

Fore
word**Do it with Courage!**

by the Reverend Michio Hashimoto Chief Administrative Director of the Konko Faith

"Do it with courage!" ... I received these words from Reverend Takeno Kondo, the then Head Minister of Konko Church of Namba, Osaka Pref. of Japan when I paid a visit to my Parent Church as soon as I was appointed Director of the Konkokyo East Kinki Regional Administrative Center. Takeno sensei always showed great consideration for me (and many others), for which I seem to have depended upon her whenever I asked her to perform Toritsugi Mediation for me. Takeno sensei's words were something I'd never expected. I'd expected her to use some "Konkokyo" words such as "Be sincere" "Be courteous" and "Be patient." Takeno sensei, however, used a regular/ordinary word of "Be courageous." I was surprised to hear her say so, but I always took these words to heart during my tenure as the Director of the Regional Administrative Center. And I still take them to heart to this day.

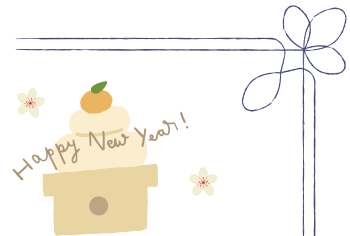
I later learned that there is a poem by the late Rev. Fujimori Kondo, the founding minister of the Namba church. The poem reads, "If you want to be a truly sincere believer of the Konko Faith, you should have strong courage in your heart AND always try to be modest as a person." I'm sure that Takeno sensei knew this poem by her founding minister, (which is) needless to say, and she therefore gave me the aforementioned words. I suppose that the meaning of this poem is "When you are forced to make a choice in your missionary work, you need to make a judgment with a strong courage in your heart. At the same time, you need to act with a modest attitude when you lead people. Be neither arrogant nor flattering by discriminating people you meet." Especially, when you have administrative goyo, you must make decisions bravely and yet you must try not to be arrogant. Fujimori sensei wrote the above-

mentioned poem and another poem on New Year's Day of 1915, when he became 60 years old. With these two poems, Rev. Kondo spoke to his disciples. Another poem, by the way, reads, "Try to be as selfless as you can by dedicating yourself to Kami, both physically and mentally. And whenever necessary, reflect yourself." According to Fujimori sensei himself, the messages embroidered onto this poem are "As long as we practice faith in our Parent Kami, we should reflect upon ourselves whenever necessary or as often as possible. We also need to do our best in order to make our body and mind as immaculate as possible, so that we can get ourselves closer to Kami. This effort is paramount for us." This poem speaks to us about two important things; an attitude with which we never hesitate to

leave everything to Kami and an attitude to reflect upon ourselves whenever we encounter difficult and/or troublesome situations, NOT blaming Kami for those severe situations. These two poems by Rev. Kondo, they respectively deal with two contrasting things; "courage" & "modesty" and "leaving all things to Kami" & "reflecting upon oneself."

I don't think Fujimori sensei maintained that he was already such a person in the poems. Rather, I believe that he expressed his desire/wish that he wanted to become such an individual someday. With these poems, Fujimori sensei wants Konko believers, and, furthermore, those who talk to people about Konkokyo and lead them spiritually to become such persons. I also want to become such a person and I have this wish every single day.

The Sacred Grounds at the New Year



At the Sacred Grounds in the New Year season, rows of banners bearing the words "Happy New Year" were raised, and small flags and *Kadomatsu* decorations adorned the area around the precincts, welcoming worshippers who came to offer New Year's greetings.

Within the precincts, a station for writing expressions of gratitude and prayers was set up, where worshippers wrote down their daily thanks and wishes on designated forms and offered them to Konko-sama. Leaflets were also distributed featuring the New Year radio address delivered by Konko-sama, on the radio program "The Time of Konkokyo," along with prayer strips inscribed with teachings of the Founder.

In addition, the "New Year Prayer Tamagushi Offering" ceremony was conducted in front of the "Shutokuden" Faith Training Center, where



worshippers offered Tamagushi branches imbued with their heartfelt prayers to Kami-sama.

At the rest area within the precincts, Sacred Sake (*Omiki*) was served by the Association of Honbu-affiliated Ministers, while sweet red bean soup (*Zenzai*) was offered by volunteers of

the Sacred Grounds at a tent beside the rest area. Amid the solemn atmosphere, scenes of lively interaction among worshippers could be seen throughout the Grounds.

* Scenes from the New Year at the Sacred Grounds can be viewed on the website "Konkokyo Followers." →



◆ Year-End Service ◆

From 10:00 a.m. on December 31, the Year-End Service was conducted at the Headquarter's Main Worship Hall.

Konko-sama served as a Head Officiant, and served by six Officiants. A Main Prayer was offered expressing gratitude for the year lived within the blessings of Tenchi Kane no Kami and praying for continued peace and well-being in the year ahead. Following the Main Prayer, representatives of the worshippers, Ministers, the Sacred Grounds Lay Believers' Association, the Women's Association, and the Boys' and Girls' Association, offered Tamagushi.

After the Service, Chief Administrative Director, Rev. Michio Hashimoto delivered a greeting entitled "The Founder and Ataka Kumada."

◆ New Year's Day Service ◆

Following the Morning Silent Prayer on New Year's Day, January 1, the New Year's Day Service was conducted at the Headquarter's Main Worship Hall. Konko-sama served as a Head Officiant, and served by six Officiants. In the Main Prayer, gratitude was expressed for the boundless blessings of Tenchi Kane no Kami and for the Founder's eternal workings of Mediation, and Prayers were offered for the fulfillment of the Konkokyo Organization's activities. It was further prayed that each and every one would recognize the blessings bestowed upon us and advance in a life of faith that is dedicated to repaying those blessings, and be of service to world peace and the salvation of all humanity.

After the Service, Chief Administrative Director, Rev. Michio Hashimoto delivered a greeting entitled "So That Everyone May Smile."



Ceremony to Appreciate the Mitama Spirits of Konko Ministers and Believers with Outstanding Contributions to the Spread of the Konko Faith, along with the 1st Year Memorial Service for the late Reverend Heiki Konko Held

Let us Contribute to World Peace and the Salvation of All Humanity !

We held the Ceremony to Appreciate the Mitama Spirits of Konko Ministers and Believers with Outstanding Contributions to the Spread of the Konko Faith at the Grand Ceremony Hall of the Konkokyo Headquarters at 13:30 on December 14th, 2025. Our Spiritual Leader was the Chief Officiant for the ceremony.

This event included the Appointment Ceremony of Ministers' Assistants (Hokyo). On behalf of her fellow Hokyo, Ms. Natsumi Sato (Konko Church of Kubara, Fukuoka, Japan) received her Letter of Appointment on the stage. Ms. Sato delivered her wishes and resolutions, which was followed by a brief address of the Rev. Michio Hashimoto, the Chief Administrative Director of Konkokyo. The worshippers attending the ceremony expressed their deep appreciation for the sincerity and dedication of their senior ministers



and believers whom they admire as Konko ministers and believers with distinguished contributions to the spread of the Konko Faith. The worshippers also renewed their decision and desire to inherit their seniors' faith in Kami and propagate this Faith to the people around them, seeking this Faith at the same time. In this article, we would like to publish the address of the Chief Administrative Director.

◆ Address of the Chief Administrative Director ◆

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to today's ceremony! I am truly grateful that we are now holding the Ceremony to Appreciate the Mitama Spirits of Konko Ministers and Believers with Distinguished Contributions to the Spread of the Konko Faith along with the 1st Year Memorial Service for the late Reverend Heiki Konko, with our Spiritual Leader serving as the Chief Officiant. This year, 78 mitama spirits have been newly enshrined at Go-Hombu and 5,039 mitama spirits in total are enshrined here.



Today, we also had the Appointment Ceremony of Ministers' Assistants (Hokyo). 289 people were appointed Ministers' Assistants by our Spiritual Leader. Your presence as Hokyo is highly appreciated.

In the Konko Shimbu Newspaper dated July 23rd 2025, there was an article about a special tribute to the former (Kyoshu) Konko-sama. On the front page, we published comments of Konko-sama's family. Konko-sama's grandchildren would often invite him to play with them. Konko-sama used to say to his family members, "Don't worry that I am



tired. I can totally relax when I play with them." And he really enjoyed playing with his grandchildren. At the Konko HQ's Central Worship and Mediation Hall, the Fifth Konko-sama often said, "You may think that these little

kids are making a noise and it's not nice. Well, actually, they are offering their lively voices to Kami." When worshippers brought their mischievous kids to Hombu Hiromae, Konko-sama



welcomed those little kids with open arms. In the last months of his life, (the Fifth) Konko-sama was happy to see those who visited him at the hospital. He said to each of the visitors, "Keep it up ! Do your best!" and/or "I admire your hard work/diligence." Konko-sama's family kindly shared in the article that (the Fifth) Konko-sama had a compassionate heart until the very end of his lifetime. According to them, Konko-sama remained broad-hearted and caring.

I am sure that each one of you has important memories with the Fifth Konko-sama. I would like to express my deepest appreciation for Konko-sama's sacred goyo as our Spiritual Leader for 30 years and his 89-year life.

As you know well, we are holding this ceremony in order to admire and give thanks to the mitama spirits of senior (Konko) ministers and believers with remarkable contributions to the spread of the Konko Faith. Since this year (2025AD) marks the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, I would like to share a war-time episode of a senior Konko minister, who is now a mitama spirit.



Japan fought against the Allies until August



15, 1945, long after Italy and Germany had surrendered. On the night of August 15, families throughout the country rejoiced a whole lot because now that they didn't need to cover the lights in their home. Now, there were no air raids. Around that time, however, Konko ministers and their families who were propagating the Konko Faith in Continental China and the Korean Peninsula were extremely concerned and nervous, not knowing what to expect.

The late Rev. Michiko Sakakura, who later became the Deputy Head Minister of Konko Church of Hagi, Yamaguchi Prefecture, Japan, was working at a factory which was a bit far from the City of Nampo of northern Korea at the age of 16 when the Second World War ended. Soon after the war ended, all the factory managers were shot to death. And Ms. Sakakura returned to Chinnampo, where the Konkokyo church run by her family was located. Ms. Sakakura's elder sister-in-law was living in the

severe circumstance.

At that time, Michiko-san was still suffering from high fever. Her elder sister-in-law gave Michiko-san Goshinmai, Sacred Rice, which made her want to vomit. When Michiko-san threw up, a white solid came out of her mouth. It was in fact a mass of parasites. After that, her fever came down to a normal level, and Michiko-san later wrote down, "I spontaneously clasped my hands together and said, 'Thank you very much, Konko-sama!'" The group of escaping Japanese people managed to get on a freight train and they got to cross the 38th parallel north.

This is a story about one's realizing Kami's workings in the midst of unimaginable hardship. The Konko Library has a booklet written by Rev. Michiko Sakakura, and this booklet contains many other wartime stories that are even severer than the above-mentioned event.

Rev. Sakakura says in her booklet, "I never wanted the horrible experiences we were forced to go through to be forgotten over the course of time. This is the very reason why I wrote these stories."

It is never easy to define how we, people living today, should interpret and/or accept these cruel wartime episodes. I, however, am sincerely grateful and find it extremely wonderful that Michiko-san made up her mind to serve our Parent Kami even though she had had to undergo such cruel experiences.

The former (Fifth) Konko-sama was present at the 2000 KCNA-KMH Joint Conference and he made a speech, which was concluded with



church with her children, and 12 other households were also living there. They were the ones who had evacuated from Manchuria (These people were workers who



engaged in constructing the Manchurian railroad.). In the following year, the Japanese government encouraged these people to return to Japan. As a young lady, Michiko-san was having high fever due to malaria at that time. She, however, couldn't help joining those who left for Japan. Michiko-san traveled by ship to some point. After that, she had to walk for 16 km in order to cross 38 degrees north latitude, which soon became the border between North and South Korea.

People with whom Michiko-san was marching told her that she should either urinate or send out excrement in the group. It was because, according to her company, if you left the group, you would never know what the locals or soldiers would do to you. Among the group was a woman in labor. Michiko-san was told to go and help the lady. What Michiko-san witnessed was that people were covering the mouth of the lady's newborn baby so that the baby would not cry out loudly. They did so because all people's lives would be exposed to extreme danger if enemies heard the baby's cry and knew where they were. They were under such a



the following words:

"Let us strive for a realization of world peace, and let us strive for a salvation of mankind." I believe that we all need to inherit these words of the Fifth Konko-sama.

Let us express our deepest appreciation for the fact that we are all connected to Konko Daijin's faith, and let us strive for true peace of the world, which is the very wish of our Parent Kami!

Lastly, I sincerely pray that all of you here today will receive Kami's wondrous and sacred mercy/power/workings through this ceremony, go home safely and will receive Kami's blessings more than ever. Thank you very much.

