

Monthly Service at Konko Church of Chicago August 8, 2021

Good morning, everyone! Happy New Day, Week & special *Thanks* for joining us today. This is our monthly service for August, 2021. I trust you are all enjoying the best of health & excellent spirits on this beautiful summer day.

My fellow minister, Rev. Nobumichi Kitamura, head-minister of KC Akiyoshi suddenly passed away on June 16 at 6:25 pm Japan time at age 71 due to acute aortic dissection.

On the morning of the 16th, he was fine and went out to Yamaguchi City, where he lost consciousness and collapsed. The rescue squad took him to the Prefectural Medical Center in Hofu City. It was near KC Miyaichi where his older son, Rev. Shuji Kitamura was serving. It was the parent church of KC Akiyoshi. Kitamura Sensei had regained consciousness when he was brought to the hospital. And he was talking in a loud voice as usual when Shuji Sensei saw him.

After the examination, he was diagnosed with 'Acute aortic dissection.' A major blood vessel to the heart had been torn, and as a result, the blood vessels throughout his body were also torn. Shuji Sensei was told that his father would not be able to move because of the pain all over his body. However, he **never** said he *was* in **pain**, and he was even able to turn over and lie on his back. They had time to talk with each other. His mind was so clear that he could transfer his faith to Shuji Sensei. It was miraculously accomplished through Divine blessings and Kami's loving protection.

Rev. Nobumichi Kitamura was born the first son and was expected to succeed as head minister of KC Akiyoshi. However, he wasn't attracted to the church and studied hard to enter the best university in Kyushu, the southern part of Japan. He got a job at Mitsubishi Corporation and worked so hard at his job. Everything went well on the job. He never experienced any failure. He was victorious at work.

At the height of his career something unexpected happened. His wife, Chizuko-san became neurotic after giving birth to a second child. She then jumped from the building - committing suicide - right in front of him. Moreover, that day (May 31, 1982) was the 4th birthday of their oldest son, Shuji Sensei.

Nobumichi Sensei was so shocked that he was at a total loss. He kept asking himself why it happened and what he should do. He could not help but realize, that his academic study and various life experiences were of no use to him. He continued wondering trying to seek the truth. For this sudden tragedy he was seeking for the heart of Heaven & Earth. He asked many prominent ministers and was told that it was Kami's arrangement. But not convinced, he tried with all his heart to find out *what **kind** of* Divine arrangement it was.

That was how Kami finally led him to see Rev. Soichiro Otsubo who had been seeking Kami's arrangements through everything that would happen in his life and could clarify that all **is** divine love, and the true heart of Kami.

When meeting Shodai Oyasensei for the first time (in 1985), Shodai taught him three important concepts of the faith at KC Airaku. The first, was the faith which

emulated the heavenly & earthly natures of the universe. The second, was faith that helps real human beings while living their human lives. And the third one was Shodai asking him to study the faith of KC Airaku. So, Nobumichi Sensei did his best so sincerely to put Shodai's teachings into practice, that he came to realize and always was moved by Divine arrangements. He came to realize not only his own fulfillment with Kami, but also was able to help Mitama spirits – including Chizuko-san's Mitama spirit.

During these past 36 years since meeting Shodai, he has been blessed with a new wife, Keiko-san, and had two daughters. His passion in seeking the Airaku Ideal attracted his family so much, that the whole family (Keiko-san, both sons and both daughters) willingly followed & succeeded in his faith aiming to deepen the peace & joy in their hearts which would serve Kami & people.

Let me tell you more about Nobumichi Sensei's faith & how it has influenced his family through sharing with you my condolences to his Mitama spirit and messages I had with his wife, Keiko-san.

Here is my message of condolences:

“Rev. Nobumichi Kitamura! I was surprised by the sad news of your sudden death. What I recall of you is that you were just astonishing.

“First of all, I was overwhelmed by your explosive motivation to seek the true faith. You met Rev. Otsubo and frequently started visiting KC Airaku. Your desire to understand the faith of Shodai was tremendous, and you sometimes talked with us trainees throughout the night.

“Your sensibility was so sharp that you were directly connected to Kami. Even recently you sent me such a moving message about my radio interview. I quote your writing:

“I was overwhelmed with tears of excitement to listen to it. Then I received this revelation from Kami: ‘Eaten by the demon and get rid of the demon.’ This revelation showed America as a demon-like power versus you, a tiny monk. It's exciting because the micro converts or changes the macro.’

“Rev. Nobumichi Kitamura! Now that you have become a Mitama spirit, you shall rush to Shodai & Nidai at full speed and you will be excited telling them your faith story. I cannot help but pray that you continue to deepen your peaceful joyful spirit in the next world and live in Konko Daijin's world of delight with them.”

Here are some messages I received from Mrs. Keiko Kitamura:

“Eight days have passed since my husband entered the next world. I still don't feel like he is dead, and he is likely to say, ‘Hi’ with that smile from somewhere.

“Perhaps he himself had a lot of things he wanted to do for this faith. It’s sad to lose a loved one, but the teachings he left behind and the proof that he showed with confidence are alive in my heart.”

“Now, with my family we are reading the book, titled, Heinin – the ordinary person (Nidai Oyasensei’s book) to his Mitama spirit. When I opened it, the title was the first thing to revive me. I received it as if he was saying to me that, on his behalf, I had a mission to tell people that there was no doubt about this way of faith life.”

“I went to KC Airaku with Shuji Sensei & Futoshi Sensei to extend our appreciation. Keiki Oyasensei sat at the Mediation seat. I couldn’t help but be moved just by hearing his voice. That was what you had said. It was full of indescribable emotions. I talked with Yoshiko O-okusama and her kindness really touched my heart. I had an intuition that the Wagakokoro era would definitely come someday. At the same time, I realized once again that I am today in the daily process and wrapped in many big prayers and in prayers of Mitama spirits, too. I am powerless, but will move forward by believing in Kami. My husband’s name is Nobumichi that means ‘way to believe’ in English.”

“I have been asking myself what I can do now since my husband died. By meeting my husband, I was given the path of true faith. I feel my husband lives in the hearts of me & my family and will be together with us forever. I am thinking of summarizing what my husband wanted to tell me, and how I had seen him from the time I met him, until he died. I think that is something that only I can do.”

“Now, I myself am determined to seriously aim for Wagakokoro. Thank you very much!”

I could not help but be moved by any one of these messages from Keiko-san. I believe the Mitama spirit of Nobumichi Sensei was pleased to know her faith has matured this much. Above all, I am very grateful that Kami has led her to open her heart so widely and deeply.

I cannot help but pray Nobumichi Sensei’s Mitama spirit becomes a spiritual foundation of KC Akiyoshi and helps to fulfil Kami’s wish for great developments at KC Akiyoshi.