KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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"Konko-Sama, Arigatou Gozaimasu"



By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano

"Omedetou Gozaimasu" on today's Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Service. Thank you for your presence as we celebrate the annual Grand Service in Appreciation of the Work of our Founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin, here at Konko Mission of Waipahu. I would also like to thank Rev. Akinobu Yasutake for giving me this opportunity to share some of my thoughts about the practice of the Konko faith.

On September 28, my wife, Reiko-sensei, and I celebrated the 49th anniversary of our service at Konko Mission of Wahiawa. It has been almost half a century. We are truly grateful that we have been able to continue serving Kami-Sama at Wahiawa Church, blessed with good health, good relationships, and the financial stability that has sustained us throughout these years.

I was also blessed to attend both Centennial Anniversary Celebrations: the Konko Churches of North America Centennial, held at the Konko Church of San Francisco on August 12, and the Konko Missions in Hawaii Centennial, held at Koʻolau Ballroom on August 15, 2026. I was very pleased to take part in both celebrations, which were filled with great joy and happiness and concluded so successfully. The presence of the 6th Konko-Sama certainly made a difference.

This reminded me of another historic occasion in August 2000, when the 5th Spiritual Head of the Konkokyo religious organization, Rev. Heiki Konko, attended the 100th Anniversary of the Independence of the Konkokyo Religious Organization, held in Hilo, Hawaii. On that special occasion, Konko-Sama visited each of our local churches. Such a visitation was unprecedented in the history of the Konko Missions in Hawaii, as well as among other Konkokyo communities in Japan and elsewhere.

This time, the 6th Konko-Sama, Rev. Hiromichi Konko, together with his wife, Rev. Nobuko Konko, three of their children, and an accompanying entourage from Gohonbu Headquarters in Konko, attended both Centennial celebrations.

Konko-Sama does not ordinarily make visits to local churches in Japan or elsewhere. Therefore, it was truly a blessing for me to personally witness his presence in America, both in San Francisco and Honolulu. I also witnessed how Konko-Sama's presence brought about some unforgettable moments—experiences that we would not ordinarily have the opportunity to witness at our local churches.

While we were in San Francisco, my son Rodney casually asked Konko-Sama whether he would be willing to visit the hospital where Rev. Masato Kawahatsu was receiving care. To our surprise, Konko-Sama graciously agreed and went to meet Rev. Kawahatsu in person.

The day before, some of us had visited Rev. Kawahatsu to express our thoughts and concern for him. At that time, he was very weak and appeared to be preparing himself for his departure from this world.

However, when we visited Rev. Kawahatsu again the following day, something remarkable had happened. He was sitting up in bed and looked quite different from before. His condition seemed to have improved. He had responded to Konko-Sama's personal visitation. This was one of those unexpected and unforgettable experiences that deeply impressed me.

When we first learned that Konko-Sama would be coming to celebrate the Centennial anniversaries, we were also informed that he would visit three local churches on Oahu: Honolulu, Waipahu, and Wahiawa. These visits were intended to be discreet and were not openly announced.

Following the Centennial celebration, we were instructed that when Konko-Sama visited each church, he would proceed to the Toritsugi Mediation desk, and the local minister was to sit on the mediator's side to receive him.

This arrangement was unprecedented in the history of Konkokyo. The instructions had come directly from the Headquarters office.

At Wahiawa Church, as Konko-Sama entered the Hiromae, he proceeded to the Toritsugi Mediation desk, accompanied by his wife. He then took his place on the seeker's side of the desk, while I sat on the mediator's side to receive him.

Konko-Sama extended his greeting by saying, **"Konko-Sama, arigatou gozaimasu,"** and shared his message regarding his visitation.

I simply received his visit. I placed a packet of Goshinmai into the holder that Konko-Sama had placed on the Toritsugi Mediation desk. I did not say anything. It was one of the most inconceivable moments of my entire missionary service.

For this very special occasion, I had also prepared tamagushi, sacred branches, for both Konko-Sama and his wife to offer.

Ever since that moment, I have continued to reflect upon what Konko-Sama was trying to convey to us through his actions.

The Fourth Konko-Sama, Rev. Kagamitaro Konko, used to say that he himself was a believer. As a believer, he served in the designated position of "Kyōshu," or Spiritual Head of the entire Konkokyo religious organization.

If my memory serves me correctly, he taught that there should be no difference among believers, whether one is a minister or a lay believer. We are all believers. This thought also reminded me of something that Rev. Hiromichi Konko himself once expressed:

> "My words, 'Thank you very much, Konko sama,' do not refer to any one particular individual. When I say these words, many people come to mind—Ikigami Konko Daijin (our Founder), Tenchi Kane No Kami (the Divine Parent of the Universe), my ancestors, numerous Mitama spirits, successive Konko-samas, their wives, everyone around me, and everything that takes care of me. I am thinking of all these people and things when I say, 'Konko-sama.'
>
> "I find myself spontaneously saying 'Konko-sama!' when, for example, my child stumbles over a stone. I do this without even thinking. I have been trained to say 'Konko-sama' even in an emergency. With this in mind, I say, 'Thank you very much, Konko sama' every day."

These words appeared in the July 2026 issue of *Face to Faith*, published by the Konkokyo International Center.

After reading these words, I began to understand more deeply the meaning behind Konko-Sama's actions during his visit and the respect and appreciation he expressed toward the ministers who have faithfully served at their designated places.

This year, both of our faith communities in North America and Hawaii are commemorating one hundred years of the organized development of the Konko faith.

This development was greatly influenced by the visitation of Rev. Kōkichi Katashima from Japan in 1926. He was interested in learning about the activities of Japanese religious communities, including Konko believers living in the eastern regions of the mainland United States and in Hawaii.

During his visit, he learned that there were already two Konkokyo faith communities in Seattle.
Following Rev. Katashima's visit, the Seattle Konkokyo Mamichi Kai was established. We also witnessed the formation of Mamichi Kai in Tacoma, Los Angeles, and Hawaii.

These Mamichi Kai organizations on the mainland and in Hawaii eventually developed into the Konko faith communities that we have today. They have been sustained through one hundred years of dedicated efforts by ministers and believers.

Throughout these one hundred years, believers in both the Konko Churches of North America and the Konko Missions in Hawaii have continued to express, **"Konko-Sama, arigatou gozaimasu,"** not only through their words but also through their actions, in gratitude for the blessings they have received.
My wife and I have now served at Wahiawa Church for nearly half a century.

Through our daily services, which we call *goyo*, we have continued to express "Konko-Sama, arigatou gozaimasu" in many different ways throughout our daily lives.

From the moment we wake up in the morning, we begin our day with this spirit of gratitude. We prepare the cooked rice offering for Kami-Sama. We clean the church. We serve as Toritsugi Mediators and recite our daily prayers.

We visit our parent church, Konko Mission of Honolulu, whenever church after our services are held. We prepare and send out our church newsletters, along with letters of appreciation to both Amagi Church and Konko-Sama at Gohonbu Headquarters. We also respond to various church functions, including pilgrimages to Gohonbu and other opportunities to serve.

All these elements of our daily service are expressions of the same message:
"Konko-Sama, arigatou gozaimasu."

And I believe this can apply to each and every one of us. Your visits to church, your goyo, your offerings to Kami-Sama, and the many things you do in your daily life can all become expressions of your own heartfelt gratitude.

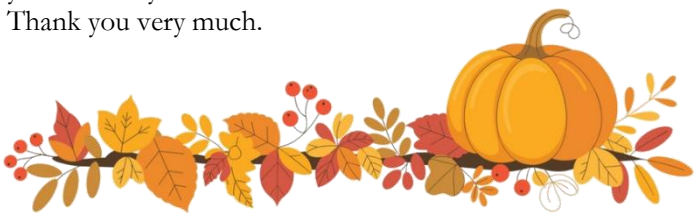
Even without saying the words aloud, your actions themselves can convey the message:
"Konko-Sama, arigatou gozaimasu."
Through nearly half a century of service to Kami-Sama, the conclusion I have reached is very simple:
Live as Konko believers under any circumstances.
The continued existence and operation of our local faith communities depend upon Konko believers who truly live their faith.

The work of the church cannot be sustained by ministers alone. It continues because there are believers who put the teachings into practice in their daily lives and carry the faith forward from one generation to the next.

As we commemorate one hundred years, my wish is also very simple.
I wish to witness the continued growth of Konkokyo faith communities made up of people who truly live their

faith—people who, through happiness and hardship, through ordinary days and extraordinary moments, can naturally express from the depths of their hearts:
"Konko-Sama, arigatou gozaimasu."

May this spirit of gratitude continue to flourish throughout the Konko Churches of North America and the Konko Missions in Hawaii for the next one hundred years and beyond.
Thank you very much.



WAHIAWA KONKO MISSION MONTHLY SCHEDULE

November 2026

1 Sun -Monthly Svc. for Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama (9 am) 天地金乃神様 月例祭 *Okage sharing
-Wailuku Church Autumn Grand Service (11 am)
5 Thr -Church clean-up (9 am)
6 Fri -Japanese Program at St. Francis (10:30 am)
8 Sun -Monthly Svc for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am) 生神金光大神様 月例祭 *Okage sharing
11 Wed-KMH Kyoten Study Session on ZOOM (5 pm)
14 Sat -Rev. Masato Kawahatsu Celebration of Life Service at Konko Church of San Francisco (11 am-3 pm)
15 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am) *Okage sharing
-San Francisco Church Grand Ceremony (11 am)
19 Thr -Church clean-up (9 am)
20 Fri -Garage Sale Prep (1 pm)
21 Sat -Garage Sale (9 am to 1 pm)
22 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service 月例霊祭 (9 am)
-Hilo Church Autumn Grand Ceremony (11 am)
25 Wed-KMH CEOC Mtg on ZOOM (5 pm)
26 Thr -Happy Thanksgiving HOLIDAY!
27 Fri -Church clean-up (9 am)
28 Sat -Hawaii Gunpla Workshop at HNL Church (12 n-6 pm)
-KMH Board of Trustee's Meeting (10:30 am) HNL
-Ehimemaru Memorial Clean-up at Kaka'ako WFP (9 am)
29 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am) *Okage Sharing
-29th Memorial Svc for late Rev. Kikue Kodama at HNL Church (9 am)

December 2026

1 Tue -Monthly Svc. for Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama (7:30 pm) 天地金乃神様 月例祭 *Share Okage

Voice of the Universe…

1. There are people between Heaven and Earth. Heaven is father and Earth is mother. Humans, plants, and other living things live on Earth through the blessings they receive from Heaven. *I Ishihara Ginzo 12.*

2. Heaven and Earth continue to live. Because Heaven and Earth are alive, all people can live. *III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 104*

In Loving Memory: November

Rev. Kikue Kodama	11/28/1997
Ronald Minoru Miyatake	11/14/2000
Crandal Ancog	11/21/2008
Rev. Takashi Inagaki	11/9/2004
David Suyeki Oka	11/8/2006
Toshihiko Hosaka	11/20/2008
Chieno Hirota	11/17/2009
Cecilia Asako Soma	11/24/2003
Tei Yoshiiwa	11/24/1973
Yoshitoshi Uyehara	11/25/2000
Nobuko Yano	11/18/2016
Katherine T. Kawaguchi	11/7/2016

The Life of the Founder 金光教祖の生涯 瀬戸三喜雄 金光教学研究所 紀要別冊教学叢書 2

The following is an English translation of a book titled, "Konkō Kyōso no Shougai" or "The Life of the Founder Konko Daijin" authored by the Rev. Mikio Seto and published by Konkokyo Theological Research Center in 1980. Many biographies about the life of the Founder Konko Daijin exist. I would like to introduce this article for your reference in your pursuit of faith. An English translation was provided by Rev. Yasuhiro Yano.
(continued from the previous issue)

Expansion of the Religious Movement

As mentioned earlier, the Konko faith gradually spread to many regions throughout Japan. By around 1877, communities of believers had formed not only in the Okayama region but also in other areas, including Hiroshima and Yamaguchi, and farther east in Osaka.

According to historical records, Kiyono Fujii became the first influential believer in the Okayama region. Kiyono had lost her eyesight six years before meeting Bunji. Despite her blindness, Kami made her a remarkable promise:

"Even if you are blind, I will allow you to live a normal, carefree life without being hindered by your disability throughout your lifetime."

Through Kami's blessings, Kiyono was able to walk naturally and perform delicate tasks such as needlework. She was also able to visit the households of the Ikeda Clan in Okayama and Amagi. Through her connections and dedicated efforts, she played an important role in spreading Bunji's teachings throughout the Okayama region.

In 1860, Sen Shibuya and Sakasuke Nakatsukasa also began helping to spread the practice of faith. The following year, in 1861, Jūemon Saitō, Zenemon Tsugawa, and Motoemon Kawasaki became believers.
In 1862, several others joined the faith, including Iwazō Asai, Tomie Takahashi, Yojiuemon Matsumoto, Ichisaburo Iwafuji, and Yasuhei Kawate. During this period, Jūemon Saitō and Tomie Takahashi achieved considerable success in their religious activities. By 1863, a small faith community known as a "Kō" had been established.

In the Kasaoka region, Uhei Hashimoto became a believer in 1864, followed by Yuu Fujisawa in 1865. That same year, Ume Oomori began serving as a Toritsugi Mediator. Through her influence, Jiroshirō Kataoka became a believer in 1866.

Most of these early believers came from the lower ranks of society and worked hard simply to sustain their daily lives. However, the teachings also attracted people from the samurai class, including individuals with considerable social standing and influence.

In the Okayama region, Kiyono Fujii had connections with the Ikeda Clan in Amagi, while Uhei Hashimoto maintained connections with the Ikeda Clan in Okayama. Through these relationships, they were able to introduce the faith to people associated with these influential families.

Zenemon Tsugawa, who belonged to the Okayama Clan, was the first to introduce the faith to people of the Ashimori Clan. Among the many samurai who became believers was Hisanobu Matsumoto, who held the position of *koori bugyou*, or district magistrate. Initially, he attempted to point out what he believed were faults in Bunji's religious practices. However, after meeting Bunji in person, he became convinced of the teachings and eventually became a believer himself.

Another notable individual was Lord Katsuhiro Itakura of the Niwase Clan. He became a devoted follower of Bunji's faith and frequently visited the Hiromae, although he did so discreetly.

As the faith continued to grow in Okayama, its teachings gradually reached farther east, largely through the efforts of Shin'ichirō Shirakami.

Shin'ichirō operated a rice-trading business in Okayama called "Bitchūya." However, he suffered from an illness that caused him to lose his eyesight to the point where he could barely perceive even the light of a candle.
In 1869, Shin'ichirō had an opportunity to hear Kiyono Fujii speak about the faith at the home of Kisouji Nakajimaya, who was already a believer in Bunji's teachings.

Inspired by what he heard, Shin'ichirō decided in 1870 to visit Bunji in person. Through this encounter, he received a miraculous blessing, and his eyesight was restored for the first time in ten years.

Deeply grateful for this extraordinary blessing, Shin'ichirō felt compelled to share the teachings with others. In 1871, he published a booklet entitled *Omichi Annai*, meaning "An Introduction to the Konko Faith."
This booklet became the first formal publication introducing the practice of the Konko faith in the history of the Konkokyo religious organization.

In 1875, Shin'ichirō began making efforts to spread the faith in Osaka. Although his initial attempts were challenging, he continued his missionary work with determination.

During his third attempt in Osaka in 1879, his religious activities experienced remarkable growth. So many people came seeking his guidance that visitors had to obtain numbered tickets and wait for their turn to meet him.

Despite this success, Shin'ichirō occasionally encountered difficulties with the police as he continued his religious activities.

Among his disciples was Fujimori Kondō, who later became one of the most influential figures in the development and operation of the religious movement. Other disciples, including Yasubee Wada, Ichibei Iguchi, and Yonejiro Nakano, also made important contributions to the expansion of the faith.

While Shin'ichirō Shirakami and his disciples helped spread the teachings eastward, other dedicated believers were carrying the faith westward from Okayama. In 1867, Fujii Kichibee became a believer through the Toritsugi Mediation of Jūemon Saitō. One of Kichibee's disciples, Tsunezō Karahi, made significant contributions to spreading the faith throughout the western regions of Japan.

Kichibee established a branch in Onomichi and began efforts to introduce the teachings to the Yamaguchi region. Tsunezō, working in Yuu, Yamaguchi, achieved remarkable success in his religious activities. At one point, his influence extended throughout the entire province of Yamaguchi. Among his disciples were Kakutaro Aketa and Kenji Tokunaga.

Through Kakutaro Aketa, Matsuhei Katsura was introduced to the Konko faith. Matsuhei Katsura later made outstanding contributions to spreading the teachings throughout the Kyūshū region.

Other important figures in the expansion of the faith included Shoichiro Miyake and Ankichi Saijo, both of whom were disciples of Jūemon Saitō.

Tanekichi Saijo, in turn, guided several disciples, including Yuujiro Manno, Yasuta Hayashi, and Torikichi Takahashi. These individuals contributed greatly to spreading the faith throughout the Chūgoku region, including Tottori, Shimane, Okayama, Hiroshima, and Yamaguchi.

The faith also began to spread to the island of Shikoku. Fujii Oomoto and Renzō Seto were introduced to the faith through Tomie Takahashi, while Tsunezō Takahashi became a believer through the guidance of Jūemon Saitō. These individuals later played important roles in introducing the Konko teachings to the Shikoku region.

Meanwhile, Toku Kashiwabara was introduced to the faith through Shoichiro Miyake. Around 1879, many others became believers, including Shima Senda, Toyomatsu Ogihara, Yonezo Akiyama, Saizaburo Kobayashi, Sadajiro Yamamoto, Kō Nanba, Hachitaro Shimamura, and Chiyokichi Toshimori.

Through their dedicated efforts, the faith continued to spread throughout the Okayama and Hiroshima regions. Another important figure was Norio Satō, who became a believer in 1875 through the influence of Yakichi Doi. Norio Satō later devoted himself to the establishment and development of the Konkokyo religious organization. In this manner, the Konko faith expanded steadily through the dedication, experiences, and personal connections of its early believers.

What began with Bunji's teachings in Okayama gradually spread eastward and westward, reaching communities throughout Japan. The desire to help others through faith spread like a powerful brushfire, igniting the hearts of people across different regions and social classes. Each believer who received blessings became a source of inspiration for others, passing on the teachings through personal encounters, Toritsugi Mediation, and dedicated service.

Through the efforts of these early pioneers, the foundation was laid for the continued growth of the Konko faith, and their spirit of helping others was faithfully passed down from one generation to the next. (To be continued)