

Five.

Soul, Spirit and Heart

I. How life carries

1. Life of the creature and Human life

“Patience” is an aspect of human life. The word “patience” connotes to people something unfavorable and is not popularly used very much. Let us put aside this word’s unpopularity and reconsider the meaning of “patience” as Konko Daijin used it.

First, I quote the oral tradition of TSUGAWA, Haruo(1836 – 1916):
“Patience is important at all times, but it is all the more important for practicing faith. Having little patience will not result in divine blessings. Some people are driven to despair, so they cease to practice faith. This is unfortunate. If the hub of a wheel breaks, the carriage cannot move. This applies not only to practicing faith, but to all human activities. Patience is essential. There are few who gain happiness without patience. Even fishermen, farmers, and merchants will not succeed without patience. Strong winds and rain are misfortunes for fishermen and farmers, while financial losses are misfortunes for merchants. But if they do not endure such adversity, they cannot become successful. Thus, patience is most important when practicing faith. To prove this, open the doors of Kami's altar. There is nothing there except the sacred staff and mirror. Divine blessings are bestowed through the patience of practicing faith. One should think that divine blessings come from practicing faith, rather than from Kami-Sama. One should practice faith with lasting patience.” [GII:TSUGAWA, Haruo:17]

Patience is not only necessary for Konkokyo's faith, but also other religious faiths, even though how each religion expresses this may be different. This concept refers to "religious training." Religious training inevitably includes having patience. The Sennichi Kaihogyo (1000-day circumambulation practice) of Mt. Hiei Enryaku-ji Temple or the meditation of Zen Buddhism starts from patience.

Before a deeper exploration of these thoughts, I would like to refer to the lives of plants or of animals, or non-human life. It is very difficult to say that other creatures practice patience consciously or not. We can only say non-human living things may endure in a natural way. For these creatures, patience is not conscious as it is with human beings. For example, insects and the birds, as creatures, cannot survive without food, and they must search for food or they will starve. But they are not conscious that they are searching for food in the same way that human beings do. The lives of birds and beasts as well as plants are harmonized based on the encouragement of the Universe, and that includes patience. By considering the lives of non-human living things and comparing them with the lives of humans, we understand that patience is specific to human life.

Konko Daijin discussed birds and beasts as follows:

"When one thinks about how birds and animals survive, one will understand the blessings of Kami-Sama. In winter, animals do not put on anything extra to keep themselves warm, and in summer, they do not remove anything to be more comfortable. Kami-Sama nurtures them without any problems. When cows or other animals give birth, the calf is not warmed by its mother, yet it grows into a creature."

[GII: YAMAMOTO Sadajiro:5.1]

Of course, the color of wild rabbits may turn from brown to white, but it is not consciously done on the part of the animal. As Konko Daijin explains, these animals can adapt to the changes of weather by receiving blessings from nature and from the encouragement of the Universe.

Every living being instinctively helps other living beings as living creatures in nature. One species does not live only for that species, but lives in relation with and to other species. Even bacteria, which human beings cannot see with their naked eyes, help other living creatures. One life helps other lives in many ways. Generally, all creatures of the Universe live by helping each other. Humans are the only ones that purposely harm other lives.

For example, a hawk may target a rabbit. If the rabbit were a human being, he would think that the hawk is ferocious because it does not have consideration for weaker creatures. But if we think from a perspective that considers the relationship among all living creatures, from the viewpoint of the relations among all the creatures of the world, then one species lives to keep and develop their own species and may also become the victim of other species. So we

can say, every species lives in order to die. Thus, all creatures are bound to live until termination of life and finally, to be reborn.

We can say that all the creatures' lives contribute to others' lives. How those lives are related and how each contributes to the lives of other creatures, are determined by the rules of the Universe. Those lives live with human beings and human beings have the same destiny as other creatures.

Only the appearance of human life is different, even though all lives have the same destiny. Human beings can see their own minds and are conscious of their own lives. That is the point; all creatures of the Universe live fusing both the mind and the body into one. However, only human beings live, separating the mind and the body.

So, only a human being is able to think about this issue. First, a human being faces the question of which is of greater value for life - the mind or the body? This is the fundamental inquiry of philosophy and religion from ancient times.

Traditionally, the general thinking is that the body is considered to be contemptible and vulgar. From this perspective, mind and body are separated; thus, culture and the results of all science were developed. Science and technology evolved, and culture and civilization expanded with the intent of resolving how the mind can conquer, control and utilize the material world, which is represented by the body.

From perspectives of Konko Daijin's faith, the concept of separating mind and body is not the primary issue. The basis of Konkokyo faith is the concept that human beings live their lives without understanding that their lives are given and maintained by the Universe. Human beings tend to think of life as belonging to themselves, separating the mind and the body, and thinking that they can train or control both separately.

All other creatures kept alive by the Universe do not need to make an effort to be conscious of living. Birds and beasts do not need to pray for "Prosperity from Generation to Generation;" that is, the number of birds and beasts is regulated by the Universe and there is no need to worry about "overpopulation." On the other hand, a human being who thinks his life is entirely his own, accepts the events related to his own life and thinks about how to cope after long history. In this way, the human thinks he is creating his own destiny.

A human is supposed to carry such a life that always "plows something up to the next one," as symbolized by the quoted words of Sophocles' poetry in Chapter 3, section 1. That can be said is a way of life for humans. Even if a human being thinks that he wants to return his life to what it was before because the current situation is troublesome, it is already impossible for this to happen. A human being's carrying life as if this "plows something up to the next one" is deeply related to "effort" or "patience."

Even if a human being has left a life with the Universe, the Universe or Kami watches over the human being much like a parent watches over a child. Kami continues to be patient about the human, not allowing him to walk into dangerous situations, or not allowing feelings of nihility or despair, not

experiencing destruction and chaos. The relation between the history of Kami and the history of humans is basically an issue of faith.

2. Frustration of life, Patience of faith

I will define the concept of “patience” in the following sentences -- “This applies to not only practicing faith, but to all human activities. Patience is essential.” This is noted at the beginning of this chapter. Patience is the step taken when one walks with the body and mind, leading in a positive direction, and breaks through circumstances that are conscious of human life with negative value.

While mind and body work together and support each other, steps that are taken are not problematic, but often as we take these steps, the relationship between mind and body is ignored. Although this may be due to fatigue, in most cases, such a thing will happen when the world of the mind becomes cluttered and confused. In such a case, people sometimes give up in the process of living life, and retreat from patience. Besides that, it is possible that people may terminate their own lives because of the lack of patience. But the act of giving up such patience is one of the steps that break through the conflict of life. Therefore, it could be argued that an act of suicide is contradictory; that is to say, in some cases humans break through the difficulties they are experiencing by self-abandonment.

The unity of the world of mind involves intelligence, passion, and motivation. If these three elements complement each other and complete the world of mind, humans can walk with patience, with mind integrating the body. However, if a negative situation suddenly becomes more intense, or if the individual notices that he cannot predict when or where that walk will end, the complementary relationship of the three will be disturbed, and the mind will no longer function as a mind. Such a state of disorder in the cohesion of the mind causes a situation in which the persistence of patience is not given to life. Moreover, even if patience is working but intellectual reflection becomes abnormally over-emphasized, there is the perception that this is not the original step, and the movement of the body may be stalled. Sometimes, it may happen that a person turns away from being patient when he feels empty, and everything seems meaningless despite one’s patience. Sometimes the decline of motivation that occurs with physical fatigue may discourage patience. This kind of disturbance of the mind causes one to regard a difficulty as being overwhelming, and consequently, one will be prone to give up and/or to contemplate suicide.

Human life is vulnerable at any time to consider not continuing to live, due to such disturbance of mind. So, Konko Daijin instructed the concept of the relation between faith and patience as “You must be patient to receive blessings (OKAGE), especially in faith. Some people stop practicing faith after burning up. It is a poor thing.” At the heart of this concept is the thought that faith has a deep relationship with the world of the mind.

Konko Daijin preaches “patience of practicing faith” to the disciples in several ways. This is because he had patience during difficult situations, such as

caring for his children and foster father, helplessly watching his cows dying, and suffering a critical illness at forty-two years of age. However, despite such challenging circumstances, Konko Daijin overcame them by practicing faith in Kami.

Regarding the disciples in *Kyoten*, many of them experienced similar negative situations during which their minds were weakened in the ability and strength to persevere. As such, they shared similar negative challenges to the ones Konko Daijin experienced.

For example, SATO Hikotaro (1844 – 1922) described his devastating situation. “Having an eye disease, I prayed to various kamis and buddhas and tried various doctors and medicines, but to no avail. ... One night, I left the house quietly and tried to jump into the well.”[GI: SATO Hikotaro:1~2] . ISHIHARA Ginzo (1833 – 1910) suffered from a chain of misfortunes; he lamented, “My children died one after another soon after being born.” [GII: ISHIHARA Ginzo:1.1], Another example is the case of a believer, Mankichi, from Tomioka, who had a situation involving Mankichi’s mother, “a believer from Tomioka (who) became so poor that she couldn't live in the village. “[GII:KONKO Ieyoshi:7.1] SUGITA Masajiro (1958 - 1931) similarly experienced problematic situations that he described as, “My wife always got sick and business was slow. There was nothing I could do.” [GII: SUGITA Masajiro1.1]

As I read *Kyoten*, there are so many cases that described lives that took steps to engage in the practice of patience before engaging in self-contradiction. From that point, these people were able to walk forward with patience, as a way to open up their lives guided by Konkyo Daijin's faith.

As one reads such stories in *Kyoten*, these can be described as a record of faith of overcoming the failure of patience-less living. This is not limited to the *Kyoten*, but in general, to all Buddhist sutras, Christian Bibles, and other religious books. In facing the difficulty of living life, a human being must solve the problems of mind, spirit, and soul to open the way to live with patience. This is the foundation of religious scriptures and texts. At the heart of such books are hidden stories relating the sadness of human lives connected to other lives of the Universe like birds or beasts. These texts describe how to overcome that sadness.

Let us continue the story about the life of patience supported by faith.

“People keep consulting the Days and Directions and do not pray to Tenchi Kane No Kami. The Days and Directions do not matter. These people should apologize and pray to Kami instead. Kami will maintain their prosperity.” [Oboegaki: 19-10]

“Shrines, temples, and homes stand on Kami's land. Unaware of this, people only examine the Days and Directions and commit acts of irreverence to Kami and, consequently, encounter hardships due to their accumulated offenses. They needed to practice faith in order to receive divine blessings.[“ Oboegaki: 21-21-4~5]

“Regardless of how wise or virtuous, a person is never able to decide when to be born and when to die. It is only after birth and before death when he concerns himself with such things.” [GI:OGIHARA Sugi:25]

“People are too self-concerned. When they are born, they have no concern about lucky or unlucky days. It concerns them only after birth and before death. They die without concern for lucky or unlucky days.” [GII:AOI Saki:3]

It is necessary to understand the phrase, "keep consulting the Days and Directions," in various ways. We can substitute "Days and Directions" with other references such as economics, medicine, information, society, rules or common sense, or value of politics. After using alternate reference terms, we can understand a fuller meaning of the phrase. What the person practicing faith must firmly grasp and be convinced of is his appearance when he is born and his appearance when he dies. We must understand how one is given a life and how one is allowed to die. In other words, we must clearly understand the departure or the end point of life. We seek solutions to problems by pursuing wealth or by seeking great medical doctors and hospitals with good reputations. This is similar to worrying about various problems in the middle, rather than understanding beginnings and endings. What Konko Daijin thinks is most important for us to understand is how life started. In other words, Konko Daijin wants us to understand that life started in relation with the Universe, and therefore, it is necessary to live life understanding this fact.

The way of carrying the time of life "for the time in-between," is the way of living life, thinking that one's life can be cultivated by oneself and must be possible. When such a storm of ideas blows into the Universe, it is impossible for humans and others to work in the heaven and earth that continuously supports and protects human life and its world. I do not know if it is a difficult task.

But, to experience or to overcome this difficulty is the encouragement from the Universe to human beings. Fully receiving that encouragement and carrying life along with that encouragement are said to be the patience of practicing faith. In this way, humans can carry their own lives solving problems by faith. After a human being starts to carry his life like this, then Kami appears. This phenomenon is suggested in the words, "Think that divine blessings come from practicing faith, rather than from Kami-Sama. Practice faith with lasting patience."

The concept of "divine blessings [that] come from Kami-Sama" -- as well as the concept that a person can overcome his difficulties through applications of ability cultivated by mental and physical training -- is a double-sided one. The notion that "divine blessings come from Kami Sama" suggests that one can expect to receive superpowers that pour into his life from Kami Sama. When one is frustrated because he lacks the ability to withstand the weight of the problem, he asks for help from a god outside of himself, as though asking a guardsman or superman for help. It appears that "divine blessings come from Kami Sama" is

wrongly interpreted to mean that a person, due to his weak ability, gives up trying to resolve his own difficulties, and Kami Sama is expected to help. Konko Daijin did not teach the idea that Tenchi Kane No Kami was such an outside god to provide such power.

The words “divine blessings come from Kami-Sama” actually urges humans to discover the life of the Universe -- hidden by the nature of the human mind-- and to make the encouragement of Kami appear in the middle of human life. We understand that patience of practicing faith is to make the encouragement of Kami appear in the middle of human life, and to show how humans overcome problems by that encouragement.

3. The life as a “The Representative”

Konko Daijin received the idea of being “one with the Tenchi Universe” from Kami because he could open up the lives -- not only his own -- but also of so many other people, by expressing Kami through the example of his life of faith. That was in 1970, thirteen years after Konko Daijin decided to practice faith to Konjin. (Meiji 3). The following is described in “Oboegaki.”

“You, Ikigami Konko Daijin, have been performing toritsugi for Nittenshi Gattenshi Ushitora Hitsujisaru Kimon Kane No Kami for thirteen years. Through much patience, you have accumulated divine virtue, and you have become one with the Tenchi Universe.” “...Through Konko Daijin's voice, I, Tenchi Kane No Kami, give My thanks. I cannot be more grateful.” [Oboegaki 18/3/1~4]

Also I will quote the relevant parts from “Gorikai” as follows,
“I, Konjin, then 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 themselves at ease. "From now on, as Konko Daigongen, perform toritsugi to mediate people's requests to Nittenshi, Gattenshi, and Ushitora Kimon Kane No Kami.” [GII:OKIDA Kisaburo:3.2]

Even though there are various discrepancies when comparing the latter with the former, because the latter is the oral tradition from OKITA Kisaburo (1851 – 1917), I would like to omit discussions over details. First, I would like to

refer to “divine message.” This “divine message” is the word said by Tenchi Kane No Kami to Ikigami Konko Daijin as “already one cycle of twelve zodiac signs [to] go around and thirteen years past after you started practicing faith. Meanwhile, you kept conquering your hardship with patience of practicing faith.” The life of Konko Daijin could return to the life rooted in the Tenchi Universe, by the virtue of faith or by the virtue of mind, which Kami wishes to be, and then Konko Daijin could share the roots of life with Kami, the Universe.

The divine words “one with the Tenchi Universe” and the words in the oral tradition “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” resonate with each other. In the later part of the oral tradition, Konko Daijin as “one with the Tenchi Universe,” showed people what to do, which are the contents after receiving these divine words stated in Oboegaki.

Life within the Universe is a life given as a gift and watched over by the Universe, so that animals, plants and humans have similar lives. As it has already been mentioned, only a human being is different from those lives, because a human can consciously look at his own life. So, a human being may repeat an act of folly throughout history, as he pulls his life away from the Universe, and forgets the Universe that nurtures the root of life. Even though we say “pulls away,” this is on the intellectual and spiritual levels. Thus, the root of life means staying in the Universe.

Therefore, being rooted in heaven and earth or “One with the Tenchi Universe,” is related to the transformation of the human mind that has been trying to perceive one's life as something separate and independent from heaven and earth. The turning of the mind does not mean that the body and mind are one and the same as those of other creatures. If that happens, you will cease to be a human being imprinted with the patience of overcoming problem situations.

Even if Konko Daijin experienced a change of mind due to his devoted practice and he could be “One with the Tenchi Universe” or with Kami, he was still a human having body and mind. He actually lives in this world with his body, as he is said to be “Ikigami.” He is still a human with flowing blood, a nervous system, and a system to discharge waste matter. As long as we are human beings, we have a destined life to carry out patience of practicing faith, and we must continue to put effort into opening the way to be “One with the Tenchi Universe.”

It is also an important patience task to always show the “root” as the form of one's life, but Konko Daijin had an even more important task imposed from above. To put it simply, he was tasked with the responsibility to show the meaning of “one with the Tenchi Universe” to the world and people who did not know their own relationship with heaven and earth and who were trying to overcome their problems with their own power. Konko Daijin was given the important role of informing people and guiding them toward the understanding of their relationship with heaven and earth.

These are words I quoted before from the oral tradition of OKITA Kisaburo: “Lend Me your voice and physical form. I will teach the Way of Tenchi and show people the way to put themselves at ease.” So that we can think deeply

about the contents shown here, I would like to quote another of Kami's requests to Konko Daijin from Oboegaki, that seems to be the background of such a tradition.

"Have faith in Kami, receive divine blessings, and save the troubled. You can give thanks to Kami by becoming one with the heart of Kami. Also you can spread this true Way of Faith by telling others about the blessings you have received. This will make Kami happy. Though people practice faith, they only use Kami-Sama. They are not aware of how Kami-Sama uses them. Tenchi Kane No Kami will use people as His representatives. Practice faith and look forward to being put to use by Kami-Sama. " [GII:FUKUSHIMA Gihe'e:11.1-2]

"Tenchi Kane No Kami has sent Ikigami Konko Daijin to the people to give blessings and teachings and to have them prosper forever. Kami is Kami because of man, and man is man because of Kami. Both continue to uphold each other." [Oboegaki: 21-21-6~7]

Sayings such as "Lend Me your voice and physical form" mean that "Tenchi Kane No Kami will use people as His representatives. Practice faith and look forward to being put to use by Kami-Sama." "Tenchi Kane No Kami has sent Ikigami Konko Daijin to the people" and other such wisdoms are the same as what Kami intended to say. The essence is about the task requested from the Universe to persuade the people that the body and the mind are rooted in the Universe. And by Kami, they are to let life, which tends to go away from the Universe, to go back to the Universe.

The Universe appears in the world which human beings built up. Kami requested the concrete life with "voice and physical form" as his servant to recover the original relationship between the world and human beings who live there. In other words, many people practice patience of faith as requested by Kami. Those people are said to be "sent to the people (Sashimuke)" or in words familiar to those days, they are considered to be "representatives (Tsukawashime)" by Kami.

Accordingly, Ikigami Konko Daijin as a representative must be a human being with real body and mind, and must not be understood like the eternal working of Ikigami Konko Daijin mediation, which sounds like abstract ideas or metaphysics. Only the "visible" and "physical" life can play the role of "representative" as "sent to the people" from Kami to the real world or human world. Words such as, "through Konko Daijin, Kami has been revealed to the world." ([GII:KONDO Fujimori:3-2] and also, "Kami has come forth through Konko Daijin," ([GII:FUKUSHIMA Gihe'e:10-4]) must be understood in the same way. Furthermore, it is not only Konko Daijin who plays that role. We must understand that all the people who live with the hard task of recovering the relationship between Kami, the Universe and human beings, living with patience of practicing faith as Konko Daijin, are requested to play such a role.

Such people are sometimes spoiled and despised by the people who are trying to open their way by themselves and through secular values. That is the time that the true value of the patience of practicing faith will be demonstrated. Kami said to Konko Daijin, "Konko Daijin, endure even if other people urinate on you. I shall

clean you up. Be patient no matter what people say,”[Oboe-cho: 20-16-1]. Konko Daijin was asked to endure and be patient practicing faith, no matter how his life is treated in the world; Kami will support. Konko Daijin was also requested to convey that to the people practicing faith.

Two years after Saito Juemon was put in jail, Konko-Sama said,
"As past incidents have shown, this Way of Faith has not yet been established. Until the caretakers complete their training, Kami will wait. In thirty years, the Way of Faith shall broaden. In the meantime, even while wearing rags and living on gruel, practice faith and wait till it's time." [GII:TAKAHASHI Tomie:23]

“Establishing a way of faith is easy for the upper classes, but difficult for the lower classes. Therefore, as lower-class people, we need more time. We will establish the Faith through Kami-Sama's blessings. We must wait till it's time. I was a lowly manure carrier, so people doubt me. But while I keep my patience, I will receive virtue.
[GII:TAKAHASHI Tomie:25]

We can understand through the quotations above that Konko Daijin never thought this was an easy task; that God imposed and he received the task to open up the way of the Universe and to help to conquer difficulties afflicting people, due to their lack of a normal relationship with the Universe. Konko Daijin and his disciples were unable to avoid various challenges in carrying out their roles as "representatives," “even if other people urinate on you,” and “even while wearing rags and living on gruel.” Their tasks would not have been completed without patiently practicing faith supported by Kami.

There are times when our minds are open and we want to convey the truth to people and to the world, regardless of how the world perceives us. That truth is convincing and understood when we experience being surprised to learn that which we did not know, and of feeling sorry for not knowing it. That is the time when we really know the truth; that experience of “true fact” urges us and energizes our mission to convey the truth to all the world. Life as a “representative” is such a life. Living a life as a “representative” means having the patience of practicing faith, based on the understanding from the bottom of the heart as we are sent to the world from the Universe.

II . Mitama

1. Japanese view of Mitama

Regarding this issue, I would like to briefly touch on Christianity and keep in mind the differences between Christian thought, and Japanese and Konko Daijin's thoughts. In the Christian world, death is considered the result of

sin, the result of original sin. To put it aside from various theological debates, I think this suggests that human beings were destined to die by God as atonement for the sins of Adam and Eve.

Death is an object of fear for humans. Death is the opposite of the essence of God, and it is said that the devil is the ruler of death. The reason why death is a fear is because it destroys life and leaves nothing. What you have to believe is that in order to be saved from extinction, one must have faith. Jesus appears there. I think that Jesus Christ's death fulfilled the mission of eliminating human sin. Therefore, the simplified concept is that those who believe in Jesus are guaranteed eternal life in heaven. Even though there are various theological positions about this concept, the faith of Christianity is that, fundamentally, death existed in the human world as the result of sin.

Based on the tradition of the Orient, especially in Japan, there is no boundary between gods, deities, kamis and humans; they are not separate. This is reflected in "Kojiki (Records of Ancient Matters)" which implies that even if a human dies, he will not disappear, but will continue to exist somewhere as a spirit, soul, or god. The traditional concept is that souls and spirits exist in mountains near villages or on the other side of the horizon seen from the coast. Folk scholar folklorist Kunio Yanagita's *About Our Ancestors: the Japanese Family System* is classic literature about fate. In addition to this book, referring to "the life of the Japanese" by a folklorist MAKITA Shigeru, let us also examine the spiritual climate about Mitama - not only regarding Konko Daijin - but also about the lives of Japanese.

Kunio Yanagida wrote about God and Mitama, asserting that "God and Mitama are now being considered to be two different things.' But we cannot believe that it was so from the beginning of the country, because there are the words of the Spirit of the gods in the old record."

It is said that in the past, God and the Spirit were considered as one. This idea -- that is "not to distinguish God from the Spirit" or "God and the Spirit are the same existence" -- is basic to the belief system of East Asia. In China and Korea, there are stories of the mountain hermits who became gods after repeated training. But in Europe and the Muslim world, that is impossible. The idea that humans can become or nearly become gods is based on the recognition that the world of gods and the real world of humans can interact. In fact, Shigeru Makita states that gods and Mitama can interact with the real world of human beings.

"From the perspective of the Japanese, there is only a thin line separating 'the world after death' and 'this world.' For the Japanese, 'that world' - that is, 'the home of the soul' should be in the far distance, beyond the sea. But in fact, it is a place so close to us that we are able to go there immediately. From 'the other world,' 'this world' can be seen quite clearly, and once we pray, the god of our ancestors quietly moves from the 'home of the soul' to appear and help with the birth of descendants."

It appears that we still have a deep belief or faith in our hearts because we inherently feel fellowship between God and humans. We understand these concepts as described by Shigeru Makita.

Furthermore, Shigeru Makita said, "It is also a feature of the Japanese that they believe Mitama could see their descendants from 'the other world' or 'the home of the soul.' " "The Japanese did not believe the meaning of this concept to be that if one dies, he goes to the far side of the Pure Land, tens of millions of miles away from the human world, and severs all connection with the real human world. "

As Buddhism came to Japan, people came to think about the Western Pure Land or "the other world," as an incredibly far place, but the Japanese traditional way of thinking about Mitama is like that described here.

Let us think about examples of this thinking, focusing on villages and houses involved with Konko Daijin. Generally, the gods were enshrined at shrines for the village as the ancestor of the whole community. At that time the village community was further divided into details, and a group of people with the same blood relations and relatives was said to be a "stock in the village." These related units were called "kabu," and the head family of a kabu was responsible for worshipping the ancestral god. Regarding the relationship with the god of family ancestors, the god of the Shinto shrine was the fundamental god that connected the god of each family's ancestors. It may have almost disappeared in the big cities, but in Konko Town, people still have an ancestral festival of the traditional Japanese family system, and you can see the customs of faith from the Konko Daijin era.

The ancestors have been enshrined for hundreds or thousands of years for each household; consequently, current people cannot remember all the names of or positions held by the ancestors. These ancestors were supposed to have been those who established the family or settled on the land at first, but since every house had enshrined them for such a long time, it has been impossible for currently living descendants to remember. Indeed, given the longevity of these ancestors' enshrinement, current people who worship do not usually think about how important or what kind of ancestors or gods they are. An example of this situation is Konko Daijin's family. The original ancestors of the Kawate family (Akazawa family), which adopted Konko Daijin, were members of the Ohashi family, but the Kawate family worshiped Maroudogami, guest god, as their god ancestor.

Generally, it is said in folkloristics, that the gods of guests were Ofudas, or drowned bodies that floated somewhere from the other side of the sea, and people worshiped them to escape from any misfortune imposed on them by the Ofudas. In fact, there is now no way to know what the guest god for the ancestor of the Ohashi family was. Perhaps even the people in the bloodline a hundred years ago would not have questioned what kind of god it was.

The Ohashi family enshrined the guest god as the guardian deity of the kinship community formed by relatives centered around the head family. Furthermore, the god was not a god who left a trace of identity, such as Ohashi so-and-so or whomever were the family heads generations prior, but

rather an ancestor, a guest god of ancestors. It can be said that Yanagida could not distinguish God from the Mitama. Nevertheless the god of the clan, or the village deity, was considered to be the god protecting a limited community such as a particular clan or village. The guest god of the Ohashi family was not a god for other clans, but just protected the Ohashi clan. Similarly, the deity of Otani village protected only the Otani village.

These gods were the ancestors of specific families and villages, so they did not interfere with the internal affairs of other houses or villages. It is said that our ancestors are so close to us that if we pray to them, they would appear in a delivery room and help us with the birth of offspring. I briefly touched upon the common ideas of many early Japanese about their ancestors or about Mitama. Understanding this, we used to think that the ancestor or Mitama -- who has an historically distinct existence, a specific name, and unique identity -- has no meaning. Our thinking today is different.

It is possible to confirm that the spirits and ancestors once enshrined by the Japanese are guardian gods of homes, villages, or country, and do not retain a specific personality or individuality. It seems that the idea of a deity or gods and Mitama has existed for a long time, but it also seems that after European civilization influenced Japanese society, ordinary Japanese people came to think in this way.

I believe this is like a phenomenon that marks the end of an era, in which gods and people are generous and friendly, and as people began to care about this matter, people questions their relationship with gods and with themselves.

2. Mitama of human, Mitama of Kami.

For the time being, let us keep in mind the traditional ways of thinking and beliefs of the Japanese people mentioned above, and ask how Konko Daijin taught about the Spirit and Mitama. Let us continue our discussion while thinking about how traditional things have deepened the meaning of Konko Daijin's faith, and are showing new developments in the world of God's faith.

In the Christian and Islamic worlds, humans are believed to have been created with the creation of heaven and earth. It is understood then that thereafter humans self-propagated like animals and plants. However, according to Konko Daijin's thought, each human being is an existence created and given a life by God. In other words, the God of the universe, heaven and earth is not a God such as Christians believed in, who at one time created the world and its lives; rather, Kami is always prepared to create new works and while working, newly re-creates the world of humans, continuously sparing their lives, and also re-creating Kami himself.

Some people regret that there is no creation myth or the myth of heaven and earth creation in Konko-kyo, but Konko-kyo followers believe God's creation work does not end with a single event, but it is continuously working day by day. In this way, it is impossible that there is a single creation myth. It can be said that there is no single creation myth because Kami, people, and the world are continuously involved in encountering and participating in new creation events.

Now let us reflect on what Konko Daijin preached about this. First of all, regarding the issue of being born, Konko Daijin taught the following: “You are a human, and I am a human. We have both received the same Mitama soul from the same Tenchi No Kami. ... People are a microcosm. Tenchi No Kami-Sama protects your head at all times, thus you can use your body at will.” [GI:YAMAMOTO, Sadajiro:2.4~6]

“Planting seeds in a paddy is known as *tane oroshi*. *Tane oroshi* from Kami is when the child, yet unknown by its blessed parents, is given a soul. The body is given by Earth, and the mitama soul is given by Tenchi No Kami-Sama. All the while, the child dwells in the womb of the mother, who is unaware of all this. The child later develops a complete body, and is born.” [GII:ICHIMURA, Mitsugoro:13]

“While the child is in the womb, no one feeds it; yet it receives nourishment through the navel and develops bones and muscles. Who is responsible for this? It is all due to Tenchi No Kami-Sama. We are not children of Kobo Daishi-Sama or Amida-Sama. We are children of Tenchi No Kami-Sama. Our bodies are endowed with a soul which enables us to live in this world. Knitting a bag is meaningless if nothing will be put in it. Like a filled bag, we have been implanted with a soul.” [GII:SATO, Mitsujiro:15.4~5]

I've quoted it again, but if you want to choose a tradition of language such as that from Kyoten, you have to use many pages. However, in each case, these words tell us that even if we are born as human beings, God creates each of us and give us lives and souls. Konko Daijin showed us that at every moment, each of us is created by God's own hand.,

Now, let's think about what the meaning of the words "soul" and "spirit" as used by Omikami. There is a misunderstanding that the Spirit is of the dead and not of the living, because of the commonly expressed "after the person passed away, he became a Mitama or spirit in Konkokyo." However, *Kyoten* says, "I receive the Spirit from the gods of heaven and earth;" "It is the seed that gives the soul to God;" and "The soul is bestowed from heaven." One can see that the "spirit" and "soul" are not synonymous with "the dead."

Since the spirit and the soul were bestowed at birth, human beings live their lives by receiving their work. You do not become Mitama only when you die. As it is said that as "separated deities" or "*Wake-Mitama*," humans live as shared lives; in other words, humans live as a spirit of God, blessed with the work of God.

The meaning of being "dead and becoming Mitama" means that as we are born with Mitama, then we show our work as Mitama to the physical world. Now that we understand this, then how do we understand the relationship between our minds and what we think?

Speaking of that question, when Mitama which was give to us from Tenchi Kane no Kami is involved in a tangible world as a life, it interacts with

the historical, social, or environment of that world. At that time, Mitama arranges concrete things called individuality by receiving and influencing the world. Mitama's work that brings individuality to the world can be called "heart."

In other words, Mitama - through an eternal life given to each person - shows our real life, in our individual identities, within the individual's life story. At that time, the kind of presence we have and the relationship between the life in which the spirits dwell and the real world we live in becomes important as a form.

The teachings that illuminate this concept are as follows: "Those who do as I say shall become a kami." Oboe-cho:24-25. "To be an ikigami is to have Kami be born within you." GI:ICHIMURA Mitsugoro:20. "...Practice faith and become a kami." GI:ICHIMURA Mitsugoro:20. "Save others and have yourself become a kami." GII:FUKUSHIMA, Gihe'e:1:6. "You will become a kami if you abandon your desires." [GIII:Jinkyu Kyogoroku170]

There are many other teachings similar to these. "To become a god" or "God is born" is not about an occurrence after one dies, but it is related to how the spirit of God who was given in the tangible world, becomes the completion of the final "garment." Participation in that completion as an individual who was given a spirit, is also a matter of religion.

3. Workings of Mitama spirit

Listen to what Konko Daijin tells us about where the Mitama, given to each individual life, goes to when the individual dies.

"When people die, they are reunited with Nittenshi. It is the same for Buddhists and Shintoists. The body dies, but the soul keeps on living. The body, which was taken from the ground, returns to the ground. The soul, which was bestowed by Heaven, returns to Heaven. "[GII:NANBA, Ko:13.2]

"People think that they are under Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama's care only while they are alive. But they remain under His care even after they die. Since the soul is bestowed by Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama, when one is dismissed by Heaven, one's soul will return to Tenchi No Kami and be in His eternal care. Since the body comes from Earth, it will also return to Earth and be under its care. "[GII:KASHIWABARA, Toku:5.1]

This is his explanation. The distinction between heaven and earth comes from the way Konko Daijin's words are used for easy comprehension when preached to people. He focuses on one thing or place of existence as the body of Tenchi Kane no Kami-Sama. Death causes humans to return to Tenchi no Kami, both physically and mentally. About that, the body is said to return to the earth,

and the Mitama returns to eternal life. In each case, the transformation from the tangible world to the intangible world is done by being "taken care of" by the creation work of Tenchi Kane no Kami. This refers to death.

Therefore, death is not imposed upon human beings by sin as Christianity preaches, nor does belief or disbelief determine whether eternal life is guaranteed. If by being born, one receives the work of creation of heaven and earth, then it can be said that returning to the work of creation of heaven and earth is death. Whether you believe it or not, it is the form of human life.

The destination of the dead is neither the heaven nor the hell, but the place Tenchi no Kami works. By expressing it in this way, the traditional belief of "returning to the home of the soul" is breathing a new meaning in the world of the Konko Daijin. To die does not mean the disappearance of life or "eternal parting," but the return to heaven and earth; that is, blending into the bosom of God or being free from something individual and coming under God's care.

Here are some more interesting teachings:

"I inquired, 'Konko-Sama, the Shinshu sect advocates that we go to the Pure Land after we die, and Shinto priests say that we will go to Takamagahara. There are many religions and different teachings, so will our souls go in such separate ways after death?'"

[GIL:SATO, Mitsujiro:28.1]

"Konko imparted, 'Such a thing will not happen. We will neither go to the Pure Land nor to Takamagahara. The souls of those who die, having nowhere to go, hover and play like gnats between Heaven and Earth. They exist and play at the household Buddhist altar and at their graves. This goes for not only Shinshu and Shinto, but for the Shingon and Tendai sects as well.'"

[GIL:SATO, Mitsujiro:28.2]

To find out what this means, one should not be distracted by phrases such as "playing like gnats" or "playing at the altar and at their graves." What is being said here is that after we die, our souls are not to shift to the Pure Land nor to Takamagahara which has nothing to do with our living world; rather, we move to reside inside of Tenchi. Tenchi no Ma is inside of the Tenchi Kane no Kami, also it is the place full of the god's works. What I am trying to say here is that we do not to move after death to a place that has nothing to do with the world in which we live, such as the one billion billion soil in the west or Takamagahara, but directly to the heaven and earth where we are alive. It means that there is the Spirit inside. Tenchi no Ma is inside of the Tenchi Kane no Kami, and also it is the place full of the god's works.

"They are going to the place where they are taught" "Though Kami-Sama cannot be seen, He is all around you. You are walking within and right through Him. [GII:TSUGAWA, Haruo:3]" "The whole world is Tenchi No Kami's hiromae." [GII:MATSUMOTO, Tashichi:3] "They are welcomed to the place; our souls individual selves are melted and returned to this place."

This means that we living things go into and through God, and at the same time, we struggle to go to the place where our Mitama works. If it is the meaning that going back or returning to the shapeless world of God that we do not have to worship God, the Spirit, and the ancestor separately, then from the standpoint of those who are left behind, there is a certain meaning.

As taught, whether you live through God or if you are watched and supported by God as the parent of life, you must realize that it is difficult for God to appear as God for those who do not wholeheartedly believe in Him, or who do not wish to see Him. Since God is intangible, we cannot realize God unless we welcome an intangible being into a tangible world. That is also the case with the Spirit as well. Some people work hard to show objectively and empirically that there is a spiritual world. Mitama appears, but there is fear in these people that they may fall the same way as the earlier European thinkers who tried to objectively record the existential proof of an intangible God.

Then, how does one understand the remaining words of Kanamitsu Ogami? At about August 1983, KARAHI Tsunezo (1827~1899) answered to the question,

“Without realizing what I was saying, I asked, ‘Konko-Sama, what will happen to this Faith after you are gone?’ He answered, ‘You need not worry. Only my physical form will be gone. Having a physical body makes it difficult for me to see people's suffering in the world. When my body is gone, I can go to where I am requested and save people.’ [GII:KARAHI Tsunezo:4.2]

This thought of Konko Daijin, who was close to death, was passed to other disciples and was embraced by them.

“I will practice faith until I leave this world and return to Kami. After my body departs, I will finally be able to truly fulfill my wish to save people. “[GII:KONDO, Fujimori:44]

“My physical body is a hindrance, as it prevents me from going to other places. But after my physical form departs, I, Konko Daijin, will be able to go wherever I am requested. “[GII:NANBA, Nami:9]. "The moon may disappear behind clouds, but it is still there. My physical form will also disappear someday. But I will still be here. Konko Daijin shall live forever. ..." [GII:FUKUSHIMA, Gihe'e:22.1]

These quotations suggest that Konko Daijin's wish was something that could not be done, if that he had a form. If however, he entered an intangible world, then you too can enter an intangible world, and you will live forever and help persons who ask for help at any time, wherever they are. One must pay attention to "where to come;" that is, to the person who asks for help. The key point when considering the Spirit as a doctrine is that this is also a key point in finding the context of Japan's view of what happens after death.

Shigeru Makita mentioned at the beginning of this section, "The god of our ancestors who are in the spirit of the soul emerge in the birthplace soon after we pray for their help in the birth of descendants." It is written that these are the expectations, desires, and faith from living things, things with a spirit, given to the god of our ancestors. But if we turn it around, the person who is approaching death -- that is, a person who will become an ancestor -- will also have the wish to protect their family and descendants even after they die.

People who die while pursuing a particular ideal and who decide to further realize it even after death, demonstrate the truth of a person's heart. For example MATSUO Basho wrote, "Sickness on a journey, my dreams go wandering round withered fields." It can be said that he decided that his spirit was to live forever and leave something behind.

In the words of Konko Daijin, as human beings live tangible lives, there are bound to be limits to the scope of the work of this house, village, region, and country. No matter how wide and deep the desire to guide and help others, we cannot fulfill that desire freely and flexibly without understanding the tangible world.

Name, personality, body, and the unleashing of the tangible world, the return to heaven and earth -- the home of spirit -- and to realize the wish, this is Konko Daijin's world of the heart, that has been engraved in the words of the cited tradition. I would like to talk about these things in more detail in the last section.

Here, let us revise Shigeru Makita's phrase "home of the soul" to "the home of human life." This home is named heaven and earth by Konko Daijin. The life given from heaven and earth will return to heaven and earth, and after returning, that life is forgiven and allowed by God to live in a formal world. In other words, a spirit full of grace and supported by heaven and earth, is promised a return back there. This is our life. Moreover, through what is called death, every human being fuses into the home of life, and is welcomed as a god, a god without form, together with Tenchi Kane No Kami. It is given eternal work to support and protect the tangible world.

The Spirit - the soul given to a living human being - becomes a god after death, and as such, watches over the tangible world. If it is certain that the spirit becomes a god, then the Spirit and the soul have eternal lives, and the matters of where to ask for help, where the call goes up, and the help that is provided all have meaning.

It is said that everyone will be a god after death, which means that we can be welcomed into the world of God called heaven and earth, and to an extent that is true. Yet, as a god, and as a living Spirit, it is not anyone who can be called upon for help by living beings. A person's life in the world of form -- how they carried on their formal life, whether they distanced themselves from family members, neighbors, society and the world -- even though their spirit is welcomed into the bosom of the God of heaven and earth, no one will call upon them as a Mitama Spirit.

"Without becoming a kami while living, how can you become a kami after death?" [GI:SHIMAMURA, Hachitaro 10] If there is someone involved with

people while during life, then it becomes faithful. In other words, the importance of becoming a figure that expresses God in the world of form is explained.

If you understand the explanation provided by Konko Daijin, you will understand the Japanese people's relationship with ancient ancestors. This is called the ancestral world. From the limited understanding of the world to Tenchi Kane no Kami, to heaven and earth, one can see again that the power of Konko Daijin's is great, with deep and wide devotion.

4. Accumulated offenses

"No matter how high your pile of offenses are, it can be cleared away through faith. Kami will clear away the offenses and curses accumulated since your ancestors. "[GII:KONKO, Hagio:2].

"Request by saying, 'Please forgive the irreverence of my ancestors. I will practice faith every day, so by the virtue of practicing faith, please take away my accumulated offenses. "[GII:TORIGOE, Shirokichi:1]

Let's ponder the term "accumulated offenses." This phrase can be cited as one of the key concepts of the devotion of Konko Daijin. In addition to the usage of "accumulated offenses from ancestors", other references to this concept are expressed in "visiting sins committed by oneself," "an offense that you or your ancestors committed," "my family's accumulated offense," or "the accumulated offenses of your ancestors and yourself."

Overall, "accumulated offenses" connotes misfortune over time -- whether this is over repeated generations or within an individual life, to the structure of the house and the community -- and is said to evolve to becoming deeply accumulated and embedded into consciousness. Eventually, in reality this concept can imply a heavy burden. For example, I may be driven by greed or build up my wealth in an excessive manner, but when the children become sick, the phrase 'Your own crimes will be a burden to your children' may apply. Also, even if the family works hard and a sickness does not end, this situation is believed to be connected to the family and their ancestors.

In the "Kyoten," the term "accumulated offense" is used, but the phrase implies "accumulated offenses by ancestors." In the previous section, I explained the Japanese views regarding ancestors enshrined in the festivals. Even when there are factual or historical foundations, the actual situation cannot be fully understood. In worship, as a matter that may span hundreds or possibly thousands of years, people do not consider the kind of ancestor or god is important as a critical element of that enshrinement.

When Konko Daijin wrote about "accumulated offense by ancestors," he did not refer to an identifiable "ancestor" from a specific time. Rather, it must be understood that although it can be traced back many generations and thousands of years ago, it can be imagined as a whole life connection that traces to the present.

Therefore, “accumulated offense” is a reality that appears to be a burden. Responsibility for the “accumulated offense” is at the forefront of the connections between history and the lives of today’s human beings. In other words, it is you and I who bear this burden, and Konko Daijin preaches that liberation from “accumulated offenses ” come from having deep faith.

Earlier, I said, “The Mitama Spirit is the eternal life, and may be described in the metaphor of wearing individual costumes in the course of life. Hearts working together contribute to the formation of ethnic and national cultures, as well as international cultural civilization. Successive generations receive them as tradition and history, and the design and atmosphere of the costumes they receive. That is the history of mankind.

This history transfers not to the history of handing over only the best things in life. That is, war is constant, the global environment is disturbed, and problematic phenomena surrounding the human world are apparent. Therefore, as the Mitama Spirit takes in every spirit and applies costumes to lives, it is clear that some of those costumes do not suit each situation absolutely. The Mitama Spirit rises from the profound work of the Holy Spirit, even as the distortion of real life and the burden of prior offenses become problematic.

If this issue is not resolved, it will be handed over to future generations. The clothes the Mitama Spirit has while working in the tangible world must be designed properly to be effective. According to this example, “Kami’s blessings begin within hearts grateful and caring, in harmony and joy” and through the history of each person and the ancestors of human life, what is told to us, to our Mitama Spirit, is that it will be involved in the problem of designing outfits that we know or do not know.

Therefore, even if it comes to “accumulated offense by ancestors,” it is because our hearts, which carry life here in this world, have to be thought about as a problem that is being pressed for change, revision and reform. Consequently, if you understand Konko Daijin's explanation, because of an earlier ancestor's bad behavior, you must apologize, or appease ancestors who were neglected. recommendations that you hear frequently in the world are only the beginning of deeper reflections of self-awareness.

Konko Daijin believed that “no matter how big one’s accumulated offenses are, they are gotten rid of by faith” rather than solving ancestral problems. Now, the spiritual dress of our hearts, created by faith as the Kami’s children, need to be fit for the Mitama Spirit received from God. By doing so it is also possible to realize the links between human past, present and future.