

Dimensions within Konko Faith

ALL IS DIVINE LOVE

A THEOREM

一切神愛論

**TWO LECTURES OF
TWO LECTURES OF**



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Editing & Design

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2014

A Personal Beginning

I was born in the United States and brought up in the Roman Catholic faith. My relationship with Konko faith began August 1982 in Japan. It was a dramatic encounter which started me on this spiritual journey.

I was attending a language teacher's conference with no idea it was in a Konko church until Rev Takeuchi informed me of the fact. Somehow, on the third day I found myself sitting at the mediation place in the worship hall for the first time.

*Peace and Joy develop within you.
Blessings come to the peaceful, joyful heart.*



On first meeting with Rev Soichiro Otsubo at mediation that day I had kissed his extended hand to show my high esteem and deep reverence – the same way as I would greet a Roman Catholic bishop. After I left, he told his followers of a pomegranate image he had received when meeting me.

The fruit was split open and a multitude of seeds were seen in separate sections. It brought to mind this saying:

障子一重に小僧千人 (shouji hitoe ni kozou sen nin)

Behind one shoji-door, a thousand young Buddhist monks

He explained that upon mastering a *Wa-Ga Kokoro* and returning to one's country, such a person would open the way for many others.

It is my earnest desire for human dimensions of faith to grow. I pray these pages would open an amazing faith journey for readers.

JANUARY 2014

REV DICK DUSEK

KONKO FELLOWSHIP OF TACOMA

DIMENSIONS WITHIN KONKO FAITH

ALL IS DIVINE LOVE A THEOREM

一 切 神 愛 論

WA GA
和賀心
KOKORO

AUGUST 14, 1972 --

addressing the Chikusui Conference of young adults

STUDYING WA-GA KOKORO

和 賀 心 学

合 楽
AIRAKU

FEBRUARY 6, 1977 --

addressing the topic of Airaku Ideal (合楽理念)

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE PATH

前 人 未 到 の 道

ENTRANCE TO
KONKO CHURCH OF AIRAKU



It is with joy that I'm able to bring these two lectures together in English. My first encounter with them, and my first knowledge of Konko faith, was in 1982. My faith began then, learning and translating, and now publishing them. It has been 30 years – just a wink of *The Divine Parent's* eye.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS



Worship Hall of Konko Church of Airaku

Translation for each lecture was directed by Rev. Masanori Takeuchi, the Head Minister who established the Konko Church of Chicago, and a long-time disciple of Rev. Soichiro Otsubo. Special thanks go to Ben Vose whose writing expertise has greatly enhanced both topics.

STUDYING WA-GA KOKORO, was translated by Rev Takeuchi, T Yasutake and R Dusek, and published 1992 in the book, *beyond heavenly paradise is ... AIRAKU The Dimension Beyond*.

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE PATH, was worked on by Rev Takeuchi, H Lindberg, Rev Dusek and B Vose, and printed 2013 in a pamphlet, *airaku ideal in Konko Faith*.

**All is Divine Love:
a theorem**

一切神愛論

Each lecture is reprinted here in English, appearing together for the first time. In Japanese, their joint appearance was also reprinting's of each. That was in the 1982 book, 一切神愛論 [*Issai Shinai Ron*], the source used for translating these two lectures.

DECEMBER 2013

THE EDITOR

Kami, the *Parental Deity*, the *Divine Parent of the Universe* or shortened forms including *Divinity* and *the Divine* are one and the same, each is indicating *Tenchi Kane No Kami* to whom the Konko founder unwaveringly prayed with a single heart.



一 切 神 愛 論
ALL IS DIVINE LOVE *A THEOREM*

DIMENSIONS WITHIN KONKO FAITH

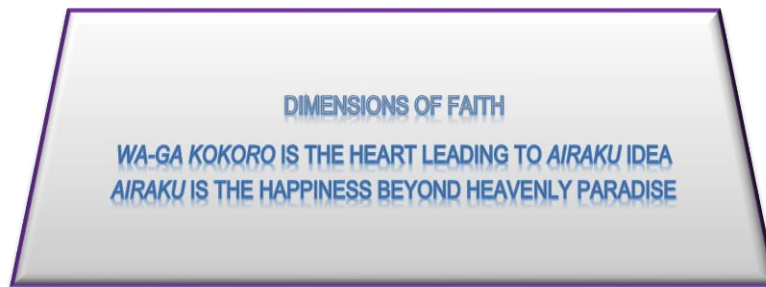
1st Lecture

WA GA
和實心
KOKORO



WA GA
和實心
KOKORO

Studying *Wa-Ga Kokoro*



Salvation through Konko Faith

We naturally need to receive divine favor for true salvation. However, that depends on your *Wa-Ga Kokoro*, as is written in the *Tenchi Kakitsuke: Okage wa Wa-Ga Kokoro ni ari* (Blessings begin within *Wa-Ga Kokoro*). This, I feel, is the essence of the Konko faith.

There are many religious beliefs in the world. Even within the same faith there are various interpretations. Within the Konko religion, for example, there are the views of the Kurume Church, the Amagi Church and the Airaku Church. I think that is good and necessary. I feel we shouldn't just say, "This must be the way," or "That must be the way," because the faith taught by Konko Daijin is so broad.

A few days ago I heard from a Konko minister about a church where many people were being helped. Most of these people wished to be cured of some illness. The minister of the church would ask the sick person who came what was wrong and apply something like finger pressure to that area. You might say he was healing through faith. In this way he miraculously helped many people. So when an important ceremony is held at his church a large number of people gather.

Another example is a minister who communicates with the souls of the departed. He encourages the holding of services for departed relatives of past generations who haven't been saved. Besides the saving of departed souls, businesses thrive and illness is cured in this way.

There's another minister who saves people through his power of prayer. So it seems salvation depends on holding services or offering prayers.

There are people saved just by going to worship; there are ministers who act like fortune-tellers. Indeed there are many ways to salvation which the faith taught by the founder does not necessarily exclude. After all, any means of salvation is possible.

If you want to be saved at all, you need to have *Wa-Ga Kokoro*. The founder has clearly said, "Pray that you can have *Wa-Ga Kokoro* this very moment and blessings will be yours."

However, that is not easy. It's difficult. Yet we should in the practice of our faith, strive for a *kokoro* of *Wa* (harmony, peace) and of *Ga* (cheerfulness, joy). This doesn't mean that you must wait for salvation until attaining *Wa-Ga Kokoro*. Actually salvation is realized just through attempting this approach.

Establishing *Wa-Ga Kokoro* Era

The objective of my speech is to establish *Wa-Ga Kokoro* era. This is the theme of the Airaku Church this year – no, not only for this year, but for as long as the Airaku Church exists. This will be our goal forever. Moreover, I'm convinced that this is not only the goal of Airaku parishioners, but also that of all those who believe in the Konko religion.

Unless we first experience how this thing called “*Wa-Ga Kokoro*” affects us, and prove how having *Wa-Ga Kokoro* brings about divine favor, no one will join us, even though we might talk about establishing *Wa-Ga Kokoro* era.

First of all, it must begin within your heart, then in your home, and then all around you.

If a campaign for the era of *Wa-Ga Kokoro* -- even just a small one -- is launched, undoubtedly *Wa-Ga Kokoro* era will be established. This might come in five hundred years or a thousand years from now, but it will surely come.

Until we reach that stage, true peace and happiness throughout the human race cannot be realized.

In *Wa-Ga Kokoro* there is strength, and truth. When we look at our extremely complex modern world, we cannot help realizing the necessity of developing *Wa-Ga Kokoro* era.

The Tragedy of Materialistic Civilization

What do you think of things you read in the newspaper every day: wars breaking out all the time around the globe; victims of fatal accidents every day; pollution, violence, delinquency and so on and so on? We can add more and more. The list never ends.

How have such things come about when everyone longs for world peace and happiness for humanity?

There have been revolutions against poor government; the shedding of blood and the loss of lives, but after all this there has been no peace. We have invented and discovered various things thinking that material possessions would bring happiness. Yet, what do each of you think? Have we found happiness?

On the contrary, what we have acquired is self-centeredness, envy, hatred and distrust -- in the contemporary world: doubt, communication gap, rivalry, pollution, racial prejudice and war. I would say materialism has produced these deformities.



Why has this happened? I don't need to point out that it's because "*kokoro*" has been overlooked; its significance hasn't been recognized.

It is common knowledge that a person cannot live by bread alone. But by only knowing that, you haven't grasped its importance. I believe this is the tragedy of the human race and the reality of the world today.

People have endeavored to increase their provisions of bread. They have also explored how to improve the quality of it. Thus humanity could obtain both greater quantity and better quality. However, what has happened? The result is that at the same time humanity has caused many of the troublesome problems mentioned earlier.

If this situation continues, surely the human race will drive itself down the road to ruin. But it is still not too late. People -- even one or two -- are needed to prevent humanity from rushing carelessly toward its ruin. This, I consider, should be the mission of young people like you to support the generations to come. I hope that many will really be aware of and become awakened to this need for *Wa-Ga Kokoro*.

Thoughts on *Wa-Ga Kokoro*

So much time, money and human talent have been spent in the process of bettering our standards of living. Shouldn't efforts now be joined nationwide and worldwide for finding how to improve and enrich the human mind? That is, how to achieve *Wa-Ga Kokoro*? I think that must be done.

I don't mean to say that we shouldn't be blessed with material things. That is also necessary. It is one of the conditions through which human beings can find a fuller and happier life. What I mean is that, while material well-being is necessary, at the same time we have to cultivate a spiritual way of life.

This is true of the pollution problem. Unless, in our hearts, we endeavor to be spiritually cleaner and purer, it's a problem which cannot be solved no matter how hard we try to restore clear skies and clean water.

As long as we are satisfied, others don't matter; only taking care of ourselves; holding grudges against others; hating, envying and so on. Until efforts are made to eliminate these feelings, until we lead lives centered upon *Wa-Ga Kokoro*, I don't think humanity will ever have permanent peace and happiness.

It is time that all human beings, particularly religious leaders themselves, should exert their energy to transcend doctrines and denominations in order to carry out this great task.

First of all, within myself and then within all of you present today, *Wa-Ga Kokoro* needs to be adopted. Then, when the excellence of *Wa-Ga Kokoro* is felt, I hope you, like supporters, will extend *Wa-Ga Kokoro* movement to those around you. This should be done not only with explanation and reasoning, but also by indicating real instances when you have received divine blessings.

In the Konko religion, *Wa-Ga kokoro* is not a type of moral training. As is clearly stated in the *Tenchi Kakitsuke*, “blessings begin within *Wa-Ga Kokoro*.” As long as you lead a life of *Wa-Ga Kokoro*, divine favor will naturally be yours. A religion which is not accompanied by divine blessings might as well be dead. If you genuinely pursue *Wa-Ga Kokoro*, divine favor will be abundantly bestowed.

The Dawning of Genuine Faith

I have maintained my Konko faith for a long time. A good many teachings I have heard. But I did not really apply them to my own life.

I was actually a merchant, and as a merchant I received many blessings. It is taught that business people should give careful attention to consumers and distributors. Also we are taught that what others sell for ten *yen*, sell for eight. Since one can sell many more this way one profits. Although that is taught, when I sold a ten *yen* item for eleven *yen* I thought it was a blessing. That was my faith. Nevertheless it is a fact



**The heavenly
Work of truth.
The earthly
Depth of respect.**

that I received blessings for a few decades. While learning so many of the teachings, I failed to put them into practice. I prayed with all my strength. I also did every sort of task for the church. But I really didn't try following the teachings; I never tried incorporating them in my daily life. Then, at the end of the war, I came to a turning point -- a crossroad or boundary -- in my religious life.

As if deprived of everything, I was repatriated to Japan from PEKING (BEIJING). Then I first became aware that my faith had been misdirected. At the time, funerals were held one after the other for my brother and two brothers-in-law. Upon each of those occasions it seemed that I obtained new insight into my faith. Then I actually comprehended and began to apply the teachings of Konko Daijin. That saved not only me, but all of those around me were helped.

How is it in your case? I think to have real faith is to actually put the teachings into practice. There are so many Konko teachings. Recently I've had the feeling they all have the purpose of leading us to *Wa-Ga Kokoro*. I do feel the excellence of *Wa-Ga Kokoro*! This is why I am confident today that there is no need of shame wherever it is spread in the world.

Total Acceptance

Now I'd like to tell you how I have reached this point.

After the war I returned from PEKING (BEIJING) and started in business in FUKUOKA CITY. My business thrived easily, but for a short time. Then everything reversed and what occurred was the complete opposite of what I had expected.

So I tried to follow various practices of prominent leaders. However, difficulties still overwhelmed me. Nevertheless at the time I glimpsed something of the goodness of faith.

That is when I requested the head minister of my church to convey my feelings to the Divine Parent of the Universe.

“Reverend, from now on I will stop asking our Parental Deity for this or that favor. I think it is certain that the Divine Parent has expectations even of someone like me. In order to achieve the expectations the Divine Parent has for me, I will never complain or feel dissatisfied, no matter what the consequences are. I’ll accept whatever happens. Therefore, from now on, please pray that the Divine Will be fulfilled.”

Since then I felt my faith completely changed. Various things happened after that. More and more people came to my home at KABAME to hear what I had to say and many more of them were saved. Those were quite hard but great times.

For instance, people coming for the first time requested a loan or asked for money. I turned over all the money in the offering box to them. Or I loaned it to them. But not once did any of it return. Money wasn’t the only problem. There were about a dozen people sick beyond hope or somehow mentally deranged. Anyone and everyone who came asking for help I welcomed. I also accepted each and every circumstance that arose.

Thinking about it now, it’s really marvelous to have been so thoroughly engrossed. If I really considered how troublesome it was and why I must look after such people, it would be quite out of the question to do so. But whether the Divine Parent brought good or bad upon me, my acceptance of everything was truly amazing, because even in the summer I was ready to wear padded winter clothing. Moreover, without a thought about what would happen to me I kept on continually accepting everything.

Four and a Half Years of Spiritual Training

I maintained this way of life for four and a half years. Then, right after this four-and-a-half-year period, I received a message from the Divine. In my spiritual eye I saw spinach -- the stuff that Popeye eats. When it’s eaten, it makes him powerful. It certainly does. I feel that meaning was also implied in the message.

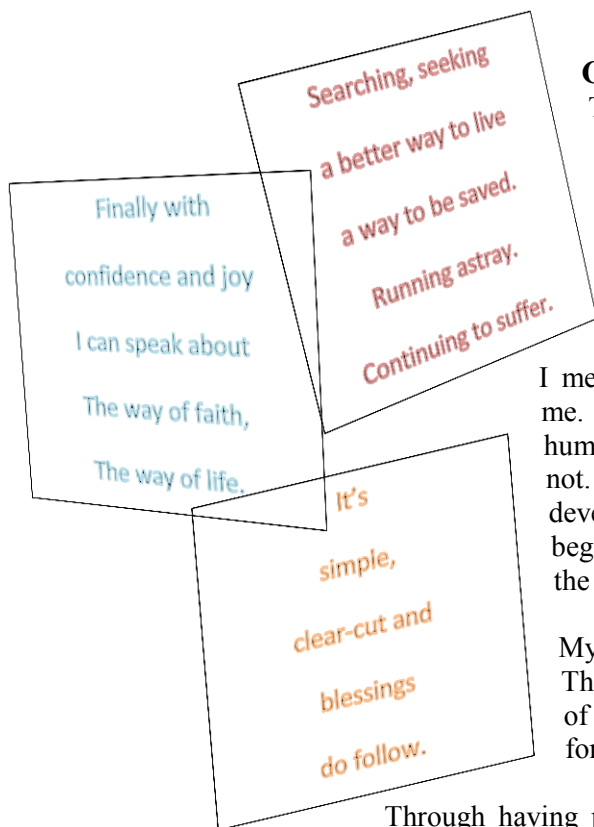
Since the spinach plant was just dug up, it still had dirt on it, roots and some wilted leaves. The Divine Parent, then, provided an explanation for me:

“The last four and a half years were like eating this spinach without removing the roots, covered as it is with dirt and with its wilted leaves. However, since this is going too far, from now on pull off the roots, clean off the dirt, tear off the dead leaves and take in only the nourishing part.”

Such was the divine message after four and a half years.

Well, that was the end. At KABAME, people no longer came to borrow money or ask for handouts. No longer were the sick brought in to be looked after. The only ones who joined me were those who really wished to take up the faith. Now, thinking back, it seems that during that period of four and a half years the Divine Parent was testing my faith.

From that time I spoke at KABAME about respecting the process of life, and how I valued each event that came into my life. However, I had still not noticed that such a way of living leads to genuine faith. As I received divine blessings day after day, I came to realize how it conformed to the will of the Parental Deity. Well, there have been many problems, but every one of them was a blessing.



Genuine Faith is . . .

This is something I have recently come to understand. When worshipping the Divinity, we usually just say prayers and show reverence to the Deity on the family shelf or offering stands. But, if we don't respect the very workings of Divinity, then we lose sight of a good half of the Divine Parent. Just praising Divinity but overlooking Divine work itself is taking Deity too lightly, isn't it?

I mentioned earlier about the Divine Parent's expectations of me. He has expectations not only of me, but of each and every human being. Faith depends on whether you recognize this or not. From the moment you recognize this, you begin to develop a faith which complies with the Divine Will. And you begin to seek more and more to understand the inner depths of the Divinity.

My position is to accept all that happens to me with pleasure. Therefore there are no problems for me. "Examine the nature of the problem" is often said, but there is really nothing at all for me to do.

Through having problems, and thanks to each problem, I've been able to progress in my faith. Since problems feed my faith, there isn't a single problem. Upon reaching this level, it's possible to have a problem-free life and a society free of problems.

There it is. Each of the many problems that occur to each and every one of us is provided by the Parental Deity for our spiritual training. Accepting problems as such is the way to respect the process of life.

Lately I've become more and more convinced of this. Though it is said, "Genuine faith! Genuine faith," true faith is when we respect Divinity and look to Divinity more and more. I feel recently I can say with conviction that genuine faith is, in a manner of speaking, not just honoring the Divine Parent by making offerings to our Deity but also appreciating the very workings of the Divine Parent.

The Nature of the Universe

The founder expounded on the importance of emulating the nature of the universe. So we should, of course, make earnest efforts to do that. Let me now present my own interpretation.

The heavenly nature of the universe is characterized by inexhaustible generosity; it is a natural, limitless giving. This is what I think the heavenly nature of the universe is.

The earthly nature of the universe is to accept everything calmly; it's to keep silent like the surface of the earth. No matter how filthy things are, the earth doesn't say, "I hate foul smelling things like this" or "Such dirty things are out." It doesn't just keep silent, but it takes such things in for self-nourishment. Such is the earthly nature of the universe.

Finally, the orderly nature of the universe — there is nothing more faithful¹ and exact² than this. Wouldn't we be in trouble if the sun said something like: "I'm a bit tired today, so I'll take a break?" Three hundred and sixty-five days a year without any rest, it's working without losing a minute or a second. This faithfulness and exactness characterizes our solar system. Therefore there is nothing more precise to compare with the orderly nature of the universe.

1 faithful, sincere, truthful (*jitsui*)

2 exact, conscientious, meticulous (*teinei*)

Since the importance of emulating the nature of the universe is being taught, that it's of vital importance must, of course, be clearly understood.

Although at first I hadn't noticed respecting the process of life means to follow the nature of the universe, I had just kept pursuing it. Now I am aware this is the very way to emulate the nature of the universe.

All as Sacred

Recently in the church I have again been using a new phrase which is "all is sacred." That is to attach sacredness to any and every thing. Even in an unfavorable situation, we should consider it sacred, because it is provided for us by our Divine Parent. This idea has done wonders.

At first, to fulfill the expectations the Divine Parent had of me, I unconsciously accepted every single thing that happened to me as spiritual training. I did that only for my spiritual development. Now I've come to see this was significant. Contrary to just being training, I have come to realize that it is foolish not to accept it gratefully.

For example, when we think of sexual desire, per se, we feel somehow guilty or that it is something obscene. However, when we consider it sacred, any obscenity about it will vanish.

At first, without knowing what to do, I just continued to accept every single thing that happened to me, because I believed that in this way I would realize the Divine Will. For my spiritual development, I accepted everything without any objection. Reflecting on this now -- wow! -- I can see how close I have come to the nature of the universe. Somehow or other I have managed to reach what our founder said is so important.

Respect Life's Process

So, since it is clear all things that happen are the work of Divinity, it is not enough to regard them as mere happenings or just everyday occurrences. My faith seems to have been raised to where I cannot help but consider all things holy.

Well, the first minister of the Konko Church of Amagi said, "Things are holy." He wouldn't even make light of a single fallen twig or leaf. He taught such indeed are the sacred things of Deity.

Likewise, even seemingly needless matters, when they arise or when we're aware of facing them, we should receive reverently. I feel this is the way of true faith.

The Divine Wish for *Wa-Ga Kokoro* Era

Recently I've been saying "the ultimate in faith is here," that is, to establish *Wa-Ga Kokoro* era. This is being done not by me. It is the wish of the Divine Parent of the Universe. It is what our Divine Parent is working on.

No matter what the problem is or how difficult it is, it is better to focus on how to face it with *Wa-Ga Kokoro*, how to bring about *Wa-Ga Kokoro* from it. If you don't know how, it's better to really devote yourself to your spiritual life until you do.

The teaching yesterday morning was:

If you want to meet KAMI, you have but to go out and look around you. The sky above is KAMI and the ground below is KAMI.

Well, one could say this is the concept of the Divine Parent in the Konko religion.

Another teaching is:

Although it is impossible to see KAMI, one exists as if walking through the very midst of KAMI. Whether you are fertilizing a field or passing along a pathway, the HIROMAE (Mediation Hall) of TENCHI KANE NO KAMI fills the entire world.

This is the impression the founder had about the Divine Parent of the Universe.

It's this sensation: There is a rustling sound and my feet are soaked as I brush past the bamboo leaves and grasses which are dripping with morning dew. This is what is expressed by *one exists as if walking through the very midst of KAMI*.

Our founder lifting his eyes upwards when praying to the universe saw all of creation, every single part of it, as the presence of Divinity, the Divine Parent of the Universe. He would also hear every single sound as the Divine voice. I think his communication with the Divine Parent, and with the whole universe, was like that.



Therefore faith is not just the understanding that the universe is the Divine, but it must be developed until one can feel the universe in that way. I would say a life of faith is living in tune with the rhythm of the universe. Whether for good or bad, a life following that rhythm will really be a joy, a blessing. Those whose faith leads them to be happy beyond measure are the ones I consider to have realized this.

All Your Past Becomes Meaningful

If we follow the faith of Konko Daijin, there should never be a problem in our past which was unnecessary or troublesome. Those who didn't make the best of a problem must probably be sorry and angry, while saying something like, "If only such a thing hadn't really happened years ago."

I think to have faith is to believe that your entire past is filled with blessings. After all this is just how everything is. Therefore, since “this is a blessing and that is a blessing as well,” from now on we can accept each moment as a blessing from the Parental Deity, in other words, as an expression of Divine love.

Even if you are struck and in pain, it becomes something to be thankful for when it can be accepted as if the Divine Parent were doing it.

Of course, from the beginning you can't do that much. But with practice, you will come to understand the point more and more. About this the founder taught, *put aside your physical eyes and open your spiritual eyes*. As blessings are accepted, your spiritual eye gradually awakens and you become aware of the actual state of reality. While looking with your physical eyes, this or that is seen as sickness or a miserable problem, but through your spiritual eye, they will be nothing but divine gifts to be grateful for.

I don't think you can become awakened at once. However, this must be the point of practicing. When you aim for *Wa-Ga Kokoro* or focus on it, I am certain that your spiritual eyes will open.

Through encouraging *Wa-Ga Kokoro* within yourself, then in your family and then throughout your surroundings, each and every one of you will demonstrate that such a blessing can be attained.

Blessings begin with *Wa-Ga Kokoro*

A thought I had recently was that both Buddha and Christ would have really been saved through the mediation of Konko Daijin.

Through practicing austerities, one who devoutly follows Buddhism can discard cares and worries, just like the proverbial self-righting toy³, until he eventually feels he wants for nothing. He comes to have the feeling “one knows only satisfaction,” as inscribed on the stone basin at Ryuanji Temple in KYOTO.

³ A self-righting toy returns to a standing position no matter how it is knocked over, as if free of cares and worries.

Making a choice must always include eliminations.

However, even though this is achieved, one relieves but oneself. In the case of *Wa-Ga Kokoro*, as also stated in the *Tenchi Kakitsuke*, it brings divine blessings with it.

Some people take divine blessings lightly or despise them. Well, you can do that if you like. But if you ever ask each and every person for their honest opinion, is there any sick person who would not wish to be cured? Is there any poor person who would refuse a fortune? Is there really any person entangled in human relations who would not like to have a peaceful life?

One of the teachings of the founder is:

All people living in the universe are KAMI's children. When you are not healthy, you cannot do your work properly. Pray for your own welfare, prosperity and for all things that affect the welfare of the children of KAMI.

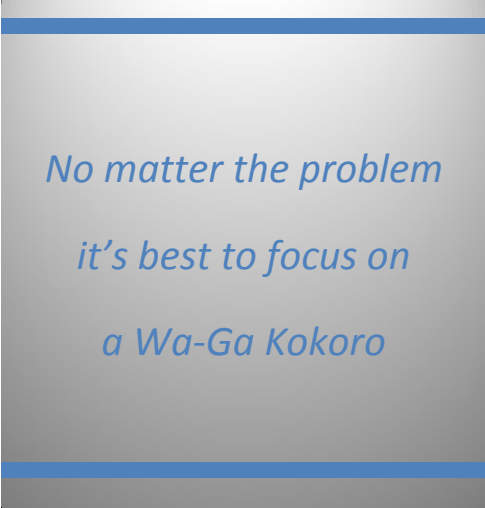
What love and benevolence overflow in these words!

It's our human nature that we cannot help but make requests of the Divine Parent. Being human we can't budge even one inch without divine blessings. Even so, faith must not be only for getting blessings.

Wish with sincerity! Wish earnestly for *Wa-Ga Kokoro*! As written in the *Tenchi Kakitsuke*, we must *pray sincerely*.

With *Wa-Ga Kokoro*, there is a law of nature whereby blessings will follow you even without asking or wishing for them. All that has to be done is to focus on manifesting *Wa-Ga Kokoro*. *Wa-Ga Kokoro* means that which will provide all the conditions for human happiness. This is what is called *Wa-Ga Kokoro* in the Konko faith.

I would like to have people from every country of the world know about this wonderful concept of *Wa-Ga Kokoro* and understand it. If I could be permitted, I have the urge to walk around with samisen and drum propagating it.



*No matter the problem
it's best to focus on
a Wa-Ga Kokoro*

The Greatest Principle: *Wa-Ga Kokoro*

I feel that a field of study is needed in *Wa-Ga Kokoro Living*. I almost feel that courses in *Wa-Ga Kokoro Living* should be a systematic part of learning and be included among the compulsory subjects of the curriculum.

Whether that is done or not, I hope you will clearly understand that human happiness doesn't come from such things as money, possessions, intelligence, nor any talents.

Isn't it really wonderful that this has been noticed by some eminent modern scholars?

Certainly man has made it all the way to the moon by human knowledge and ability, but he has noticed that happiness isn't attained that way. Scholars have begun to point to the heart as the answer. By indicating just the heart, that is not the way to happiness. It must be a heart which accumulates divine blessings.

This is *Wa-Ga Kokoro*. The founder alone mastered it through experience. *Wa-Ga Kokoro* may well be the greatest principle behind Konko teachings. I even feel it's no exaggeration to say that all the teachings of the founder are for developing *Wa-Ga Kokoro*.

I think we must seek for *Wa-Ga Kokoro* more and more, and do further research about it. And I consider it vital to make it a part of ourselves.

This *kokoro* of *Wa* is different from its usual meaning of peace. What *Wa* stands for, the founder has taught, is something unbreakable, not fragile; whatever the problem this *kokoro* of *Wa* is not shaken in the slightest.

Naturally the founder has spoken about the *kokoro* of *Ga* as joyous celebration. It is like celebrating by fixing red-bean rice, a cheerfulness that is merry and full of life and wanting to express real congratulations.

While practicing your faith, aim for *Wa-Ga Kokoro* and you'll be surprised at what you can do. No wonder the founder has said:

*People call Konko Daijin, IKIGAMI or a 'divine person'.
However, not only Konko Daijin, but all of you can receive
this divine favor and become a 'divine person'.*

In this way I think all humankind must aim to be *divine people* and establish *Wa-Ga Kokoro* era. The founder has said that anyone aiming for it will be able to get this divine gift.

Wa-Ga Kokoro Day

We must realize that human beings cannot become truly happy unless they have *Wa-Ga Kokoro*. Yesterday I was talking about Mother's Day celebrations and wearing red carnations. As such practices have spread around the world, wouldn't it be good to have even just one day out of the three hundred and sixty-five as a day to commemorate *Wa-Ga Kokoro* or *Wa-Ga Kokoro Day*? That'd be good, wouldn't it?



It might take five hundred or a thousand years. But I feel it necessary for followers of the Konko faith to devote themselves to praying for such a great and marvelous purpose.

First of all, from the believers or members of the Konko religion, a movement must be made to proceed with it. That, I feel, is just what the Divine Parent of the Universe desires; in other words, it's the Divine wish.

For achieving this Divine plan, each and every one of us must be burning with desire to be used as the hands and feet of the Divine Parent. We must raise our faith to where the Divine wish and our wish become one.

The founder taught with the words, *Konko Daijin prays single-heartedly to TENCHI KANE NO KAMI. Single-heartedly* does not mean to pray with fervor; it means to pray for the same thing as the Divine Parent of the Universe, namely to act always with the same heart and mind as the Parental Deity.

That, I feel, isn't the sole right of the founder. I think each person following the faith must come to pray single-heartedly to our Divine Parent.

To illustrate, each of our prayers is like one drop of water. It flows down a stream, into rivers and then to the sea. When just one drop of water falls into a stream, it becomes stream water. If it flows into a river, it's river water. When joining the sea, it's no longer a drop, but it has become part of the sea.

When we have the same heart and mind as the Divine Parent of the Universe, we flow together in the same way as the waters of the sea. Thus those leading a life of genuine prayer are guided by its bright light and with little effort achieve divine favor naturally.



WAGA
和賀心
KOKORO



一切神愛論

ALL IS DIVINE LOVE A THEOREM

DIMENSIONS WITHIN KONKO FAITH

2nd Lecture



THE UNIQUENESS OF THE PATH

The World of *Airaku*

The word *airaku* in the phrases, ‘*Airaku* Idea’ or ‘Aim to Share *Airaku*,’ is not indicating the geographic place, but is divinely inspired. From the founder’s teachings the expressions, “each calling the other”¹ and “through parental and filial care,”² are taken and combined to form the word, *airaku*. Through the concept, *airaku*, the Parent Deity of the universe is fulfilled and people, too, are fulfilled. In this way we and the Deity join together in prayer and gratitude. It is the world ideal for the Konko faith.

1 As in a work song, a person calls out and the other answers back, maintaining a working rhythm.

2 *Under the care of parents, then under the care of children*; dependency going both ways.

The Essential Key Points

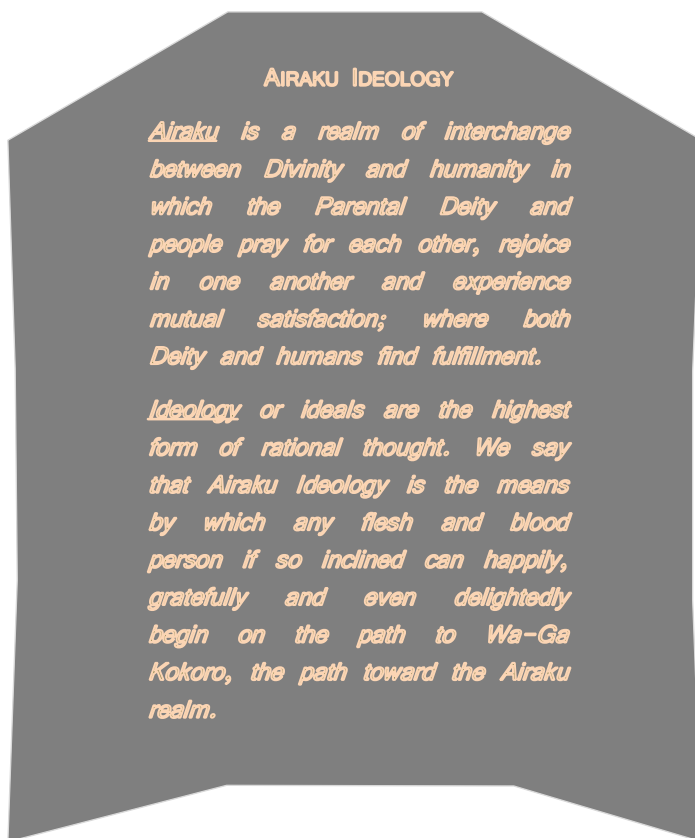
This world ideal I had thought of as a flower on a high mountain peak. However, recently what I mean by saying this phrase is that when any of us are truly practicing the concept

it will explain in easy terms just how to practice faith. Furthermore, I’ve recently been saying that it is a sure way.

Thus briefly, *airaku* philosophy is a sure way which is, at the same time, a way that anyone can follow with joy and gratitude. Moreover, I call it a life of faith that is supported with a natural, divine rhythm; a life of faith in tune to that rhythm of heaven and earth.

Thus, we must train ourselves to agree with the Heart of Divinity. How well one can follow the rhythm depends on, for example, if the Divine is water, then we must become water. It certainly sounds difficult to agree with the Heart of Divinity. Actually, I

have been practicing this very thing for decades -- a lifestyle that emulates the Divine Heart. Each moment I was filled with so much gratitude that every event felt right, not only right, but divinely planned. Thinking of it now, it’s quite a surprising feeling.



Developments Leading to *Airaku* (1946-1950)

Thirty years ago I knew nothing of this concept, *airaku*. For the longest time I had been practicing faith for pursuing blessings. I had been using faith for the purpose of bettering my daily life. Then, when I was repatriated from PEKING (BEIJING) after the war, I had lost everything, and returned to Japan. I realized my practice of faith up to that point was wrong and that I had to turn it a full 180 degrees.

Emerging from the faith I'd had up until then, I began to approach every day of life for practicing my new way of faith. In other words, everything in daily living is used for faith practice. So I realized that all of daily life was to be received to nourish this faith, though I did not understand this at first.

I had heard of the strict training done by Rev. Katsura³ of Kokura Church, Rev. Yoshiki of Fukuoka Church, Rev. Ishibashi of Kurume Church, and even Rev. Yumijiro Aramaki⁴ of my home church. So I tried imitating them. I wanted to receive many, many blessings. Therefore, as best I could, I undertook as many ascetic practices as possible. It seemed to me that ministers are not the only ones who must train. I thought, "I need training to receive blessings, because even believers need to train themselves."

³ First Konko minister in KYUSHU and two disciples.

⁴ Rev. Aramaki of Mii Church trained in KURUME under Rev. Ishibashi.

It might be said that I confronted the extremes of nature and poverty in these processes. Within a half-year my brother and two brothers-in-law died one right after the other. In this way, I encountered a series of life's greatest misfortunes. I didn't really feel thankful at the time. I just accepted it. There wasn't any other alternative. I just endured each of these things that happened without losing faith. Although I continued various forms of ascetic practices, they did not lead to blessings. Praying to go right, things would go left; and praying to go left, they would go the opposite. Then I knew I had to change the way I practiced faith somehow.

Four and a Half Years of Training (1950-1955)

Although I had done all kinds of ascetic training which I thought would be for spiritual development, not one thing came anywhere near my expectations. Instead, things went in the opposite direction. Because of that, I decided I must do something different for my training. Since I was encountering various problems, I decided to quietly accept them all. I decided this would be my training.

Through mediation I vowed that from then on every single thing that happened, whatever it was, I would accept it, take it, and pass through it. Without realizing, nor even dreaming it possible, this now has become the central principle we call "sacred happenings" at Airaku Church. Thinking about it now, I never dreamt that this would become the source for such a wonderful *airaku* concept.

Beyond heavenly paradise is ...

AIRAKU

The Dimension Beyond

This happened about the time that I had returned to KABAME, and as a result I was actually prevented from going out anymore. I couldn't even go to worship at my home church. I sat in meditation continually. I couldn't believe I was talking straight from five in the morning to ten at night. People were receiving such blessings, that many came to worship bringing box lunches with them.

Then the difficulties began. For people who asked to borrow money, I lent it to them. For those who said, "Give me money," I would tip over the offertory box and give it away. When I was asked to take in people who were sick beyond hope, without hesitation I took care of them.

People were brought who were so sick that even their parents would walk away and leave them. A father came with his child. The child was almost twelve years old and had tuberculosis. Although the child was nearly twelve, you could hold him in your arms. They both stayed at KABAME for two or three days and then the boy's father left and never came back. The boy improved at first, but since his father didn't return he became lonelier every day. Then about a month later he passed away.

In those days there was a field of persimmon trees next door to my place. And it was rumored that ghosts appeared at "*Konko-Sama's* home," as people referred to my home in KABAME.

Actually, at that time, there were usually about ten people who were so sick doctors couldn't save them. Being in the middle of all those sick people, you can't help but wonder why so many believers came to worship in such a small place where they could barely move. It was really disgusting. And the complaints from the neighbors!

There was a tiny stream outside of our house. Every morning when they got up each sick person would go out there to wash their face. Therefore, you can imagine complaints would come from the neighbors. Complaints were filed with the police and they came to investigate. I was also called in by the police, or by the court prosecutor. Well, in those years, there were certainly many things that happened.

During that time, as I think about it now, I was able to endure this because I was really ready to just accept whatever came. And my family really followed through without any argument. Things were accepted and we passed right through them. To those begging I gave. To those asking to borrow I lent it. To those asking to be taken in, I really took care of them.

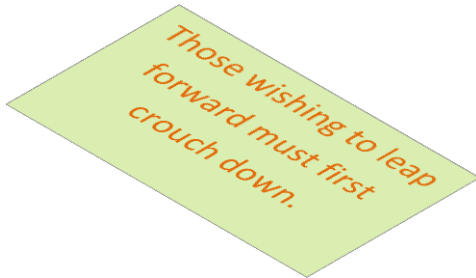
An elderly blind lady came. For this elderly lady my wife did all she could. These were things that continued on for four and a half years. On another occasion a young man of about thirty was brought there. I was asked to look after him. Up close you could see he was handsome; he had a face like the actor, Azuma Chiyonosuke. However, asking around it was discovered he was a sex addict. It seems any woman he met, whether young or old, was okay with him.

My wife heard about this and came to implore, "*Sensei*⁵, *Sensei*, the person you just took in, is it really alright? There are many women who come here to worship. If something were to happen, what would we do?"

5 Polite salutation for church ministers.

This is the only time she had spoken this way. If it had been anything else, she would accept it as always, without saying anything. I replied, "It'll be okay, since he must receive blessings, too. I'll pray to the Divine Parent and everything will be fine," and let it go at that. He was around 'til the evening, and then was never seen again. It seems our Parental Deity was testing me right to the end.

I feel, as you have all heard me say, that during that time every member of my family cooperated. And now, I see that because I was into the spirit of it, it was never a difficult thing to do. Whatever the problem, it was never refused. Instead, since I had decided to be accepting, even though it did not fill me with joy, the difficulties were somehow or other accepted as spiritual training. Furthermore, as I've said, I was ready to accept and take whatever it might be. Thus, thinking of it now, it really was important in my development of faith.



This lasted, as you have all heard, four and a half years. This was in the year of the fifth annual ceremony to be held at Kabame, and six months before this anniversary, the spring ceremony was to be held. At this time I received the divine insight to take up another type of training. During the preceding four and a half years, my training had been to receive anything and everything without complaining and quietly accepting whatever happened; however, from this point onward, I began to do my training in another way.

In my spiritual eye I received the image of a spinach plant. It was the image of spinach like you see in cartoons, the same stuff that Popeye eats which makes him so strong. The spinach had been dug up from the field with its roots and dirt still intact. In the vision I saw, it had just been pulled up from the ground; it still had some dirt on it; it even had hairy roots, wilted leaves and all.

That's just how I had been practicing faith, as though I was eating the plant, every part of it. Chewing up the whole plant was the way I had trained during those four and a half years. Therefore, from then on the Divine meaning was to tear off the roots, pick off the hairs, and any wilted leaves, and then, of course, wash it clean, and take only that which was nourishing.

For example, from then on, we no longer took care of the hopelessly sick, and people stopped asking us to do so. How could I explain this training period? It was like a divine test, or a drama produced by the Parental Deity. It was four and a half years of continuous, successive trial. However, I never once felt any despair about it, because I actually was so full of gratitude. Even if I had been beaten I could have accepted it, with the feeling that it was the Divine Parent's doing. This might be kind of overdoing it, though. After the four-and-a-half-year period people just came as trainees who truly desired to do religious training. Of course, people stopped coming to borrow money, and people to whom we would offer money outright stopped, too.

That's the story of my four-and-a-half-year training period. Since receiving it, I have continued in this manner to this very day.

The Meaning of That Period: The Process is Divine Work

While receiving such blessings I came to realize how wonderful it is to respect the process of life. Life's processes are to be received with more importance. This does not mean to undertake anything that happens haphazardly. It's not the ridiculous extreme of when asked for a loan, just answering yes and lending the money. That is silly and not at all natural. You should look into whether to extend the loan or not. Through this loan, ascertain the effect on the person's life, the advantages or disadvantages it presents. Then it's okay to give the loan. Then you would disregard self-interest and lend them the money. Thus it's not to accept just any terms, but to examine the situation so you can accept the nourishing part.

Although, until then I had only done my best to accept daily happenings, after completing the four and a half years I began to see that the process itself is the sacred work of Divinity. I've been led to understand that though treating the Divine Parent honorably with respect is what has been done 'til now, and even when we are respectful and treat Deity honorably, if we neglect the Divine Works themselves, then we are honoring but half of the Divinity, and neglecting the other half. Then for the first time I began to approach the meaning of true faith.

It was then that I came to realize that though we speak of true faith or the true way to live, the feeling I had was that the actual way of truth was right here. Everything that happens is due to the Divine Parent of the Universe who is providing for each and every person. The problems which occur are being given to us by our Deity. Since we are allowed to do this training provided for us, indeed we should become grateful, indeed strength should develop, and indeed at KABAME in those days more and more people should have been saved. And that is what happened. In other words, the various problems that occur to each and every one of us are the very manifestation of the Divine Heart. Another way of putting it is, the relationship between the Divine Parent of the Universe and each of us, or the relation between the work of the natural universe and what occurs in our everyday lives, is received thoroughly as the Divine Work of Deity, or as Divine Love. Such a way of acceptance is truly the training that treats Divinity with respect.

There it is

The problems that occur to each of us are provided by the Parental Deity for our spiritual training.

Accepting problems as such is the way to respect the process of life.

All Is Divine Love (View of Difficulties)

As this concept is developed to the point where it is absolutely right, you reach the point where even Christianity, Buddhism, or any other religion has not gotten yet. Gautama hadn't acquired it. Christ, without mistake, was a person dearly loved by the Parental Deity of the universe. However, the Divine Parent never revealed this point to him. Instead, it was fate; or it was original sin. But practicing Konko faith, whatever the encountered problem may be, it could be understood as it is all Divine Love. However, since it is karmic fatalism in the Buddhist religion, you'll be told there's nothing you can do about it. With original sin, you

are led to believe that for your whole lifetime you'll never be able to erase the sin. That is Christianity. That's Buddhism. However, in the Konko faith it is neither indicating sin nor original sin. It's also not from karmic fate. But truly it is called, Divine Love.

In all the teachings the founder mentions offenses only once. In Teaching Number 3, there is "... suffering hardships due to these offenses." But the offenses the founder speaks of are not of fate, and they are not sins.

The offenses that the founder spoke of are the misconceptions and misunderstandings that human beings have about the workings of *Heaven and Earth*. Teeming with universal qualities, this could be said to be the greatest aspect in the Konko religion. It is clearly stated in Teaching Number 3:

Although people live between heaven and earth, they are unaware of KAMI's blessings. Shrines, temples, and houses all stand on KAMI's land. Without realizing this, people consult the Days & Directions and are disrespectful to KAMI. They suffer hardships due to these offenses. ...

What are these offenses that lead to people suffering? It is said that all human beings living between heaven and earth are the children of the Divine Parent. However, unaware of the blessings of Divinity, we do not realize the Divine Works of the Parental Deity. These works of Divine Love have been mistaken for indications of sin, or signs of karmic fate. But this needs to be corrected.

Then, it teaches that shrines, temples, and houses are all on Divine land. This is misconceived as taking something that is not your own and thinking it were yours.

Next, people just consult the Days & Directions. The founder has proclaimed that there isn't even one place in the universe, not even where you might press a finger, that is not filled with Divine Love and its Divine Virtue would never seep out; whether it be a dirty place or a clean place it is under the protection of the Divine Parent of the Universe. Although people are living in the bosom of such a huge universe, they set up courses for studying the Days, and the Directions, making up the principles of Yin and Yang such as, what's good, and what's bad; for example, this one direction should not be used, or ominous days. In this way, people themselves make the universe so limited that it doesn't agree with the Divine Parent's intentions.

Therefore, aspects of these offenses are present here in the problems of today. That is my point in saying we should take the process importantly, or place an honorific prefix today on everything that happens and receive it all as honorable events and happenings.

The first Head Minister of Amagi Church took each single thing as sacred, placing the honorific prefix on each one. That is where a faith of humility is born in the reverent pose of raising every object to one's head. It's the same as feeling you just have to take things as sacred; that for whatever you eat or drink you can't help but pray for it. No matter how important we say Divinity is, no matter how much we say we respect the Divine Parent, unless the very Work of the Divinity is respected and taken importantly, we will not truly be respecting our Parental Deity; it also won't reflect the importance we have for the Divine.

It's not just honoring the Deity worshipped at the altar, but placing the honorific prefix onto the very workings of Divinity and receiving them as such. In other words, it's to treasure each working as an honorable event or sacred happening.

It's not like saying it is our fate, so we ourselves must accept all of these things. No! Instead, our Parental Deity is providing these Divine Works because we just have to be fulfilled; we just have to be strengthened. It is the Divine Love coming from the Divine Parent. By realizing this, our hands clasp in prayer as we receive each Divine Work. This is how we actually practice accepting with hands together in prayer.

The Nature of the Universe: Heavenly, Earthly, and Orderly (View of Deity)

As the founder has taught, *It is essential to have a heart like that of the universe.* This is because the nature of the universe is itself the nature of Divinity, and also is the spirit of the Divine Parent which we need to practice. Though seemingly so very difficult, it has been clarified at Airaku Church, so as to be easily practiced.

To explain, the heavenly nature of the universe is the beautiful spirit of giving unconditionally, without limit giving to the end. For example, when caught up in selfish desires, you need to notice that your heavenly nature to serve, to show goodwill to everyone is absent.

The Nature of the Universe

*Heavenly: inexhaustible benevolence;
natural, limitless generosity.*

*Earthly: accepting everything calm &
quiet for enriching nourishment.*

*Orderly: faithful, conscientious and
precise.*

For the earthly nature, it's unbelievable, but even though there's something that seems as though you just can never endure, when the Divine tells you to endure it, suddenly you can. Therefore, through such experiences, while you are accepting everything that

happens to you, thinking that here is where I must somehow consider being like the nature of the earth, that just as the soil becomes rich through manure, a spirit of acceptance will enrich the soil of your faith and nourish your spirit even before you know it.

It's just so amazing to me. For example, if it had been last year at this time for me to persevere through such a thing, it would have been too difficult to bear. But a year has passed and I'm now fully content and able to take such an experience.

Finally, the orderly nature of the universe is so exact that there's nothing you can think of that will compare with it. Speaking of it, I've recently drawn a new idea from the following saying:

*BY DOING, IT'S DONE;
IF NOT, IT'S NOT
WHATEVER IT IS.
IF NOT BEING DONE,
YOU'RE NOT DOING IT
IS WHY.*

'It's done by doing' is as in the saying, "With the motivation, even a child can do it." Even the most difficult situation, need not be undertaken in a difficult way. For example, if you want to climb a high mountain, if you have the motivation, there will be a way to climb it.

Right now what's being noticed in Airaku Church is there are so many things which even a child can practice but have been neglected up until now. You know, when you take a bath, there are manners for the bath. When these manners are not followed, the bath becomes a mess and the person who enters next will feel bad. For everything there is a way to follow. After using a towel, it is put away in a proper manner. Until now you may have just tossed it down, leaving it in a heap over there. It should be hung up neatly. As in this example, you become aware of having neglected something which, with the motivation, even a child could do; in other words, you really get into the orderly nature of being exact and conscientious by choosing to do something for spiritual training.

Abolishing Ascetic Practices - part 1 (View of Religious Training)

Moreover, at Airaku Church ascetic practices have been abolished. There are many ascetic practices to train oneself, such as standing on one's hands, ablutions or fasting. There are even such things as, not eating pork, not eating meat, keep away from women, and no alcohol. I, myself, have even done these things as the last resort or because I didn't know any better. During this training I wasn't intimate with my wife for one year. I had actually thought that was how to train the spirit. That's why Mitsuaki and Naoko (two of his children) are three years apart. Everyone else in the family is two years apart. But just in this one instance the birth was three years apart. Since I wasn't intimate with my wife, there wasn't any other way that it could have happened. Really, I went to such foolish extremes for spiritual training. I actually thought that fasting and winter ablutions were quite reasonable practices. However, this would be not one bit different from other religions and sects.

The founder has plainly stated, *Do spiritual training rather than ascetic practices*, hasn't he? Therefore, to 'do spiritual training rather than ascetic practices' is the same as to 'quit ascetic practices and only do spiritual training.'

This point is where it can get awfully ambiguous, and until recently, even I have had vague thoughts about it. It's not saying you don't need to do ascetic practices, thus I've thought while doing ascetic practices you must

*Faith is living in rhythm
with the universe*

put importance on spiritual training. Also, among the teachings of Reverend Shijin Konko (successor and son of the founder) there's: *Can those unable to do ascetic practices do spiritual training?* In that case, if you're going to practice cold-water ablutions in winter, then without really getting up the courage to do so, you won't be able to do it after all. As a believer of the faith I had thought that ascetic practices were the proper way to train.

However, if it were "practice Konko Faith rather than Buddhism," then you would have to give up the Buddhism you've practiced until now, before you could take up the Konko faith, right? So since it's teaching to *do spiritual training rather than ascetic practices*, then we have to realize that it is not necessary to do ascetic practices. And then, with singular enthusiasm take up spiritual training.

Spiritual training is the training done within the heart. So whether you're asleep or awake, even in the toilet, there is spiritual training. By always keeping spiritual training in mind, then when something happens, whatever it is, you'll be able to quickly take it up with faith. Spiritual training is so effective that way.

When you really try to come to grips with it concretely, you may come up against something you don't understand. But when you don't understand something, it's good to ask questions and find the answer. Even though taking the process seriously, while actually trying to come to grips with it, you may come to something you cannot understand.

In the beginning you'll get through it by just diligently considering the process as important. In order to do this, I've said, "Master the rhythm of the universe." By getting into the rhythm you are able to proceed without mistake. There will also be times when you will become perplexed. But through practice, you will gradually get a clear understanding of getting into that rhythm.

And at the same time, those taking up the faith will develop the conviction of the important work of mediation, so that when you are not getting into the rhythm, you can seek the Divine Will through mediation. That is where your rhythm will be adjusted. In this way, as you master more of the founder's faith, then what religions of the past didn't comprehend, will become clearer.

The View of Departed Souls (View of the Spirit World)

Here's an example of clearer comprehension. The world of the departed is pitch-dark. The *airaku* idea explains that by purifying the soul in this world you receive light, and in the next will live in a world of brilliance. To live in a world of brilliance is the same as to be enshrined as a *kami* (a divine soul) in the next world.



It might sound exaggerated, but if you're going to start a religious revolution, this is an area which you will have to cover. Various religions say different things about the spirit world or the world of the soul. For example, in Buddhism there's hell or paradise, and although some religious denominations have divided it into various stages, the spirit world is not a place like that.

Such things as the works of departed spirits are not like that. For example, when you're busy with things to do, after praying to the Buddhist altar, "Grandfather, please look after this grandchild," you would then leave the child in front of the family altar. And then the child quietly plays and goes to sleep. So it's said that Grandfather has taken care of the child. This is taken as a matter of fact, right? But it doesn't mean that Grandfather, who's departed and gone to the next world, is actually doing it. Indeed, it does seem that you would make contact with the departed soul as if it were a living person. But since such an intention conformed to the *heart of the universe*, the *Universe* has been pleased to take care of it.

There are many other stories that could be told. The upper half of the body of the departed Rev. Matsuhei Katsura appeared to Rev. Matsujiro Ishibashi, the first minister in Kurume Church, and made a request for construction work for the main worship hall at Konko Headquarters. Then, upon accepting the request, while praying wholeheartedly to the Divine Parent of the Universe, one of the board members in Oita Church (a branch of Kurume Church) offered his earnings to Kurume Church of ten thousand yen, in the money of those days. Rev. Ishibashi presented all of it to Konko Headquarters. With that ten thousand yen

the towering gate at headquarters was constructed. If built today, it would probably be a hundred million yen.

Thus until now we have considered that this must be how the departed spirit is doing this work. However, I have come to understand that it is the work of the Divine Parent of the Universe, whose intention is to save us, and who only wants to provide us with blessings. I see such works as if they were ‘tricks’ performed by the Parental Deity of our universe. For example, if it were someone completely unknown who had appeared to Rev. Ishibashi and had requested the construction work, then you wouldn’t expect him to pay it much attention. It was because his own teacher, Rev. Matsuhei Katsura, had appeared that he actually undertook the project. Therefore, this work was done by the Divine Parent of the Universe using the physical appearance of Rev. Katsura.

There are so many of these stories that could be told. The tales of departed spirits are numerous. However, all of them are various productions by the Divine Parent for bringing about real human happiness. They are performances put on through the work of the universe. I’m saying that Divine ‘tricks’ are performed to somehow develop the way for human beings to be fulfilled.

***I’m a happy man,
simple and innocent.
I’m a man that can’t but put trust
in the benevolence of the universe.***

Thus, it means that all the many religious teachers up until now have not even broken away one bit from these expedient ‘tricks’ of the universe. The Divine Parent has taught me that a departed spirit doing such work is the same as having the dead person get up on stage and being

asked to dance. But hasn’t the founder stated, *Receive divine virtue; divine virtue can be taken into the next world, and can be left behind for this world.*

Indeed, you can take it into the next world and also leave it behind for this world. Yes, it certainly can be left for this world, but that doesn’t mean you will be able to send it back from over there. From over there you actually cannot consider coming to pick up the grandchild which has fallen down.

The meaning of being able to take it with you is something like the money in our world, if money could control human happiness in this world. Through the virtues you take into the next world you can just act or function as a departed soul who’s free, who’s gentle, one at ease, or one who’s joyful. Since we cannot send it back from the other world, we should take virtues for our own sake and take the virtuous light for ourselves.

To practice faith and then leave the virtue behind is by no means leaving itself bare. How could you leave virtue to a son who’s kind of foolish? Even leaving virtue for us, there are many examples of it ending without a son ever coming across it, or not being able to receive it. Thus, if your parents have left you virtues, even without digging very much, these virtues will emerge by just digging a little bit. Having to dig a little, I have said, is like filial respect for one’s parents.

In the play, “The Four and Twenty Paragons of Filial Piety,” there’s the part that speaks about digging up bamboo shoots. It’s the middle of winter and the parent wants to eat bamboo shoots. Without asking how bamboo shoots could be there in the middle of winter, he entered the bamboo grove because his parent had requested it. Then the sword he had been searching for was found buried right where he dug.

So you see that without the heart of filial piety, of how you submissively and obediently take up what the parent says, you will not be able to receive the parent’s virtues. It’s as I have been saying, that filial piety is always at the very essence of the concept of *airaku*.

This filial respect for the parent is thus transferred to the minister at your parent church, and to the founder, and also to *Tenchi Kane No Kami*, the Divine Parent of the Universe. Therefore this faith proceeds progressively, escalating as it develops. It has the feelings you have for your parents. Then as your prayer develops from wanting to understand the *Heart* of the universe, to satisfying the *Heart* of the universe, and then wanting to live in a way that meets the *Heart* of the Divine Parent of the Universe, then you’ll get closer and closer to fulfilling the *Airaku* Idea.

In this way, in order to understand more and more fully the Divine Heart, we really must polish and purify the gem of the heart. No matter how much we are called the masters of living creatures, some people will have qualities which distort them to where they only appear human on the surface, if you will, and could be considered devils or maybe even snakes. Therefore, we actually must come to grips with our spiritual training.

Abolishing Ascetic Practices - part 2 (View of Religious Training)

We really must abolish ascetic practices. Unless they are abolished, what is genuine Konko faith will not be developed. Couldn’t we say the way of taking just this spiritual training alone is quite characteristic of the Konko religion? By actually taking up spiritual training, there really is no time to do ascetic practices. But, up until quite recently, even I have encouraged the practice and have done ascetic training myself. You know, you really can develop strength at those times. However, it is just like billowing clouds before a summer rain shower. It’s full of energy and strength, but the time comes and poof, it just disappears.

A certain priest who communicates with the departed was saving numerous people. He had gone to a secluded mountain to do ascetic training. He then came to understand a variety of things to help save people, but this person became a little lustful. He raped a woman believer who came to worship. From that moment people were not saved anymore. He had lost his spiritual powers. In this way, what was built through ascetic training disappears in an instant. In a certain way, I feel that it is a faith that is like cherry blossoms.

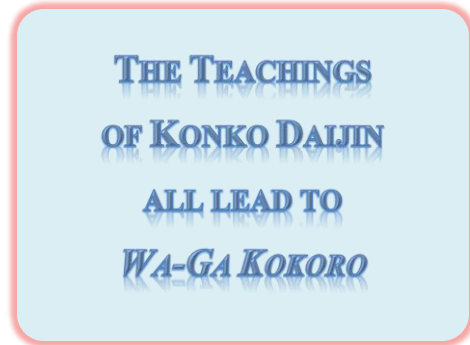
So, since it’s taught to *practice faith like a plum blossom rather than a cherry blossom*, and since here it is teaching for faith ‘rather than the cherry blossom’, therefore faith that is like the cherry blossom should be abolished and we need to practice faith like the plum blossom. Thus it means we must narrow it down to spiritual training only. Now I hope you are beginning to understand the reason why ascetic practices are not necessary.

You can see just how insignificant ascetic practices are. Presently the Konko churches which have received great blessings are all still doing ascetic training. Therefore, since that is the type of thing which has to be torn down, and in order somehow to get the *airaku* idea into the

Konko faith, each of us must really test and prove *airaku* idea, apply and manifest these results, receive strength, carry the light of fulfillment, and with sincerity, conscientiousness, and through a heart of love, transmit it. First, it means that this must be manifested throughout the believers of Konko faith; and then, the most difficult thing is somehow try to convey this to those without faith.

***Wa-Ga Kokoro: The Peaceful, Joyful Heart* (View of Happiness)**

At the same time, we who take up the faith must first come to grasp how wonderful the teachings of the founder are. They teem with universal and eternal qualities. But even the great ministers who lead the Konko religious organization see the book of teachings of our founder as merely a rough draft; it could not be compared with the major religions of Christianity and the Bible, or Buddhism and the Sutras. You all probably think it's no real match for the major religions. However, that is not really so. By seeking to understand the laws of the universe, it becomes as difficult as you make it. But if it doesn't lead to teaching how living human beings can be saved, it would be better not to have it. In a sense, the Konko faith is truly simple, and clear, and blessings follow for certain.



Speaking truthfully, the Konko faith is fine with just, "Blessings begin within *Wa-Ga Kokoro*." Thus, you can say, that the 182 teachings in the earlier book of teachings are for gaining such a *Wa-Ga Kokoro*. These 182 teachings are not just to be taught directly; at Airaku Church, they have continuously been interpreted for thirty years now. Every day opening the book of teachings, and then receiving it from every angle, is how we will realize that this is the way to build a *Wa-Ga Kokoro*; it's how we can understand what faith is.

Moreover, what it means to be brimming full of universality is, as I am always saying, that whatever the teaching, it is teeming with universal qualities. However, the most wonderful thing, whatever is said, is the teachings for receiving meals:

Food is made and provided by TENCHI KANE NO KAMI to sustain one's life. Always be grateful for whatever you eat or drink.

For example, as I mentioned just a while ago, in some Christian religions you can't drink alcohol, or some Buddhist groups must be devoted in order to reach mastery. Some devotions may mean you shall not eat raw things like fish or meat. And there are also strict precepts such as not approaching women.

But the Konko faith is not like that. While taking a wife and having children, and while eating things that are raw flesh.... Since we are provided with these things by Divinity, we should even receive the sake, meat and fish with gratitude. These are received because this will please the Divine Parent. However luxurious the meal may be, by refusing to eat such lavish things is actually being irreverent to the Parental Deity. When we receive it with the joyous feeling of 'how could we ever really partake of such delicacies,' the food comes alive and is appreciated.

Whether it is fish or meat, it's such that the soul of the fish or meat will be fulfilled. It is thus purified when it has been thankfully received by people. This type of thing is truly something that can be understood anywhere at any time, whether you are Chinese or American. Making

a small mistake here would be like feeling you must lick the western plate clean. If you say it like that, then Americans would regard you as low-class. It's so precious you should even pour tea on it to drink up the last morsels. That's nothing that Americans can learn quickly.

But as you gradually learn the Konko faith, the truth of the matter is you come to the point where you can't stop yourself from getting into this practice. If something is too much for you, then you shouldn't pick it up to start with. You also don't pour the soy sauce until it overflows; you're careful in using it. As the Head Minister of Amagi Church might say, by realizing it is something sacred, you are obliged to treat it with care. However, if eating the last part causes a tummy ache the next day, then the Divine Parent wouldn't be at all pleased. It's the same for any delicious food. You mustn't overeat. Here you need to remember:

Overeating and overdrinking are the causes for becoming unable to eat or drink.

On a plaque written by *Konko-Sama* is, *The Way Is Not to Be Done Alone*. So the way cannot be opened by itself. Therefore taking the *airaku* idea as your foundation, you cannot expect to reach spiritual enlightenment instantly. With the *airaku* idea as your base, various problems shall arise. Since you cannot open the way alone, the *airaku* idea has you discover the way by going through these problems. Thus this is an area where even though it may be a work of a lifetime, there may be many things we are unable to accomplish. Borrowing the words of Rev. Horio, the first minister of Hita Church, we might say, "Incomplete as it is, forever."

*Clear & simple with blessings,
the airaku idea helps one open
the way through the problems.*

Let's say true faith is, for example, like believers who have to get to the town of KONKO, but instead they are practicing their faith headed in the opposite direction going to KAGOSHIMA CITY. They receive blessings even though headed in the opposite direction, but from time to time they feel uneasy about it. Getting uneasy, they wonder if this is the true way (to KONKO) that they are heading toward.

Here at Airaku Church it is said that if it is the *airaku* idea, it's the sure way. This concept, *airaku*, explains the way to reach the town of KONKO as you take up this process, while convinced that you're proceeding unmistakably in the direction of KONKO. Since the *airaku* idea clearly explains a sure way simply, enjoyably, and thankfully, you should experience it concretely as you continue to inquire into the Divine Will. It is there that you meet and proceed on into the world ideal of *airaku*.

That is why I hope all of you, no matter what, will actually awaken the spirit to master this concept of *airaku* and put it into practice as you develop your faith.

