

Our Founder and Infectious Diseases

Foreword by the Rev. Michio Hashimoto
Chief Administrative Director

With so many others of the globe, we, people of the Konko Faith community, went through the fierce spread of Covid 19 a few years ago. Thanks to the virus calm down, we can hold the Autumn Grand Ceremony for our Founder with lots of worshippers again, and we are truly grateful for this. This is true of not only the Konko Headquarters but also each local Konko church.

In the Founder's era, today's medical technology was NOT available, and nobody had any knowledge of viruses and bacteria. I wonder how people in those days dealt with infectious and/or contagious diseases. As the Gion Festival of Kyoto symbolizes, Japanese people during the Heian Era (AD 794 – AD 1192) believed that a god of disease brought smallpox to one.

Founder himself took care of his third and fourth sons, asking his relatives to hold a funeral ceremony for his deceased second son. This action of the Founder makes good sense, because he was already immune to smallpox. He isolated his sick sons from the people for his second son's funeral. BRevvy that time, Ms. Shimo Kandori lived in a village and the Founder, as an adopted son, lived in another village. Ms. Kandori didn't visit the Founder's house. Instead, she visited her grandson's grave afterwards. During the Covid Pandemic, we followed restrictions of movement between areas. Back in those days, Ms. Kandori, the Founder's biological mother, did something quite similar to this, and her action also makes good sense here.

During the Founder's era, people already seem to have shared some "base materials" to accept scientific knowledge. The word "science" was not known to people in the Founder's era, but people of the Edo Period (AD 1603 – AD 1868) probably lived each day, recognizing the "Law of the

Several centuries later, namely during Early Modern Period (late 16th century ~) people seem to have learned through experiences that a person who developed a disease but overcame it afterwards would never develop the same disease again.

Ms. Shimo Kandori, the biological mother of our Founder, told her little son that he suffered smallpox at the age of 6 and measles at 9. It was very wise of Ms. Kandori to have done that. She probably needed to tell her boy, "You are already immune to these diseases, so don't worry." The Founder lost many of his family members to illness. During this hardship, he lost his second son, Makiemon, to illness in May, 1850. At that time, the Founder was constructing the main house. Soon after this tragedy, Nobujiro, the third son, and Mohei, the fourth son, suffered smallpox. Wishing to save these two little sons, the Founder asked a Shinto priest to come over to his house and had him perform some magical rituals such as "shime-oroshi" and "shime-age." At the same time, the

Universe/Nature." I am sure that people of that era must have had rich experiences of closely observing the nature on a daily basis, for most of them were farmers back in those days. This allows me to imagine/assume that our Founder wasn't scared of gods and buddhas. Instead, he had deep respect and awe for them. Our Founder didn't leave every single thing to Kami, our Parent Deity. Konko Daijin had full, bottomless trust in Kami, but he never said/thought, "I don't do anything about this matter, so please take care of it on my behalf, Kami-sama." Konko Daijin directed his heart to Kami AND utilized all the wisdom, ingenuity and experiences of humans of the Edo Period at whatever he engaged himself in. Our Founder never considered his life easy. He desperately lived each day for survival, just as we do so every day. Konko Daijin and each of us share something big in common, in other words. We, therefore, are able to accept and appreciate Konko Daijin's teachings through our modern-day sensibilities.

The Formal Funeral Ceremony for the late Rev. Heiki Konko

At 13:20 of August 29th, 2024, two singing groups performed a song called “Konko-sama,” which was composed for the funeral ceremony of the late Rev. Setsutane Konko, the Third Konko-sama as a dedicating song (Lyrics by Rev. Motonori Sato, Music by Rev. Iwao Konko). The two singing groups were the Konkokyo Headquarters Chorus Group and the chorus group of the music club of Konko Gakuen High School. At 13:30, the formal funeral ceremony for the late Reverend Heiki Konko, the Fifth Konko-sama, commenced. The Reverend Michio Hashimoto (Chief Admin. Director of Konkokyo) served the Chief Officiant and 9 other Konko ministers joined him as ceremony officiants. All the attendees/worshippers recited the “Tenchi Sangyo’oshi,” and the Chief Officiant went up to the front and solemnly recited the Saishi Prayer. Listening to the Saishi, all the attendees/worshippers reminisced the 30-year Sacred Mediation which the Fifth Konko-sama conducted with sincerity. They also offered their sincere gratitude to Konko-sama. After the Chief Officiant offered Tamagushi, the Reverend Hiromichi Konko (Chief



Mourner), the Reverend Yaeko Konko (Rev. Heiki Konko’s bereaved wife) and the Reverend Nobuko Konko offered Tamagushi and bowed their heads respectfully.

After that, the bereaved families and relatives of the late Fifth Konko-sama offered Tamagushi in turn, which was accompanied by the following persons who recited eulogy:

Rev. Fumio Shishino, Chairperson of the Sect Shinto Association and Chief Abbot of Shinto Fusokyo

Rev. Yoshinori Nishikawa, the representative of the Konko Faith congregation and Head Minister of Konko Church of Fuji’idera

Then the Rev. Shin’ichi Hashimoto offered Tamagushi on behalf of the Head of the



Official Funeral Committee for the Fifth Konko-sama, who was serving as the Chief Officiant during the funeral ceremony. The Director of the General Affairs Department of Konkokyo offered the paper of the eulogy manuscripts to the Kami/Mitama Altar.

Following the Tamagushi ceremony, all the attendees recited the “Shin Reijin Haishi.” As the Chief Mourner, the Rev. Hiromichi Konko’o made a greeting. The Rev. Hashimoto delivered a greeting of the Head of the Official Funeral Committee on the Committee Head’s behalf.

After the Ceremony Officiants left, there was an announcement, “Our Spiritual Leader, Konko-sama, is now leaving the Central Service Hall with the remains of his father, the 5th Konko-sama.” Konko-sama held the urn of the remains in his arms and graciously walked out of the Service Hall with his family. All the funeral attendees/worshippers saw them off. During this period, “tengaku” or old Japanese court music arranged for Konkokyo was performed. The remains of the 5th Konko-sama were brought back home with the Konko family. The present 6th Konko-sama entered the Central Worship and Mediation Hall and conducted Sacred Mediation for worshippers/believers just as usual.

In this way, the formal funeral ceremony for the 5th Konko-sama concluded at 14:42 without any troubles.

Address by the Chief Mourner

Please allow me to make a brief address. My heart is now being filled with deep, enormous gratitude for the 5th Konko-sama's 30-year goyo. On a personal level, I am also thanking him for being my father for 58 years. My heart is also being directed to our Parent Kami, Who granted the 5th Konko-sama a 89-year-and-8-month life.

I recently have better understanding of the 4th Konko-sama's words, "Always tell yourself that the foundation of life is gratitude." Of course I am lonely and sad now. But, much more than these emotions, I am keenly aware that my gratitude is just



NOT ENOUGH. This awareness urges me to realize that I cannot but keep saying "Thank you very much." This means that (showing) gratitude is the most important in Konkokyo, the faith of our dear



Founder, Konko Daijin.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for your attendance at the 5th Konko-sama's funeral ceremony despite a hot, humid and rainy weather.

I express my earnest gratitude to every single one of you, because I know that you all gave deep sincerity and warm friendship to the 5th Konko-sama throughout his lifetime. And I would humbly like to receive your care and guidance from all of you from now on. Thank you very much once again.

