

Foreword

Kami-like Heart or
“Kindness Based upon Faith”

by the Rev. Shin'ichi Hashimoto
Director of the Financial Department

During the Nara Period (710AD – 794 AD), there was a Buddhist monk named Gyo'oki (668AD – 749AD). Gyo'oki made a remarkable contribution to the construction of the huge Buddha Statue of the Todaiji Temple. He is often called the pioneer of volunteer workers in Japan. Gyo'oki seems to have built a facility called "Fuseya" or "Charity House," where he gave food to destitute farmers.

About 1,000 years later, Konkoku Daijin, the Founder of the Konkoku Faith, taught the heart of "kindness based upon faith" to the Rev. Sadajiro Yamamoto as follows: "Those who practice faith don't just

worship Kami-Sama. They also sincerely help people in emergencies or in sudden adversity without expecting any money or thanks in return. If there's a fire, they quickly go and help extinguish it. Such is true faith and kindness. Bear this in mind in whatever you do."

About 140 years have passed by since then. We are now in the 6th year of the Reiwa Period (2024AD). The Disaster Relief Team of Osaka has been working hard for the reconstruction of the victimized areas of Noto Peninsula Earthquake, and they recently sent us the 13th report of their activities there. In this report, there is a quote of the address by the Noto area's summer festival organizer (a summary): "During the cold weather in January, and during the severely hot weather in this summer, the Konkoku Disaster Relief Team of Osaka has been dedicating themselves for all of us. I thank each member of the team very, very much." In conclusion, this organizer remarked, "At least for today, I want all of you to forget

all the sadness and inconveniences that the Earthquake has caused you. Let us all have a lot of fun, putting melancholy aside! Lastly, please allow me to tell you this, ladies and gentlemen of Konkoku. We are all deeply grateful to you for everything you have been doing for us. Even today, you are engaging yourself in volunteer activities for us. Because of this, please give these Konkoku people a big, big hand!"

"Takidashi" or "Emergency rice cooking/feeding" that the Disaster Relief Team of Osaka has been doing for the Noto people is a charity activity, which people in Japan started in the Nara Period. When the Kumamoto Prefecture was struck with two huge earthquakes in April 2016, I joined the Disaster Relief Team of Osaka and I worked with them. The members of the Relief Team were never pushy. They were modest and cherished each one of the local victimized people. They were always there for those people in need. The above-quoted address by the summer festival

organizer in Noto helped me remember how caring and sincere the members of the Relief Team were in Kumamoto.

"Kindness based upon faith" is a kami-like heart every single person embraces in them. Volunteer groups of Konkoku engage in their activities which are based upon this kami-like heart. When you support these groups and/or always remember their selfless services for those in need, YOUR kami-like heart is also being activated. When the kami-like heart of a person and the kami-like heart of another person resonate with one another and work together, a ray of hope is delivered to those in hardship, and those people will be saved accordingly. There may be few things we can do at the very place of disaster relief. Even if so, I pray that we are all willing and ready to help people, telling ourselves, "At least I can do this." With this humble attitude and our small, humble aiding acts, we would like to contribute to the fulfillment of Kami's wish.

Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremony

Let us Walk towards Peace Together

The Autumn Grand Ceremony for our Founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin, was held elegantly at the Konkokyo Headquarters' Grand Ceremony Hall. The Ceremony commenced at 10:00 AM on September 29th and at 1:30 PM on October 6th and 10th. Many believers from various parts of Japan and from abroad came worshipping.



A sermon was given for about 20 minutes prior to the Grand Ceremony each time. Konko-sama, the Spiritual Leader of the Konko Faith, was the Chief Officiant, and 12 officiants in all conducted the Ceremony including Konko-sama. Many other Konko ministers were also at the Grand Ceremony Hall during the Ceremony, being dressed in the ceremonial costumes just like the

Officiants. After the Ceremony was over and the Officiants left, two dancers gracefully performed Kibi-Mai Dance.

On the "eve" of Day 1 of the 2024 Autumn Grand Ceremony (namely on the evening of September 28th), we had a couple of events, "Commemorating Event for our



Founder's Birthday" and "Evening with Kibi Mai Dance." On the following September 29th, we had "Gathering of the Konko believers," where the participants considered how to



help (young) boys and girls grow up soundly and get enlightened spiritually. On Day 2 (October 6th), we had the 25th Lecture on Konkokyo's Doctrines.

Next, we would like to show you the address of the Chief Administrative Director of Konkokyo during the 2024 Autumn Grand Ceremony.



Address of the Chief Administrative Director

Delivered by Rev. Michio Hashimoto



Please allow me to make an address. Welcome to today's Autumn Grand Ceremony for our Founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin, ladies and gentlemen. I admire your earnest

faith in our Parent Kami, since you came over here all the way despite your busy life on a daily basis.

I am truly grateful, because we are now being allowed to hold the Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremony together, and, above all, with our Kyoshu Konko-sama serving the Chief Officiant for this Ceremony.

Before the main part of my address today, please allow me to refer to this: the Reverend Heiki Konko, the former Spiritual Leader of the Konko Faith, passed away on July 21st, 2024. I would humbly like to express my sincere condolence and

go east, you will reach the Niwase Station sooner or later. This station is just two stations before the Okayama Station.

On the north side of the train station, there are castle ruins of the Niwase Castle that once had a moat surrounding it entire self. Merchants prospered and their streets are still preserved. There used to be the Niwase Domain in Niwase during the Edo Period.

During the Founder's lifetime, the Niwase Domain was ruled by its Domain Lord, Mr. Katsuhiro Itakura. Mr. Itakura visited the Founder's Hiromae (Worship/Mediation Room) due to his wife's sickness. He received a divine blessing upon his wedding partner and became a follower of Konko Daijin, our Founder.

On the same day, someone came worshipping. Let's call him Mr. A for our convenience. Mr. A immediately noticed that a man with a lot of servants was in the Hiromae. All the worshippers moved aside and gave up their respective turns for Konko Daijin's Sacred Mediation for that man with a big entourage. After the big group of people left the Hiromae, Mr. A asked Konko Daijin, "Who was that man?" Then the Founder answered, "He was the Domain Lord of Niwase." Mr. A said to

also my deepest gratitude for the 5th Konko-sama, who served the important position as our Spiritual Leader/Principal Mediator for 30 years, for six straight five-year terms.

I also would like to remark that it has already been 9 months since the Noto Peninsula Earthquake. The Peninsula suffered a heavy rain flood on September 21st. To this day, still now, lots of people in this area are being forced to live under a severe circumstance. Let us all pray to Kami that people in Noto will get to enjoy a full recovery and reconstruction as soon as possible.

Today's Grand Ceremony is a service for us to admire the divine virtue of our Founder, re-receive the everlasting Sacred Mediation of Ikigami Konko Daijin that our dear Founder expressed for all of us and pray to our Parent Kami so that we also will be allowed to express its workings for people in our society. Now, please let me describe how our Founder performed his Sacred Mediation for worshippers from 1859 to 1883. I will introduce you to two true episodes regarding this subject.

When you take a local train (the JR Sanyo Main Line) at the Konko Station and



Konko Daijin, "Well, if that is the case, you could have treated him more politely." Konko Daijin imparted, "Humans discriminate between upper-class people and lower-class people, but Kami does not do so. Whatever class they may belong to, those who have and practice faith in Kami receive divine blessings."

There was "class system" in Japanese society in those days, but the Founder of the Konko Faith dealt with each worshipper equally with an "equal view of humanity." This episode is a clear proof on this point.

In 1868, the First Year of the Meiji Period, there was "Battle of Toba Fushimi," a civil war between the Tokugawa Shogunate soldiers and the rebellion soldiers with ambition to overthrow the Tokugawa Shogunate and establish a new government for Japan. The Okayama Domain was a strong domain and they sided with the "new government" soldiers. The Okayama Domain made its troops go west toward its western neighbor, the

Niwase Domain. Not sure what to do and/or what was the best action for Niwase, Mr. Itakura came over to Konko Daijin for his Sacred Mediation.

The Founder spoke to Mr. Itakura, "Do not make your soldiers confront Okayama. Open up the front gate of your castle and you should welcome and greet the Okayama people at the main entrance." Mr. Itakura faithfully followed Konko Daijin's advice, and the Niwase Domain was able to avoid a war accordingly.

Thanks to the Sacred Mediation performed by the Founder, Mr. Itakura and his Niwase Domain were able to avoid an unnecessary war. This saved not only the Domain Lord himself but also lots of people in his domain from samurais/warriors, farmers, merchants to women and little children. The Founder sincerely considered how the Niwase Domain would be able to avoid a



war against Okayama, valuing peace as the most important thing for all people.

These two true stories show that the Founder was not influenced by trends of the times; he was a person with a sense of equality for all people. The episodes also clearly show us that the Founder had ability to judge the situation of the times sensibly and show worshippers a way to avoid (military) conflicts.

Just as our Founder did, I pray that we, who follow the faith of Konko Daijin, will walk on a path towards peace together. Along the way, we will hopefully cherish and value each other's life and avoid confrontations against one another. The former, namely Fifth Konko-sama, prayed during his lifetime, "We, the whole congregation of the Konko Faith, will strive for world peace and the fulfillment of all humanity." We would like to help this sincere prayer of Konko-sama come true.

Lastly, I sincerely hope and pray that all of you here will receive the Divine Virtue of today's Grand Ceremony, will go back home safely and will be allowed to receive grand blessings from our Parent Kami more than ever.

This is all for my address. Thank you very much.

M o v e m e n t

Discussion Meeting on Konkokyo's Written Resources

on August 21st 2024

We had this meeting at the Conference Room on the 4th floor of the Konkokyo Headquarters' Administrative Office Building.

At the beginning of the session, the Reverend Michio Hashimoto, the Chief Administrative Director of Konkokyo, remarked:

"The resources dedicated to the Konko Faith Headquarters in February 2015 include resources written directly by our Founder. The Konkokyo Theological Research Institute sorted and deciphered those resources, and they published "Research Materials Regarding the Events that Happened to Konko Daijin during His Lifetime" in 2019. They published and distributed this to all (local) Konkokyo churches as research materials of the Konkokyo Theological Research Institute.

In the following year, 2020, the Institute published Journal No. 60, which includes a thesis about "Kane No Kami sama Konshi On Sashimuke Oboe-cho." In this thesis, the author deciphers and explains the "Sashimuke Oboe-cho." Next year, in 2021, they released Journal No. 61, which contains a thesis about "O Konjin sam Sashimuke Cash Book." In this thesis, the writer deciphers and explains the "Cash Book." We would like to put these theses all together and make one booklet. We then would like to distribute it to all Konkokyo (local) churches. As the Hashimoto Cabinet, we are currently engaging in various activities towards the 150th Anniversary of our Founder.'s passing in 2033. We sincerely hope that the publication of the new research materials

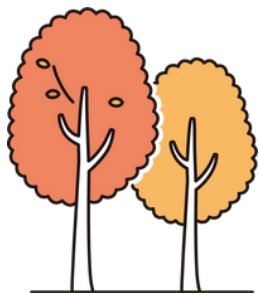
on our Founder will help us 'explore' Konko Daijin's faith and feel his faith closer to us once again."

After the Rev. Hashimoto's statement, an explanation about



the structure of this booklet was given. Then the meeting participants were asked to express their opinions on publishing this booklet.

Some participants were positive enough to say, such as, "I am sure that these research



materials will be quite precious not only for us, Konkokyo, but also for the history of Japan," "It is important that we have more (official) commentaries of Kyoten, the Sacred

Scriptures of Konkokyo. "Others were more pre-cautious and said, "We haven't really finished researching these materials yet. Therefore, we should give ourselves a second thought on publishing this booklet as an official publication from the Konkokyo Headquarters," "If or when this is released and distributed as an official publication from the Konkokyo Headquarters, what kind of messages will this booklet bring to each Konko church and/or Konko minister?"

The 5th Nationwide Assembly in Kita-Kyushu of the Nationwide Association of Konkokyo Believers

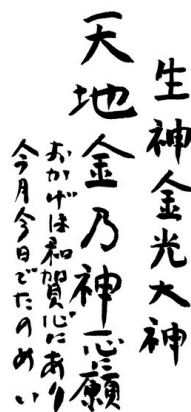
The Nationwide Association of Konkokyo Believers (its headman is Mr. Akira O'ta) held the above-mentioned assembly at the large hall of the Ito Culture Hall (Ito Bunka Kaikan) in Itoshima City, Fukuoka Prefecture, Japan on September 7th and 8th, 2024.

The theme of this year's assembly was "Let us increase the number of people who pray to Kami for 'true peace of the world' with a peaceful and joyful heart, also with motivation to realize the 'Way of Kami and People.'" Its sub theme was "Let us regard what happens to us as events (which) Kami brings to us. Let us also engage ourselves in training to nurture a peaceful and joyful heart." This assembly saw 143 local Konkokyo churches and 874 people as total participants.

In the beginning of the Nationwide Assembly, a silent prayer was given by all the participants in memory of the late Reverend Heiki Konko, the former Spiritual Leader of the Konko Faith. Then, the activities of the North Kyushu Diocese and those of each League of Konko Churches were introduced. Mr. O'ta and the Rev. Yu'uki Fujimoto, the Director of the Konkokyo North Kyushu Diocese Administrative Center, gave an address respectively.

In the First Half of the 5th Nationwide Assembly, we listened to a lecture of the Rev. Kiyoji Konko (of the Konkokyo Headquarters). The theme of the Rev. Konko's lecture was "Worshipping Waga Kokoro or a Peaceful and Joyful Heart."

(Summary of the Lecture)



We are given a venerable teaching by Konko Daijin, "Divine Favor depends upon one's peaceful, joyful heart." We train ourselves every single day, so that "our heart" will become a "peaceful and joyful heart." We, however, let the peaceful and joyful heart that we are nurturing on a daily basis wilt/fade through a relatively trivial event.

Despite ourselves, we do this at times. What can and should we do in order to cultivate waga kokoro, which has ability to withstand any negative events? I would like to seek its answer through the teachings of our Founder, Konko Daijin, his successors (the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Konko-sama) and the faith of the 5th Konko-sama, who passed away in July this year.

With a solid faith of "True peace of the world stems from our peaceful, joyful heart



(waga kokoro)," I sincerely pray that we will receive Kami's blessing and expand this torch of waga kokoro from ourselves to each of our homes, and from each of our homes to our respective community. I pray to our Kami about this, because I know that this will be the very first step to bring true peace to the whole world.

In order for us to achieve this goal, let us receive Kami's blessing that allows us to give off a ray of light of Konko (Golden Light) and of waga kokoro (a peaceful and joyful heart) whenever it is and wherever we are. Let us receive such a divine blessing by learning from the 6th Konko-sama, who always says "Thank you very much, Konko-sama!" We can receive Kami's blessing, also by asking Konko-sama to come into our heart. (a quote from the pamphlet with the program for this event)

In the Second Half of the 5th Nationwide Assembly, we enjoyed a performance of the Konkokyo Marching Band. They participate in the parade of "Hakata Dontaku (deriving from a Dutch word of "zondag" or "Sunday") Minato Matsuri (Port Festival)". We also listened to three members of this band presenting "Messages for Peace from the Next Generation." These were followed by a fun attraction, where we enjoyed musical performance by the Chorus Group of the Second League of Konko Churches of

the Central Area of Fukuoka Prefecture and the BDM brass band (of Konko Church of Maebaru).

In the Closing Ceremony, Mr. Katsumi Ikejiri, the chairperson of the executive committee for the 5th Nationwide Assembly, gave a closing address.



The next day, we traveled to the Nagasaki Prefecture and had "Peace Workshop in Nagasaki": We visited the Peace Park, the Nagasaki

Atomic Bomb Museum and the Ground Zero Park. In the Peace Park, we visited and worshipped Peace Memorial Statue. We also dedicated a bunch of origami crane that was prepared by the Women's Group of the North Kyushu Diocese. They folded each crane with a sincere prayer. We had a round trip travel between Fukuoka and Nagasaki by bus. While we were in the bus, each of the 29 participants in all from various regions of Japan made a self-introduction. We also shared our respective expectations/hopes for the Assembly (prior to participating in it) and impressions/what we thought and/or felt on the event with one another.

