



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

## Suffering Even With a Deep Faith

*A translation of a series in the Konko Shimbun about the Founder's life.*

The Founder, Konko Daijin, has passed on many teachings through Toritsugi Mediation. These teachings that guided many people to salvation were born from his turbulent experiences in his early years of life as well as in his later years sitting in the Hiromae and talking with Kami Sama.

Here, in this first chapter as we review Konko Daijin's life, we will take a look at his experiences from birth to age 42 when he fell gravely ill.

208 years ago, in Bunka 11 (1814), the Founder was born in a village about 2 kilometers away from

in Otani Village. The Kawate's had no children of their own. The Founder told his adoptive parents, Kumejiro and Iwa Kawate, "I would like to visit temples and shrines on my days off." They were happy to allow him to do as he requested.

This episode is often shared as an example of the Founder's devotion to religion. But for the Founder, perhaps visiting various temples and shrines were a way to stay connected with the memories of the time spent with his biological parents.

Over the mountain and to the east of Yuzakiyama, where the Konkokyo Headquarters is located, lies the marker for Mitsuemon Ono's house, who was the village head of Otani. It was here that the Founder learned how to read, write and use the soroban soon after being adopted.

The Founder was blessed with the opportunity to be educated by Mitsuemon for almost 2 years and even picked up some of his personality traits.

Even though he was only educated for 2 years, being able to write probably allowed the Founder to write down and pass on the teachings of Kami Sama through collections of his writings such as the



*The Kandori Home*

Otani called Urami Village (the present Konko-Cho, Urami). That is Konko Daijin's hometown.

He was born the second son to farmers Jyuhei and Shimo Kandori, and was named Genshichi. His birthday falls on September 29 in the new calendar, which was also a festival day for the god that protects Urami Village, Omiya Jinja.

The Founder would often get sick because of a weak digestion system, so everyday his father, who was a very religious man, would carry the Founder on his back and visit the Kandori family temple, Sensho-in, to pray his health.

Thanks to his father's prayers, the Founder grew up healthy and strong, and at the age of 12 it was decided that he would be adopted into the Kawate family



*Omiya Jinja*

.....continued on page 2





*The Ono Family Home Marker*

“Konko Daijin Oboegaki” and the “Oshirasegoto Oboegakicho.” Later, the Founder consulted with the Ono family about construction dates and directions when rebuilding his house.

Today, the gate and stone wall remains of the Ono family home are preserved along with the surrounding area, and one can still witness what the Founder himself saw.

The Founder was a hardworking man from his teenage years. He always strived to work harder than anyone else. He always worked together with his adopted father and helped to build roads and ponds and brought in a lot of money for the family.

When the Founder was 18, his adopted parents were blessed with a child. Their son was named Tsurutaro. However, he suddenly fell ill and passed away at the young age of 6. His adopted father's death followed the next month. With 2 deaths in the family within such a short span of time, the Founder and his mother must have been wrought with sadness and uncertainty about the future.

After that, the Founder changes the family name from Kawate to Akazawa as was written in his father's will. He then takes over as head of the family at the age of 23 and marries his neighbor, Tose Furukawa. The couple were famously known for being hard workers. As they worked hard and expanded their home and fields, and because they were such good natured people, they began to gain the trust of the people in the village.

Just when it seemed that life was going good and everything in the Founder's life was looking up, tragedy once again hit his family. Between the ages of 29 and 38, he lost his eldest son, eldest daughter, and his second son at very young ages. He also lost

2 oxen on the same month and day, 2 years in a row.

There were whispers among the people in the village that, “It must be a curse from Konjin.” Konjin was the god that ruled the days and directions during construction of buildings, and it was said that if you disobeyed Konjin you would be cursed. The Founder always paid careful attention to these things and made sure to follow all the rules after having the Ono family read what days and directions to build in so as not to disrespect Konjin.

Likewise, when the Founder bought a house in a neighboring village and was to renovate the building, he consulted with the days and directions and prayed to Konjin before starting construction.



*The Founder's Home*

“I will have them choose the dates and directions to build in, but I am remaking a small house into a large house, and I am expanding in 3 different directions. There's no telling what kind of offenses I will commit in what direction. First things first, I will build an altar and offer the “*Rokkon Shoyo Harai*” purification prayer and “*Hannya Shingyo*” Sutra 50 times in thanks to Konjin.”

When the remodeling was completed, as he had promised, the Founder built a new altar to Konjin. He then recited the *Rokkon Shoyo Harai* and *Hannya Shingyo* prayers in appreciation of the completion of the construction. The Founder's devotion to faith is clearly demonstrated in his dedication to not only following the days and directions, but also praying to Konjin.

Still, his second oxen died the following year. “I did everything I possibly could and prayed so hard, yet this misfortune still continues.” The Founder began to feel defeated, “I'm praying this hard to Kami



*The Founder's Gravesite*

Sama and still...why..."

"If my irreverence toward Konjin is the cause of this, what can I do?" He had no choice but to continue on without knowing the reasoning for all his suffering.

In December of this year 1851 (Kaei 4), his second

daughter is born, and 2 years after that, his fifth son, Ieyoshi (later to be known as Konko Shijin Sama, the second Konko Sama) is born. It was in the following year, 1855 (Ansei 2), that a life-threatening event happens to the Founder.

*(to be continued)*

## Hanashikai: Hand Made

March 6, 2022

By Karen Taniguchi, Konko Mission of Waipahu

We are blessed with hands that can do wonderful things. They comfort, they create, they heal, make music, reach out, communicate, and more. The Rotary Hanashikai on Zoom, March 6, 2022 put a spotlight on our hands and the things we do with them. The very act of creating is sometimes like a Zen experience, taking people to a peaceful and happy place in their minds. The organizers of the zoom gathering at the Konko Mission of Waipahu hoped that individuals sharing their personal stories of "handmade" would inspire, encourage, and motivate others to try new things and have this joyful experience. Learning is a never-ending process and using our minds and hands in different ways is just us evolving as we age with grace. It is a good thing to do as we are spending more time at home, still in Covid times.

The hanashikai began with an invitation to everyone on zoom to join us in exercising our upper bodies. Daily exercise like this stretching one, helps us to maintain physical and even mental health. Elaine Indei of Aisen Shiatsu led us through a routine of stretches of the neck, arms, shoulders, back and hands. It is a routine that we can do daily, before or even as we face the challenges of a new day. With that session's burst of happy serotonin, people were ready to connect with their Konkokyo community on zoom.

Wanda Tamashiro and Gayle Yabuki spoke of two talented people who influenced their lives, their mothers in law, Mrs. Mildred Tamashiro and Mrs. Toshie Yabuki. Like many women of their generation, they were superstars in the art of hand making. They drew on the ingenuity of their minds and hands and the spirit of giving, to create practical things, often works of art. Mrs. Mildred Tamashiro sewed many one-of-a-kind clothes for her family and donated countless, much valued items to the Waipahu bazaar. Mrs. Toshie Yabuki was a woman ahead of her times, taking classes in her senior years to learn to paint and wheel throw ceramic pieces. She donated many of her vases and bowls to the church bazaar. Their legacy lives on in their gifts, tangible and intangible they have left with us.

Gayle Yabuki shared a story that moved us. When Glenn (her husband) passed away in 2019, one

of the many things that she was faced with was what to do with the dozens of aloha shirts he had left behind. She would have donated them to a local charity, but her children weren't ready to let go of them, so she decided to use them to create something; something useful for each, and meaningful too, a keepsake. Glenn's shirts became beautiful accent pillows and quilted blankets. She cut the shirts into dozens of square pieces and joined them together. Each blanket is a work of art. It took many months of studying, cutting, matching, and sewing, a complex project she had never done before. But it filled a void in her life, she said, and at the same time gave her the chance to be able to hold Glenn's physical presence close to her as she worked on them. Chad, Erin and Brayden now can do the same every day, the warmth of their father's Mitama close to them, in their mother's handcraft.

Amy Fukawa remembered her father who was an amateur oil painter. After his death she was motivated by the memory of her father with brush in hand in front of a canvas, to pick up a brush herself and paint. She showed us her painting, a stunning ocean-Koolau scene on a large canvas, in oil. She was untrained as an oil painter, but her hands moved, maybe intuitively with the memory of her father doing the same with his hands, etched into her mind. Amy also showed a ceramic teacup that she takes much pleasure in using every day. This was Mako Taniguchi's wheel thrown teacup. She likes the feel of it in her hands, its perfect size and beautiful glaze.

My father was literally unschooled but lived in his world always observing and learning. He was an avid fisherman who created many lures to catch octopus and fish, shaping sea creatures from rocks, lead and Styrofoam, and painting colorful details to attract other sea creatures. The hooks were also handmade and stealthily hidden. Some lures were realistic looking while some were just whimsical works of fun art. These are some of my stored away memories and images of him at his work bench, memories of his mitama. We all have a rich reservoir of memories of people making, doing

things with their hands. In my case, it encourages me to make things too. We keep alive our family mitama as we continue to maintain and grow their spirit.

Handmade creations are also vehicles that can communicate ideas, promote understanding, and provoke thought. Reverend Edna Matsuoka shared that she has been writing, designing, and illustrating their church newsletters and bulletins for over three decades now, a dedicated commitment that is not only hers but also of both her father and mother, the Reverends Yasuhiro and Reiko Yano. Each edition printed by the Konko Mission of Wahiawa reaches out to the Konko community and beyond, news of members and church events, activity schedules and Konko teachings. Its outreach goal is a model of a vibrant church.

A more literal connecting of hands experience was shared by Reverend Akinobu Yasutake. He said that when he feels anxiety or stress, he finds himself reaching for his wife's hands. Holding her hands always calms him. It is also a rewarding experience for Reverend Miyoko. Our hands can work magic.

We also saw beautiful, detailed work that hands can make. Reverend Reiko Yano showed a beautiful Girls' Day card, a collage of origami figures artfully folded, pressed and arranged on a card. Reverend Tetsuro Yasutake showed the beautiful woodwork pieces he made: Decorative planters, hanging baskets, utilitarian catch-all boxes for pencils, utensils, and such, each constructed and finished with beauty and care. Clayton Matsuoka showed his artwork, a model he put together, of a character from the Japanese genre of superheroes. His character was made of many intricate pieces and stood strong and fierce. He has created a collection of this modern art.

We also saw a more subtle art in Reverend Koichi Konko's creations. Every morning he prepares the goshinpan, rice offering. At first glance, it appears to be just small scoops of rice patted down and placed on five miniature goblets-like stands, to be placed on the altar. But there is more to this than meets the eyes. It is Reverend Koichi's heart and art as he mindfully pats the sides of the rice into its shape, not perfect, he said, but with harmony of height and silhouette of the five offerings, looking like little Mt. Fujis.

Another sharer was Mako Taniguchi who showed a shikishi wall hanging he received from Fumihiko Indei Sensei. Sensei composed the poem on it and calligraphed it to celebrate Mako's recent hole in one. It is a piece of literary and aesthetic art. Mako read it with a smile, for it was both lyrical and humorous, commemorating the event. This was better than receiving a trophy or a medal.

Shunichi Kawahara also shared. He spoke of his

two years journey facing and overcoming health challenges. He is now well on his way to recovery after months of chemotherapy and radiation treatments, then a difficult post-surgical recovery. In the hands of many skillful doctors, specialists in their various fields, he has received numerous blessings. He was further blessed to be cared for by the watchful eyes and hands at home. His daughter Keiko was able to stay home during his critical recovery days, thanks to Covid, he said. She was able to prepare nutritious meals for him, manage his medications, consult with doctors when needed, and take him to doctors' appointments. There were many hands at work to bring him to where he is today. He is grateful for that.

Sometimes "handmade" is not what we imagine, and its revelation makes it even more special. Nakayama Kametaro was a Konko minister who lost both arms and one leg when he was five years old. And despite this unimaginable physical disability he was able to do things masterfully and even excel in writing, by grasping the writing implements with his mouth or toes. Reverend Yano shared a calligraphy screen of Nakayama Sensei's beautiful writing. It is an example of how we are blessed with god's grace to create despite what our physical condition or limitations may be.

Finally, John Tamashiro showed a vibrant hand painted tiger drawn and painted by the 12-year-old daughter of an Aisen Shiatsu client. He explained that this tiger has a special meaning for him, for it is his alma mater's mascot and were it not for his high school sending him to the mainland to participate in a student government program, over 50 years ago, he would not have met his wife, Wanda.

We each have a place where we go to seek moments of peace and comfort in our busy and sometimes disquieting lives. Sometimes, the act of quiet reflection, then doing something with our hands brings us to this place. As we move about in this space, we connect with our Mitama, who has taught us their craft and maybe transferred their spirit into our hearts and hands. Let us be thankful as we carry on this spirit. Let us do something today.





# The Power of Prayer

By Alex Yasutake, Konko Mission of Waipahu

On Wednesday, December 29, 2021, I was able to fly to Honolulu for a much overdue visit to my family in Hawaii. It was a bit special this time around, because this was my first time to visit Hawaii during the New Year's since I left Hawaii in 2001. I have some fond memories of New Year's in Hawaii, like eating *zenzai* or sweet red bean soup with mochi at the church or eating *toshikoshi* soba that my grandma made. It was also my first time being able to visit my grandma's remains since she had passed. The travel restrictions had not allowed me to attend her funeral. I was able to spend some time with my grandpa as we went *osonae* shopping as well as looking for a new microwave. I also got to see my parents again, not through just a smartphone screen, but in person.

One thing I like to do when I visit my parents is making sure their computer is in tip-top shape. There's the occasional virus that is lingering or a software update that has not been properly applied. I also occasionally change some of the hardware inside the computer like increasing the memory or adding hard drive space. I do this without my parents' permission and sometimes they don't like it because it usually means they have to learn something new, such as, "don't click on that weird pop-up that says, 'you won!' or 'you have to click this button to see your email instead of this one now.'" I think my parents have finally gotten used to me doing this since this visit they laid down some ground rules: No working on the computer until after the New Year's Day service. The reason for this is that there is too much that needs to be done at the church before the service and they did not want to focus on anything else, which is understandable, so I agreed. I got to focus on the church *goyo* for several days and when everything was cleaned up after the service, I got to work on the computer. This year was a big year since I was going to change out the processor and motherboard. Aside from the outer physical appearance, it was basically going to be a new computer.

The process of changing out the computer components wasn't without its hiccups as I ran into situations that I did not expect. It took a few calls to straighten up a Windows license issue but after that, the computer seemed to be working fine. After a couple of days, however, a few things started to act strange, like the computer would not shutdown properly, or the connected printer would not print a document with real words. Then the next day, it would not boot up. Worst yet, the backup image I had created was not restoring the computer correctly. Even my dad's laptop wasn't turning on. When it rains, it pours. It was already Friday night, and I was

supposed to be leaving the next day, Saturday, January 8th. I was running out of time, but I was not seeing a solution in sight. I've been staying up late trying to fix the problem and only slept for a couple of hours the past few nights. I was running on empty, and my parents could see I was getting tense. I finally decided to push back my flight to Sunday so I would have one more full day to solve this problem.

Thankfully the airlines do not charge for changes these days, so I was able to easily change my flight. I would try to let the computer restore one more time overnight then went to sleep.

The following morning, to my surprise, I saw that the restoration was successful, and the computer was working just fine. That's when my dad said, "I prayed to Kami-sama." At that moment I realized that I did not pray once to Kami-sama about this problem and simply thought I could do this on my own. I imagined my dad must have seen my tenseness, and

had prayed for me, that I would be able to see this computer issue through. It showed me the power of prayer. Even when no one is looking, when it may seem pointless, a simple prayer could lead to the help of someone in need. With that, I was able to spend one more peaceful day with my parents, as well as go to the church on Sunday one more time before my flight home.



Alex, Noriko, Rev. Akinobu, and Rev. Tetsuro Yasutake



Front: Judy, Tetsuro, Noriko  
Back: Alex, Miyoko, Akinobu

# What is True Faith?

By Rev. Mitsuko Yasutake, Konko Church of Chikushi Hongo

Hello everyone. I hope you're doing well. It is a pleasure to have the chance to connect with you all on Malamalama. I am Mitsuko Yasutake from Japan. As a minister, wife, and mother, I am now assisting my husband at Chikushi Hongo Church.

Today I would like to tell you about the KMH Kyoten Study group. We hold this study session online, and participants can freely exchange opinions for about an hour starting at 5 p.m. in Hawaii and noon in Japan. Learning with this group here brought me several fruitful things. I am now also working with a volunteer translation group that publishes news from around the world. There is a reason why I want to learn translation. I believe words are an invaluable tool that Kami-sama has given us to communicate with the heart and soul. Especially during mediation, Kami-sama tries to use human beings, but actually, Kami-sama is using my life as a way out. The words, facial expressions, and attitude of being with Kami-sama are all ways in which the Ujiko who receive the mediation can sense Kami-sama in their souls. Let us emphasize the role that words play through mediation. In Japan, a culture places value on putting soul into words, called "kotodama." Silence is also part of the language. I always try to "translate" Kami-sama's love without fail, which is my essential attitude when dedicating goyo as a mediator. For these reasons, I became interested in learning the art of translation. As a minister, I convey how Kami-sama loves people who come to church and deliver their wishes to Kami-sama, which means I have to use words.

In this study session, no more than ten people have participated so far. We read the teachings, commenting on them or freely introducing episodes for about one hour. One day, one of the participants talked about a very troubling experience. Other participants communicated with her to ease her mind. Everyone was speaking in English. As I prayed that Kami-sama would heal her wounded heart, I felt like sharing with her in Japanese. Then I told her exactly what was on my mind in Japanese. And then what happened? After listening carefully to me, she said, "Sensei, it was good that you spoke to me in Japanese. I can understand you very well. Living here, I have sometimes felt difficulty in English in the past." It happens! And I was glad to hear it. In addition, there are several bilingual ministers, so they will also



Rev. Mitsuko Yasutake

interpret for you. And more, some of them want to learn Japanese; anyone can participate without worrying about the language. Remarkably, people of different mother tongues can be connected in this way through the bond of faith in the same One True Parent, Founder, and talk about practicing faith.

What's more, regardless of nationality, we all make mistakes. We, human beings, all make fundamental mistakes; that is, we live between heaven and earth, but we do not know the reason for it, and we live disrespectfully toward heaven and earth. It accumulates from generation to generation and becomes a family tradition, complicating it.

To live a life by the principles of heaven and earth means to know the favor of heaven and earth. It is about learning from the whole creation and changing past mistakes. Everything that is happening now results from what has happened so far.

The most important thing is that we are constantly learning from it ourselves, and keep growing until the end of your living life. But, if you try to learn only on your own, you will make the same mistake again. Why? You have to think about it. It is because of whom you have not changed or you don't know how to change. So, Kami-sama needs a human being who could live and teach with words to mediate. The mediator is the teacher, and those who visit the church are students who are earnestly learning and practicing to reevaluate their way of life. Of course, the teacher must have a strong pipe from Kami-sama, who has acquired faith and trust in Kami. Without this right relationship, mediation is not possible.

Here is a famous story about the words of Rev. Katsura Matsuhei. One day, one of his disciples brought a man saying, "This one is zealous in faith." Without a pause, Rev. Katsura asked back, "You say he is such a dedicated believer, but then how many people has he led so far?" The person who was introduced to Rev. Katsura as "a zealous believer" opened his eyes to the fact that true faith is not only to save oneself but also to tell others about one's proper way of life as a human being living between Heaven and Earth. It was a significant turning point for him, and from then on, whenever he heard of someone in difficulty, he would come to them and tell

them stories of how Kami had helped him, and with his divine heart, he began to lead many people to have faith.

It is the essence of true faith. I think of it this way. If you know this fact, you should check yourself to see if you are mistreating it. Otherwise, I would have to say that I am irresponsible and ungrateful to Kami-

sama when it comes to me.

I hope that this online session will be helpful with improving and refining your faith. Please feel free to contact the KMH Kyoten Study Group if you are interested. Please contact Rev. Edna Matsuoka at [ednakazuko@hotmail.com](mailto:ednakazuko@hotmail.com) to join. I wish you all the best this year.

## May is for Mamas and Mangoes

*Just thought I'd share some seasonally appropriate recipes since I had some extra space to fill up. With Mother's Day around the corner, how about cooking up some treats for the special mothers in your life?*

### Pickled Mango

It's mango season in Hawaii!! Who doesn't love a good pickled mango?! I love mine extra vinegar-y...hoo! Let the salivation start!

#### Ingredients:

- ♦ 6-7 pounds of green mangoes (peeled and cut into 1/4-inch thick slices)
  - ♦ 2 1/2 cups white vinegar\*
  - ♦ 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar\*
  - ♦ Splash of rice wine vinegar\*
  - ♦ 3 cups filtered water
  - ♦ 2 1/2 cups sugar
  - ♦ 3 Tablespoons Hawaiian salt
  - ♦ 15 red li hing mui seeds
  - ♦ 15 white li hing mui seeds
- \*\* Adjust the ratio of vinegars to your taste



Pour all the ingredients except the mango into a large pot. Warm and stir until all the sugar and salt has dissolved. Let cool. Put mangoes into a sealable container (Ziploc bags work just fine. Just remember to put the Ziploc bags into a bowl to catch any liquid in case it leaks out of the bag.) and pour the vinegar mixture over the mangoes. Let sit in the refrigerator for a couple of days, turning mangoes in pickling liquid a few times. Enjoy!!

### Mango Pudding

Some like it sweet! A great use of ripe mangoes...fresh, frozen, or canned.

#### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup boiled hot water
- 1 packet (1Tbsp) unflavored gelatin
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 cup mango puree



1. In a medium bowl, whisk together the gelatin and boiled hot water until no lumps remain.
2. Whisk in the sugar and salt until dissolved.
3. Stir in coconut milk, then mango puree until mixture is smooth.
4. Pour into 4 ramekins or small bowls. Cover and chill for a minimum of 2 hours before serving.

\*\* Mango pudding can be covered and stored in the fridge for up to 3-5 days.

# 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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