



The Konko Missions in Hawaii will fulfill Ikigami Konko Daijin's vision to embrace the world with the Konko Faith.

## A Five Star Experience, Kokura Church



The Kokura Konko Church in Kyushu is the parent church of the Amagi Church and other Konko churches in Kyushu. It had its humble beginnings in a family home, in the late 1880s, where its founder, Reverend Katsura Matsuhei, ministered to the villagers. The landscape would have been agricultural farm scenes with homes here and there. Much later, a formal structure was built, with great care put into its design and even in the selection of the trees to be used for its construction. It must have been the most magnificent and imposing structure of its day.

Even today, the Kokura Church is beautiful. But today, it is nestled in a modern city, dwarfed by the towering concrete buildings surrounding it and a busy train station not too far away. The gated manicured grounds

and the 1900 century temple like structure are a stark contrast to the outside world. It is a serene oasis in a desert, even though the desert is of our own creation, shiny rectangular buildings of glass, metal and concrete connected by asphalt streets. And yes, this enclave is as relevant to its members and the Konkokyo community as the modern buildings are relevant to the city, for it also strives to lead and guide. It serves the people.

Our visit was a memorable one. We were received graciously by the head minister, Katsura Sensei and her sister, also a minister. Sitting in the worship hall was calming. The architecture is beautiful, with tall rafters, beautiful lines, and light coming in through the shoji walls. Sensei greeted us, expressing gratitude for our traveling such a long distance to visit the various churches in Japan to cele-

brate their anniversaries. She spoke of how blessed we were, that we were able to do so, and added that we should not forget that we were also blessed in that we had others back home, protecting and watching over our homes, families, and businesses, to make this possible. This made a big impression on us, especially the In-deis, Sensei and Elaine, for their shiatsu school and business back in Honolulu, stayed open to continue to give their unique service even though they weren't there. Katsura Sensei said that this protection is the toku that we receive from Kami everyday of our lives. We cannot see it, but we accumulate this virtue when we live our lives with Kami as our partner. We need not think of amassing toku, for it will happen if we live unselfishly. Toku is something that comes naturally, like a bi-product of acts of gratitude, kindness, sincerity and more. It cannot be taken away from us, like material wealth or goods that can be destroyed or damaged. We live embraced by the toku of our ancestors and in turn our toku is the invisible spirit that is already being passed on to our descendents. Unlike material goods, it doesn't have a shelf life.

Sensei spoke with a powerful voice, a voice electrifying and full of sincere fervor. That was our first impression. But her other voice, the spirit that was projected in her story telling was also compelling. Her storytelling voice conveyed sincerity and heart and gave her message life. You can't help but be drawn in by the two voices. We left the hall greatly energized.

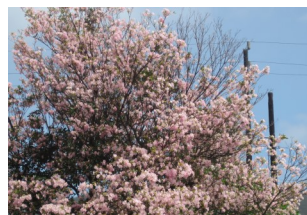
Refreshments were served in the reception room. Something like the spiritual toku, the ladies of the church were an invisible force that could not be seen, but worked quietly in the background, preparing a special treat for us. They cooked and served deep fried Konkokyo manju and a maple leaf tempura with hot tea. It looked like a lovely piece of art, too good to be eaten, but we ate it and each was delicious. Yasutake sensei reconnected with the Reverends Katsura, classmates from seminary days. We discovered that the younger Katsura sensei was fluent in English; that she had studied in Australia. We were pleasantly surprised to hear that she was one of the speakers at

one of our church anniversaries in Honolulu. Conversation flowed easily and casually.

When it was time for us to go, we noticed several cars in the front driveway. While we were visiting, other members had arrived and were waiting for us, to drive us to the station. We couldn't refuse their friendly offer, even though the station was within walking distance. The Japanese tradition of seeing off guests is so charming and unexpected. Everyone, including the volunteers from the kitchen and in the yard, had come to the front to send us off, waving, bowing, and inviting us to return and telling us to have a safe journey. We all had smiles on our faces as we left. It was a short drive to the station. In the brief conversation we had with our driver, we learned that she was one of the adult leaders of a Boy Scout group. She was not a regular church goer, but she was involved with activities sponsored by the church. We appreciated her dedication and the kindness of the other drivers, too.

At the station, the drivers parked on the road side, and waved good bye to us as we walked toward the entrance. We rode the long elevator up, and when we turned back, saw that our drivers were still there, waving and bowing. The elderly gentleman especially caught our eyes, for he was waving very enthusiastically, maybe with his cap in his hand.

Our visit to Kokura was like a fine five course meal, beginning with the appetizer, the visual appreciation of the church and its grounds, to the warm welcome of the Reverends Katsura, to the main course, the stirring speech of Katsura Sensei, to the dessert, the delicious food prepared and served by the ladies, and finally to the touching send off. We came away from this experience refreshed and warm, the same satisfaction after eating a great meal. This day was as good as any church experience can ever be.



Written by Mrs. Karen Taniguchi,  
Konko Mission of Waipahu



On the steps of Kokura Church.

Top row from left: Reiko Yano, Wanda Tamashiro, Elaine Indei, Mako Taniguchi, John Tamashiro

Bottom from left: Fumihiko Indei, Mitsuko Yasutake, Karen Taniguchi, Tetsuro Yasutake

## ***Totokaka-maru*** **The Happy Couple's Boat**

By Rev. Yomisu Oya, KMH Center Director

“Even if you have a logical explanation, don’t reveal it entirely. Logical explanations, like a wedge, should be driven in only eighty percent. An overstuffed paper bag will break. The word can be at peace through *aiyo kakeyo*.” (GII:Karahi Tsunezo 2)

This teaching changed Karahi Tsunezo’s life, and he helped spread the Konko Faith to the West of Japan. Karahi Tsunezo’s wife was a tomboy and a drinker. Tsunezo told everyone that he had to be her husband, otherwise no one else could. Occasionally, he wanted to say a few words. However, if he said what he believed, she would be upset, and they did not get along well. In such cases, Tsunezo applied the Founder’s teaching and tried to live with *aiyo kakeyo*. Having practiced faith in this way, he started to say, “We have been husband and wife for years. However, she is a precious daughter for her parents. Moreover, she is a beloved child of Kami. Thinking in this way, I won’t slap her, and I will never get upset. I feel grateful for whatever she could do for me.”

Tsunezo and his wife were doing business with their boat in Seto inland sea. Many people who met this happy cou-

ple started to call their boat “*Totokaka* (husband & wife) *maru*”, a happy couple’s boat. Naturally, they spread Konko Faith. They guided many people to the Konko Faith, including Aketa Kakutaro. Aketa Kakutaro later introduced this faith to Katsura Matsuei, the first head minister of Kokura Church. In this way, the Konko Faith spread to the West of Japan and reached to Hawaii.

There may be a time when we have an urge to say something. However, we should remember how Tsunezo swallowed his words following the Founder’s teaching. Let us practice faith to understand that all people are children of Kami. Let us practice “*aiyo kakeyo*” in our daily lives. The foundation of faith is to be in harmony with one’s family. Let us believe that we are capable of caring for others.





# "The Two Hundredth Hug"

by Harold H. Bloomfield, M.D. and shared by Wanda Tamashhiro



This is a story I read in the book called, *Chicken Soup for the Soul* by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen. Because February is the traditional month in which we celebrate Love in America, I chose to tell this story because I think we can all learn from other people's moving experiences so we can make our lives that much more meaningful.

As the story begins, a son has learned that his father is dying from pancreatic cancer, and just has a few months to live. He desperately wants to comfort his father and tell him how much he appreciates and loves him. However, his father is a very stoic, or in Japanese, "majime", and never shows any emotions. So the son is resentful of his father's emotional distance. Regrettably, their interaction has been mostly a hand shake and a how do you do,-- not very warm.

Despite these hurtful feelings, the son is determined to hug his dad and be hugged by him. On his first attempt, his father quickly recoils with his shoulders and body becoming rigid. The younger man had never experienced anything like that.

Even though the first embrace was unsuccessful, the son presses on. On the next try, he tells his dad to sit up and say, "I am going to put my arms around you. Now I am going to give you a squeeze."

The father complies but with no emotional reaction. So the son perseveres. He would sit close to his dad and say, "Put your arms around me. Now squeeze."

The dad is not accustomed to these gestures of affection. But the son continues teaching the older man how to hug, sometimes almost mechanically. Every time he visits

he asks his dad to assume a sitting position; he places his dad's arms around his shoulders and says, "Now squeeze. Good." He would say.

Throughout the many visits, there is anticipation of wanting this closeness, even for hundreds of times without much success. But the son never gives up striving to melt a habit formed over many years.

One day, around the the two hundredth try at this act of sitting up and hugging his son, his dad, who almost never responded, said "I Love You". What a moment! The father had finally expressed his true feeling of love for his son.

How about us? Shouldn't we try to connect by expressing our love for our family members before it's too late. We will have lost something very important. We may think that saying, "I love you"

is silly; it's only words. But just like this father and son, who would never have known this feeling of closeness if the son had not initiated this change of heart. Openly expressing your feelings needs to be practiced because many of us in the Japanese upbringing may not have learned this habit.

It will be worth your while to improve your relationships. This, I believe is another important way in which we please Kamisama. Kami wants us to love each other for our own true happiness and Kami's happiness. As Takebe Sensei told us, how you live your daily life is how you will act when you are at the end of your life.

At the beginning of this story, there was a quote, "Love cures people--both the ones who give it and the ones who receive it." Dr. Karl Menninger



## With Healing Hands

Waipahu church member, Fumihiko Indei-sensei will be recognized by the Consulate General of Japan in Honolulu. On April 24, 2015, Indei-sensei will receive the Consul General's Commendation in recognition for his tireless work in bridging Hawaii and Japan through Shiatsu. With the establishment of Aisen Chiryō Doin Inc. and Aisen Shiatsu School in 1977, Indei-sensei brought the healing art of Shiatsu to the people of Hawaii. For 38 years Indei-sensei has served the local community by not only healing aching bodies and ailing minds, but also teaching others the massage techniques to help over 27,000 clients. Furthermore, he and his students have volunteered shiatsu services to aid in healing runner's fatigued muscles after races such as the Honolulu Marathon and the Hapalua Half-Marathon.

Congratulations Indei-sensei! Here's to the continued success of Aisen Shiatsu in Hawaii!





*Rev. Tetsuro Yasutake of the Konko Mission of Waipahu officiated the 35th Anniversary service for the Aisen Shiatsu Group at the Aisen Shiatsu Chiryō Doin back in March 3, 2012. Indei Sensei and his wife, Elaine Indei are seen here offering tamagushi.*

## Editor's Corner

A space where the editor can share inspirational stories and informational tidbits

I recently stumbled upon a piece of scratch paper that had my co-worker's handwriting on it that read, "Brene Brown, TED lectures, The power of vulnerability, Youtube." I had obviously forgotten about this little note and yet it appeared before me from under my pile of papers on my desk, as if to say, "You really need to watch this lecture." I have learned not to ignore these types of chance encounters, so I looked this lecture up on Youtube and watched this 20-minute long talk by Brene Brown, a research professor at the University of Houston, who has written books based on her research of vulnerability, courage, shame and authenticity.

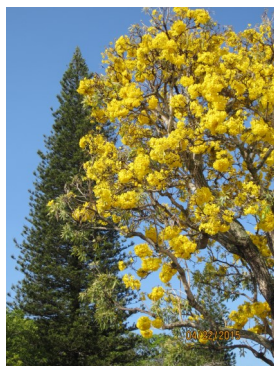
She starts by explaining that our purpose in living and what gives meaning to our lives is connection. We all want to be connected to people, to the world around us, to Kami. In order for connection to happen, we have to be vulnerable. What keeps many of us from being vulnerable is shame, which she defines as the fear of disconnection. Is there something about me that would, if people knew, cause me to not be worthy of connection?

She uses the term "wholehearted" to describe people who have a strong sense of love and belonging and believe that they are worthy of love and belonging. These people have a sense of courage. [Side note: the word courage comes from the Latin 'cour' which means heart. Courage means to tell the story of who you are with your whole heart.] People who are "wholehearted" have the courage to be imperfect. They have the compassion to be kind to themselves first and then to others. Finally, they have connection (to other people and things) as a result of authenticity.

In order to be wholehearted and hence truly connected, we must fully embrace vulnerability. Brown gives

examples of this as the willingness to say "I love you" first; the willingness to invest in a relationship that may or may not work out; or the willingness to do something where there are no guarantees. This is true for personal relationships as well as our relationship with Kami. To connect to Kami, we must be authentic. We cannot put on a façade with Kami. It is as Todd-sensei reminded us in a recent sermon at Wahiawa Spring Grand Service, the *okekkai* is like our spiritual toilet bowl and where we can dump our problems onto the minister, who is a representative of Our Founder and Kami. But, if you are not being truthful and presenting yourself wholly, then you cannot receive blessings. I, personally, find it difficult to be vulnerable with other people. It is not easy to be vulnerable, because there has to be a certain level of trust. How can I open up to someone and allow myself to be vulnerable, if I can't trust that they will protect my fragile heart? Brown's research has found that being vulnerable is the core of shame, fear, and struggle for worthiness. But, it is also the birthplace of joy, creativity, love, and belonging. Perhaps you have heard the saying, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." If you don't take the risk of putting yourself out there, taking that chance, taking that leap of faith; you will never know what you are able to achieve. You may never know what Kami has in store for you.

I would argue that this concept of the power of vulnerability holds the answer to how people receive *shintoku* or blessings through *Toritsugi* mediation. *Toritsugi* mediation is one way to communicate with Kami. If we can bring ourselves to be more open with our *Toritsugi* mediators, to be more vulnerable, we will receive more blessings.



# **2015 KCNA-KMH Joint Conference July 17-19 @ California State University, Long Beach**

The 2015 KCNA-KMH Joint Conference will be held on the campus of California State University, Long Beach from July 17-19. The guest speaker will be Lore Lapinsky.

Deadline to register is June 1, 2015.

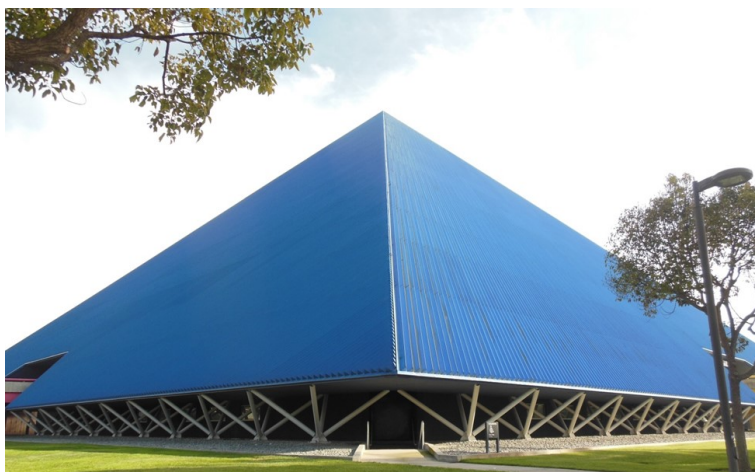
Pricing is as follows:

Adults (26 years and older).....\$125 (double occupancy); \$175 (single occupancy)

Young Adults (18-25 years).....\$50

Youth (13-17 years).....\$50

Children (1-12 years).....FREE



Let us help, guide, and pray for one another with a  
compassionate heart of Kami



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# 2015 Joint KCNA/KMH Conference

Thank you for your interest in this year's Joint Conference, to be held on the campus of California State University, Long Beach, in Long Beach, California. This year's keynote speaker will be Lore Lapinsky. Lore is a skilled and experienced business professional with more than 20 years' experience in program facilitation, organizational design and development, learning needs analysis, executive coaching, public-speaking, and leadership development. Lore is a committed community volunteer, helping out at local and regional dance festivals, Special Olympics events, swim teams and aquatics programs, senior events and local elementary schools. In her free time, she enjoys traveling with her family, regular yoga classes, and anything that involves the beauty of dance.



This year's theme, "Let us help, guide, and pray for one another with a compassionate heart of Kami", gives us a great opportunity to deepen our relationships with others from across the continent and across the Pacific Ocean. Lore's talk, entitled "Goal Setting – Moving towards the balance between strength and flexibility", will help us create realistic goals and strategies for achieving them.

Goals? What do goals look like? Whose goals are we talking about? My goals? My Sensei's goals? Kami's goals? Does Kami have goals? How can we help each other achieve our goals? The Southern California and KMH churches invite you to participate in this year's Joint Conference and find out!

Bring the whole family! There will also be four pre-conference gatherings: Family Camp, Youth Camp, Young Adults, Spirituality Bridge. For more information, please contact the Conference Committee, the Konkko Church of Gardena, or the KCNA Office. We look forward to seeing you the weekend of July 17.

P.S. If you are interested in turning your conference experience into a holiday, consider spending some extra time in Southern California. There are many attractions, beautiful sights, and great restaurants in and around the Long Beach area. Let the Conference Committee know if you would like a listing of recommendations.



For more information, please contact the Conference Committee via e-mail at [conference@konkofaith.org](mailto:conference@konkofaith.org) or the Konkko Church of Gardena at 310-327-3349.



Registration forms and informational flyers are available at your local churches or through the KMH Center.



### **KMH Mission Statement**

The Konko Missions in Hawaii addresses the spiritual needs of the people of Hawaii by promoting the Konko faith through a better understanding of the life and teachings of Konko Daijin, and through the practice of Toritsugi (Divine-Mediation).

“Malamalama” is now available through e-mail!

For our devoted readers who would like to receive the “Malamalama” electronically, please let us know at [kmhcenter@hawaiiantel.net](mailto:kmhcenter@hawaiiantel.net).

For our readers who would still prefer a hard (paper) copy, please do not hesitate and let us know.

Thank you!

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Konkokyo Hour : Radio K-ZOO AM1210 at 7:00 a.m., every Sunday  
Radio KNUI AM900 at 6:20 p.m., every 2nd Sunday

To: