of Konko throughout the rest of her life.

Setsuo Furuya became a Konko minister in 1982. He devoted himself to serving Kami & people as an associate minister of KC Takanabekita for the rest of his life.

My family moved to the city of Portland - in the U.S. state of Oregon - on September 5, 1994 to serve Kami & people in a whole new country. Reverends Nobuharu & Michie Uzunoe very generously accepted me & Kanako to become associate ministers at KC Portland for two years & 10 months.

Setuso & Kimie visited us in Portland, Oregon in June, 1996. Kanako's sister Hisako Ohara, her husband & their three children also visited as she took a vacation for infant care. This was the first time that the three families - the Ohara's, Furuya's & Takeuchi's - had all gotten together in what became the last and only time. We stayed together at the lodge in Oregon's famous 11,400 ft. Mountain, Mt. Hood.

My family & Kanako's parents were invited to attend the wedding ceremony for the daughter of our friend, Mr. Ben Vose while the Ohara family went whale-watching & hiking through the mossy forest of the Pacific Coast mountains. It was a very wonderful wedding.

Thinking of this wonderful time now, it was a precious set of memories for our three families, having a wonderful time together for the first, last & only time Rev. Setsuo Furuya dared to take time off his church duties & visited us in America.

Rev. Setsuo Furuya gave all his faith & energy to the KC Takanabekita, especially since he became a Konko minister. Through the Konko faith he developed the Earthly nature of the Universe to serve Kami & people as a mediator. Mrs. Kimie Furuya did her best to run east & west to guide people to KC Airaku.

During the next morning prayer service after Kimie passed away, such thoughts welled up in my mind that I would like to give her Mitama spirit her divine Mitama name. Then when I opened the Wagakokoro sacred book, I received the divine Mitama name of our founder's that was written on a part of only one page among 521 pages of that sacred book. His posthumous title is "Jinriki Odoshi no Mikoto – the majestic lord of human powers."

Through Kami's great arrangements I gave the Mitama spirit of Rev. Setsuo Furuya the following posthumous title: "Furuya Setsuo Chikei Magokoro Tsukushine Ushi no Mitama no Kami (古屋撰雄地主真心尽根大人之霊神)" and the Mitama spirit of Mrs. Kimie Furuya the following posthumous title: "Furuya Kimie Amatsu Magokoro Tsukushine Hime no Mitama no Kami (古屋公江天津真心尽根姫之霊神)."

Setsuo's posthumous title means that he devoted his life to serving Kami & people by developing his earthly nature. Kimie's posthumous title means that she devoted her life to serving Kami & people by helping people through her heavenly nature.

We will pray for the eternal peace & happiness of both our precious Mitama spirits.