

KONKO Church of Chicago
Monthly Service February 02, 2025

Good morning! Happy Sunday in this *new* week of Kami's blessings! Thank you very much for joining today's service. This is our monthly service for February 2025. I hope each one of you is in good health & excellent spirits on this beautiful winter morning.

January 25 was my 77th birthday. We call the 77th birthday 'Kiju (喜寿)' in Japan, one of the longevity celebrations. It is a way of expressing gratitude to grandparents and wishing them a long life. 'Ki (喜)' means 'Joy' and 'Ju (寿)' means 'Longevity.' The next day, being my daughter Hiroko's birthday, we gathered at their house to celebrate both birthdays together. During the celebration I could not help but realize how blessed I was with the best wife in the world, the best children in the world, and surrounded by the best grandchildren in the world. I was so moved; I was moved to tears. I also could not help but realize that this was all owed to Shodai & Nidai Oyasenseis (the first and second Head Ministers of KC Airaku). They taught me the way to rid myself of selfishness - and become one with Kami's Peace & Joy - by devoting myself to respecting each daily occurrence as Kami's precise doing - which would deepen my peaceful joyful heart.

Our founder gave the following teaching to his disciple, Rev. Fujimori Kondo:

**Those who conscientiously practice faith
should not mock the dreams they have at night.
Kami teaches good and bad even through our dreams.**

I, myself, have respected dreams as divine ever since, at age 18, being awestruck with such a dream that one could not help but admit was divine. First of all, I would like to talk about that dream I received from Kami. After failing the entrance examination for Tokyo University, I became a trainee under the guidance of Rev. Soichiro Otsubo, Shodai Oyasensei, though for only three months. One night I received a dream that I could not help but think was divine. In my dream, there was a small puddle to the side of where I was bowing down. From the puddle, Shodai appeared like from a magical Aladdin lamp and said, "If you feel sorry and sad for it, blessings will follow. (わびて 悲しゅうなれば おかげをやる)" Then he disappeared into the puddle. In my dream, it was so impressive that, naturally, it brought tears to my eyes. Then I woke up and still I was in tears.

After the morning prayer service, I sought mediation with Shodai about this impressive dream. He taught me: "The sadness you feel after feeling sorry is the deep emotion that

our founder wrote about in Memoirs of Konko Daijin as follows:

"As I write up to this point, I am filled with deep emotion. 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. However, I am incapable of doing so. I am overjoyed, and even overcome with emotion to see how man has been able to be saved and how Kami has been able to be realized.'"

Shodai's words in the dream, that is, "If you feel sorry and sad, blessings will follow. (わびて 悲しゅうなれば おかげをやる)" became one of the major guiding directives for my faith throughout my lifetime. Since then, I have tried to understand the messages and wishes Kami gave through dreams. And many times, they influence me to take a course of action.

What was your first dream in 2025? On New Year's Day, I woke up at 3:13 am as usual. Just before that I had had a divine dream. Kami gave me an impressive dream, so vivid, that I remember it clearly.

In my first dream of 2025 Kami wished I would help realize the *Airaku* world. The *Airaku* world is the world where Kami and humans worship, rejoice, and enjoy each other, that is, a world of mutual fulfillment between Kami and humanity.

Especially nowadays I cannot help but feel how magnificent Kami's workings were for our founder. They were so vivid. And beyond human capability. That was why those who came to our founder's worship place came back one after another to seek his Mediation again. Without such vivid work of Kami, I don't think the Konko faith could have spread far and wide.

I have always been amazed with the fact that so many people remembered the words of the founder's Mediation. That was because Kami worked so vividly in his Mediations. And his words impressed people so much that they changed their lives.

When I met Rev. Soichiro Otsubo, he almost always was sitting at the mediation place and I was always awestruck by his great dignity and gentle nature. I felt his heart was filled with peace and joy, and his peaceful joyful heart was overflowing. I think the founder's heart was just the same. It was filled totally with peace & joy. His heart was one with the Peace & Joy of Kami's Heart.

In order to achieve such a heart, we should look deep into our own heart and do our best to rid ourselves of what selfishness we find. The best way to do that is try to respect each happening with gratitude. The more precisely we can respect each happening, the more we will realize we are still doing it our own way. That is how we find the selfishness in our heart. And then we can try to eliminate more of it to the extent of becoming one with the Peace & Joy of the Divine Heart. When we try hard to accomplish this, Kami's magnificent workings appear much clearer and more vividly all around us.

Let us do our best to nurture our peaceful, joyful heart limitlessly, spread it to those around us and help surround the world completely with the peaceful & joyful hearts of all people. Then I believe Kami's magnificent workings will appear for the betterment of the world, and for revealing the *Airaku world*.

Let us live a life of mutual fulfillment between Kami & us humans co-prospering, worshiping, being delighted & enjoying each other while truly feeling the *Work of Kami*. With such absolute belief in Kami, let us accept whatever happens with gratitude. Then Kami's glory surely appears and definitely leads each one of us to develop a true *Wagakokoro*. Let us develop such an unbreakable *Wagakokoro* that it's never shaken at all.

Throughout this year and beyond, I will do my best to accomplish just that. Here is my prayer I always keep in mind:

“May the history of human conflicts, whereby we are ruled by force, come to an end; and the *Wagakokoro Era*, where Kami and humans worship, rejoice, and enjoy each other, come to be manifested. It is for this I ask *You*, Kami, to nurture my *Wagakokoro* so it can resonate throughout the heavens and earth and enrich the world. With my *Wagakokoro* I would like to truly help Konko Daijin – who realizes ‘All is Divine Love’ – to be born one after another in all countries throughout the world, and in every state of the United States.”

The aim is for a *Wagakokoro* which attains the realization that ‘All is Divine Love.’ And then, what we can create is the *Airaku world* embracing the whole world. I think it is do-able.

With our faith let us join in this effort for *Divine Love* to be realized. May our peaceful joyful hearts become ever closer to Kami’s Heart of *Divine Peace and joy*.