KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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HCRP Peace Prayer

By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano *(Head Minister)*

The annual Interfaith Peace Prayer coordinated by the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace (HCRP) was observed on Saturday, October 18, 2025, at the Konko Mission of Honolulu. This year's theme, "Choosing Peace; No More War," commemorated the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II.

The Keynote Speaker was Mr. Leo Kimo Mier, a retired Sergeant First Class of the United States Army. Fourteen representatives from the local community offered heartfelt messages of prayer.

Representing the Konko Faith community, my daughter, Rev. Edna Matsuoka performed the Ōnusa Purification Rite and read the "Prayer for Peace" from the *Konkokyo Prayer Book*. Interestingly, many attendees joined in by picking up the prayer book and reciting the prayer in unison.

Two participants also highlighted the importance of encouraging young people's presence at the annual gathering. We are reminded to respond to that call as we look ahead to next year's Peace Prayer.

The following is the message I shared with the audience as President of HCRP:

Thank you very much for being here today. Your presence gives true meaning to this annual Interfaith Peace Prayer. My heartfelt thanks to Rev. Koichi Konko for graciously providing this facility, and to all board members and supporters who made today's gathering possible.

This marks the 29th Peace Prayer, as we were unable to meet in person during the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2022. It also marks 33 years since the founding of HCRP. I am deeply grateful to have been part of this organization since its beginning—and perhaps I am the only founding member still active today. As president, I would like to share a brief reflection.

Many years ago, I visited a nearby 7-Eleven. As I approached the entrance, a man kindly opened the door for me as he was leaving. I said, "Thank you," but perhaps he didn't hear me. He looked upset, as if I had ignored his kindness. On another occasion, in a similar situation, I held the door open for a young woman entering the store. She smiled and said, "Thank you." That small difference made me realize how simple gestures can have very different outcomes.

As a believer in the Konko Faith, I have learned to be grateful simply for the opportunity to help others, even in small ways—like holding a door open. Whether or not my act is acknowledged, I can still feel gratitude for being given the chance to express kindness.

The Fourth Spiritual Head of our faith, the late Rev. Kagamitaro Konko, once wrote:

"世話になる全てに礼を言う心、平和生み出す心といはん。"
A heart that responds in gratitude for all forms of help and support is a heart that creates peace.

May today's gathering remind us that peace begins with small acts of gratitude and kindness in our daily lives. Thank you.

Voice of the Universe

1. *There are people between Heaven and Earth. Heaven is father and Earth is mother. Humans, plants, and all living things thrive 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 are able to live.* — III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 104

Bulletin Board November 2025

• KMH Kyōten Study Group via Zoom Voice of the Universe Join us: at 9:00 am, ZOOM
•Garage Sale: Sat. 11/8 from 9 am to 1 pm. Proceeds will be offered to the Konkokyo Headquarters.
•BBQ picnic at Haleiwa Ali'i Beach Park on Sat. 11/29 from 3pm to 7pm. (Rodney sensei and Fong will be back)
•5th International Yatsunami Gathering, Sat. 11/15 at 3 pm till 4 pm on ZOOM.

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
Rev. 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
By Seto Mikio, Konkokyo Theological Research Center, Educational Series No. 2

The following is an English translation of *Konkō Kyōso no Shōgai* (*The Life of the Founder Konko Daijin*), written by **Rev. Mikio Seto** and published by the **Konkokyo Theological Research Center** in **1980**. Many biographies have been written about the life of the Founder, **Konko Daijin**, but I would like to share this particular work as a valuable reference for your own faith journey.

The English translation was provided by **Rev. Yasuhiro Yano**. *(Continued from the previous issue)*

V. Sashimuke — Divine Arrangement
(1) Difficult Encounters

Policy under the Meiji Restoration
Bunji experienced deep spiritual fulfillment through his faith, yet the sweeping social changes brought about by the **Meiji Restoration** inevitably led him into difficult encounters.

He had already sensed that change was coming near the end of the Tokugawa government. Several accounts reveal his awareness of the shifting times. **Kami** revealed,

"We are presently in the Tokugawa Period, which is built solid like a stone wall. But in thirty years, things will change, and this Way of Faith shall permeate. Kami will wait until His caretakers receive virtue." (*Gorikai II, Takahashi Tomie 22*)

Konko-Sama also said, "Soon Heaven and Earth shall be turned upside-down." While people wondered what he meant, the Meiji Restoration soon took place. (*Gorikai II, Akiyama Jinkichi*)

When the great social upheaval unfolded in **1868**, Kami revealed to Bunji:

"You, Ikigami Konko Daijin, have been performing *Toritsugi* for Nittenshi Gattenshi Ushitora Hitsujisaru Kimon Kane no Kami for thirteen years. Through much patience, you have accumulated divine virtue and have become one with the Tenchi Universe." (*Oboegaki 18-3*)

Through this revelation, Bunji was given insight into the future direction of society.

The **Asao Clan**, which governed **Otani Village**, supported the emerging imperial forces seeking to establish an emperor-centered government and overthrow the Tokugawa regime. Because of their political alignment, the Asao Clan and Otani Village did not suffer negative repercussions after the Restoration, and village life continued peacefully for a time.

However, the new government's rapid modernization policies soon brought sweeping and often harsh changes. At first, neither the Asao Clan nor the villagers could imagine how drastic these reforms would become. They envisioned a bright new era—like sunlight breaking through clouds—promising progress and prosperity. Yet reality soon proved far different from their expectations.

The **Meiji Government** sought to create a modern, emperor-centered nation. To understand how this affected Bunji's activities, let us look at the **religious policies** introduced during that period.

Effects of the Law of Separation of Shinto from Buddhism

The Meiji Government was founded on the belief that Japan should be an **emperor-centered nation**. Its first priority was to restore imperial rule and unify religious rites with state affairs—a policy known as **"Saisei Itchi"** (unity of religious rites and government).

To reinforce this, the government sought to establish **State Shinto** and issued ordinances beginning in **March 1868**, prohibiting the use of Buddhist titles for deities, banning Buddhist images at shrines, and removing Buddhism-related objects from all Shinto institutions.

Ordinance of Separation of Shinto from Buddhism

In **April 1871**, the regional office issued the official **Ordinance of Separation of Shinto from Buddhism** to **Otani Village**. The village office promptly acted: priests of **Jakkoin Temple** were stripped of their Buddhist status and reassigned to handle Shinto rites. Every religious institution was inspected, smaller ones were abolished, and the remainder were merged into larger entities. This meticulous restructuring continued into the following year.

Two major consequences of this ordinance directly affected Bunji's religious activities.

The first was the **prohibition of the title "Konko Daigongen."**
The term *Gongen*—of Buddhist origin—refers to a Buddha or Bodhisattva who manifests in human form to save suffering people. In Japan, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas were believed to transform into the form of **kami** (deities). Thus, *Gongen* came to signify a divine being possessing immense spiritual power, revered as a human-like deity.

For Bunji, the title *Daigongen* ("Great Gongen") symbolized the highest expression of his spiritual status and divine power. However, the government banned such Buddhist-derived titles.

In response, **Kami** bestowed upon him a new divine title: **"Ikigami Konko Daijin."**
This name, meaning *Living Kami, Great Man of Konko*, expressed both Bunji's role as a living deity and the culmination of his spiritual attainment once represented by *Daigongen*.

On **September 24**, Kami revealed:

"Change your divine name to Ikigami Konko Daijin. Make and raise a banner that says, 'May there be peace throughout the world, prosperity in all countries, and safety for all people.' And pray daily."
(*Oboegaki 16-9-1, 3*)

From this divine message, it is clear that Kami's intention extended beyond Japan—to embrace the peace and well-being of all humankind.

In connection with the government ordinance, Bunji was also **appointed by the local authorities** to conduct the religious rites of the **Village Shrine** (*Shirin*). The villagers, too, desired that he take the role. Had Bunji accepted this position formally, his livelihood would have been secure.

However, after about two months, Bunji **resigned from the post**. It appears that his acceptance was largely procedural—he likely never performed the official duties. Instead, he chose to follow the path of faith according to his own divine calling, rather than seek worldly stability. *(To be continued.)*