Speech for 2026 Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremony

Good morning, everyone! Thank you very much for joining the Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremony of the Konko Church of Chicago. I trust that all of you are enjoying the best of health and excellent spirits on this beautiful autumn day.

I left for Japan on Tuesday, Oct. 6 to attend the Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremony at both our headquarters on Oct. 10 and at KC Airaku on Oct. 16, and returned back to Chicago on Tuesday, Oct. 20. I felt much blessed and grateful that our second son, Daichi & his girlfriend, Fabre Gabriel, nickname Gabi joined these ceremonies with me. Even more the grateful was for me to be asked to give my sermon for the Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremony at KC Airaku.

I stayed two nights on Oct. 9 & 10 at KC Otoshima where my niece Fukuyo Sensei was the wife of its head-minister Rev. Shinji Iwamoto and located near Konko town. Every time I stayed there, I learned a lot from his father, Rev. Tokuo Iwamoto.

I also attended the morning prayer service at our head-quarters on 11th and headed to Imari. On 12th I conducted the service for building the new house for Mr. Munenori Takeuchi, the son of my brother, Kazunori Takeuchi. Then I headed to KC Airaku on 13th. It was a great honor for me to seek Mediation for Mr. David Ogawa for his Mitama spirit to have the eternal peace & happiness in the next world at both our head-quarters and KC Airaku.

I gave my sermon for the Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremony there on 16th. Though it was a short sermon, I received good responses from many believers, such as “I was impressed with your sermon a lot, please continue to do your best. We will greatly support you.”

The followings are the brief summary of my sermon: “This Divine Reminder is the essence of Konkokyo. Among them the peaceful joyful heart is essential It manifests briefly the Way how each human lives an ordinary life, achieve fulfilled life with Kami and manifests true world peace.

So I started my propagation in Chicago, believing ‘The Way forward lies within my own peaceful joyful heart. This is the very Way of Kami’s Wish and the Wish of our founder & Shodai. This is the Way even I, with no power, no talent & no ability can follow and will lead to a path that saves the world.’

We celebrated the opening ceremony of the Konko Propagation Hall of Chicago on Nov. 2, 1997 Since then and through three kinds of difficulties human experiences, Kami trained me hard to become a genuine Mediator.

The first one is poverty. Shodai went through the depths of poverty. That is why I have never felt poor and always been blessed even though I had no job to earn the income. The second one is conflict. KC Chicago has never been condemned by other religious organizations. However there

had sometimes quarrels between my wife, Kanako & me. She has had a great wish for me to become a great mediator. I have done my best to be as such. However, it has not been enough from her images. So we sometimes had quarrels with each other. Through them I could not help but realize I still have stuck selfishness fast at the bottom of my heart. Kami tried to get rid of my selfishness to perfection.

The third one was disease. I had thought I had a strong body. However, since opening the Propagation Hall of Chicago in 1997 I have experienced sever illnesses one after another such as intestinal obstructions, colon cancer and hernia etc. Every time I prayed to Kami, "Through this training of Kami, named illnesses, Kami, please lead me to get rid of my selfishness more and more and deepen peace and joy in my heart to become a genuine mediator."

Then fortunately we could establish a Konko church in Chicago and had its opening ceremony at the ball room of the Doubletree hotel on Sunday, Nov. 1, 2009. Around 150 people attended this celebration and kindly 20 believers from KC Airaku.

Throughout my whole life I have tried to develop the peace & joy in my heart no matter what happened. Daily, through the divine virtue & mediation of our Founder & of Rev. Soichiro Otsubo, I prostrate myself in the following prayer before Tenchi Kane No Kami.

> **Please hear my prayer. As Rev. Otsubo & as our Founder always respected each & everything that happened as Kami's sacred working, and as they would undertake everything thankfully, cheerfully & with divine grace – no matter what would happen each second of their daily lives, I earnestly seek to be like that. Such faith practice surely allows peace & joy to be developed within me. With such a peaceful joyful heart, please allow me to be of great service for opening this precious way of Konko faith for all human beings so that true world peace & real human happiness will be attained.**

I became a trainee under the guide of Rev. Soichiro Otsubo (Shodai Oyasensei) at Kabame (his birth place) at my age 18 in 1966 after failing the entrance examination of Tokyo University. Though as a trainee they were only for three months. I received a divine dream during that training that would determine the rest of my life of faith.

That dream was as followed: "As I sat in formal kneeling posture besides a puddle, facing the Mino Mountain Range, Rev. Soichiro Otsubo emerged from the water in it – much as Aladdin might appear from a magic lamp, He declared, "If you humble yourself and grieve in sorrow, blessings surely follow わびて　悲しゅうなれば　おかげをやる)," and then vanished back into the puddle. I was so impressed that I was crying with tears of emotion in my

dream. Just after that dream I woke up sobbing through tears as the morning sun brightly illuminated my face.

When I sought Rev. Otsubo's Mediation about this impressive dream, he taught me as follows: "This deep emotion of yours is the same as that of our founder's when he drew a circle and wrote at age 42 in the Memoirs of Konko Daijn that, "As I write up this point, I am filled with deep emotion." Then he wrote, "Then Kami-sama encouraged, 'Konko Daijin, these deep emotions are not only your own. If I, Tenchi Kane no Kami, were a poet, I would express these emotions through poetry."

The next year I entered the Yokohama National University in 1967. Following the student protests at the University of the Yasuda Auditorium at Tokyo university in January 1969, numerous universities were barricaded and occupied by students, raising fundamental questions regarding the very purpose of academic studies. Yokohama national University was no exception. And so, I found myself being asked what I ought to do. Without thinking myself and my future, I confronted this question with sincerity. Then I went on a hunger strike for a week in the campus. However, without answering and solving anything, the university asked the police to ensure that the barricade blockade was cleared – even if it required forceful measures.

Facing this dishonest behavior of the university I lost interest in pursuing the academic studies. Instead, I tried to learn the human history to make this world better and how to establish true world peace. I gradually came to join the radical students' movements. I fought for four years for those who were discriminated against and oppressed, such as Vietnamese people and Koreans in Japan.

Then I received the divine dream such as: "At the Mediation seat in our headquarters my father introduced me to Rev. Otsubo. He said to me, 'The resolve to fight on behalf of those who face discrimination and oppression is one and the same as the spirit – taught in Konkokyo – of striving to save those who are in difficulties." I knew the greatness of Rev. Otsubo's divine virtue, but I didn't want to admit this, thinking that it is an act of cowardice just to pray without fighting against.

However through this dream, I decided to go back to Airaku again to know more about Airaku Ideal, what Rev. Otsubo taught us to manifest true human fulfillment with Kami and true world peace. I became one of his trainees again in January 6 in 1974.

Shodai Oyasensei deepened his faith each and every moment and talked about his deepening faith in Gorikai (teaching) after every morning prayer service. I spent almost all the time everyday to clearly understand it and what he wished to deliver from it. As a trainee I felt fulfilled to pursue it and spent almost twenty years as his trainee without realizing such a length as a trainee.

Then the time came for me to do missionary work in the USA. Rev. Nobuharu Uzunoe kindly invited me to do so. My family moved to the USA on September 5, 1994. My wife and I became associate ministers of KC Portland. We learned a lot from Revs. Nobuhru & Michie Uzunoe for almost three years, then moved to Chicago and admitted from our Headquarters to establish the Konko Propagation Hall of Chicago on July 30, 1997. In order to establish a church Konko Churches of North America (KCNA) requests three responsible believers and at least ten members. Though it took 12 years, fortunately we could establish the Konko Church of Chicago in 2009. Around 150 people kindly joined us in the Opening Ceremony of KC Chicago, including 20 believers from KC Airaku.

17 years have passed since then. I now really feel Kami's wishes and the importance to have the Konko church in Chicago. Chicago is one of the three major cities in the USA and is located in the middle of the USA. Anyone who gets to know the Konko Faith and realizes what a genuine religion the Konkokyo is to help people in difficulties and save the world, tries to contact with me. They eagerly wish to know the essence of the Konko Faith and ask me anything about it. I have tried to do my best to response them. I have sent them all the materials about the Konko Faith I have had and bought from KCNA. I now send my sermon after every monthly service to more than twenty followers in other states.

I believe the more I can develop peace & joy in my heart through each happening in my daily life, the more genuine seekers of faith Kami draws toward me. I really wish them to be the manifestation of peaceful joyful heart to the extent to save the world. I really hope those people are born everywhere in the world and the Wagakokoro era is created in the world.

For that, I believe there are two important matters. One is to deepen peace & joy in our heart to have fulfilled life with Kami. The other is for anyone to be able to receive blessings of any kind, that is, even any kind of miracle, miracle beyond human thoughts through one's single-hearted prayer.

Through our founder's sincere prayers, miracles appeared and seekers were blessed. Through his sincere mediation he taught them how to live their fulfilled lives with Kami to acquire the eternal happiness with Kami.

I really hope I am such a mediator like our founder that any blessing can be manifested through my single-hearted prayer and then can show them how to lead their fulfilled lives with Kami. I would like to continue to do so and hope this faith gradually is spread in each state throughout the USA, the North America and beyond.