



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

Wagakokoro Wo Osonae Seyo (Offering Your Sincerity)

By Rev. Edna Matsuoka, Associate Minister Konko Mission of Wahiawa

Good evening, thank you for coming to the Wahiawa Church Spring Grand Ceremony, where we have come to give thanks for the blessings of Heaven and Earth, Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama. In layman's terms, it's God. In Star War's it's called The FORCE. In scientific terminology, it's called The FIELD, and Mrs. Fusami Kudo calls it "SOMETHING GREAT." Today I want each of you to re-evaluate your faith. Am I practicing faith? I want each one of you to offer one thing to Kami-Sama, The Force, The Field, Something Great—whatever you call it. I want you to offer your sincerity. "*Magokoro Wo Osonae Seyo*."

Offering your sincerity—What does it mean? How can you tell if you are offering true sincerity? How can you tell if the faith that you have been practicing has been true all these years? Does sincerity mean to offer more money to the church? In Konkokyo that is not necessarily the case. There was an episode in the Gorikai that went like this:

Konko-Daijin does not pray to receive monetary offerings. Since Konko Daijin is to save those in distress, he tells them. "Don't think about offerings. Come when you happen to have enough pocket money." Practice faith and when you have received divine blessings, offer things you want to give so that you will be **happy**." (Gorikai I Yamamoto Sadajiro 64-3). The key to that passage is, "HAPPY." If whatever you are giving to Kami-Sama is not making you happy, don't do it.



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that each copper roof tile cost 10,000 yen (\$100). So you can imagine \$100 bills all lined up over here. Each roof tile is about the size of a sheet of typing paper folded lengthwise. Tens of thousands of these tiles...can you believe it?! The offering of people's sincere heart for the blessings they received built the ginormous Headquarters. Even this church was built and continues to be in existence through people's sincere offerings; not through compulsory donations. It's amazing. Next year we will celebrate our 80th Anniversary on March 15, 2020. Mark your calendars.

How much you offer to Kami-Sama is none of my business. It's between you and Kami-Sama. Some religions encourage you to offer your tithing. That's 10% of your paycheck. To some people, even that 10% can be difficult, especially as the cost of living in Hawaii is so high.

There are some other religious organizations that post the name and amount of money or church equipment people donated. However, doing this may lead to negative feelings for people who were not able to donate. It would also compare others. Like so and so offered more than him or her. Then it'll be like owning bragging rights. Kami-Sama dislikes when people compare who offered what and having people feel distressed. Also, knowing who donated what can lead to some unnecessary negative thoughts that cloud our hearts. Kami would be sad if such thing happened. So, in Konkokyo, we do not do that.

Being present at tonight's service is a sincere offering of your time to Kami-Sama. You had to plan ahead. Wear nicer clothes; use your gasoline and your time. Some people willingly came to participate in church clean ups and food prep. This is also considered a sincere offering to Kami-Sama. In whatever shape, form, skill or amount you decide to offer, offer your sincerity. If you have musical talent, make a song for Kami-Sama. If you have artistic talent, make a painting for Kami-Sama. That would be a great offering of appreciation. And who knows, maybe Kami-Sama will inspire you with a phenomenal idea.

Now, how in the world are you supposed to know if



This is the picture of the Konkokyo Honbu Headquarters. One day as I was admiring the beauty of the architecture of the Headquarters, I was told by a sensei

you are offering something in sincerity? I'll give you a hint...Konmari. Marie Kondo is the queen of decluttering. You will know if you are offering sincerity if it sparks joy. Do you feel, "Arigatai", "I'm thankful", "Thank you Kami-Sama for all that you bless me with." Or, "I can't thank you enough." If your act of coming to church, offering money, or helping out with church functions is not sparking any kind of joy or happiness for you, it's not a sincere offering to Kami-Sama. If you are also feeling regretful of how much you offered, it's not an offering of sincerity.

About 15 years ago, when I was still in college, I saved up money because I wanted to change the matting of the 3rd Konko-Sama's portrait (Large and small) since it was starting to look discolored. I went



to Pictures Plus which used to be in Pearl Highlands. I thought that it wouldn't be too expensive since it's just a piece of thick colored/textured cardstock. But since it was custom sizing, and it was special cardstock, the matting cost about \$75. I was a bit surprised at first, but I really wanted to change the matting as my sincere offering to Kami-Sama. So I went ahead with the order. The sales associate measured the dimensions accurately...Or so we thought. When she came up with the grand total, and I was about to swipe my card in their machine—the entire store blacked out. That's right, even the credit card machine and computers. Everyone was surprised. The blackout lasted about 10 minutes. But in that time, I asked to see the dimensions she wrote down, versus the actual dimensions of the original matting. I noticed that the matting on the original matting was bottom heavy. The sales associate didn't realize it. She had thought that the top measurement was the same as the bottom. As soon as she revised and confirmed the measurements, the electricity came back. And I was able to scan my card to complete the purchase. This was no ordinary order. It was for the 3rd Konko-Sama (Late Rev. Setsutane Konko). This was no doubt the mysterious workings of Kami-Sama. When you really wish to do something for Kami-Sama, Kami-Sama accommodates. I was in complete awe. I will never forget this episode.

Today is Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama's Grand Service, where we come in appreciation of the source of life. No amount of money is enough to repay Kami-Sama for all the blessings we receive every single day. But your offering of sincerity will definitely be felt by Kami-Sama. Kami-Sama will warmly accept your sincerity, no matter what it is.

Konko Sama said, "People say that one candle offered by the poor is the same as a thousand offered by the rich. There are some people who cannot offer even one candle. Kami will accept anything, whether it is a candle or a stick of incense. If a whole stick of incense cannot be offered, half of it will do. Kami will accept it like a whole candle. If even in-

cense cannot be offered, offer a spark by striking the flint. Kami will accept it like a candle. There are people who can receive blessings even from the ashes of the incense."

When I was little, like in the 2nd grade, I remember wrapping Christmas presents for my parents of things around the house, like an old tie that I never saw my dad ever wear. And as for my mom, I remember wrapping up a blouse that my mom always wore. That was my sincere offering to them for being great parents. They took care of me, cooked, cleaned, washed my laundry, made sure I was safe, and always extended their genuine kindness, care and prayers. I appreciate all they do for me even today. They don't expect anything from me. But for all they have done for me, I can't help wanting to give back to them. This is the feeling we must hold for Kami-Sama. Kami-Sama grants us tremendous divine blessings every day. All that we have and all that IS, are blessings from Kami-Sama. We may offer fruits and vegetables to Kami, although they came from Kami. It's like me giving a neck tie that my dad already has. But it's the thought, it's the sincerity that matters the most. And this is THE element that is accepted by Kami-Sama.

Our Parents are exactly like Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama. *Ten* is our Father, and *Chi* is our Mother. We are the children of Kami-Sama, lovingly sandwiched between. We receive the blessings of the sunlight, the blessings of the earth, air, food, water, and all the elements on our earth to live in comfort. Even the smart phone people can't seem to live without these days and fancy cars that people drive came from the materials provided by the Earth. How can we repay Kami-Sama for the 1,360 watts of solar energy that hits the earth per square meter? We pay for electricity, but not the energy from the sun.

But the Sun is a given, you say. The air we breathe is a given, you say. I live my life as I wish, you say. I am rich because I work hard, you say. The ignorance of humans not realizing that all these givens are actually divine blessings is what saddens Kami-Sama the most. That's likable to having your good friend always helping you out, and not even saying "Thank you." We need to realize that we can live because of Kami-Sama's blessings. We can work because of Kami-Sama's blessings. Everything is possible because of Kami-Sama's blessings.

Thank your eternal parents, Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama. Thank this universal energy that sustains all life. Thank Kami-Sama for your normal bodily functions. People do a whole lot of praying, but they don't always give thanks when they receive their blessing. This is the important part. Complete the circle. Start in prayer, end in prayer and give thanks. This is the key to receiving continuous divine favor.

Going back to Konmari. How can we spark joy when we offer things, talent or time to Kami-Sama? Practice faith daily. Read the Konko teachings and put them to practice. Please utilize the Toritsugi mediation desk. It's there for a reason. Talk with sensei. He/she will listen to your problems or requests and pray for you, and even offer priceless guidance. It's like learning a new punch or block technique from your karate sensei.

You can come to the church every single day, but if you are not mediating with the sensei, or even listening to the teachings, it's equal to going to the karate dojo and not moving a muscle. What you learn in the church will surely help you in your daily living.

I started Karate after meeting my husband because he also teaches. He's been doing karate for more than 30 years. His blocks come automatically. I like trying to scare him sometimes by hiding behind doors or walls. As soon as I try, he will block it. When you practice faith you will automatically know how to deal with problems.

People want blessings fast. But just like becoming a black belt, you can't achieve this rank overnight. It takes lots of dedication and regular practice. I read a quote one day by Bruce Lee and it went like this: "I fear not who practiced 10,000 kicks only once, but fear who practiced one kick 10,000 times." There are lots of Konko teachings, but if you can at least learn to master one of them, it will be your super power.

Practicing the Konko faith is like chewing a cube of dried bonito (Katsuobushi). For those who have never eaten a cube of that resin hard *katsuobushi* cube, you can use a slice of beef jerky to get the picture. You can't really taste much flavor the moment you pop it into your mouth. But with time and with some chewing, the *umami* will gradually come out and you will be able to appreciate its delicious flavor. Practice true faith for 3 years first, then 5 years and 10 years. You will be able to look back, and I guarantee, if your faith was really sincere, you can say, "Wow, these 10 years have been the greatest years of my life." You will notice a positive change in your heart. And like a ripple effect, if you spark joy within your own heart, it affects the people around you in a positive way. Your family, friends, and even your co-workers will notice it. This is practicing true faith.

I was watching a show on Japanese festivals during the New Year, on NHK World. It talked about the Hadaka Matsuri (Naked Festival). It's when the men in the village go naked—except for their family jewels, wearing a loin cloth (*fundoshi*). This is for New Year's where it's freezing and it's snowing. And they pour 3 large bucketfuls of ice cold water on to their body. One on the right shoulder, one on the left and one on top of their heads. A Caucasian man who was a host in the TV program also participated in the event. He changed into the *fundoshi* and in the sub zero temperatures, he went with the flow of the other men in *fundoshi*. This is their way of offering their sincerity to Kami-Sama for the blessings of a New Year. The head priest, who was a female, stated the significance of the Hadaka Matsuri. "People go to the shrines and temples on New Year's and throw a few coins in the offertory box, while all warm and cozy in their winter outfits, grab the rope to ring the bell, clap twice and they pray to Kami-Sama for 365 days worth of blessings! Are you kidding me!? Where is the sincerity in that? A year worth of blessings for a measly few cents, while wearing their warm winter coats?! How rude!"

People could die of hypothermia (freezing to death) from being naked participating in the Hadaka matsuri. But these men are single hearted in their intent. So such

things don't happen. They participate with an "I don't even care if I died" kind of attitude. So they receive blessings. The Caucasian host for that NHK program was in awe at participating in the Matsuri. It was a life changing experience for him.

Konko Daijin never told his followers to strip naked and go out in subzero temperatures. However, he did give an example to Kondo Fujimori Sensei of a different kind of ascetic practice. Kondo sensei wanted to isolate himself deep into the mountains and survive only on nuts and leaves of trees. In response to this, Konko-Sama responded, "That is fine. However, Kondo-san, you need not trouble yourself by going to a mountain. Create a mountain in your heart, and do religious training there. Enter the mountain which you have created in your heart, then no matter if there are difficulties or unsavory meals from your wife, you will not complain."

You can make your workplace, your household, school, circle of friends your training arena to practice faith as well. Receive blessings of holding back the urge to complain, fight, argue, threaten or bully. Practice faith long enough and you will not even have to hold it in. You will have a round heart, a heart of acceptance and care instead.

Do you know what the greatest thing you can offer to Kami-Sama is? It's helping others who are not aware of Kami-Sama's blessings become awakened. It's helping those who are suffering and guiding them to the Konko way of life, so they too can be happy and saved.

How do you define sincerity? That's something you have to decide for yourself. What I do is make sure I am off every 1st day of the month, so I can attend the Monthly Service at 7:30 pm at our church. I also request vacation on the two Godaisai days for our church every year, a year in advance, so I never miss them. I make sure that the first check I cut on my paycheck I receive is an offering to Kami-Sama in appreciation. And I make sure that when I wake up every morning, I go to the altar to give thanks for the new day, and before heading to bed, I give thanks for the day and pray for a great day tomorrow. I also mediate any problems I encounter at the Toritsugi Mediation desk and relieve myself of my spiritual wastes. And I feel good! It's that good feeling you experience when you go to the bathroom after holding it in for the longest time. I can truly say that my life is blessed. I'm not telling you to do the same, because this is what I do. You can offer your sincerity that sparks joy in your own way.

One thing's for sure. The amount of blessings we receive, reflect the amount of sincerity we forward to Kami-Sama. If Kami-Sama is just a fraction of your life, then the blessings you receive will just be a fraction of what it could have been. Okage, blessings means shadow. If you place something large in front of the sun, the shadow behind it will be large. If you place a toothpick in front of the sun, the shadow will be so small. Likewise, offering of your great sincerity will result in great blessings. I challenge you to test this

theory. Make Kami-Sama a huge presence in your life. My mom always used to say, this church may be small, but the okage is huge—depending on how large Kami-Sama's presence is in your life. Don't treat Kami-Sama like a *Yabu-gami* or *Ko-gami* (a small powerless demi-god). Because that's the only kind of blessings you will

receive with that kind of faith.

Let your faith and your sincere offering to Kami-Sama "Spark Joy." And practice the kind of faith in which you feel more and more grateful year after year. Offer your BIG Sincerity. That is true faith. Thank you.

KMH Missionary Women's Society Seminar

By Rev. Seiko Konko, Konko Mission of Honolulu

The Konko Missions in Hawaii Missionary Women's Society Seminar (MWSS) was held at the Konko Mission of Hilo on May 12, 2019. It was the same day the Hilo church's Spring Grand Service was held. Therefore, members of the MWSS were also able to attend the Grand Service. The MWSS was about 2 hours after the service was done. It was fortunate that Reverend Yoshie Nagai from Hilo church and Reverend Kiyomi Kunito who lives in Kona were able to join the MWSS. Since they live on the Big Island, they have a hard time attending the gatherings on Oahu or Maui. It was a rare opportunity for us to hear about their faith. I am very glad I had the opportunity to listen to their faith stories.

We may have pain somewhere on our bodies and



get disabled with increasing age. Thus, we worry and complain about our bodies; however, Reverend Yoshie was doing church goyo with joy and with a positive attitude although she has some physical challenges as she is getting older. Only appreciative words came out from her mouth. She leaves everything up to Kami-Sama; I can see she gives herself up to Kami-Sama entirely.

The Founding Minister of the Konko Church of Amagi, Fukuoka, Japan left a teaching poem, "Leave your worries to Kami. We merely keep praying and receive divine favors." It is not easy for us to let go of our concerns and burdens, but as we proceed in our Faith, we can achieve a no anxiety world. I strongly feel that I want to come close to an anxiety free world step by step.

Kami Sama Within Us

By Rev. Seiko Konko, Konko Mission of Honolulu

Sermon given during the Spring Grand Service at the Konko Mission of Waipahu

Good morning! Thank you very much for attending today's Spring Grand Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama. I am very happy to see you. I am glad the service was done beautifully. Konko Faith is part of my life now. But it took time to realize how important the Konko Faith is to me.

Kami is our Divine Parent and Kami-Sama loves us.

That is all I needed to understand. First I would like to share my recent challenge.

About a month ago, Koichi sensei shared a story about a minister's wife who is teaching people how to play the piano at the church on the Konkokyo Radio program. One of her students, who is 28 years old and has a 3 years old daughter, is always late for her lesson.

This mother never contacts the wife to say, "I will be late." But the wife emails her after waiting for 30 minutes lesson every time. Then this mother replies. One time the wife emailed her and the mother asked to



Rev. Seiko Konko

change the start time 6 times and in the end changed the lesson to the next day for her convenience.

Finally, she came to the church for the lesson but she didn't apologize to the wife. The wife also never said anything about the delay and didn't ask why she didn't contact her. The minister said that if he was her, he definitely would have said something to her. After the first lesson after this incident, finally she said to the wife, "I must be a terrible student. I am sorry. I will never cancel or be late to the lesson again." Since then she

was never late for the lesson.

This minister wondered why his wife never got angry and said nothing to this person but instead welcomed her and smiled at her. He asked her and she answered, "Years ago I decided to not get angry and to not show my gloomy face to anyone. Everybody has Kami-Sama within so I believe in Kami-Sama within the person and pray for the person. I don't need to get angry ever. Since then my life is so easy. I feel at ease.

Why don't you try it?"

After I heard this story, I tried to smile as much as possible and tried to not show my gloomy face to others. First day, it was not easy for me, but I was able to smile more and keep myself from getting angry. I didn't show my angry face to my husband and son. Maybe my face twitched a little bit.

The third day, when I wasn't careful, I realized I was grumbling. When I was tired, my gloomy face appeared. Two weeks later, I totally forgot about my challenge to smile more and not to get mad and not to show my negative emotion. I noticed I would scold my son Michio emotionally without hearing his story. This was not good.

I talked to Koichi sensei about my challenge and my failing.

He said, "This is not about controlling your face muscles and expressions. You need to believe in Kami's heart within the person and talk." I talked to Kami-Sama within myself. I started to think, "When I get mad, I am practicing faith right now. This is the time to earn the heart that pleases Kami-Sama."

I found out I just looked at others. For example, "He doesn't do this for me. He doesn't listen to me." As I saw myself and noticed my anger is from my heart and not from someone else, my temper was comforted. When I reformed myself and I changed, the hearts of others changed, too.

In other words, people and situations around me reflected my heart. The relationships between myself and others are just like a mirror. I just needed to look at myself and communicate with Kami-Sama within me in order not to get mad.

Next I would like to share my past. When I look back at my life, before getting married to Koichi sensei, human relations bothered me and it felt difficult to live. Suddenly I thought "My life should end soon." because this is kind of grueling and tough.

My parents have always been attending church, but I hadn't gone to church for over 10 years. When I recall that time, actually my work was okay, all my family members and I were healthy. We were receiving blessings.

However, when I was by myself, I always felt I was empty and had a hollow feeling in my heart. I think it was because I continued to blame myself, "I am no good. I am such a worthless person," everyday for some reason.

I have Faith now so it is very different now compared with my past. If I didn't have faith, the world would become dark. We are actually hurting ourselves and suffering. When we try something with only our strength, we soon reach the limit. There is a limit and dead end. We have a limit.

As we push ourselves too hard, we tend to experience problems. I learned, "Kami-Sama is our Divine Parent." "Tenchi Kane No Kami is the parent of all people. Think having immortal parents and think everything is possible with Kami-Sama. Just look to Kami of Heaven and Earth." It is okay to completely depend on Kami-Sama, ask any request to Kami-Sama. This is the natu-

ral relationship between Kami-Sama and us. We are all beloved children of Kami-Sama.

This is a teaching from Voice of the Universe Page 13 # 39

"Since Tenchi Kane No Kami is the parent kami of this world, all people who live between Heaven and Earth are the children of Tenchi Kane No Kami regardless of whether they practice this Faith or not."

I challenged myself to keep smiling and not to get angry, but it was impossible by myself. I needed to communicate with Kami-Sama within me. I needed to see Kami-Sama within others.

I was suffering somehow because I didn't know about Kami-Sama. Kami-Sama is our ideal and immortal Parent who always watches over us, supports us, and saves us. It is okay to depend on Kami-Sama.

I got married to Koichi sensei and truly met the Konko Faith and felt saved because I tried to understand Kami-Sama and practice the Konko Faith. So I have to bow to Koichi sensei.

I truly appreciate my parents who continue to practice the Konko Faith, and my grandfather who entered the Konko faith and passed it down to me.

It is very very important to let our descendants know and experience the Konko Faith and encourage practicing faith.

Passing the Konko faith down to the next generation is much more valuable than leaving millions and millions of dollars to our children and grandchildren.

Through practicing faith in daily life, we can feel Kami-Sama's existence. The more we practice faith, the more we can feel the protection by Kami-Sama. Kami-Sama is right here for me, right here for you.

This is Konkokyo.

To conclude my sermon, I would like to read one more of the Founder's teachings from the Voice of the Universe page 6 # 18. It goes,

"Everyone around the world is a child of Tenchi Kane No Kami. The world is full of Tenchi Kane No Kami's blessings.



KMH members on Oahu gathered on Memorial Day to pay respects to Konkokyo members laid to rest at the Punchbowl National Cemetery of the Pacific.

Pictured: Grace Kodama, Rev. Yasuhiro Yano, Rev. Koichi Konko, Rev. Akinobu Yasutake, Clayton Matsuoka, Rev. Edna Matsuoka, Nancy Yamanaka, Rev. Reiko Yano, and Michio Konko

Lecture by Dr. Hideo Kishimoto

*given on July 14, 1959 at the Konko Mission Headquarters Church
(the present Konko Mission of Honolulu)*

I want to begin my talk by describing how I came to know the Konkokyo religion. This was about 14 years ago, immediately after the surrender of Japan. The MacArthur Government was established there in September 4, 1945.

It was some time in October or November, when I was a young associate professor of comparative religion at the Tokyo University, that I received an unexpected telephone call from the Ministry of Education, Mr. Maeda. It made me wonder what could be the matter for me to receive a telephone call from such a dignitary as the Minister of Education. I went to the huge office of the Ministry of Education. There, Mr. Maeda, explained to me the situation and set up of the occupational government of General MacArthur, which sent out directives to the Japanese government. These directives came out just like arrows shot into the sky, not knowing where they would fall or how they would be received. This was the precarious situation: There was no liaison between the MacArthur government and the Japanese government, but the Japanese government must obey all the directives.

Then the Japanese government learned that the MacArthur government was searching for some Japanese advisor for their policies in Japan. So, Mr. Maeda had called me and asked me to be an advisor. The main reason why I was picked out was that I was able to speak English for I had four years education at Harvard. The Japanese people as a whole, read English very well, but they could not speak it. This was the peculiar situation, but this has been improved lately, the Japanese are getting to speak English very well too.

At first, I refused to accept the position; I wanted to remain just a University professor, but after much discussion I accepted and became their advisor. In this connection as an advisor I came in touch with the religious policies of the MacArthur government. For them, Shinto was quite a problem. They could not understand it. Even today many Americans believe that Shinto was the magic ideology which made the Japanese people wage such a reckless war, make Banzai attacks, or suicide drives. So, how to treat this Shinto, whether to close all the Shinto shrines or abolish it, or what to do with them, was the problem. To solve this problem, an investigation was begun, and the MacArthur government summoned all the leaders of the various Shinto religious sects. All the sectarian Shinto came up and Konkokyo was among them.

Until then, I did not know much about Konkokyo although I had studied it because my field is comparative religion. Mr. Izumi and others of the Konkokyo, came to see me on the night before they were to appear before the MacArthur government to report on their activities. They were very apprehensive and worried and did not know what was going to happen. During the recent war

all the Japanese institutions including the religious bodies went all out in helping the Japanese war efforts. It was their duty and it was nothing to be ashamed of. However, the Japanese people did not know how the occupational government were going to look at it, and the Konkokyo people were worried so they came to ask my opinion.

I told the Konkokyo officers exactly what I had told all the other religious bodies: "Why should you be ashamed of what you have done. You did your duty to your country in good faith and sincerity, so why don't you just tell them exactly what you have done. If you had contributed airplanes or cannons or made war implements, that was all right. I told them further that if your church were to be closed down because of these war efforts, you should be satisfied."

So, the next day, when the Konkokyo officers appeared before the MacArthur government, I was with them and they told the truth. They reported exactly what they did in the war effort. They were prepared for the worst and were ready for any decision handed down by the MacArthur government. This honesty, this sincerity made me admire this Konkokyo. A couple of months later, when I met those officials of the MacArthur government in charge of religious affairs and got to talking about Konkokyo, they told me that they too admired the Konkokyo for their frankness and honesty. They told me that they had known what every organization had done during the war by the reports of their secret service agents. The other religious organizations only told half of the truth, or they discounted their activities in their telling. And Konkokyo was the only one who told the whole truth. So I was not the only one who admired them. This is how I got to know Konkokyo personally. Since then, in time of storm or stress, they have come up to ask me my opinion and advice.

That was the first part of my talk in Japanese, and the second part was that, although it might sound a little strange for me to tell the followers of Konkokyo, the history of Konkokyo. Some of you might not really know, so I want to briefly give you the description of the scene and setting when Konkokyo was founded. The time was in the last days of the Tokugawa period in the middle of the 19th century. During the 250 years of the Tokugawa period, Buddhism was almost like a state religion and was well protected by the Tokugawa government and very rich and powerful. They government had made the Buddhist temples the census takers, so all the people had to report to them. Now, whenever any religion is well protected and rich, they lose their vitality and will decline. That means, toward the end of the Tokugawa period, Buddhism was rich, powerful, and well protected, but it could not solve the problems of the people. As a result, many new religions with spiritual power of solving human problems were born. May new

religions were born, but only a few survived and flourished. Konkokyo is one of them. Some of the others are: Tenri Kyo, Taisha Kyo, and Kurosumi Kyo, etc. So Konkokyo can be said to be indigenous to Japan, arising out of the religious culture and need of the Japanese people. And Konkokyo seemed to have the ability of solving more of the problems of men. This is the brief history of Konkokyo.

There are many things about the Konkokyo which impress me, but I will tell you about the two most important ones. The first and the most important thing is your Kyoshu sama, Ikigami sama. Whenever I visit your Headquarters Church in Okayama, I am always introduced and presented to Him. Here is an old man sitting at the Okekai and receiving the people and their problems (Otoritsugi) continuously from early morning to sundown, every day without fail, since he was 14 years old, for the last 65 years. Meeting Him is really a rare experience. He sits quietly listening with a smile and a flow of divinity sort of. Pardon this expression and comparison, but He seems soft and warm. Whenever you meet an ordinary man face to face, you feel some sort of resistance, something solid, a barrier. But your Kyoshu sama has no resistance, instead you are immediately enveloped in His warmth, His human personal warmth. He sits quietly and smilingly answers my questions, never haughty. This man, this quiet and smiling man, is the center of the whole religious spirit of Konkokyo. He says nothing but everybody looks up to Him for guidance. And from His silence comes the real solutions and guidance. This is my greatest admiration. This Kyoshu sama's devotedness and sincerity is the core of the Konkokyo organization, a huge organization of 700,000.

Any other religion with 500,000 or 700,000 followers are like huge trees. The huge tree seem to flourish, but when you examine them carefully, the nourishment is flowing up and down just beneath the bark and the center many times is rotten or dead. It was so in the Medieval days, when Christianity was spreading throughout Europe. The churches and monasteries in the outlands were really living an austere religious life, but the priests in Rome were living a soft, corrupt life. But it is not so in Konkokyo. The farther you dig into the center, the purer, the more genuine, the more sincere and devoted, and higher spirit you will find, because Kyoshu sama is at the core.

The second point which I am impressed by in Konkokyo is your Shinjin Seikatsu Undo. Most of the religions in Japan are born out of Japanese culture and faith cures. There is nothing wrong with faith cures, religion is supposed to solve all human problems so if a man is ill, his problem is illness and it should be solved or cured; if a man is having business failures, business is his problem, so he should pray for prosperity and success. However, if that is as far as this religion goes and cannot offer anything more, then this religion is a very shallow thing. This is the general situation of the religions in Japan.

About 20 years ago, Mr. Masao Takahashi and other Konkokyo spiritual leaders, realized that in order for

Konkokyo to grow, they must go beyond this faith cure stage and dedicate themselves to a religious way of life, in which every act from the time one gets up in the morning till the time he goes to bed must be in line with the Konkokyo teaching and one's whole life should be religious. This is the Shinjin Seikatsu Undo. Now this program of Shinjin Seikatsu Undo is a very important one. There are over 600 various religious sects in Japan, but they are all in the faith cure stage and only Konkokyo has dared to go beyond this stage into the religious way of life.

Konkokyo was born in Japan, but there is no reason to let it be limited to the boundaries of Japan. You can proudly go forth into the world and spread your good teachings. Last summer's conference of the world's free and liberal religions in Chicago may have given the necessary push. That conference was not limited to Christianity but open to all free and liberal religions. I happened to be on the committee to select the delegates from Japan. The executive committee, after much discussion, chose the Japanese Layman's Buddhist organization, and the Jinja-Shinto and Konkokyo to send delegates. Unfortunately the former two organizations could not send any delegates, so Mr. Sato, ex-Chancellor of Konkokyo Church, was the only delegate from Japan. I could not attend that conference too because I was conducting another international conference in Tokyo at that time. I was a little worried Mr. Sato because I knew he did not speak English too well. After his return to Japan, he came to report to me and he was so enthusiastic about the conference and was in high spirits. He had seen the world and had met on an equal footing with other religions. And the world had seen Konkokyo as a religion worth studying. In line with this, I believe that, Konkokyo need not be confined to Japan, as already you have several churches here in Hawaii and several more on the mainland. For any religion to become an international religion, must undergo some modification. For instance, in Christianity, the disciple, Paul, spoke Greek as well as Hebrew, the native tongue of Jesus Christ, and he spread Christianity throughout the Greek speaking Mediterranean. They modified the teachings until now it is the universal Christianity. In a similar way, Konkokyo may undergo changes to meet different customs and living conditions, and come out as an international Konkokyo. You are the pioneers in this field, therefore the churches in Hawaii and the mainland have grave responsibilities and wide opportunities. If you go forth with the idea of solving all human problems with your sincerity and live your SHINJIN SEIKATSU UNDO, I am sure Konkokyo will prosper and spread. This is the most meaningful and interesting of the religions of Japan that I am studying.

Konko Missions in Hawaii

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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!

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.

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