

From Yukiko

Dear Jim,

This is the paper for the Theory and Practice of Intercultural Relations.

I turned in the ~~an~~ another copy to Janaki.

I need to know if it meets the quality to pass the ~~of~~ course or not <sup>e (sp)</sup> immediately, so please let me know about it. by email.

My email add: yukiko.ban@mail.sit.edu

This is even more fascinating than our conversation! It is very well written - my notes show where I think it is not.

A couple of "next steps"

1. Translate the principles of your grandmother's spirit into a critique of globalization; historical materialism; structural functionalism.

2. Translate them into setting where you can/cannot realize them.

The well

F

it is very

spirit

structural functionalism  
2. Translate them into setting where you can/cannot realize them

WHO AM I?

---MY FAMILY AND A JAPANESE NEW RELIGION, KONKOKYO---

金光教

SUBMITTED AS THE FINAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR  
THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS

WITH

PROF. JANAKI NATARAJAN AND PROF. JIM BREEDEN

BY

YUKIKO BAN

FEBRUARY 2002

When I think about what I will do in my future, these questions always come up in my mind: Should I take over my family's legacy, religious work of *Konkokyo*; Should I stay at my home with family; What is the meaning of my birth <sup>within</sup> under my family? Now, my mother runs the *Konkokyo* church of a religious corporation, <sup>? organization</sup> which was taken over from her parents. She is its head minister now, but she never intended to become <sup>that</sup> it. She always told me how it was difficult to live for religious work. In this paper, I will reflect on my family's legacy to think about those questions, and try to answer them for myself.

*Konkokyo* is one of the largest new religions in Japan. It was founded in 1859, nine years before the Meiji Restoration of direct imperial rule, which was the big transformation from feudal society into a modern industrial nation-state. According to the *Konkokyo* English Web site, the founder of *Konkokyo* was a farmer named Akazawa Bunji (later renamed *Konko Daijin*) in small farming village in Okayama. At the time, beliefs in superstitions, divinations, and ominous deities were rampant. The most feared deity was the dreadful *Konjin* capable of causing death. People took special pains to avoid *Konjin* wherever he lurked. Once when Bunji fell seriously ill, he had a spiritual encounter with *Konjin* which made him realize that *Konjin* was actually a benevolent deity. To recognize the deity's benevolence, it was renamed "Kane No Kami" and later "*Tenchi Kane No Kami*." "*Tenchi*" means "universe." It indicates that this deity is everywhere and that the infinite universe is its body. "Kane" means gold, the precious metal whose luster lasts eternally. It implies the deity's eternal function and sanctity. "No" means "of" and "Kami" is "God." From 1858, *Konko Daijin* became able to speak with *Tenchi Kane No Kami*. He then started to mediate between this deity and people. He relayed believers' requests to this deity and communicated the deity's teachings to believers. Through his mediation, *Konko*

and how that other fits or meet with superstitions hopes for your future

in order to (?)

comparative figures of others and then grow to

金光教

金光大神

金神

天地金乃

神



She often told me stories of her experiences at a girls high school.

with joy

Church in Kyoto in 1913. Her grandmother was a large landowner, so that she spent happy

days when she was young. She often told me her stories at girl's high school with joy. She could read some English but it was rare for women in her age. After her father's decision,

she married Shigeru and got into the Ban family in 1937. Her married life in Yokkaichi was

not easy at all. She went through an air raid at Yokkaichi under World War II. She never

told me about it even I asked for. She said she never wanted to remind it. I could imagine

how awful her memory was. When she was 65 years old, and her husband Shigeru was 71,

I was born in 1978. Shigeru had been sick in bed for a year before he passed away in 1985.

Tsuneko had taken care of me a lot when I was a little girl, although she was already in her

70s. She worked hard until I became a high school student. She got up early, opened church,

and prayed every day and night. She was so unselfish and always prayed for others and her

family. She saved her money for us or for church service, but she never used it by herself.

She had served many festivals at church. She sometimes visited other churches to serve

festivals by train. Whenever she went to the other church to serve, she always brought

dinner back to us. She was very active in her 70s. She had a good spirit throughout her life.

She had breast cancer surgery at the age of 73. Even then, she always smiled and kept her

positive attitude. I never heard from her complaining. I liked her very much. It was her with

whom I connect directly rather than our religion Konkokyo. I lived with her until I went

away to college in 1997. She passed away right after I moved. She was 84 years old at that

time. It will have been five years this spring since she passed away. My memories of my

grandmother, Tsuneko, are getting stronger these days.

My mother, Machiko, was born the third child of Kiyoshi in 1951. She had two

elder brothers. (Her biological mother passed away few years later she gave her a birth.)

Machiko was adopted into Shigeru and Tsuneko as a successor. Shigeru was quite strict to her. But he slapped on his wife instead, when Machiko didn't obey him. Machiko was told the fact that she was adopted, when she was a high school student by Shigeru. After she graduated from a junior college, Shigeru insisted that she should go to the Konkokyo minister's school in Okayama. Machiko hated to be the successor for leading the church. She was dreaming to work at the airport. She resisted going to the school, but he took her to the school. She sobbed at the entrance ceremony. My father saw her sobbing and he wondered what happened on her at the ceremony. They met and fell in love there.

My father, Kazumichi, was born the fifth child at the Tambabashi Konkokyo

Church in Kyoto in 1948. He has two brothers and two sisters. After he graduated a college, he went to the Konkokyo minister school. He took things easy. He decided to go to the school because he didn't have to pay for his room and board. I don't know if it is true but my mother said so. My mother and father, they fell in love and decided to marry finally.

According to my mother, my father fell in love with her. But their families were not happy with their decision. Shigeru wanted a man adopted as the husband for his daughter to succeed the church. My father didn't want to be adopted nor did his mother. His mother

didn't want him to go away. No one of his brothers and sisters wanted to succeed their church, and they already went away of the church. The young two people, Machiko and

Kazumichi didn't think it would be a problem for them, because they loved each other.

They held a wedding ceremony, but waited to report their marriage to the city hall. My mother thought he would be a right one because she met him in the minister's school.

However, the reality was not easy for them. At first, my mother meant to live with him in

Kyoto, which is his hometown. But he was too poor to manage his own home so that he

meant to live at the second floor of his sister's house as their newly married home. She didn't like this idea. <sup>My mother</sup> She also found the town was so different <sup>from</sup> where she used to be. She didn't feel safe enough to give a birth <sup>there</sup> for her child.

She came back to her home at Yokkaichi to give a birth for me. She didn't mean to stay long at that time. I was born in 1978. After my birth, my mother and father ~~should~~ <sup>were supposed to</sup>

report it to city hall. My father came to Yokkaichi and talked with my grandfather Shigeru. Shigeru insisted <sup>?</sup> that his idea, so that my father <sup>? agreed to be adopted?</sup> ~~abode~~ to adopt into the Ban family. At that

time, my mother was absorbed in raising her child. She wasn't worried much about it. She thought it would be all right <sup>? because she trusted her husband</sup> ~~unless~~ she believed her husband. She didn't take any action

about her marriage. Then her father Shigeru tumbled down and <sup>Φ</sup> became difficult to walk by alone. <sup>was greater than</sup> His age already became ~~above~~ 70. My mother remained ~~her~~ home to raise her baby

and take care of her father. She didn't mean to leave her husband. One day, she received a call from my father. He said he needed his name in the family register in Kyoto to be a high

school teacher in Kyoto. He had been a part-time teacher for a long time, but he had a chance to become a full-time teacher at last. He asked her to send a divorce notice to have

his name in Kyoto. It was last minute for him to apply to the school. My mother wanted to support his career so that she obeyed his decision. <sup>(!?) What does this mean to her? to you</sup>

My mother told me that she didn't sign on the divorce notice by herself. <sup>forced her to sign the papers.</sup> It was ~~her~~ father Shigeru and her husband Kazumichi. She didn't want to divorce. She thought he was

still her husband and he would not leave her in that way. Their marriage and divorce is quite a mystery for me. I rather feel angry with them. Why did <sup>they</sup> you get married? Why did

<sup>they</sup> you get divorced?

I was born and raised at my mother's home in Yokkaichi until I went to a college. I

My mother refused to sign the divorce notice, so her father, Shigeru, and her husband, Kazumichi, signed it for her.

Explains his idea  
wrong words  
but through I think I get their meaning.  
also  
by himself  
unassisted

ask you answer here

have lived with my mother, my grandfather (who passed away when I was 5,) and my grandmother (who passed away when I was 18.) My father lives in his hometown in Kyoto, which is four hours away by train from my home. My parents divorced when I was a baby even though I didn't know that until I became 13. I am their only child.

*In the*  
Under Japanese traditional family system, the oldest son stays *in* the house and takes over the family's house and work. If there is no son, one of *the* daughters stays home and a man will come from another family to marry *with* her, then he takes over her family's legacy. If the parents have the only child, she or he stays the house.

*I'm summarizing!*  
My mother stays at home because her parents wanted her to take over their religious work and corporation, Konkokyo. In fact, my mother was adopted. Her biological father and her legal father are brothers. Her legal father was the oldest son of his seven brothers and sisters, and *her* biological father is the youngest one. Her legal father took over his parents' religious work and the religious corporation, Konkokyo Yokkaichi Kyokai (Yokkaichi Konkokyo church). He was given his wife from another Kyokai in Kyoto.

Unfortunately, they couldn't have children, so they adopted my mother.

*That is not the issue - you could do any thing and 'not forget' The ? is how you act with respect to bring the successor*  
I don't know what I really want to do or I should do in my future yet, but I think I should not forget my family legacy and the fact that I am the only child of my parents. For me, it ~~doesn't~~ matter what I will do as a professional, but what attitude I will have or how I will work is important.

What my grandmother tried to achieve was *having* ~~that she would have~~ the attitude of Orei, *おれ* Owabi, and Onegai. Did she achieve it? She did practice it all her life. At the end of her life, *おわび* *おねがい* She sometimes said, "I am tired now." The meaning of her death was to pass her wisdom on to my mother and me. I feel it is not necessary to take over the religious corporation, but it

is necessary to carry on my grandmother's spirit. I wholeheartedly agree (I'm to do so would be to replicate the trap your mother was caught in.) Loyalty to the traditions you describe appears unfaithful and unjustly imprisoning. Your problem may be

**Religious Beliefs of Konkokyo**

constructing a new community of trust and support in which you can practice the attitudes/spirit of your grandmother —

生神 金光大神  
 天地 金乃神 願  
 おかげの和智恵あり  
 今月今日でとのあり

**Tenchi Kakitsuke (Divine Reminder)**

This is a piece of paper written with a message that is the essence of the Konko religion and the starting point for all Konkokyo activities and endeavors.

Called the "Divine Reminder" in English, it is translated as follows:

Through Ikigami Konko Daijin,  
 To Tenchi Kane No Kami,  
 Pray with a single heart.  
 The divine favor depends  
 Upon one's own heart.  
 On this very day pray.

and that is a common (universal) problem!  
 You may also think of work toward creating communities/institutions that reflect this spirit.

**Mutual Reliance (Aiyo kakeyo) あいよかけよ**

There is a mutually dependent relationship between Tenchi Kane No Kami and man. People cannot exist without Tenchi Kane No Kami, and Tenchi Kane No Kami cannot exist without people. With air, water, food, and other blessings of the Universe in Tenchi Kane No Kami's body, people can live and work. In return, Tenchi Kane No Kami asks that people help and save others, live according to the ways of the Universe, and make the world a happy and peaceful place to live. By fulfilling Tenchi Kane No Kami's wishes, people bring Tenchi Kane No Kami's work to life. Through this mutually reliant and interdependent relationship, both Tenchi Kane No Kami and man can continue to exist and work together to make the world happy and peaceful.

**Becoming an Ikigami (Living God)**

Since all people are born with a part of Tenchi Kane No Kami's heart and spirit, everyone has the latent ability to become a living deity. By embodying Tenchi Kane No Kami's intentions and carrying out His wish to save people, anyone can become an extension of Tenchi Kane No Kami, and therefore a living god. A living god (ikigami) is not an exalted being or someone with mysterious, spiritual powers. It is the ideal human being who strives to save people from suffering and problems and to make the world a happier place to live in. Tenchi Kane No Kami is invisible, but His work is visible through the efforts of people

生神

striving to become an ikigami. And only through such people can Tenchi Kane No Kami come to life in the real world.

## **Basic Precepts of Konkokyo**

### **Blessings and Happiness from Within**

Konkokyo adherents strive to find blessings and happiness within themselves. They try to recognize the blessings they already have and those not so readily apparent. To this end, they endeavor to have a heart or attitude which seeks to understand and recognize life's meaningful lessons and the ways of the Universe. In doing so, they inevitably start to recognize and appreciate the blessings bestowed on them, leading to personal happiness. It is important to open one's heart to life in general and to keep an open mind for all things. The more open the heart and mind are, the more blessings and happiness will fill them.

### **Praying**

When Konkokyo believers pray, they pray to Tenchi Kane No Kami, the all-encompassing divinity believed to be the parent of all people. Although Konkokyo has formal prayer services and prayer books, there is no set phrase or manner for praying in private. You can pray anytime and anywhere, even while working, jogging, or lying down. And everyday words (or silence) can be used while praying since it is like speaking to your own parent. A prayer is given for any of the following three purposes: A request for something, an apology for something, and an expression of gratitude.

### **Apologizing**

People must of course apologize if they have done wrong. In society, it is generally understood when an apology is owed to another person.

However, people often do wrongful (even if legal) acts without realizing it. It is for these acts that we must apologize. For example, acts which affect the environment which happens to be part of Tenchi Kane No Kami's body. Even if there was no intentional harm or maliciousness, apologies are in order.

### **Giving Thanks**

The Founder of Konkokyo said that we should express thanks to everything, even to the tree stump we sit on. We must give thanks to all the people and things which help us in our daily lives. They can be friends and relatives, neighbors, the local butcher, a washing machine, and a fork and knife.

We must also give thanks to Tenchi Kane No Kami for the air, water, food, plants, natural resources, etc., which support human life.

From Konkokyo English Web Site (<http://www.konkokyo.or.jp/eng/dep/belief.html>)

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