

Good Morning Everyone! Thank you very much for attending today's monthly service for November 2025. I hope you are all in good health & excellent spirits.

I was blessed this fall to attend the Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremony at both our Headquarters on Friday, Oct. 10th & KC Airaku on Thursday, Oct. 16th. I stayed at KC Airaku from Oct. 13th to Oct. 22nd. And I returned back to Chicago on Wednesday, Oct. 22nd.

This time my trip to Japan was filled with Kami's awesome workings as always. I could not help but think Kami arranged everything so smoothly & perfectly. Rev. Tokuji Iwamoto, senior minister of KC Otoshima kindly invited me to stay overnight on both Oct. 9th & 10th at his church near Konko town. Therefore, I was blessed to welcome & pray for our Principal Mediator along the path of his daily procession from his house to the main worship hall at 3:45 am on both Oct. 10th & 11th.

I was also blessed to serve as assistant head-officiant for the Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremony at KC Airaku on Oct. 16th. After this service I visited my brother, Kazunori's family in Imari. His son Munenori plans to build a new house near Imari for him & his wife, Makiko. So, I was asked to conduct a topping-out ceremony on Oct. 17th. It is in a wonderful location near the sea. During the service, I thought it's such a blessing for my brother to have his son's family living near him.

On Monday, Oct. 20th, KC Kokura celebrated the 140th Anniversary of its establishment. Since it was the first Konkokyo church in Kyushu, this was also the 140th Anniversary of Kyushu propagation of Konkokyo. KC Airaku is related as a great-grandchildren of Kokura Church. I was fortunate enough for to attend the ceremony with more than 300 believers coming from many churches in Kyushu.

This time as always, I found myself deeply immersed in the passionate atmosphere of KC Airaku that did its best to be of service to bring a revival of the founder's way of life & faith. My trip was as fulfilling as always.

After Konkokyo headquarters received new materials of our founder's own writings from one of the Konko families, the new Konkokyo Sacred Kyoten was published in 1983. There were two most important documents. The first was the handwritten copy of our founder's "Record of Revelations."

The second was the handwritten copy of our founder's "Memoirs of Konko Daijin" written by Rev. Ieyoshi Konko, the second successor of our founder.

In 1871, our founder was requested by Kami to write his life of faith from his birth up until the present day. This became the content of "Memoirs of Konko Daijin." By combining these two books, we have his whole life from birth to his final moment.

"Record of Revelations" started with an incident in 1857. And it is described as the "Start of his Faith" and is called, "Kami's First Request." Do you happen to remember what it was?

On October 13, 1857 a man from Kameyama Village came and said, "Your younger brother, Shige'emon has become demented. He claims Konjin has possessed him. Deranged, he asked Bunji to come to see him." Our founder rushed to him and through Shige'emon's voice, Konjin spoke, "Bunji, I'm glad you came. I had you brought here because I have a request for you. Will you fulfill My request." Our founder replied, "I will do whatever I can if it is Your request." Konjin then explained, "Shige'emon must build a new house, but he has no one to borrow any money from. What I want to request is for you to take care of the construction costs." Our founder affirmed, "I shall do so."

Later, Kami pleasure with our founder's acceptance was shown by this request being calling, "Kami's first request."

Among the new materials were two accounting books kept by the founder. One of them even started with this 1857 episode. This incident is said to be the first blessing from Konjin-sama. We can thus begin to see just how much our founder felt about this event.

Furthermore, both covers of these two accounting books were honorably labeled as "Kami's Doing." Our founder thought that both income & expenses were sacred works. The expenses included were: compulsory requests by mountain priests, gambling debts of one of his sons' gambling & payments of scams, etc. There has never been such a person who thought of such expenses honorably as Kami's doing. We are now able to realize that our founder did his best to respect each & every happening in life as Kami's doing with gratitude.

Through the facts mentioned above, I have come to realize that the faith of my parent minister, Rev. Soichiro Otsubo, was exactly the same as our

founder's. He devoted himself thoroughly to pursuing our founder's faith, and therefore, of course his faith should have been the same as our founder's. Now I could clearly point out what it was that was exactly the same.

The year our Founder died, he had given a farewell poem to his son, Hagio Konko:

“The true way of Konko
Makes the world bright,
Shines through Heaven,
And will last forever.”

What a marvelous conviction our Founder had about the true way of Konko.

Rev. Soichiro Otsubo said that the Airaku Ideal was the way for any humans to live a human-like life and reach to the absolute fulfillment with Kami.

The essence of the true way of Konko is that Everything that happens is Kami's doing, as the essence of the Airaku Ideal is that All is Divine Love.

Our founder's faith practice to respect everything that happens as Kami's doing was born when he accepted Konjin's request through Shige'emon's mouth in 1857, even though it was very hard to do so for other people, because it was a request from a demented person. However our founder accepted it with respect as if it was Kami's wish.

Rev. Otsubo could not receive blessings no matter how hard he had trained himself. That was when he requested to Kami which I summarized shortly as follows: “Kami has expectations for even someone like me. So I'll accept whatever happens. Therefore, from now on, please pray for the will of Kami to be fulfilled.” Like our founder, he accepted whatever happened, no matter how difficult. He practiced faith in this way for four & half years and realized this was the genuine faith. Rev. Otsubo said that the overflowing joy welled up in his mind when he realized that the process of life was Kami's doing.

Through practicing faith in this way, both our founder & Rev. Otsubo developed peace & joy in their hearts toward unbreakable ones. They both lived the world filled with divine blessings more than they had expected.

I now have a strong conviction about our faith. When I practice faith to respect each & every happening in my life as Kami's doing more precisely like both our founder & Rev. Otsubo, I believe this Way will surely open in Chicago through my peaceful & joyful heart, as the Divine Reminder says,

“Divine favors begin within one’s own peaceful & joyful heart.”

It is the absolute value of my existence that I will embody & manifest the Divine Reminder and be of great service for true world peace. Prostrating myself before Heaven & Earth, I will do my best to accomplish it.