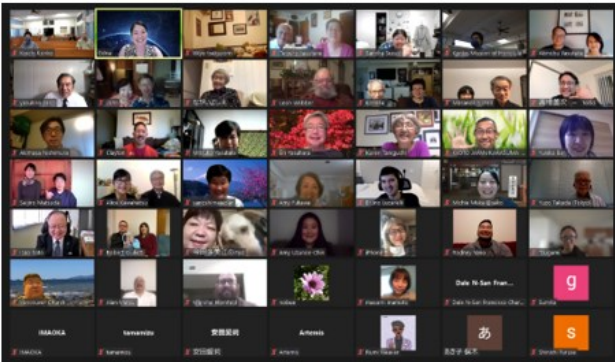




The Konko Missions in Hawaii will fulfill Ikigami Konko Daijin's vision to embrace the world with the Konko Faith.

First KMH Yatsunami Gathering

Rev. Edna Matsuoka, Konko Mission of Wahiawa



The First Yatsunami Gathering coordinated by the Konko Missions in Hawaii (KMH) started with a prayer and a video clip of the current **Sixth Konko-Sama (Rev. Hiromichi Konko)** on the day of his inauguration. The clacking sounds of the wooden geta clogs on the concrete pavement early in the morning around 3:45 am echoed throughout the premises at the Head-

quarters. Konko-Sama was accompanied by his Hiromae attendants as he proceeded towards the main worship hall. The *Odemashi* (Morning procession) doesn't only happen on special service days; Konko-Sama wakes up early in the morning for this procession on a daily basis—rain or snow.

.....continued on page 2

Just like how the blessings from Kami-Sama continue; Konko Sama is the first person to wake up to give thanks to Kami-Sama to pray for the world. This is what I find so humbling.

In acknowledging the blessings and favors of Konko Daijin-Sama and Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama, the KMH Community Engagement and Outreach Committee (CEOC) held an online zoom event called the KMH Yatsunami Gathering. It was the first online gathering held on Monday, November 15, 2021. That day is significant in Konkokyo. This was the day that the Founder, Konko Daijin received the Divine Call to him and his family back in 1859. It is otherwise known as the *Rikkyo Kinennsai*. This year, Konkokyo turned 162 years old.

Rev. Yasuhiro Yano, the chair of the KMH Yatsunami Gathering shared a message on the significance of the event. He mentioned that the Yatsunami 8-petaled crest of the Konkokyo faith symbolizes the blessings of Kami-Sama that spans in all directions. So it was our prayer that people from all around the globe could join this event, just like the Konkokyo International Gatherings that were held annually. However, due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the Konkokyo International Gathering had to be cancelled for a couple of years now. The theme of the event was "Celebration of the Establishment of the Konko Faith."

Over 70 people logged on from Hawaii, Japan, the Mainland USA and Canada to attend the event. We were very fortunate to have 5 presentations of talent in the course of the program. All video presentations were pre-recorded and shared during the event. There was a Kibimai performance by **Miss Sapphira Jackson**. She danced beautifully to the song "Momijiba" (Maple leaf) during the 90th Anniversary of the Konko Church of Portland, held on October 3, 2021. Koto accompaniment by **Rev. Michie Uzunoe** and Sapphira's mother, **Mrs. Theresa Jackson**.

Following the kibimai dance were the "Antalarz" rock band group! They were an all-Konko ministers band from Hyogo and Osaka prefecture, Japan. They played for us the Sukiyaki song and Shinjin No Eiko. The base vocalist is **Rev. Yoshihiro Kondo** of Suita Church. Guitar vocalist, **Rev. Seichi Sugita** of Mikuni Church. Guitar vocalist, **Rev. Akimasa Nishimura** of Nishinomiya Church and Drums, **Rev. Hiroshi Morita** of Tenman Church. I really liked how they rocked Shinjin No Eiko. This is a rock group that was born in 2013. What does their name mean? "Antara" means "Hey, you guys!" in Japanese. This group name was created when the band members were not being serious with their work at the church, so their senior sensei used to always scold them and say "Antara! Hey you guys! Stop foolin' around!" So they came up with the name "Antalarz." They really gave us viewers a burst of positive energy.

And if that wasn't enough, the harmonica presentation by **Mr. Gilbert Phillips** really blew us away. He composed his own song "The Pandemic Blues" and he played that song in a stylish blue kimono that suited him well. Gilbert became a follower of the Konko Mission of Honolulu just 2 years ago in an interesting incident that may have been divinely arranged. He was watching a science program on TV one evening, and the TV turned blank. Then it automatically switched to KIKU TV channel 9 (Japanese programming), and it just so happened to be playing Konko Daijin's movie "Okage wa Waga Kokoro ni Ari." As he began watching, he was able to identify Konko Daijin as a holy man. He decided to Google "Konko Daijin" and found the Konko Mission of Honolulu and has started to attend church on a regular weekly basis.

One after another, we were just mesmerized with such gifted talent by the willing volunteers. **Miss Jeddie Kawahatsu** elegantly danced hula to the song "Pua Kiele" sung by Josh Tatofi. Her gracefulness in the cool Hawaiian breeze, with Diamond Head in the background, the shimmering waves, the leisurely sailboat, and the swaying palm trees represented Hawaii so well. Some of the people who were watching told me that they really wanted to visit Hawaii after watching the hula. Jeddie is the daughter of **Rev. and Mrs. Masato and Alice Kawahatsu** of the Konkokyo South San Francisco Spiritual Center.

In conclusion of the entertainment portion of the program, we were very fortunate to have the **Rev. Tamie Imaoka** of the Konko Church of Nakadachiuri in Kyoto, Japan share her heart-warming singing and piano playing to the song "Hikari Kagayaku Michi" which is known in English as "Shinning Shimmering Light." Rev. Imaoka composed the song and lyrics. It has since been translated into English and sung overseas as well. Her song really touches the heart and many have mentioned that it has given them hope during trying times. We were very happy to see Rev. Imaoka join the Yatsunami gathering. After her singing and piano, we all followed the English slideshow version sung by **Mrs. Sayaka Wilson-Haste**.

To top it all off, the Yatsunami Gathering closed with a prayer and a lively Banzai Sansho by the **Rev. Reiko Yano**. I believe it was a successful event with the positive feedback that was collected. We look forward to continuing the Yatsunami Gathering in celebration of the birthday of Konkokyo for many years to come. Mahalo nui to **Rev. Koichi Konko** for taking care of the technical side of the ZOOM gathering and to all the participants and CEOC committee members who were part of the planning process with such short notice.

Kami-Sama: A Spark in My Life

Ginny Yasutake, Konko Mission of Wailuku

As he sat in his car, Jon anxiously awaited the results of his rapid covid-19 test. Minutes seemed like hours and finally, his cellphone rang. He had tested positive. In that moment, my heart sank. Scenarios bombarded my mind... already running a fever, and very fatigued, will he be, okay? Will anyone else in our household test positive or become sick? In a few days, we were to take our eldest son, Cael, to Columbia University in New York. Do I cancel the trip? My dad was to undergo a much-needed surgery to remove a tumor in his spine the following week but if he

our home, I prayed to help get me through the day. In doing so, I realized how blessed I was in this difficult time. My family was alive, a large house to accommodate for quarantining, protein shakes for Jon because he didn't have an appetite and had already lost fifteen pounds, the protection from the vaccine, all the love, prayers, food and groceries from family and friends, freezer meals, bleach and soap, just to name a few of the blessings. A few days later, one of our sons, Chase, also tested positive and the remainder of our household was cleared from quaran-



tests positive, will the surgery be postponed? With so many questions and no answers, the fighting spirit in me seemed to dwindle... my inner light began to fade.

Albert Schweitzer once said, "At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us." Kami-Sama became a spark in my life. As I prayed, it became clear to me what I needed to do and Kami-Sama had given me the strength to do it. The very next day, the remaining seven in our household took the rapid test. Our daughter, Cami, the only non-vaccinated person in our house tested positive. Jon and Cami isolated in two separate rooms, while the rest of us social distanced and wore masks in our own home. Three of us camping out in the living room, another who was exhibiting mild symptoms in another room, and my parents in their own room. Life would continue in this way for the next couple of weeks.

Sleep deprived and exhausted from sanitizing

time. Now, the goal was to sanitize the rest of the house, send my son off to college, and help those who were sick to recover. Praying daily, my inner light became brighter. I became thankful instead of angry or upset or frustrated. Thankful for the strength to get through every day and for the hope that tomorrow would be better.

Bleach and water, Lysol and Microban spray, and Clorox wipes became my arsenal to rid covid-19 from our home. I obsessed about sanitizing and cleaning and ridding every single droplet of the virus. The stress and anxiety of feeling that I wasn't doing enough, overwhelmed me. Again, I prayed. This time, Kami-sama made me feel like I was doing

the best that I could. Stopping to pray, allowed me time to breathe and focus on the science and facts regarding the virus and how it is spread. The more I prayed, the more at peace I was with myself and now, I could give my all and be as helpful as I could to my family.

Next on the "to do" list, was to send my son off to



college. Cael decided to travel as soon as possible to participate in a few of the NSOP (New Student Orientation Program) events at Columbia University. Thankful to Roy Sensei for driving Cael to the airport and tears falling from my eyes, I waved goodbye to him. Thankful to Hisayo-sensei and Kanae-sensei for assisting Cael at the Kahului airport because I could not be there with him was a blessing and then, off he was to New York for the first time by himself. This was not how I envisioned sending my son off to



Rev. Hisayo and Rev. Kanae seeing Cael off at the airport before he goes off to college.

college. Again, feeling sad and helpless, I prayed. This time, Kami-Sama made me realize just how lucky I was to have such an amazing son and how blessed he was to have such a wonderful opportunity to be educated at one of the top colleges in the country. Also, we (Jon and I, along with our family and friends, Cael's coaches, mentors, and teachers, etc) helped prepare him for this moment. A journey that he was ready for... a ten-hour flight on Hawaiian Airlines, an hour-long Uber ride from JFK Airport,

and at 3am Hawaii Standard Time, he reached his destination... Columbia University in the city of New York!

Finally, the road to recovery was different for all those who were sick. Cami had very little to no symptoms, Chase had mild symptoms and recovered within a day or two, and after five long days of having a fever and no appetite, Jon was feeling better... so much so, he requested a Kimchi bowl for lunch and for those of you who know Jon well, you know that eating a bowl of ramen means he is just fine! My dad, too, had a successful surgery and is now on the road to recovery. With help from my mom and our son Cy, everyone recovered and was cleared from isolation from the Department of Health.

Events happen in your life and you wonder why? I always had a positive outlook on life but during this situation, I realized it wasn't enough. Praying and giving thanks allowed Kami-Sama to be a spark in my life... lighting the flame within me to not only shine but to shine brighter. I was given a sense of peace when I needed it, energy when I lacked some, and strength and courage when I doubted myself. With deep gratitude, I say, "Thank you, Kami-Sama"! Thank you for all the blessings in my life... a mantra, I say daily now. A reminder to always be truly grateful to the one who rekindled my spirit.



First picture of the Columbia University Campus Cael sent after arriving

At Cael's virtual scholarship presentation



A Family Affair

Aimee Yasutake, Konko Mission of Wailuku

The Konko Mission of Wailuku held its Autumn Grand Service on November 7, 2021. It was a family affair. Due to the pandemic, for the last 2 years, ministers from the neighbor islands have not been able to join us on Maui for the Grand Services. But, thanks to the blessings of Kami-Sama, I was able to make it home and the family from Lahaina was also able to join us.

Rev. Hisayo Yasutake, Rev. Roy Yasutake, Rev. Kanae Yasutake, and Rev. Alvin Yasutake work hard from about a week before the service to prepare the church grounds and clean the church inside and out. Kanae-sensei makes all the food for the naorai... this time since it was going to be only the family, she prepared tonkatsu and curry. If you've been lucky enough to have Auntie Kanae's curry, you know, it was ONO! Roy-sensei and Alvin-sensei work to-



gether to prepare the altar and the offerings. My usual duties when I get home for a Daisai are to do the flower arrangements and help with the cooking. When my brother Jon and his family get to church, they always bring tons of food for the naorai as well. My niece, Cami, has become quite the baker, and made the yummy azuki manju dessert. And the kids all pitch in to set up the tables and chairs for the naorai lunch after service.



It was so great to see us all together, even though we missed having my eldest nephew, Cael who's away at college, there and the other church members. I couldn't help but feel my dad looking down at his family and smiling. I'm sure he is

proud that we are all carrying on his work at the church and keeping it going as a family.



The kids setting up for the naorai

Kenneth Kenichi Yamada

Amy Fukawa, Konko Mission of Honolulu

My father, Kenneth Kenichi Yamada, was born in Hawaii, in 1913. His parents immigrated to Hawaii from Hiroshima, Japan, and settled in Waialua, Oahu, where he and his younger brother were born. Later, his parents returned to Hiroshima with their two young boys. The brothers grew up and attended school in Hiroshima, although they were legally classified as American citizens.

Years later when dad was a young man, he de-

cided to return to his birthplace, Hawaii. But first, he traveled by ship to California and worked at wine vineyards, at grocery stores, etc., and eventually returned to his birthplace, Hawaii.

Upon arrival in Oahu, he made connection with Mrs. Shizuyo Ota, who was a family friend of his Hiroshima family and hometown. Mr. & Mrs. Ota looked after my dad and helped him to adjust to his life in Hawaii. Mrs. Ota was an exceptionally faithful

and loyal believer in Konkokyo and was a strong influence in turning dad's heart to Kami-Sama and Konkokyo. Dad became a taxi driver and would often take Mrs. Ota to Konkko Church, at its original location on Liliha Street. He would wait for her in his car outside for the service to end and he would take her home. After this continued for a while, Mrs. Ota convinced him to wait in the church rather than wait outside. That became the start of his strong faith as a believer in the Konkko faith. Dad prayed daily, in the morning before work, and at night before going to bed. He often fell asleep on the floor with his forehead resting on his clasped hands, and my pet cat would jump on his back and sleep on him.

Dad was a kind and easy person to get along with. The church members remember "Yamada-san", who attended church almost daily after he retired, and always worked on the church yard. He would say, "o-rai", for "all right" when we asked him for something. He was always kind, helpful, and never

criticized or showed anger.

His strong faith was a huge influence on my mother, me, and Michele, my daughter. He would have been so proud of Michele, his grandchild, when she went to Konkokyo Headquarters, in Okayama, Japan, for a year to study and do

research as a student. She later explained that Grandpa instilled in her questions and a curiosity of the Konkko faith. On her own, she decided to study in Konkko Headquarters to understand the teachings and get answers to questions she had.

Dad encountered several misfortunes in the years before his retirement, but his strong faith never faltered. He survived being robbed and shot in his chest by drug crazed kids one day during work. He



survived major surgery and, with his faith and trust in Kami, he recovered and returned to work again.

Unfortunately, the effects of the surgery on his lungs and respiratory system caused several long hospitalizations. As he got weaker and weaker, he told me to ask the doctor to stop any further treatment and let him pass on, which the doctors had counseled. He said he was okay and ready, and he could then be with my mother. The doctors and nurses were very comforting and supportive in his request. Dad passed away very peacefully, but it was painful for me and our family.

After the funeral services were over, I felt troubled and remorseful. I regretted that I could not somehow find a way to help dad live longer and encourage him to keep trying. This feeling of guilt

and sadness continued until one night I had a "dream", or a "vision", or a "message". In the dream, I was walking towards a plain white bridge and saw my dad sitting quietly alone on the bridge, looking at me. The bridge was very plain and it curved up towards the sky with nothing on it except dad. He got up and quietly

walked toward me. I started to walk towards him, smiling and calling him, but he just looked at me quietly and smiled softly with kindness in his eyes. He then turned away toward the bridge and softly walked up and away. I immediately woke up and realized that dad's "mitama" visited me. Gradually, I began to feel consoled and thanked him from my heart for his silent message and expression of love.

To this day, whenever I think and reminisce about my dad and mom, it always calms me and reinforces my hopes to try to become a stronger and more faithful believer.



"Dear Stranger"

Rev. Seiko Konko, Konkko Mission of Honolulu

The following is something I read on Instagram and was popular in Japan. I tried to translate it below.

"I don't know you. I know you don't know me, neither.

It must be strange that I am writing a letter to you. But please take some time to read this if you have a few moments to spare.

I am now laying on my bed in a hospital. I have a fatal illness. I most likely will no longer exist in this world when you read this letter. That is the reason I am writing this to you...to tell you something important while I am still alive. I couldn't do anything that I could be proud of in my life. I yearned for one occupation when I was young. However, I was not able to make it. I had a woman whom I loved, but she

didn't care about me. Whenever I saw a seat to sit down, someone else always took it before me. If someone were to make movie about my life, you'd probably think, "This is very boring!" I definitely agree with you. As this boring movie is now finally ending, and my uninteresting life is approaching its end, I am writing this letter to someone...but nobody will probably receive it. Do you understand why I am doing this? I am scared. I am scared to die. I told myself repeatedly, "There is no sense in sparing my life. It's just another boring life waiting for me even if I survive." Yet, my fear of death never disappeared. I don't want to die, but I want to live. I want to love someone. It doesn't matter if the person doesn't respond to me. It is okay if I am just hurt. I want to once again experience the moment of happiness as I think about the person whom I really love. I want to have a dream. It is okay that it will not come true. I may just feel embarrassed because of the dream. But I want

to have a dream once again. My life was boring, therefore I understood something. To live is wonderful! I want to hold tight to even my boring life until the last moment. I thought when my dream is fulfilled, then my life could shine. Thus, my life cannot shine and have to be boring because I never reached any of my dreams. That was wrong. To live is to shine. To live life itself sparkles. You now are alive. It is very bright to me."

This is actually an excerpt from a novel, "But I Still Dream, Soredemo Bokuha Yumewo Miru (それでも僕は夢をみる)" by Keiya Mizuno(水野敬也). It is

special and miraculous to be alive through receiving life from Divine Parent although it doesn't look special.

I cannot help but thank Kami-Sama.

Thank You Stephen

Rev. Koichi Konko, Konkko Mission of Honolulu

His name is Mr. Stephen Yeh. He has been staying at Hilo church for over 1 year and helping Rev. Yoshie Nagai after Rev. Makio Nagai passed away. He even helped with Rev. Nagai's funeral with Rev. Oya and Rev. Kunito who are former staff members of the Konkokyo Hawaii Center. Mr. Yeh is a friend of Rev. Kunito and is not a Konkokyo member. He was laid off because of the pandemic. He and Rev. Kunito moved to Hilo church to help Rev. Yoshie. Rev. Kunito went back to Japan, but Stephen continued to help Rev. Yoshie. When I went to Hilo church for its Spring and Autumn Grand Services this year, we prepared for the service together such as making offerings and switching the rattan blinds for the altars for the Grand Service from the regular ones. It was easy for me to work with him because he understood Konkokyo words. Rev. Kunito taught him about Konkokyo and some technical terms such as *osagari*, *sanbo* and how to make offerings for the altars.

He is also knowledgeable about IT technology so



Stephen and Rev. Yoshie Nagai

he helped Rev. Yoshie join Zoom meetings. Many ministers and members on other islands didn't have any opportunities to see her for a long time, it was so nice to see her in various meetings on line.

He told me he never attended any churches or temples regularly before. His roots are in Taiwan. He was born in Guam and raised in Chiba, Japan. He is most fluent in Japanese. He has a good personality and easy to talk to. He is also responsible.

He helped Rev. Yoshie run errands, and I am very sure Rev. Yoshie felt at ease with him at the church. He said Rev. Yoshie is his great grandmother's generation and, he is impressed that she is still very healthy and sharp. She is very open-minded, but strict and does her best as hard as she can for goyo for Kami-Sama.

He went back to Japan in the beginning of December because there were no jobs for him in Hawaii now. He hopes he can come back to Hawaii after the pandemic.



Konko Missions in Hawaii

Malamalama Editor: Aimee Yasutake

1728 Liliha Street, Honolulu, HI 96817

Phone: (808) 536-9078 E-mail: kmhcenter@konkomissionshawaii.org

Website: <http://konkomissionshawaii.org/>

Konkokyo Hour : Radio K-ZOO AM1210 at 7:00 a.m., every Sunday

To:

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@konkomissionshawaii.org

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

Thank you!

KONKO MISSIONS IN HAWAII

HONOLULU 1728 Liliha St., Honolulu, HI 96817
Phone: (808) 533-7173
E-mail: Konko-Honolulu@hawaii.rr.com

HILO 58 Huapala Lane, Hilo, HI 96720
Phone: (808) 935-3239

WAIPAHU 94-106 Mokukaua St., Waipahu, HI 96797
Phone: (808) 677-3716
Use same # for Fax.
E-mail: Ytetsu1@outlook.jp

WAHIAWA 207 Muliwai Ave., Wahiawa, HI 96786
Phone: (808) 621-6667
Use same # for Fax.
E-mail: konko-wahiawa@hotmail.com

WAILUKU 2267 Mokuahau Rd., Wailuku, HI 96793
Phone: (808) 244-4738
Use same # for Fax.

HANAPEPE c/o Rev. Setsuko Okuno
1544 Molehu Dr., Honolulu, HI 96818
Phone: (808) 423-7707

KONKO CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA

Administrative Office

1911 Bush St. #4A
San Francisco, CA 94115
Phone: 1(415) 851-9722 Fax: (604)-876-4326
E-mail: kcnaoffice@konkofaith.org
Website: <http://www.konkofaith.org/>

We welcome any and all article contributions! If you have an interesting story of faith, inspiration or have any ideas or suggestions for material you'd like to see in future issues of the Malamalama, we're all ears! Please contact us at kmhcenter@konkomissionshawaii.org.