

Radio Program

Rev Masanori Takeuchi, KC/Chicago

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1. How did you get involved in Konkokyo?

I was born into it. My parents were devout believers of Konkokyo.

My father, throughout his life, was always searching for the real faith of our Founder, Konko Daijin. He believed that somewhere there existed a minister whose faith was similar to that of our Founder. He was more than willing to go on a pilgrimage throughout Japan in order to find this person. After searching near and far for a genuine mediator, he finally met Rev. Soichiro Otsubo, founding minister of KC Airaku. Soon after that, is when I met him for the first time. I was 15, and also felt deeply that there was something about this man. I was awestruck by his gentle nature and great dignity. The more I listened to his teachings, the more I felt he was the appropriate guide for my life.

When I failed the entrance exam for Tokyo University, I decided to become a trainee under the guidance of Rev. Otsubo. Although I trained for only four months, I had many great experiences that deepened my relationship with Kami. These experiences sustained me throughout the turbulent university days that followed.

The next academic year I attended the university. It was 1967. This was during the Vietnam era and soon I was caught up in the anti-war movement on campus. Students all over the world were uniting to support the Vietnamese peoples' right to self-determination. When I saw these courageous students with my own eyes, I couldn't remain on the sidelines. I joined the radical student movement. I devoted myself to the movement for five years with the understanding that, as a Konko believer, I would have to fight in the vanguard for people who were suppressed and discriminated against. I really wanted to reform the world for the betterment of people.

My weeping mother always said, "I understand your feelings, but it is so dangerous. You should not do that yourself."

And I always told her, "As a Konko believer who wants to help people in difficulty, I should fight more than anyone else."

But gradually, as I became more actively involved in the movement, I felt more and more that I couldn't leave this world without seeking the kind of faith that Rev. Otsubo taught us. He called it, "A *Wa-Ga Kokoro* World." *Wa-Ga Kokoro* literally means, "peaceful & joyful heart." *A Wa-Ga Kokoro World*, then, would be a world in which everyone had hearts overflowing with peace and joy. Needless to say, I was deeply troubled by these conflicting loyalties in deciding just what I should do.

Then there came a turning point in my life. I had a divine dream which determined the rest of my life. In that dream our family sought the sacred mediation of Rev. Otsubo. My father introduced me to him. Rev. Otsubo said to me, “Masanori-san, the feelings which inspire you to fight for suppressed and discriminated people are the same as those through which Konkokyo tries to help and support people in difficulties.”

I thought long and hard about this impressive dream. I ultimately decided to return to the Airaku church once more. I eagerly wanted to know the proper way towards human fulfillment. But I felt like a sleepwalker for almost an entire year. That was because I had to completely reorient my life from a path in which people were trying to reform the world, fighting by conflict, to a path toward peace and joy by means of total acceptance. I had to learn to accept that even the severest suppression or isolated condition of people was Kami's doing, and was necessary for the deepening and polishing of the human heart. That's why my heart was torn in a continuous struggle between these two ways of living.

This was one reason why I always asked many questions of Rev. Otsubo during those days at the youth meetings in the Airaku church. Questions like, “Are the problems of pollution or racial discrimination the workings of Kami?” “Are people's sufferings from natural and man-made calamities the will of Kami?”

Rev. Otsubo always answered my questions calmly and politely. Finally, he told me that he believed that, at some point in time, his faith would grow to the point where he could believe that ‘All is Divine Love.’ By witnessing such a strong faith right in front of me, I saw with my own eyes how Kami could work to help people change and deepen their hearts. Particularly in absolute faith like his, everything that happened was Kami's doing.

At last, setting aside all my questioning, I made up my mind to try to find the kind of belief his faith had brought to him. I wanted to believe that all is divine love and to see whatever occurred as evidence of the infinite workings of Kami. In the end, I was a trainee under his guidance for nearly twenty years. This is my story of how I came to be a Konko minister.

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2. Who was the Founder of Konkokyo?

Our Founder was born on September 29, 1814, in a small village in Japan. Given the name Genshichi, he was the second son of Juhei & Shimo Kandori, ordinary farmers. As he was the second son and thus not expected to take over the family lineage or the farm, relatives arranged for him to be adopted in the fall of 1825, when he was eleven. Kumejiro & Iwa Kawate were his new parents and he was renamed Bunjiro Kawate.

With the death of his father, he became the head of the household at age 23 and got married with Tose Furukawa. When he was a farmer, he lost many members of his family. His family suffered continuously from disaster. There were rumors in the village that his family was receiving Konjin's punishment, which was the most fearful deity in those days.

Japanese people believed that there were 808 Konjins in the world at that time. They were afraid of Konjin as the origin of all disasters, and tried to escape from His spell. They tried to evade Konjin's attack, or to close up the Konjins in the shrine so they could not come out. But all their efforts were in vain.

Different from others, our Founder faced Konjin as sincerely as possible, believing that since Konjin had such power to take life, Konjin would also have the power to give life. Even so, at last our Founder himself fell ill so severely at age 42 that the doctor did not think he could recover. He apologized for his irreverence toward Konjin, saying, "I did not know anything due to my primal ignorance. But I feel no matter how sincerely I may show respect, it is not sufficient." Konjin was pleased with his attitude. Through his sincere & conscientious faith in *Konjin* his life was spared. 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 know Kami's heart; and he did his best to realize more and more with such thoughts as: *The heart of the Universe I want to know. If there is a way, point it out to me, Great Universe!*

Two years later his brother, Shigeemon, was possessed by *Konjin* and requested our Founder to help him build a shrine to *Konjin*. Even though his brother acted as a mad man at the time, he accepted the request, saying, "*I will do whatever I can.*" Kami was very pleased. And so, the Founder was able to accept this **first request of Kami**. This was the origin of his faith. He himself wrote of it as the start of his faith and of receiving blessings from *Konjin*. Since then, he did his best to respect whatever might happen as Kami's doing by sincerely following Kami's instructions.

It was again two years later at age 46 he received the *Divine Call*. It was 1859. Without a thought for himself, he devoted himself to sacred Mediation to help people in trouble. Kami was very happy with his sincerity, and how steadily he was progressing in faith. Years later the time came for Kami to reveal to him the essence of the Konko Faith, the true **Way of Konko**.

The Meiji government ordered Konko Daijin to remove all of the altar fixtures. He was totally denied any way of connecting people and Kami. This was the greatest ordeal in his life. Even so, he respected it as Kami's wish and thought deeper within himself: *Even if there is no worship place or no mediator – no matter **what** happens, will people still be able to receive Kami's Divine blessings at any time or place?*

Then, finally, Kami found in him the person to whom Kami would express the Divine Parent's true feelings and reveal the unprecedented truth about Kami. For the first time in human history ***The Divine Reminder*** was disclosed to our Founder at age 60.

Divine Reminder

Divine Parent of the Universe

Divine Mediator

Pray sincerely, with all your heart. Be one with Kami.

Kami's blessings begin within hearts grateful and caring, in harmony and joy.

Look to Kami always, now and forever. On this very day, pray.

From then on, for 10 years, our Founder put ***The Divine Reminder*** into practice in his daily life. The year Konko Daijin died, he wrote this impressive poem to his son, Hagio:

***The true way of Konko
Makes the world bright,
Shines through Heaven,
And will last forever.***

What a marvelous conviction our Founder had about this 'true way' of Konko. It is a way based totally on ***The Divine Reminder***. It leads us on a sure path of mutual fulfillment between Kami & humanity. It is the way to live life and a true way toward world peace. In Japanese, it is expressed as *Wa-Ga Kokoro*, which in English I call, *the peaceful joyful heart*. This is the essential foundation for human happiness, the golden rule of human life. This true **way of Konko** will shine throughout Heaven and last forever.

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3. Who is Tenchi Kane no Kami?

Tenchi Kane No Kami, we call the Divine Parent of the Universe. Here is how the Divine Parent explained ITSELF to our Founder, “Tenchi Kane No Kami is *Tenchi*, or the *Universe*. From Tenchi Kane No Kami, people receive a body and a soul, which is part of Kami’s spirit. They are able to live by eating the grains bestowed by Heaven and Earth. Since long ago, it has been said that Heaven is the father, and Earth, the mother. Tenchi Kane No Kami is the parent of all people. Those who practice this faith will meet their immortal parents and will keep receiving divine blessings.”

We all are born in the Universe. Tenchi Kane No Kami is specifically said to be the three divinities: the Sun, the Moon and the Earth. We humans receive everything from these three divinities. Humans are born into the blessings of the Universe, live amid the blessings of the Universe, and die amid the blessings of the Universe. Kami also revealed to our founder as follows: “People are bestowed with the spirit of Tenchi Kane No Kami. Nittenshi (divinity of the sun) blesses our bodies with warmth, while Kane No Kami (divinity of the earth) blesses our muscles and bones. Gattenshi (divinity of the moon) blesses our mouths with moisture, enabling us to speak.” We all receive blessings from the Universe, or Tenchi Kane No Kami. Therefore, we need to really realize and be grateful for these blessings bestowed to us from the Universe.

As it was said above, Kami sustains and nurtures the cycle of life. Kami is much like a parent, embracing our lives to protect us and provide us with what we need to grow and mature.

As I said before, our Founder entered into his faith with Konjin which was believed to be the most fearful of deities in Japan in those days. The deeper our Founder put faith in Konjin he would receive ‘divine names’ step by step. And simultaneously more of the quality of Konjin would change, and the name of Konjin would also change. As our Founder finally received the divine name, Ikigami Konko Daijin, Konjin was revealed in fact, as Tenchi Kane No Kami, the most benevolent deity.

Almost all religions in the world have started by believing in the most benevolent deity. There are also some cursed religions in the world. However, there is no such religion like Konkokyo whereby the deity appeared first as the most feared and changed into the most benevolent through the development of the Founder’s faith.

Tenchi Kane No Kami is the Parental Kami whose ardent wish for the darling human people totally fills the universe. Our Founder said, “If people do not receive divine blessings, then Kami and I will not be happy. If they suffer and receive no divine blessings, Kami cannot fulfill Kami’s duty. When people cannot do well, Kami and Konko Daijin cannot do well.” Tenchi Kane No Kami earnestly wishes to help human beings.

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4. Do we have a soul?

Our Founder taught us, “The body is given by Earth. And the mitama soul is given by Tenchi no Kami. All the while, the child dwells in the womb of its mother, who is unaware of all-of-this. The child later develops a complete body, and is born.”

He also taught us, “When people die, they are reunited with Kami. The body dies, but the soul keeps on living. The body, which was taken from the ground, returns to the ground. And the soul, which was bestowed by Heaven, returns to Heaven. Dying is when your body and soul separate.”

Each of us human beings have such a soul.

Our Founder said, “Divine virtue will be with you even after death and passed down to future generations. It can be received by anyone who practices faith. Divine virtue is never exhausted.”

After genuinely pursuing Konko Daijin’s faith, Rev. Otsubo received these instructions from Kami, *“The next world is pitch dark. Therefore, one needs to polish the gem of the heart to receive divine virtue & true light while living here on this world. Thus, we shall be able to live a happy life in this world, & have a bright eternity in the next.”*

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5. Where do we go when we die? Is there a heaven or hell?

Our Founder taught us, “Know that heaven and earth will be your eternal home while you are living, and even after you die.” We humans cannot help but be blessed by Kami and be taken care of by heaven and earth in order to live or die, and even after death. We do not go anywhere away from heaven and earth. Our departed souls are always with us.

He also taught us, “Because humans are born through the blessings of Kami, they must also die with the blessings of Kami. Therefore, if a child’s birth is a happy event, then death is a much happier event since one becomes a kami. The reason dying is so abhorred is because people have not yet developed enough peace in their mind to accept death. So, practice faith that you will be blessed with peace of mind.”

The Konko Faith emphasizes the importance of ‘this day, this very moment.’ As the Divine Reminder says, “On this very day, pray.” We and all other living things are really only living on ‘this day, this very moment.’ We’re neither in the past, nor are we in the future. No one can return to the past, nor can they be absolutely sure of having life tomorrow. Therefore, the Konko Faith teaches the way to live fully by having delight and joy on ‘this day, at this very moment.’

The world is only a continuation of this single moment. Therefore, the Konko Faith does not think that the vision of the end-of-the-world is necessary. Our Founder does not teach of Paradise, Heaven or Hell in the next world. He did not teach of sorrow of dying or punishment after death. He believed in the totality of the Great Universe as being complete and perfect. He taught that this world is filled with the infinite *Benevolence* of the Divine Parent of the Universe.

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6. Why were we created? Why were we given life?

One of the most important questions of life is, “What is the purpose of life? Why were we given life?” It is of great importance for each of us to find a purpose in life to serve the world in a unique way. This is because goals which benefit others and the world around us is meaningful and satisfying.

However, beyond good works, an even more important purpose of life is for each of us to purify our own ‘heart-soul’ and become an *Ikigami*, a living-spirit. Kami is not one who deals only with curing diseases, or the avoidance of misfortunes. The Divine Parent is Kami, whose creative purpose is realized within the reformed hearts of human beings. When we renew ourselves and deepen our peaceful, joyful heart, then Kami’s purpose for our ‘being’ and the perfect purpose for our life shall match each other. Kami’s purpose would match our own genuine purpose.

Our Founder said, “Faith is to polish the gem in your heart.” We humans are born into this world to purify our heart. When we understand that this is the greatest purpose of life, then each and every *process of life* becomes meaningful, and we come to realize the Divine Parent is always working with us to polish our heart. We can therefore come to fully appreciate the power of acquiring a profound respect for the *process of life* as faith training. We come into harmony with the rhythm of life, the rhythm within Heaven and Earth; we’re able to live a grateful and pleasant life, and will prosper with Heaven and Earth forever. This is how the mutual fulfillment between Kami and humanity is realized.

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7. Do you have a concept of "sin" in Konkokyo?

As I've mentioned, it was the profound belief of our Founder that Kami was benevolent. The founder revealed Konjin, who in his day was the most fearful deity, to be in fact the most benevolent deity named, Tenchi Kane No Kami. Therefore, Satan or evil deities disappeared, and we are taught a new world of Absolute Love of the Divine Parent. So, of course, there is no concept of 'sin' or 'punishment' in Konkokyo.

Most of the old religions taught the Almightiness of God or Infinite Love of Buddha, but at the same time they insisted on the existence of Satan and Hell. Such teachings are illogical and contradictory in theory. How could Satan exist before the Almighty Power of God? Why cannot Buddha or God enter into Hell to save the sufferer caught by Satan? Our Founder established a new theology that denied Satan and Hell. He gave us the new way of salvation which has no contradiction in the theory.

Tenchi Kane No Kami is the Divine Parent and has such a parental heart that forgives anyone when apologizing. This Kami only wishes to bestow divine blessings. It's like Kami saying, "I'll give blessings, instead of taking the time to punish."

Any sin or Karma disappears in front of *Wagakokoro* (the peaceful joyful heart), just as if frost disappears by sprinkling boiling water over it. We should direct our heart toward Kami even through our evil actions. Then, we can realize our powerlessness more through them and even come to see our evil actions may stimulate us to practice faith and develop more peace & more joy in our hearts.

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8. Many of our listeners are from Christian backgrounds. So, they will want to know: how does Konkokyo view Jesus?

Our Founder said, **“There are followers who come and only speak ill in front of me. They slander the Kurozumi and Buddhist religions. Imagine having children of which one becomes a Christian reverend, another a Shinto priest, another a Buddhist monk, another a government official, another a craftsman, and another a merchant. If someone slandered one of your children, would you, as a parent, feel happy?”**

When you come before me, do not speak ill of others. When slandering others, you do not reflect Kami’s heart. Buddha, Christ, and Kurozumi are all children of Kami.”

He also taught us, **“Tenchi Kane No Kami does not look down on other religions. Those who practice faith should not be narrow-minded. Have an open heart. Be broad-minded about the world. The world is in your heart.”**

In working for greater understanding among people, Konkokyo respects all religions. We realize that religions must work together as the leaders of the world. In order to fulfill people’s needs, let us take down our walls, accept our differences, and learn from each other.

Our Founder taught us the importance of emulating the nature of the universe. The heavenly nature of the universe is characterized by inexhaustible generosity. It is a natural, limitless giving. The earthly nature of the universe is to accept everything calmly. It’s to keep silent like the surface of the earth. Moreover, no matter how filthy things are, the earth takes such things in for self-nourishment. And the orderly nature of the universe – there is nothing more faithful and exact than this. This faithfulness and exactness characterize our solar system.

In more recent times, the second successor of the Konko Church of Airaku, Rev. Katsuhiko Otsubo, taught us:

“Christ was the person / who finally / accepted his destiny / calmly / in the most / extreme / human situation. After asking / God / not to forsake him, / Christ / received his destiny / of being crucified, / saying, ‘If / it is God’s Will, / I will / accept it.’

As such, / Christ / showed / the earth-ly nature / of his heart.”

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9. What is Wagakokoro, and why is it important?

As our Founder gave a Divine Reminder to one of his disciples, he explained the line, *Divine blessings are within Wagakokoro, your peaceful and joyful heart*: “The peace means for you to be calm, and the joy is from the joy of life’s celebration.”

Wagakokoro is the fundamental principle for the happiness of mankind. It is life’s desire to seek the mild heart of WA (which is peace, or harmony) and the joyous heart of GA (which is celebration). Our Founder is the person who has taught and expounded on the way so that everyone could understand it. It is not too much to say that all of our Founder’s teachings indicate how to deepen peace and joy in our hearts at this moment on this day in our daily lives.

Wagakokoro is the spirit-heart which inter-connects with Kami. Even when it is not calm, when it is not secure and you are led to feel thankful is what is called, Wagakokoro (the peaceful joyful heart). In our quest for peace and joy in our hearts, at any time or place, we must be able to apologize or to give thanks.

The Konko Faith is the way of the peaceful and joyful heart. It seeks to establish an era of peaceful joyful hearts of people all around this world. Our Founder said to one of his disciples, “**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: “**The world will be in turmoil and the glory of Kami will be gone.**” In other words, the glory of Kami will appear and true world peace will be attained when people believe every moment in the truth of that statement, “**On this very day pray with a single heart. Divine blessings are within your own peaceful and joyful heart.**”

Kami’s arrangements or workings definitely need to be the foundation in order to accomplish peace and justice throughout the world. The world is presently the reflection of the collective hearts of self-centered human beings. The more we choose to turn our hearts to developing peace and joy, the more the hearts of the entire human family will be deeply turned toward peace and joy for the whole world, and the more our world will be blessed. Then, finally, through Kami’s great plan, I believe true world peace and human happiness will be manifested.

My parent minister, Rev. Soichiro Otsubo lived an admirable life with Kami. Here are two quotes from him. These were his last words left for us:

"It is through Kami's blessings and due to this Faith, that I will be able to enter into the next world with such gratitude & delight."

"There are no other words I might leave for the world than Wa-Ga Kokoro. I have been seeking Wa-Ga Kokoro in myself throughout my whole life. At every moment of each & every day I seek Wa-Ga Kokoro; and continuously pray I'll seek Wa-Ga Kokoro in the next world."

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10. What does it mean to become an Ikigami, a living deity?

An Ikigami, is a *divine person*, someone who shows the light or work of Kami while alive. Our Founder, Konko Daijin was an ordinary farmer who practiced his faith to deepen his heart through everything that happened in his daily life, and in the process became an 'ikigami,' a living *divine person*. As the reputation of his faith spread, Konko Daijin said, "Though people call me 'kami,' I am not the only one. All people who come here are the children of Kami. To be an 'ikigami' is to have Kami born within you. I was the first to receive such divine blessings. You can all receive divine blessings in the same way." Konko Daijin declared that anyone can become a *divine person* in the same way that he had. And that is the way anyone can follow; anyone will be able to do it.

All human beings are the children of the Divine Parent of the Universe, or Kami. When we are born, we are invested with the soul of Kami. Think of it as splitting the seed of a persimmon in half, and clearly seeing its bud in the middle. In the same way, when we are born into this world, we are blessed with the miracle of having the nature of a *divine person*. In Japanese it is called, "Ikigami no shou".

When we leave a persimmon seed alone on the top of a table (or somewhere), it never becomes a bud, and cannot bear fruit. However, if it is put into the ground, its shell breaks to become a living thing; then, warmed by the earth, it grows into one of the most delicious fruits on earth.

In the same way, even though at birth we have a bud or soul of a *divine* spirit, if we leave it as it is, we come to live a selfish life, and that bud never sprouts. Only putting it into a heart like the earth, will our *divine* nature come about and grow. By nurturing a heart like the earth, we are led the way of being a living *divine* spirit.

Those practicing to develop the heart of the earth will be led to get rid of their selfishness. This is because, if we cling to our selfish desires, we cannot become like the earth, which accepts everything. In a heart of acceptance & patience, there is an abundance of blessings and Divine virtues waiting to come alive. We call it, the heart of the earth because the earth takes all which comes into it and uses it for nourishment. To totally put oneself into the heart of the earth will lead the way for anyone naturally to get rid of selfishness.

No matter how much one builds a fortune, from Kami's viewpoint, without getting rid of selfishness would be like building a castle on sand. Those who practice faith to acquire a heart like the earth, will come to not blame others or get angry against anything. They will gradually come to live their lives with gratitude, joy and pleasure; they'll come to see that all is divine love & it's also the Divine wish for us to perceive. They can extend their appreciation to all things and be blessed with all the conditions for human happiness.

Through respecting the *process of life*, like the earth everyone can become a manifestation of Kami and receive the light of a *divine person*. Only with that light will it bring us real happiness in this world. And this is the light we can also bring into the next world. In that way, we can have a bright world in the midst of the darkness, which is there.

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11. What is Toritsugi and how is it practiced?

It is said that the Konko Faith is the Way of Ikigami Konko Daijin's Mediation. In other words, it is the Way to fulfill the Divine Parent of the Universe's desire through Ikigami Konko Daijin's Mediation.

Mediation is what Kami requested of our Founder. He received the Divine Message in 1859, at age 46. We now call it, the *Divine Call*. This was the actual start of Mediation. I quote the Divine message received from Kami:

“... Won't you stop farming? When you were gravely ill at forty-two, the doctor gave up hope. Everyone worried about you. You prayed to the kamis and buddhas and were blessed with complete recovery. Regard this event as your death. Dispel all desires and assist Tenchi Kane No Kami. ...”

“There are many people in difficulties around the world. Won't someone like you, who has sincere faith in kamis, help these people by performing Mediation?”

“This will help Kami and save people. People exist because of Kami, and Kami exists because of people. Thus, Kami supports people as Kami's children, and people support Kami as their parent. There will be eternal prosperity through *Aiyo Kakeyo*, mutual interdependency.”

Kami found Konko Daijin to be one capable of being Kami's Mediator. Here is one of Konko Daijin's teachings:

“Kami imparted, ‘I, Konjin, decided to put people at ease. But even those who practiced faith evaded me, and there was no one with a sincere and firm heart. But you, Konko Daijin, though you were tested many times, since you started practicing faith, you still depend on Me with a firm heart. I have already noticed your unyielding heart. Lend Me your voice and physical form. I will teach the Way of Tenchi and show people the way to put them at ease. From now on perform Toritsugi to mediate people's requests to Me.”

[pause]

A religion worthy of respect, should teach about the nature of Heaven and Earth. More importantly, it needs to show the way to become one with the universe. Only then can those searching for meaning and faith in their lives come to naturally prosper with Heaven and Earth. These religions then, should be a witness for universal harmony or mutual reliance.

Looking back at the course of human history however, we find that all too frequently many of the greatest problems have been caused by religions. Countless lives have been lost & are still being sacrificed in the name of holy war. The word “jihad” means precisely that & is used to justify holy terror.

Why has this happened? It is because each religion insists that only its way is the right one. Each forces its beliefs insisting on that so as to “save” people or take them to Paradise. But instead, shouldn’t the spreading of religious faith happen naturally? The basic idea of propagation is to let things happen, not make things happen. Those who would share their religions should deepen themselves to project the positive, fruitful characteristics of their faith; thus, their beliefs would be propagated naturally.

In the Konko faith, Kami asked our founder to help people by performing Mediation. Therefore, faithfully responding, Konko Daijin sat at the same place from dawn to dusk every day and waited for people to come seek Mediation. Our Founder once told one of his followers, “*When serving as a Mediator, don’t commercialize this wondrous Faith. To spread the Faith, I just sit here. Don’t go around selling this Faith. When necessary, people will come to receive divine blessings.*”

He was not just sitting. While sitting at the Mediation place, our Founder practiced faith by deepening his heart and becoming more grateful and caring, with greater harmony and joy; he deepened his peaceful, joyful heart through the daily events he faced. One of his teachings states it this way: “*Rich soil will be productive without fertilization, and so it is with faith.*” The more we cultivate our hearts, the more prepared we are to receive blessings, and in that way, faith will naturally grow, step by step, just like rich soil will produce great bounty.

Whether or not this Way is open depends upon the peace and joy in one’s own heart, especially the heart of the Mediator. In the **Divine Reminder** it is expressed, “*Divine blessings are within your peaceful and joyful heart.*”

That is why the Konko Faith is also expected to ease any conflicts among religions.

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12. Are ancestors worshiped in Konkokyo?

Ancestors & departed souls are the foundation of our inherited lives. If we separate ourselves from these roots through negligence, the branches of our personal tree-of-life suffer & wither. Therefore, it is very important to respect & honor our ancestors & departed souls in any way possible.

Konko Daijin taught us:

“Practice faith. Receive divine blessings by practicing faith. Then, not only you, but also your grandchildren, great-grandchildren & even generations far into the future can receive divine blessings.

“The spirits of your ancestors will be able to rest in peace because you receive divine blessings by practicing your beliefs faithfully. All the blessings you have ever received will stay with you forever. Therefore, build as solid a foundation of blessings as faithfully as you can during your life here on earth.”

Our Founder also taught, *“Divine Virtue will be with you even after death & passed down to future generations. It can be received by anyone who practices faith. Divine virtue is never exhausted.”*

Divine Virtue is surely meant to be with us in the next world. In this world, we can supposedly buy anything we want to help us live a happy life when we have enough money. In the same way, when we bring Divine Virtue to the next world, we can live free active lives as relieved & delightful Mitama spirits in a world of mutual reliance with Kami. However, we cannot send our Divine Virtue to the human world. Therefore, we have to acquire Divine Virtue for our own in order to bring it with us into the next world.

And, on the other hand, descendants should discover Divine Virtue that was passed down to them & accumulate it by practicing true faith; and, thereby, honoring their ancestors’ spirits. Then, their ancestors will be blessed & be more delighted in the next world since they are being remembered & appreciated in this world.

Through Konko Daijin's Mediation, we should offer our prayers as faithfully as possible in order for our Mitama spirits, or our ancestral spirits, to deepen their peaceful joyful hearts & live happy, prosperous lives in the next world.

Read on Radio by Rev Masanori Takeuchi, Head Minister of Konko Church of Chicago 29Apr21