



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

## Struggle, Perception and Little Seeds of Faith

Mrs. Trisha Adkison, Konko Mission of Wahiawa

Aloha. My name is Trisha Suwa Adkison, and I am a fourth-generation Konko believer and practitioner. In our religion, we believe that even the smallest things that most people take for granted are blessings. We have all made it through the night and were able to wake up this morning, and we are blessed to live another day. We are blessed with sight to see our loved ones and the beauty of nature. We are blessed with hearing to listen to the stories of our ancestors, to hear danger before we see it, and to be moved by music and art. We are blessed with the sense of smell and taste to enjoy delicious food. We are blessed with touch, allowing us to feel things like hugs and the softness of our pet's fur, but also to keep us safe. For example, heat tells our brains to recoil our arm so we do not damage our hand on a hot stove. We give thanks for our food, the sun, water, the earth, the farmers, the delivery drivers, the store employees, and anything and anyone else who inadvertently helped us get the food to our table. We understand that we are receiving okage from the moment we wake up to the moment we go to sleep and all through the night until we wake up again. Everyone has so much to be thankful for because we are all receiving okage all day, every day.

With this way of thinking and so much to be thankful for, I could spend all night listing my okage. However, I do not like talking about myself because sometimes sharing all of my okage feels like bragging. So instead, I want to talk about okage in relation to struggle, perception, and faith.

One of my biggest okage is my family. My great grandmother and grandmother on my dad's side, and mother are devout Konko practitioners. I am



Mrs. Trisha Adkison

grateful that even though my parents divorced when I was one, my mom remained close to my dad's parents and continued to attend church with my dad's mom. If my mom and grandma had not maintained that relationship, I would probably not be sharing with you today.

Recently, my sister Kimberly and I had a discussion about struggle, perception, and faith. We talked about how things seemed like a struggle back then; but in hindsight, we see things differently. I thought about how it must have been a struggle for my mom being a single parent, trying to raise two stubborn and sassy girls by herself.

My mom worked long hours, so my grandparents helped take care of us. We did not have the latest and greatest toys, but that was okay. Looking back, it is funny to me that my favorite thing to do in the summer was to play with ice. My grandparents had a big freezer by the back door, and every other month or so, we would have to defrost it. When you do not have many toys, you develop a very active imagination. So, I was always excited to defrost the freezer because I would imagine tiny penguins and polar bears walking around inside, as if it were a tiny frozen tundra. Then, we would use an ice pick to chip off the ice, put the big chunks of ice in a large plastic bowl, and take it outside. I do not remember what I was pretending or imagining, but I would sit outside and play with the ice for hours, thinking it was the best thing ever!

My sister and I also talked about how we didn't have our own room or bed. Often times, we would sleep on the living room floor. Some might perceive that as something negative, like we were

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poor. But we weren't poor, and I never thought of it as something negative. My perception of our upbringing was actually pretty positive. I thought sleeping on the floor was fun, like having a sleepover everyday.

I think my mom said that I started coming to church when I was 5. So from a very young age, I have had these little seeds of faith planted in me. And that's why Konkokyo is my second biggest okage. In Konkokyo, even when bad things happen, we are thankful because it could have been much worse. We see bad things as blessings because Kami-sama turned a mountain into a molehill. We also believe that things are put in our way for a reason, and that reason might not become apparent for a while. We sometimes say that it was a blessing 5 or 10 years in the making.

Struggle is inevitable. Sometimes bad things happen to us. Sometimes we put ourselves in predicaments. Sometimes, some of us are more stubborn than others, so we keep making the same mistakes over and over. But that process is necessary because that is how we learn life lessons.

Konkokyo has taught me to appreciate strug-

gle by changing my perception of situations that I encounter. My family, Rev. Yano, and his family have continuously watered the little seeds of faith that were planted in me all those years ago. All of their love and prayers have encouraged those little seeds to blossom over the years; and now, faith provides me with an overwhelming sense of peace because I know that everything will work out for the better. I know sometimes it drives my husband crazy because it seems like I don't care enough about certain things. But it's not that I don't care. I just have the utmost faith in Kami. Isn't it amazing what a little watering can do?

So as you go about your day, please remember that the grass is not greener on the other side. That perception is an illusion. Truthfully, the grass is greener on the side that you water. Every time you attend a service in person or online, and every time you invest in your relationship with Kami-sama, you are watering the little seeds of faith within you. When you attend a service or help out at a church function, you are watering the seeds in your church. So thank you for joining us and pouring your love into our garden, and we hope to see you again soon.

## Paying Respect to Those Who Made the Ultimate Sacrifice

Every year, on Memorial Day, members of the Konko Missions in Hawaii pay a visit to the graves of the over 30 Konkokyo members who are laid to rest at the National Cemetery of the Pacific in Punchbowl. The visit coincides with the annual Mayor's Memorial Day Ceremony to honor the men and women who have given their lives in serving in the United States Armed Forces. It is a time to give thanks to these brave men and women and to never forget their sacrifice. A sacrifice without which we would not be enjoying the freedom and democracy we have today in this country.



From Left to Right: Rev. Yasuhiro Yano, Rev. Reiko Yano, Rev. Akinobu Yasutake, Michio Konko, Joyce Morikuni, Clayton Matsuoka, and Rev. Edna Matsuoka

Photos Courtesy of Rev. Edna Matsuoka







## A Minister's Self Reflection

*After attending the KMH Minister's Gathering held on March 25, 2023*

*By Rev. Miyoko Yasutake, Konko Mission of Waipahu*

On Saturday, March 25th, the first KMH minister's gathering of the year was held on Zoom. Since this year marks the 140th anniversary of the passing of our founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin, the theme was "Accepting the divine arrangement from Kami, we will practice faith to seek and reveal the way of life as a child of the Divine Parent of the Universe." The meeting was mainly about "what is the practice of faith (信心の稽古) and "what is Kami's divine arrangement" (お差し向け).

Firstly, concerning the question of what the practice of faith is, last year, a roundtable was hosted by the International Center at the Konko Headquarters. They invited Prof. Tadashi Nishihira, Deputy Director of the Grief Care Research Center at Sophia University, who is researching the philosophy of practice from various fields such as arts and martial arts. The contents of the roundtable were published in the Konko Newspaper on February 22nd. Summarizing that article, Rev. Koichi Konko explained the outline of Mr. Nishihira's philosophy on Practice.

The article summarized the outline of Prof. Nishihara's philosophy on Practice, which I've described below.

In Budo(武道), things associated with the term "path", or classical performing art, Noh(能), it seems there are different stages of practice. First, one learns the basics and forms of the school and imitates the master. Then there is the stage where one becomes the role rather than imitating. Then, there is the stage where one can move naturally without thinking. It is no longer borrowed, but ripens within the person; becomes something with that per-

son's own taste. The idea of this kind of practice is not only completion of the "technique", but to master the "path" beyond that. For this, it is important to refine one's inner maturity. Without inner maturity, the technique will not be completed. However, the only way to achieve inner maturity is to practice the techniques. There is a cycle there, where each act of daily life and living is involved.

Comparing for similarities with those ideas of such practice, discussions were had about what "the practice of faith" is and what kind of practice we do, or what we keep in our mind in our daily life. During the discussion, there were many topics about how to hold one's heart. We should not forget we are allowed to live between heaven and earth. The heart of joy and the heart of gratitude enriches our own hearts and lives. When we are facing unexpected difficulties or are too busy in our daily lives, we easily tend to rely on the people around us, feel irritated or confused and forget our joyful and grateful heart "和賀心" which we received from Kami. Through practicing faith each day, we can be aware of how we are blessed.

In the second half, there were discussions about divine arrangement. Why were we guided to be Konkokyo ministers? Why a church in Hawaii? For me, these questions have always been quite challenging and what I've asked myself repeatedly.

Looking back on my life since I was born, my parents were led to a Konkokyo believer through my mother's illness when I was two years old, and they started to worship at Toyohara Church in Okayama. I believe my father had a desire to pass on that faith to my older sister and me. He was not an easygoing

person, but always had sincere faith in Kami. When I was in the second year of junior high school, there was a call for the first overseas dispatch for youth development in Konkokyo. My parents gave my sister and me the opportunity to participate in the program. During the journey, we visited churches on the west coast of the US, and Hawaii including the Waipahu church. I was taken care of by the Taniguchi family, who were members of the Waipahu church, and spent a memorable time during my homestay. Also, I met my husband, Akinobu Yasutake who was participating in the trip, and we began to associate after we were back in Japan. When I think about it now, I feel that I have had a mysterious connection since that time. After graduating from high school, I was able to get a job I wanted to pursue and was working when I met Akinobu again at the Konko headquarters for the first time in a long time. He was in seminary school to be a minister to help his parents who were starting to serve at Waipahu church. We talked about our future, and he asked me to stay with him. But I was confused because I had a job I wanted, and I didn't think I could live as the wife of a Konkokyo Minister. However, when I finally decided to do so, I was told that I naturally had to enter the seminary school to learn about Konkokyo and train there to get married. After one year of learning, I received too heavy a qualification. This year marks the 40th anniversary of my graduation from seminary school.

When Rev. Koichi Konko asked me to write something about this minister's gathering, it made me think, "Why did Kami arrange for me to become a minister?" For me, being a minister always felt like a



burden, but now, I feel that I am so blessed because I had the opportunity to stay at Konko headquarters for a year and Amagi church for nine months after seminary school. It was a

precious experience I had. I met such wonderful people there.

When I visited the headquarters in 2018, Rev. Hideko Konko, who is Rev. Koichi Konko's aunt and has been praying for me for a long time, gave me a book called "Women Who Lived with Konko sama" (金光様と共に生きた女性たち) written by Rev. Hideko Konko herself. In the book contained the teaching of Kiyo-sama, the wife of the second-generation Konko Sama, called "three important things", which were very simple and flexible:

Joyfully undertake what you can do (できることは何なりと喜んでさせて頂くこと)

Say thank you for what you could do (できたことはお礼をいうこと)

Apologize for what you can't and/or couldn't do (できぬことはおわびをすること)

I always think about my inadequacies while seeing that people around me have a sense of mission and enthusiasm for Konkokyo. But when I reflect on the various events in my life, I think that my path has been full of guidance by Kami Sama all along with a lot of love that led me to where I am now.

If this is the divine guidance for me, I would like to continue to practice every day and focus my heart on each task that I can do with joy, while apologizing for what I cannot do.

## "Supporting a Better Life: Practical Implementation of Toritsugi in Society"

*Reflection of attending the KMH Minister's Gathering held on May 20, 2023*

*By Rev. Edna Matsuoka, Konko Mission of Wahiawa*

The Rev. Dr. Shintaro Hara of the Konko Church of Isahaya took the time out of his busy schedule to be the guest speaker for the recent Konko Missions in Hawaii Minister's Gathering, held on May 20, 2023. I must say, it was a very interesting and insightful presentation that was held over ZOOM. I felt it would have been great if more people could join and listen in.

The topic of the gathering was "Supporting a Better Life: Practical Implementation of Toritsugi in So-

ciety." Rev. Dr. Hara discusses the importance of palliative care, spiritual care, and cultivating a perspective on life and death. He also shared a personal episode about a female patient who found transformation and gratitude through saying "Arigato Gozaimasu (Thank you)." Rev. Dr. Hara emphasized the essence of care and the role of clinical chaplains in providing spiritual and grief support as well.

The COVID-19 pandemic was also explored, highlighting the power of prayer and the lessons



people with faith can learn and practice. The stages of fear, learning, and growth were also discussed, along with the concept of "Aiyo Kakeyo," which refers to mutual prayer and support. He really got our attention as he discussed the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Rev. Dr.

Hara drew an intriguing parallel between the invisible nature of the virus and the intangible belief in an entity like Kami Sama. He highlighted how the virus, so minuscule that it can only be observed with an electron microscope, possesses the ability to manipulate human emotions and behaviors. Just like placing faith in the unseen, the congregation realized that a force as imperceptible as the virus could wield immense control over our lives. This thought-provoking connection left a lasting impression, prompting deep reflection on the power of the unseen and the need to confront and overcome the challenges posed by both the tangible and intangible forces that shape our existence.

I could sense that the inspiration for his presentation comes from his diverse roles as a Konko Minister, clinical pastoral counselor, respiratory medicine specialist, and certified palliative care physician. He draws from the many experiences in various settings. The exploration of palliative care, spiritual care, and the COVID-19 pandemic further motivated the Rev. Dr. Hara to share his personal and faith based insights and perspectives on supporting a better life in society.

Incorporating the key messages from Rev. Dr. Hara's presentation into our daily lives can have a profound impact on our well-being and the way we interact with others. Here are some practical ways to apply the insights he shared:

**Embrace gratitude:** Practice gratitude by acknowledging and expressing appreciation for the things, people, and experiences in your life. Like the woman in the story, consciously say "Thank you" for the blessings we have. Make it a habit to find something to be grateful for each day.

**Prioritize holistic care:** Recognize that care extends beyond physical needs. Consider the emotional, social, and spiritual aspects of well-being. Whether we are supporting someone who is ill or going through a difficult time, strive to provide comprehensive care that addresses all dimensions of their being.

**Cultivate self-reflection:** Take time for introspection and contemplate our own perspectives on life



and death. By facing mortality, we can develop a deeper appreciation for life and make choices aligned with our values. Regularly reflect on what truly matters and make adjustments accordingly.

**Practice empathy:** Seek to understand others and their experiences. Develop empathetic listening skills to provide meaningful support.

When engaging with individuals who are suffering or facing challenging circumstances, practice showing compassion and refrain from imposing our own beliefs or judgments.

**Embrace the power of reframing:** Train ourselves to see situations from different angles and find value in unexpected places. When faced with difficulties, consciously reframe our mindset and look for opportunities for growth, learning, and finding meaning.

**Nurturing our spiritual well-being:** Explore and nourish our own spirituality, whatever form it may take. Engage in practices that provide solace, whether it's prayer, Toritsugi meditation, nature walks, or connecting with a community. Cultivating our spiritual well-being can bring peace, purpose, and a sense of connectedness.

**Engage in self-care:** Take care of ourselves physically, mentally, and emotionally. Prioritize activities that promote self-care, such as exercise, healthy eating, quality sleep, and engaging in hobbies or activities that bring joy and relaxation. By attending to our own well-being, we will be better equipped to support others.

**Embrace flexibility and adaptability:** Learn to navigate uncertainty and embrace the unknown. Develop resilience and the ability to endure situations that may seem irresolvable or unmanageable. Practice being open-minded, flexible, and willing to adapt to new circumstances.

**Fostering a sense of community:** Recognize the importance of relationships and connection with others. Support those around us and build a community that promotes care, empathy, and understanding. Engage in acts of kindness, offer a listening ear, and extend support whenever possible.

By incorporating these principles into our daily life, we can contribute to a more compassionate and supportive society while also enhancing our own well-being. Remember that change starts with small steps, and consistent effort in applying these insights can lead to a more fulfilling and meaningful life.

# Insights from the Rotary Hanashikai at the Konko Mission of Wahiawa

By Rev. Koichi Konko, Konko Mission of Honolulu

On March 5, the Konko Mission of Wahiawa hosted an enlightening Rotary Hanashikai event, both in person and on Zoom. The attendees engaged in thoughtful discussions about personal and divine expectations, understanding and feelings, the importance of kindness, and the impact of divine love on individuals. It was emphasized that having the right attitude and frame of mind is essential to gain the full benefits of the practice of faith. The group shared personal experiences and expectations, with one sharing how he felt a divine expectation to become a minister despite trying to run away from it. Another member shared a story of how his mother's love and care helped him overcome difficulties in school, which he saw as an



Rotary Hanashikai at Wahiawa Church

example of mutual interdependency, an important aspect of the Konko faith. The group also discussed how people should demand excellence from their government and institutions and practice mutual interdependency to build a better society.

Overall, the discussion highlighted the importance of having a positive attitude, faith, and strong relationships with others, including Kami-Sama and fellow human beings.

The Rotary Hanashikai event offered a valuable opportunity for attendees to learn about the Konko faith and reflect upon and connect with essential aspects of life, promoting personal growth and a deeper understanding of themselves and others.

## Third Episode

### From Divine Request to the Establishment of the Faith Trials, Training, and the Entrusted Divine Wish

*In this third installment of our series on visiting the Founder, we explore the path from the initial divine request that set the stage for Konko Daijin's spiritual journey, to his disciplined training and eventual establishment of the faith, highlighting the divine wish that was entrusted to him.*

*When the Founder was 42 years old, he contracted a severe illness, so grave that those around him feared the end was near. However, through the prayers of his brother-in-law for his recovery, the divine intention behind the illness was revealed. This event became a turning point, inspiring the Founder to devote his heart even more intensively to the Divine Parent. This devotion was to further develop and expand his faith.*

**Kami made a request, borrowing the body of the Founder's younger brother, and the Founder, who readily accepted the divine plea, received a divine message.**

Recovering from a serious illness thanks to divine blessings, the Founder decided to devote the 1st, 15th, and 28th of each month to focusing on Kami. Starting in the third year of Ansei (1856), he began visiting various shrines from early morning.

In October of the following year, when the Founder was 44, a messenger arrived at his place. His younger brother, Shigemon Kandori, was reportedly possessed by Konjin and was uncontrollably disturbed.

(People believed Konjin was a fearful deity.)

At Shigemon's house, relatives and neighbors had gathered, looking worried. Upon the Founder's arrival, Shigemon said, "You, born in the Year of the Dog (referring to the Founder), Bunji (the Founder's name), you came at the right time. I, Konjin summoned you because I have a request. Will you listen to the request of Konjin?"

"If it's within my capabilities, I will assist," the Founder replied. The request was to rebuild Shigemon's house, as he didn't have any means to borrow money. He was asking if Bunji could cover the expenses.

When the Founder readily agreed, the response was, "Kami is also relieved," and Shigemon's possession was lifted. The next morning, Shigemon himself had no recollection of the event. However, for the Founder, it was a promise to Kami. He provided the construction costs and even worked up a sweat doing the carpentry himself. Along the way, his arm swelled and hurt, but after taking a day off and recovering, the Founder rejoiced, attributing his recovery to the divine blessing.

In fact, Shigemon had been a devotee of Konjin for some time. Upon completion of his new home, he began to enshrine Konjin and serve as a priest at home. On New Year's Day in the fifth year of Ansei (1858), when the Founder visited Shigemon's house, another revelation came through Shigemon's mouth.

"You, born in the Year of the Dog, Bunji, you have done as Kami has instructed and revered me as Kami, which pleases me. As a token of gratitude, I, Kane no Kami permits you to clap your hands in prayer. From now on, regardless of which god it is, or whether it is a grand or small shrine, clap your hands and bow in prayer. As a 'parishioner of Kane no Kami', your prayers will reach the gods throughout Japan and they will respond directly to you. You, born in the Year of the Dog, have faced various hardships and difficulties up until now, but from this point onwards, rely wholeheartedly on the Kami for everything. They will ensure that you don't need to consult doctors or prayer masters. Do not share this with others. Your wife's delivery will be on the fifth or seventeenth day."

This revelation affirmed the Founder as a special devotee, known as a "parishioner of Kane no Kami," and promised that if he clapped his hands in prayer, he would receive a direct response. His wife, Tose, who was pregnant at the time, indeed gave birth to a girl on January 17th, just as the revelation had predicted. From this point on, the Founder's faith was raised to a new level by divine guidance.

### **Enduring Severe 'Trials': Embarking on Spiritual Training as a Disciple of Kami**

Around this time, the Founder had begun to receive divine teachings and intentions in the form of "notifications." When he clasped his hands in prayer, his hands would move up and down; when they rose, his wish would be fulfilled, and when they fell, it would not. Considering how he had been trying to avoid hardships and adhere to auspicious days and directions without understanding the intentions of the Kami, being able to receive direct notifications of Kami's thoughts must have been a great relief to him.

However, these divine notifications were not simply commands to be followed. Obeying the word of Kami also tested one's resolve to trust Kami unconditionally. The notifications gradually began to take on the character of testing the Founder.

They included instructions that contradicted common sense, experience, and human etiquette, poten-

tially leading to conflicts with those around him, truly constituting "trials". Nevertheless, the Founder strived to overcome the worries that arose in his heart and follow Kami's instructions. As a result, he received considerable blessings in the harvest of rice and wheat, both in quality and quantity. Combined with his fervent faith, this began to attract attention from those around him.

In the fall of that year, it was as if the Founder's faith had been recognized so far, and he was appointed by Kami as "Kami's first disciple." At the same time, the content announced by Kami changed from a test to what meant practice.

Kami instructed him to "In the autumn, practice. Get up in the morning, change your clothes, go out to the worship room in the house and pray. As soon as that's done, have your wife carry your meals, then eat there, and as soon as you're done, change your clothes and go out barefoot to work in the fields."

"Go out barefoot to work in the fields" was something that did not make sense, but the Founder accepted it as he was told and began the practice of going barefoot.



*From "The Founder's Illustrated Biography"*

On a frosty winter morning, when the Founder was about to go out barefoot as usual, his wife Tose stopped him, saying, "It's bad for our reputation if people think we don't even make straw sandals." The Founder was an-

gry, saying, "Tose seems to know Kami's blessings, but she doesn't. She cares too much about how others see us." However, when he thought about what his wife was saying and her feelings, he started to carry his straw sandals on his hoe as he walked. When people asked him about it, he distracted them by saying, "The sandals are hurting my feet," thus satisfying both the training of Kami and his wife's feelings.

Furthermore, the phrase "Wake up in the morning, change your clothes, go out to the worship room and pray" brings to mind the sight of successive generations of Konko-sama praying at the Main Worship Hall of the headquarters and the ministers at each church, a tradition that continues to this day. Between November and December of that year, he was informed to set up a new altar in his home. The feelings that Kami was secretly entrusting to the Founder were beginning to grow.

*...to be continued in the next issue*



# 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](mailto:kmhcenter@konkomissionshawaii.org)

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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