



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

## A String of Blessings

Mr. George H. Greenhouse, Konko Mission of Hilo

Good Morning! As we commemorate our annual Aki no Mitama Matsuri, Sensei reminds us that there is no one alive without ancestors. As basic as this sounds, we should remember with heartfelt gratitude all the hard work and sacrifices our ancestors encountered and overcame to provide for us and the generations to come. Our ancestors are the foundation of our faith, the source of energy of our lives, and the guide to our passing of the torch to future generations, so they can know of our mitama's virtues and finest attributes which should be acknowledged and passed on from generation to generation.

This morning, with your indulgence, I'm going to take you on a personal journey. A teaching from Yamamoto, Sadajiro: "There are people who come to this Hiromae, request to be cured, and come to give thanks after complete recovery. That's all. Rather, if you have been completely cured by Kamisama's blessings, tell those in distress about my teachings. Spread my teachings so more people will start to practice faith sincerely. This is giving true thanks to Kamisama."

Based on this teaching and a teaching received by Ichimura, Mitsugoro, inspired me to take you on this personal journey. Teaching from Ichimura, Mitsugoro: "I will give you a faith with an endless string of goals. Be single-hearted, then receive divine blessings. The more blessings you receive, the more benefits and divine protection you will gain. After receiving divine blessings, you must not forget the divine grace of Kami."

This teaching awakened me to a string of blessings I received during a critical time in my life. At this special time in my life I realized more and more the essence and presence of Tenchi Kane no



*George and Jeri Greenhouse*

Kamisama, Konkosama, and my Mitamasama watching over me, supporting me, protecting me and ensuring my future health and well-being. I wholeheartedly believe that my Mitamasama in concert with Tenchi Kane no Kamisama and Ikigami Konko Daijinsama continuously impacts my life.

A little over a year ago, August 16, 2016, a fateful day in my life. It began a string of blessings which fulfilled my life. Although I receive blessings each day, the following six weeks were a blur of blessings. It began as a beautiful sun shiny day with Ron Inoue, my wife, Jeri and myself, receiving the bless-

ings of doing goyo at church, mowing the grass. Just as we were finishing up, I began to feel strange. I stopped my lawn mower and hung on to the handles for support. Then I lost consciousness.

I'm grateful that my second heart attack occurred at church in the presence of Tenchi Kane no Kamisama, Konkosama and my Mitamasama. I was able to recover quickly from my unconscious state, Ronald reacted quickly to Jeri, calling 911, and Yoshiie Sensei was at my side with goshinmai. My wife was quickly by my side with my nitro and prayers, while holding me, keeping me comfortable, reassuring me that the EMS was on its way and that I would be okay. I'm also gratefully impressed by my wife's quick thinking and reaction as she retrieved my nitro from my right pocket, removed the nitro bottle from the metal container, opened that little bottle, and placed the nitro under my tongue which stimulates my blood flow. She was also timing me to see if she needed to administer another dose. I believe her quick thinking lessened the impact of a more severe heart attack, allowing me to regain consciousness and a quicker recovery. The fire station is less than a

mile away and they were there within minutes and took over my treatment.

Another okage was that a doctor was on the ride-along with the EMS crew. In no time I was in the ambulance enroute to the hospital. As we left the church yard, I saw Makio Sensei standing on the porch of the church. This gave me great confidence that I would be okay. I'm sure I prayed before collapsing, asking Kamisama, Konkosama and Mitamasama, "Tasukete kudasai, please help me!" I continued praying on my way to the hospital and the entire time I was there.

The ER doctor treating me said that I had suffered a small heart attack. He also said that if my condition had not manifested itself at that time, and had gone undetected for a little while longer, my outcome could have been a lot worse. A small heart attack, okage? YES!!!

While I was there in the ER, the Hilo doctors were in communication with the doctors in Honolulu, deciding what would be best for me - to be medevaced to Honolulu or rest in Hilo. I prayed even harder that a trip to Honolulu would not be necessary. I was medevaced during my first heart attack, and aside from the cost, it puts a lot of stress on my wife, Ronald, and the rest of my family. I didn't want to put them through that again. My prayers were answered. They decided to monitor me at the Hilo Medical Center. Two days later I was allowed to go home.

Following my release from the hospital, my cardiologist decided that I should go to Honolulu to have an angiogram done at Kuakini Hospital. The results of the angiogram determined that there wasn't much more that needed to be done. I was grateful that surgery wouldn't be necessary. Shortly thereafter, an electro physicist from Straub Hospital saw me in Hilo. He and my cardiologist thought I should have a pacemaker/defibrillator implanted. Based on my recent episode, he wanted me at Straub that same week. We had to scramble for a flight to Honolulu as well as secure a hotel room. The only seats available were middle seats and Jeri and I were not going to be able to sit together. Big baby that I am, I was quite uncomfortable with this arrangement but I had no choice. But here too, okage continued as the person sitting next to me, on the window side, was a classmate of 50 years ago. Talking story with him helped relieve my anxiety, which also kept my mind off of the procedure I was to undergo that afternoon.

After the procedure and a restful night at the Hawaii Prince Hotel, we returned to Hilo. Although we were able to sit together, we had to sit in the three seat side of the plane. Protecting my left side, Jeri suggested that I should sit in the middle. Not a talkative person, I just acknowledged the woman next to me. As we were arriving in Hilo,

she turned to me and asked if I was all right. She said that I looked uncomfortable. I told her I was okay and shared briefly what I had just gone through. Then she told me she was a retired registered nurse. I was stunned. Kamisama ensured my comfort on the way out to Honolulu and my safety back home to Hilo.

I wanted to share with you this personal string of blessings which fulfilled my life at a very challenging time. I continue to live gratefully for this great gift of life I am given.

Note: Four years ago, at the time of my first heart attack, a nurse attending to me said, "Your mother must be watching over you." I was surprised to hear her say that as we've never met before. It was a "look around the room moment." Is my Mom here?? Mom passed away in 2005. I believe at that moment my faith deepened and my belief and trust in my Mitama was further strengthened.

I live daily with great gratitude for this gift of life, realizing that this gift of life is a special blessing allowing me a 2nd and 3rd chance to express my gratitude for my existence. I realize, too, that this gift of life is built on a lifetime of blessings of Tenchi Kane no Kamisama, Konkosama and the strength of the Toku of my Mitamasama.

A calendar teaching says you should not break the bond with Kami. Kami will not break the bond with you. Let everyday be a strengthening of the bond between you and Kamisama, Konkosama, and our Mitamasama. As we commemorate this Mitama Matsuri, let us continue to honor our Mitamasama daily and not only through these special services. In doing so, our Mitama can rest in peace, be happy and continue to be with us, protecting and guiding us each day. As our Mitama is saved through our efforts so are we saved under the watchful guidance of our Mitamasama. Let us preserve this attitude and the memory of our Mitama through our daily prayers and in our daily way of living, where we remind them that their efforts on our behalf through our lifetime together and as they continue to watch over us were not, is not, nor will ever have been in vain.

A teaching from Kondo Tsuru says, "Immortality is important for humans. Immortality is when others keep praying for you after you die." Let us honor our Mitamasama daily through our prayers.

*Go to page 4 for Mr.Greenhouse's daily Mitama prayer!*



# Happy 20th Anniversary Konkokyo Oahu Chorus Group!

Rev. Edna Matsuoka, Konko Mission of Wahiawa

On September 4, 2017, the Konkokyo Oahu Chorus Group celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at the Konko Mission of Honolulu. With the combined help and tremendous support of the Konkokyo Women's Group led by **Mrs. Wanda Tamashiro**. It was a fun filled celebration with yoga by **Ms. Sheila Miles**, tons of delicious potluck food and singing our hearts out with YouTube karaoke. There was a great turnout of 35 people!

Scheduled once a month, our chorus group meets for two hours at Honolulu Church. We usually spend at least an hour catching up with each other on life events and *okage* blessed stories, while munching on yummy snacks. As much as chorus practice is intended to make us sing better, I believe our faith in Kami-Sama is what has been enriched the most. **Rev. Mitsuko Yasutake** and I have been members of the chorus group since the very first practice. I am privileged to have seen the steady continuation of this group till this day.

The chorus group was initiated by my mom, **Rev. Reiko Yano** of Konko Mission of Wahiawa. The group was formed out of a request of a Konko believer who wanted to learn more Konkokyo songs. Then the first chorus practice was held on October 18, 1997. New members have joined. Some have left. Some have sung with us on special occasions, like church anniversaries, but still, its members have always been at a steady 8 to 10 people. We have collected a \$1.00 donation every time we would meet. And at the end of the year, it was just enough to pay for our year-end karaoke party at Toma's Karaoke studio and make out an *Osonae* offering to Honolulu Church for allowing us to use their facility.

The chorus group is a fun bunch of people. We encourage each other. We enjoy laughter and share our happiness, while singing songs of past and present: *Hana wa Saku, Hanyu No Yado, Oboro-zuki Yo, Furusato, Hana, Pearly Shells and Shining Shimmering Light* just to name a few. The chorus group is also a talented bunch, who also participated in short skits for anniversary functions and volunteer activity at Kuakini Hospital. Going through memory lane, the skits we performed were: *The Giant Turnip, The North Wind and the Sun, Momotaro, and The Tortoise and*



*the Hare.*

There were a couple of occasions when it was getting difficult to continue the group because of various circumstances, but I would tell her, "No, you have to keep the group going. Once you begin something, you must never quit!" I just stole those words from my own mom, actually. As some of you may know, I publish the monthly children's

newsletter for our church. I have been doing it for 25 years. There were a few times when I wanted to quit, but my mom would scold me and say, "No, you have to keep the newsletter going. Once you begin something, you must never quit!"

"*Hosoku, Nagaku tsuzukeru*," which means to continue on, long and thin. Although times may get tough, there is virtue in continuing what you have started. It's easy to quit things we have started, but it takes energy to continue. The 20 years of the chorus group was possible through the blessings of Kami-Sama and the many people who have been there to support us throughout the years.

A few nights before the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, I opened a spreadsheet to jot down the names of every person who have been in our chorus group—even for just one practice session. Since my mom has been keeping a record of every chorus meet for the past 20 years on those black and white marbled composition books, it was not very hard to count. We were able to name 48 people! It is our prayer to be able to continue this chorus group for as long as Kami-Sama allows us to.

Many thanks to **Rev. Yasuhiro Yano, Mr. Shunichi Kawahara** and **Mrs. Amy Fukawa** for helping to set up the hall for this big celebration a day before. And a big thanks to all the people who came to celebrate with us on this very special occasion. Congratulations and Mahalo!





# Daily Mitama Prayer

Mr. George Greenhouse, Konko Mission of Hilo

*Mr. George Greenhouse's daily prayer to the Mitama*

Mitamasama, thank you very much for establishing for all of us the faith of Tenchi Kane no Kamisama, upon which we are able to build, develop and strengthen our faith and our way of life which has allowed us to receive the blessings and teachings of Tenchi Kane no Kamisama through the efforts and practice of the Konko faith by Konkosama and all his disciples and through the efforts and practice of the Konko faith by our Mitamasama, who are also ful-

filling Konkosama's promise to be wherever he is requested although his physical form is gone. We know that our Mitamasama are with us every single moment of our lives. I just pray that we can learn to live our lives where we remind you always that your efforts on our behalf, through our lifetime together, and as you continue to watch over us as our Mitamasama, has not been, is not now, nor will ever have been in vain. Mitamasama, arigatoo goozaimasu.

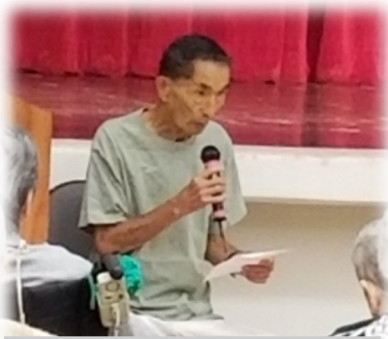
## A Morning with the Kupuna

Aimee Yasutake, Konko Mission of Wailuku

On Sunday, July 17, 2017 members gathered at the Hale Pulamamau Senior Center at the Kuakini Hospital to spread some aloha and cheer to the patients. The patients were treated to some wonderful entertainment by the many talented members of the Konko Missions of Hawaii.

To see the smiles on the faces of the patients made the time spent with them priceless. Not only was it incredibly satisfying to see the joy on the patients'

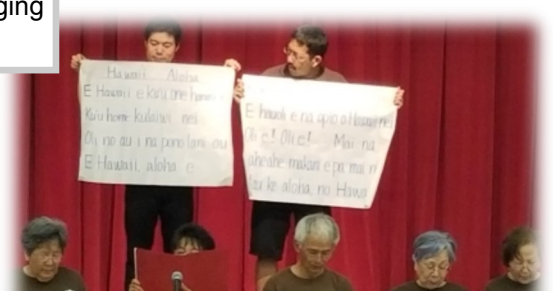
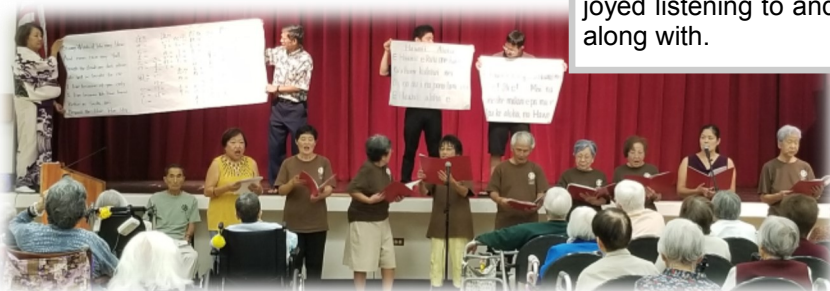
faces, but the feeling of satisfaction beaming from the members who were there to volunteer their time was extremely heartwarming. This yearly community service event is the perfect opportunity to show a kupuna some love and bring some much needed exposure to Konkokyo. Please consider joining in this activity next year! I promise you a morning well spent with the kupuna.



Mr. Ronald Yamanaka emceed the program



The Konkokyo Oahu Chorus Group sang a variety of songs that the kupuna enjoyed listening to and singing along with.





Mrs. Amy Fukawa performed a beautiful traditional Japanese dance



Mrs. Nancy Yamana singing



Mrs. Reiko Motosue dancing the hula



Mrs. Wanda Tamashiro on the piano



*Join us next year and spend some time with the kupuna!*



Balloon Toss Time!



Konko Ondo





# Faith Enrichment Program

## “Omichibiki”

By Aimee Yasutake, Konko Mission of Wailuku

On Saturday, October 21, 2017, KMH held its Faith Enrichment Program at the Honolulu Church. Lead by Rev. Koichi Konko, the theme for the workshop was “Omichibiki.” Together we explored what “Omichibiki” means and what we as members are able to do to carry it out.

“Omichibiki” literally means to take one by the hand and guide them. Rather than simply helping others by telling them what they should do, *omichibiki* implies leading by example and sharing in the experience of discovering the way with the person you are helping. For example, instead of just telling someone who is asking for directions what road to take to get to their destination, you physically accompany them to their destination, walking side by side, making sure that they follow the right path.

Rev. Koichi explained that to be human is to help others. Konkokyo teaches us that showing others this way of faith is one way to help them. When we see someone suffering, we, as humans, naturally want to help them. But how? Rev. Koichi pointed out several teachings that emphasize the importance of *omichibiki* in Konkokyo. There are several teachings which state that to save others and to serve Kami-sama, we must tell others about the blessings we have received. Telling others about the faith is also one way to express your appreciation to Kami-sama. You can also help yourself through helping others. For me, this was a profound message to receive at this juncture in my life. I have found much fulfillment in serving the church in my own capacity and feel that I have been saved in many ways because of it.

An integral part of saving people in Konkokyo is *Toritsugi* mediation. In fact, the very definition of a church as stated in the Konkokyo bylaws is that there be a *Toritsugi* mediation seat or *okekkai* placed to the right side of the altar. As some of you may be able to sympathize, seeking *Toritsugi* can be intimidating. I can attest that it takes a bit of courage to approach the *okekkai* to do *Toritsugi* when you haven't really tried it before. Add to that the fact that the person sitting at the *okekkai* is a family member, in my case my mother or brother, and it can feel nearly impossible. But, I can say this, trying *otodoke* will bring you blessings in one form or another, you just



Rev. Koichi Konko

have to be receptive to it. From a minister's standpoint, Rev. Koichi explains that the minister sitting at the *okekkai* is supposed to be a representative of Konko-sama, but they are definitely human too. They are not perfect and most certainly need practice in performing *Toritsugi* as well. In order to practice, they need members to come and seek mediation.

This is where Rev. Koichi posed a question to the members, “What are the characteristics that an effective minister or *Toritsugi* mediator should have?” The members shared a variety of answers, such as the minister should be personable, approachable, and can listen and treat the members with respect. One characteristic that showed a difference in culture was eye contact, which is something that Rev. Koichi shared doesn't happen in Japan. One input I found to be a key in *Toritsugi* is that the member must be open to receiving *Toritsugi* as well. I have found this to be very important in my own experience in seeking *Toritsugi*. Also something I found interesting that someone shared was that a good minister is someone who has suffered. I must agree here as well. I think some of the most impactful and memorable sermons I have heard have been about that person's personal struggles and how they overcame them.

The next question Rev. Koichi posed to us was, “How can we do *omichibiki*?” There were various ideas like sharing your blessings with others around you; or volunteering at senior centers or plac-



es with people in need; or encouraging others to join a church group or in church activities. All excellent suggestions to promote the Konkko faith and spread the teachings and blessings we are all receiving with others. By doing this, hopefully we can inspire others to come and see what Konkokyo is about and spread the teachings. I recently had a discussion with a friend about how to get more people to notice Konkokyo. Her suggestions were in line with this workshop in that we need to get the Konkokyo name out there. People don't know about us because we don't advertise ourselves or go door to door reaching out to people. It has never been Konkokyo's style to do so. However, in this day and age of dwindling membership, we can all agree that there needs to be some kind of renaissance in how we approach spreading the faith. There are people in need all around us, they just need to be aware of what is out there for them. Konkokyo can definitely be one of tools available to them. It is up to us members, those that know about the greatness of this religion,

to get the word out there. Start with the people closest to you and start a dialogue about ways to find happiness. You never know who might be waiting for just a little bit of encouragement from a friend to seek guidance and help. By helping others, you will be helping yourself as well.



## Find Your Happy

### Editor's Corner

At the suggestion of a minister I respect and admire greatly, and in an attempt to find more fulfillment in life, I have taken to seeking more *Toritsugi* mediation. As a minister's daughter, I was always told that all problems could be solved at the *okekkai*. Now, whether I truly believed that is a completely different story. As a child, I never sought *Toritsugi* and I always felt very intimidated by the idea of sitting in front of the sensei and talking about my issues. Mind you, the sensei sitting at the *okekkai* was usually my father. However, as an adult, I have found that I am more comfortable sitting in front of the *okekkai* and giving thanks for blessings I have received or asking for prayers to help with a problem I might be facing. To be honest, it is still difficult for me to do *otodoke* with my mother or brother to the extent that I do with say, Koichi-sensei. But, I have found that comfort comes with practice. The more I sit myself down at the *okekkai*, the easier it seems to get.

This has lead to opportunities to find happiness in my life. I have a brighter outlook on life as a whole and it has allowed me to reach out in ways I didn't think possible in the past. One example is the Sunday School program at the Honolulu Church that I have been given the opportunity to participate in. I have always enjoyed working with children. Though my career path has taken me away from teaching, I am very grateful that Kami-sama has found a way to

allow me to fulfill my love for working with children while helping the church that has served me so well. Although the "Konko Keiki" Sunday School program is just starting, it is my hope that this will lead to many more opportunities for people to become familiar with the church and know that they can always come here for help and guidance.

I encourage all of you to go out and find what might make you happy and I am confident that your happiness will be contagious and grow into happiness for others as well.

If you have any children or grandchildren that would be interested in joining the Sunday School, please reach out to your local church!



Halloween craft fun at the first "Konko Keiki" Sunday School at the Honolulu Church



# 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!

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).

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