



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

## Konkokyo to Me Over the Years

Mr. Chad Yabuki, Konko Mission of Waipahu

*Transcribed by Mrs. Karen Taniguchi from speech given at the Konko Mission of Waipahu Sunday service on January 31, 2021*

Good morning, everyone. Many of you might not know, but I'm living a childhood dream right now. When I was a little kid, I would come to church and just observe. I'd see Sensei up at the altar, which I called a stage and think, "That's what I want to do when I grow up!" Sensei had a wooden paddle and a white paper that he would read from and pray. My mother told me that at my Yabuki grandparents' home in Waipahu, I would sit in front of the altar, stick a rice paddle in my shirt, and with a folded paper in hand, pray. I don't know what I was saying at that time, but at that young age, I said that's what I wanted to do. When dad saw me doing this, I said, "Dad, I want to be a sensei at the church." He said, "No, son, you're going to be a financial advisor." So that dream ended very quickly. But thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today.

Before we came here, my mom said, "Chad don't say anything embarrassing because your Grandma and Grandpa Yabuki will be sitting in the front row, listening. I didn't tell her what I was going to speak about, and she didn't mention anything about embarrassing my dad. "What about dad?" I thought. Knowing my dad, he's somewhere in the back, talking story, half paying attention, so we're good.

Thinking about what I was going to speak about today, I thought that it would be interesting for you to hear my perspective on what the Konko religion and the church has meant to me over the years and how that has evolved and changed. When I was young, I looked at church as a social event, mostly. I didn't fully grasp the religion part of it so every Sunday when I came to church, I interacted with all of you, had snacks afterwards, and ran around with Alex and Lisa, Stacey, my brother and sister. It was just

fun. I enjoyed coming every Sunday, and I have fond memories of the bazaars we had back then. I remember being in charge of the music one year, as the DJ. I have memories of scrubbing the window screens and washing the tamagushi leaves in the cold water.

At that young age I prayed, not daily or nightly, but whenever I felt that there was something important that I could use extra help in. I remember praying before a big baseball game, before a spelling test, or when I wanted the cute girl in class to like me. And for the most part it really helped. And I remember

at some point in elementary school, asking my mom about the Konko necklace that she and my dad wore. I told her, "Hey mom, I want to wear one of those." My mom said, "Oh, ok. I think we have an extra one." So maybe in the fourth or fifth grade, I started to wear the Konko necklace. I thought I'm cool now, wearing the Konko necklace. That was through elementary school. Then I started 7th grade at HBA, Hawaii Baptist Academy. That was a very important part of my life, and also from a religious standpoint, for the first time in my life I was really confused. HBA is a very strong, Christian school and I did not know what I was getting into. The first day, they gave us a Bible and we prayed. I felt like a fish out of water, so out of my element, because this religion, Konkokyo, was all I knew. I remember thinking that this was all so different, especially coming from a public elementary school, where we never talked about religion. All of a sudden, we're always talking about religion. It was a big change. I remember still wearing my necklace at that time in the 7th grade, and a classmate asked me, "What is that? What is that necklace?" I remember feeling ashamed in saying that it was a church necklace and what the Konko religion was. I



didn't want to feel judged because if you're not a Christian at HBA, you're in the minority. So I told them that it was just a family crest, nothing special. I stopped wearing it, after a certain point because I didn't want to be questioned about it.

Then I went away to college, and that is when I stopped going to church. What I really enjoyed, was coming back for the holidays and the New Year service. Whenever I came back for holiday break and came to church, it just felt like coming back to my roots and my childhood. It looked the same. It's all of you, the same people. And after the service we had the New Year's party. That brought me home and grounded me for a new year. I did appreciate that a lot.

Then, fast forward to more recent events, when my dad passed away. We were in Vegas. What happened after was that we got back his jewelry; his wedding ring and his necklace. My mom told me that she wanted me to wear dad's necklace. That moment was a flashback to the first time I wore that Konko necklace when I was a kid. I remembered a long time ago, when I took it off, in high school. This was like a full circle moment for me.

With all of that came the thinking, of why did this happen? I struggled to understand it. One thing my dad always talked about was Divine Arrangement. He was a big believer in Divine Arrangement, the sense that everything in your life happens for a reason. Everything happens at the exact time that it's supposed to happen. He would always tell my brother, sister and me about this. I started to remember that and took peace in knowing that maybe this happened for a reason that we won't understand. I know that one of the pillars of the Konko faith is thankfulness, and I remember just going from feeling sad and maybe upset to being thankful, for the time that we were able to spend with him. It made me reflect, that someone's life shouldn't be judged on the number of years. It should be valued for the richness of the relationships and experiences you have with him while he was here. I was really caught up in the thought that my Dad died when he was only 64 while most people lived into their 80's and 90's, and I felt robbed of those 25 years. I thought about what could have happened in our lives in those 25 years that we missed and I got really down, thinking about it. But then I realized that even 64 years are not guaranteed to anybody. Anything could happen

at any time, and we should just be thankful and cherish the relationships and experiences that we had with my dad over that time. I think the Konko religion, and church and Divine Arrangement and everything combined really helped me cope with this, this situation. And remembering back to prayer and how as a kid, I prayed for good grades and cute girls, I started to pray every day, a different prayer. A lot of that came from watching my dad pray. Whenever I came home for the holidays, I saw him pray every morning and night. One thing I regret is not asking him what he was praying for or whom he was talking to. But I have an idea that he was probably praying to Kamisama and to my grandma and grandpa Yabuki. And every night now, I pray. It's a very simple prayer that I'll share with you. I remember Uncle Maiko telling me that whenever he asked my dad, "How are you doing?" My dad would answer, "Okagesamade," as a response, which is, I think, "Thank you, I'm good".

I always start my prayer every night saying, "Kamisama, arigato gozaimasu. Okagesama de". The prayer is simple. It's just asking for good health and safety, for my family and friends; to keep us safe in our commutes and help us all have a good day. That's the extent of it, very short. And I know my dad hears me.

I just feel that getting back to that practice has been really good for me, and helps me move forward. I feel like I'm embodying what my dad would do. If I had a message for you today, although I'm not a sensei, as much as I wanted to be one when I was young, it would be to just live life to the fullest. We've all been there, sitting on a fence of, "Should I take this trip? It's expensive." or "Should I reach out to this person again and talk? It's been a long time. No, we're too busy." Do it, because at the end of the day, that's all you're going to have that you can look back on. It's the relationships and experiences that you've had. And luckily, for our family, there's a ton we can look back on and really be thankful for. That has helped me in realizing that 64 years is not the longest life, but in the richness of the relationship and the experiences we all had with him it was a long life.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I enjoyed it, and I hope that you can take at least something small away from it and that I was helpful, just in sharing my experience and the way I view the religion now and through the years.

### Spring Grand Service Schedule

|                            |                          |         |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| Konko Mission of Honolulu: | April 4, 2021 (Sunday)   | 11:00AM |
| Konko Mission of Waipahu:  | April 11, 2021 (Sunday)  | 10:30AM |
| Konko Mission of Wahiawa:  | April 13, 2021 (Tuesday) | 6:30PM  |
| Konko Mission of Wailuku:  | May 2, 2021 (Sunday)     | 11:00AM |
| Konko Mission of Hilo:     | May 9, 2021 (Sunday)     | 11:00AM |



# Remembering Makio-Sensei

Mr. George Greenhouse, Konko Mission of Hilo

Reverend Makio Nagai was born in Kyoto on April 11, 1933. Upon completion of faith training, he made his way to Hilo a year after his marriage to Reverend Yoshie Yamanaka in March, 1976.

Makio Sensei and Yoshie Sensei served as understudies to the late Reverends Yoshifusa and Fuji Nishida, the founders of

this Konko Mission of Hilo. After the passing of Rev. Fuji Nishida on January 25, 1992, Makio Sensei was ordained as Head Minister of the Konko Mission on April 02, 1992, serving until his passing on September 13, 2020.

As understudy and Head Minister, many projects were begun and established. A major undertaking was the removal of the earthen floor downstairs and creation of the current church hall. This was done by members of the church and under the guidance and assistance of various contractors. Besides being home to shintokai meetings and Sunday school study sessions, many celebratory events were held here: Daisai luncheons, shinnenkai parties, Christmas parties, Easter egg hunts and in 1987, an All Hawaii Sunday School gathering. This was a special moment as our Senseis loved the presence of children. Under the guidance of all the ministers, a Sunday School program evolved, Kangakusai Services were held with school supplies being handed out, followed by graduation services. Another major project was replacing



*The 5th Konko-Sama with Hilo church members on the church stairs. Photo taken August 13, 2000.*

the tatami mat floors in the hiromae with laminate flooring.

Makio Sensei loved Shinnenkai parties. He would bring out his karaoke machine and sometimes we even had guest singers. We never heard him sing, unless he serenaded Yoshie Sensei when no one was around! He especially loved playing bin-

go and claiming prizes.

Our gathering hall was host to some lively, fast-paced, very competitive ping pong games. Makio Sensei was very adept at this sport and we had many challenging matches.

Makio Sensei served as Director of the Konko Missions in Hawaii from 1998-2000.

Besides the 10-year celebrations of our Ohiromae, I believe the highlight of his tenure was when Hilo hosted the KMH-KCNA 100th Anniversary Service of Konkokyo Independence on August 13, 2000. We were gratefully honored with the presence of our Spiritual Head, Reverend Heiki Konko and his wife. We also received the special okage of having Rev. Heiki Konko and his wife visit our ohiromae and meet with members.

We are grateful that we were able to celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the Konko Mission of Hilo with Rev. Makio Nagai on November 03, 2019. We pray for your continued guidance as our Mitama. Mahalo, Sensei, and ALOHA!

## A Chance Encounter

We were seated at adjacent booths at Burger King, pre-pandemic. As usual in such a setting, we didn't acknowledge each other, isolated in our own space, as she ate and I waited for my food. We sat, just gazing outside, watching the scene. Just passing traffic. An egret - dressed in white, lean, tall necked, long legged, floated down with grace, stood upright, on a hedge outside our window and walked, almost tiptoeing, on the little sprigs of the hedge. It was so magical, like a dance. Almost wanting to share this moment with someone, we both turned our heads to look at each other, saw that we were both watching it, each with big smiles on our faces. We nodded and laughed in appreciation of the impromptu dance.

Smiling at a stranger, acknowledging someone, sharing a moment of joy is a powerful thing. I think we both felt better for it.

Each time we're out and about has the potential for such chance encounters, sometimes very surprising. Sometimes magical. I wonder if that young lady in fatigues on her lunch break, remembers that moment whenever she sees an egret; that is, the shared smile with a stranger.



# Remembering Okusan, Rev. Mitsuko Yasutake

Mrs. Wanda Tamashiro, Konko Mission of Waipahu



Until Okusan, Rev. Mitsuko Yasutake, became ill last year and passed away in April, 2020, she served our church, Waipahu Konko Mission, faithfully and well, for forty years. (At church,

we referred to the minister's wife as Okusan, so she became known to us and even Sensei as Okusan.) She was known to be a sociable and ingratiating person, as my mom and a member said, Okusan was so nice to her. As her title indicates, she played the main supporting role of chatting with believers and preparing snacks after osooji or at onorai or New Year's parties. In particular, I remember her exceptional cooking every January when she prepared fish and zenzai, a red bean mochi dish relished by Mako Taniguchi and others. For onorai, she cooked sekihan and her coveted nasubi dish.

Our Okusan was so talented many of us enjoyed her soprano renditions of Japanese folk and Konko favorites. She was a standout at our ser-

vices and belonged to the Konko Chorus that performed on special occasions. Once, I remember that she and Sensei harmonized "Hoshikage no Waltz" at my parents' 50th wedding anniversary party.

In addition to her beautiful voice, we also admired her ikebana as she arranged flowers for the altars so attractively decorated at Sunday services. She frequently added these touches of harmonious color to our hiromae drawing from blossoms she had tended in her garden. When we had to take over some of her chores, we saw how her diligent energy had cared for the heliconia and plants in the yard.

Over the years, Okusan helped with sewing and food preparations for our big bazaars. She, along with the women of the church, greatly contributed to the success of these events. When my aging mother required help, Okusan joined the other church ladies and caregivers to socialize with her making life more enjoyable. For that I am so grateful to this gracious lady and our church believers. We

are happy that our Okusan was able to enjoy traveling to see her grandchildren and great grandchildren who live abroad. Also, she had travelled to Japan many times.

Okusan was always our cheerful hostess, making sure that we had snacks and enough to eat. She brought to Waipahu the best in herself and the best that Konkokyo in Japan could offer to help make us even happier than before. In her new role as a mitama we thank her for her many years of faithful service.



## Staying Vigilant

As the number of COVID-19 cases continues to decline and the City and County of Honolulu has moved into Tier 3, let us all be reminded that this pandemic is far from over, and we must remain vigilant to protect each other. While Oahu has seen a decline in cases, some of the neighbor islands are still seeing an increase in numbers. With vaccinations underway across the state, we are slowly seeing a return to "normal" life. If you've been to Waikiki recently, you've seen the unsettling number of people walking around without masks.

Although we cannot control others, we certainly have control over our own behavior. Protect yourselves! Wearing a mask might be uncomfortable, but it could be that layer of protection you need to keep safe. Washing your hands 50 times a day might mean dry skin and cracked cuticles, but it sure beats suffering from COVID.

We all pray for the day we can return to daily life like it was pre-pandemic, but until then, please stay safe: wear a mask, wash your hands, and social distance in public.

# KCNA MWSS 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Zoom Gathering

Rev. Reiko Yano and Rev. Edna Matsuoka

On Sunday, January 24, 2021, the Konko Churches in North America Missionary Women's Society celebrated their 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary online using ZOOM. They invited Hawaii and Japan to join in as well for this two-hour program. In total, there were 24 missionary women (16 from KCNA, 4 from KMH and 4 from Japan). It was great to see everyone using ZOOM. People who joined from Japan had to wake up early to join in. **Rev. Seiko Konko** (Honolulu), **Rev. Yoshie Nagai** (Hilo), **Rev. Reiko Yano**

and **Rev. Edna Matsuoka** (Wahiawa) were able to join from Hawaii. One inspirational message that was shared was "Spiritual Vaccination" by **Mrs. Alice Kawahatsu**. She mentioned that the "Tenchi Kakitsuke" (Divine Reminder) is our spiritual vaccination. Even if we were not able to meet each other in person due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it is a prayer for us to face our hearts to Kami-Sama and continue to hold hope that things will get better for all of us.



## Don't Lose to Corona Virus

By: Fumihiko Indei

Don't lose to Corona Virus  
Keep your own health.

If you can't keep your own health,  
Pray to Konko Sama.

Five basic rules for good health and long life:  
Proper sleep  
Proper diet  
Proper elimination  
Proper exercise  
Laughter

コロナウイルスに負けるな!!  
健康は自分で守れ!!  
守れないと思ったら  
金光様をお願いせよ!!  
健康の五原則  
快 眠  
快 食  
快 便  
快 働  
快 笑



# Kaisen Sara Udon Recipe

Ms. Keiko Kawahara, Konko Mission of Waipahu

*The pandemic has given many of us extra time at home to cook for our families. Whether out of necessity or as a new found hobby, cooking healthy meals can be a great way to use our time wisely and keep our bodies nourished and strong. Try this tasty recipe for sara udon...an awesome way to incorporate extra veggies into your diet! It's a great refrigerator clean-out meal as well!*



1) Purchase a package of Sara Udon (sold as serving for 2, contains dried, thin, crispy noodles with gravy powder packet enclosed) at Marukai. Hi-gashimaru is the brand and found in blue packaging in the ramen section aisle.

2) Buy squid, scallops, shrimp, \*kikurage, mushrooms, carrots, onions, and \*\*bamboo shoots. Cut into 1/4 inch slice pieces for the proteins and julienne the vegetables and mushrooms.

If proteins are small no slicing is needed. If using frozen proteins, defrost first and be advised it forms extra liquid in fry pan while stir frying, so you will need to drain out the excess liquid from the fry pan.

3) Take out the ready-to-eat dry noodles and put them on a dinner sized plate. Press down on noodles to make it a little flat.

4) Open 1 gravy powder packet and pour into 150ml of water, stir well, set aside. If making 2 servings, open 2nd packet into 150ml of water.

5) Using a fry pan, add some oil for stir frying and a little bit of crushed ginger. Add proteins to pan and stir fry for a minute or so. If liquid forms in the pan, drain the liquid out. Add vegetables and continue to stir fry. Pour gravy mix into frying pan and cook until sauce thickens and everything is done.

6) Immediately pour the mixture over the dry noodles.

\*Kikurage is optional. It is usually sold in dried form and can be found near the dried seaweeds section of the store. Rehydrate kikurage by soaking in hot boiling water for about 5 minutes or so, until kikurage feels hydrated and rubbery. Chop accordingly.

\*\*Bamboo shoots: One can buy pre-cooked bamboo shoots in a can or a vacuum sealed bag in the tofu section of Marukai or asian store. Use maybe a third of the can or less or vacuum sealed bamboo shoots. I like to pre-boil the chopped up bamboo shoots in water and salt for about 15-20 minutes to take out the "aku" and before boiling scrape off the white powdery preservative in between the bamboo shoots. Rinse after boiling and stir-fry with other vegetables. My father added some pre-cooked octopus as well as a small amount of chopped broccoli.

\*\*\*Please be careful to not burn yourself while preparing this dish. Please use your best judgement and Happy Eating!





# KMH ZOOM Conference 2021

*"Kokoro Kubari: Living with Mindfulness"*

**Date:** Saturday, July 17, 2021

**Time:** 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm

**Guest Speaker:**

**Rev. Saijiro Matsuda**

(Former Director of KMH Center &  
Head Minister of Konkko Church of Minamimuro)

**Theme:** Kokoro Kubari:  
Living with Mindfulness

**Purpose of the Conference:**

- Defining Living with Mindfulness (Kokoro Kubari) in Konkoko
- Practicing Mindfulness



**To participate you will need:**

- PC/Tablet/Smartphone
- Web camera/microphone
- Internet connection
- Email address
- Zoom app
- Kokoro Kubari shirt (Optional)

**"Kokoro Kubari" apparel for this event on sale at Teespring:**

<https://teespring.com/kokoro-kubari?pid=2&cid=576>

**Let's wear Konkko Shirts!**

*(Shirts will take about 2 weeks to reach you. So, order early!)*

**Register by Saturday,  
July 3, 2021**

For more info. contact:  
kmhcenter@konkomissionshawaii.org  
or text: Koichi Sensei (808) 536-9078  
or Edna Sensei (808) 223-3448

*Konko Missions in Hawaii*

## KMH Summer Beach BBQ

**What:** KMH Summer Beach BBQ

**When:** Sat., June 12, 2021 from 9 am-1 pm

**Where:** Haleiwa Ali'i Beach Park  
(Near Haleiwa Jodo Mission)

**Who:** All is welcome to join us

**Cost:** FREE

**Food:** The Konkko Mission of Wahiawa will prepare all the food. We will need approximate headcount by Sat. 6/5.

**Memo:** Feel free to bring beach gear, fishing gear and your own canopies and beach chairs. Please take note, that you may enjoy water activities such as swimming and fishing, but you are doing so at your own risk. Konkko Missions in Hawaii will not be responsible.



**Deadline to RSVP is Sat. 6/5/21**

Please contact Edna (KMH CEOC  
Secretary) at (808) 223-3448



# Konko Missions in Hawaii

Malamalama Editor: Aimee Yasutake

1728 Liliha Street, Honolulu, HI 96817

Phone: (808) 536-9078 E-mail: [kmhcenter@konkomissionshawaii.org](mailto: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](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!

## **KONKO MISSIONS IN HAWAII**

HONOLULU 1728 Liliha St., Honolulu, HI 96817

Phone: (808) 533-7173

E-mail: [Konko-Honolulu@hawaii.rr.com](mailto: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](mailto:Ytetsu1@outlook.jp)

WAHIAWA 207 Muliwai Ave., Wahiawa, HI 96786

Phone: (808) 621-6667

Use same # for Fax.

E-mail: [konko-wahiawa@hotmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:kmhcenter@konkomissionshawaii.org).