

KONKO Church of Chicago
Monthly Service June 08, 2025

Hello Everyone! Happy Sunday in this *new* week of Kami's blessings! And thank you very much for joining today's service. This is our monthly service for June 2025. I hope each one of you is in good health & excellent spirits on this beautiful early summer morning.

The second successor of KC Airaku, Rev. Katsuhiko Otsubo passed away on June 5, 2018. A couple days ago on the day the fifth memorial anniversary for his Mitama spirit was held at KC Airaku. We joined the ceremony with sincerity from afar in Chicago. And we will also have it now at our church in conjunction with this monthly service.

Today I would like to talk a little about him. Today is also the day when Rev. Mitsuaki Otsubo, my sister, Emiko's husband passed away seven years ago. We will also have the seventh year memorial service for his Mitama spirit.

My father, Michinori Takeuchi was earnest in his belief in Konko Faith. He eagerly sought for the essence of the faith from some great Konko minister, and discovered Rev. Soichiro Otsubo, founding minister of KC Airaku. So that's how at age 15 I first came into contact with Rev. Otsubo's church.

In my high school days, I would often bicycle from Kumamoto city, where my family lived, to visit the Kabame Shinai-kai (the former name of KC Airaku). The distance was 85 kilometers, around 50 miles, which took me five hours by bicycle. At the time Rev. Katsuhiko was in training at KC Zendoji (Parent church of KC Airaku). He was 20 years old when I first happened to see him. He impressed me how pure and refreshing he was.

In high school I not only studied very hard, but also prayed singleheartedly to Kami for entering the best university in Japan. However, I failed my entrance exam for the University of Tokyo. I realize now what a divine arrangement it had been. But at that time, I was so shocked that I lay down on the ground there and looked up at the sky in a daze.

The next year I failed again. So, I entered Yokohama National University and lived at the Sosuiryo dormitory. It was one of the bases for Gakusei Inter (an extreme sect of student radical movements). Gradually I participated and became a member.

Once a year I returned home to Imari, where my father was the mayor. However, I would stay at KC Airaku almost all my stay in Kyushu. And nearly every one there seemed to avoid me because I would talk of the need for revolution. However, Rev. Katsuhiko was so sincere. He tried to listen and understand why I had joined such a radical movement to fight against the government. He said that he would follow me if he thought I were right.

I was commanding a squadron of demonstrators, fighting to stop American tanks from being transported from Yokohama port to Vietnam in November 1972. I was arrested, and detained for six months in the detention center.

From a small prison cell, I turned my heart to Kami and continued to pray for what I should do from then on. It was then I received the divine dream which completely change the course of my life.

In my dream my father introduces me to Rev. Otsubo at the mediation seat. He said to me, “The feelings that you have to fight for reform for the sake of those oppressed and who are discriminated against is the same feelings as those of the Konko faith, wishing to help people in difficulties.” However, I wouldn't agree with those words and kept silent. I was thinking it's cowardly to just pray and not take action. Then he said, “If you continue these radical movements, you'll only live for another 4 or 5 years.”

Again and again, I thought over this dream and decided to go back to KC Airaku. I became one of the trainees under the guidance of Rev. Otsubo in 1975. Around that time, he established the Airaku philosophy, a culmination of his own devotion, which sought the very essence of our founder's faith.

In 1983, after the 15th Anniversary Celebration of KC Airaku, Rev. Otsubo fell down and was hospitalized due to diabetes and kidney disease. Ever since then, he was forced to be bedridden. Therefore Rev. Katsuhiko succeeded in his stead and did his best to clarify the Airaku philosophy for the ordinary person to understand and easily follow.

“Airaku is where Kami and man meet together in prayer, rejoice together in gratitude and delight in mutual satisfaction. It is the world in which Kami and man commune together. That is, both Kami and man are saved and prospering. Airaku is the ideal in Konko faith.”

So he held seminars and gave lectures on Airaku philosophy numerous times. Then based on the Airaku philosophy, he gave further lectures into the founder's faith. Through these efforts everyone could reach deeper insight of our founder's way of faith. In ordinary life people were then able to deepen peace & joy in their hearts.

Every moment is always changing. It's progressing all the time. It seems the same, but nothing is the same. Therefore, we should & could deepen peace & joy in our heart by respecting each and every moment, and by respecting each and every happening one by one. It means we should and could get rid of our selfish intentions one by one. I believe the more we can do this, the more vividly Kami's workings will be manifested through us.

Let us each follow the Way that Rev. Katsuhiko has clarified so sincerely. Let us be of service for establishing the Wagakokoro era. And let us open an era of peaceful & joyful hearts for all people around the world.