

April Monthly Service 2025

Good morning, everyone! Happy New Day, New Week & special “Thanks” for joining today’s service. This is our monthly service for April 2025. I hope each one of you is in good health & excellent spirits on this beautiful spring morning.

Back in the 1990’s when I came to the USA, Chicago was the priority of Konko Churches of North America (KCNA) for establishing a new church. It has been my mission ever since moving to Chicago in 1997. Though it took time, KC Chicago was established in 2009.

I have had the earnest desire to open this *Way of Konko* through deepening my peaceful joyful heart (*Wagakokoro*) and manifesting the truth stated in the *Divine Reminder*, that *Kami’s blessings depend upon one’s own Wagakokoro*. Recently I am strongly convinced that *the more my Wagakokoro is deepened, the more widely this marvelous Way of Konko will spread in the world*.

Our founder was ordered by Meiji government to remove altar fixtures and was prohibited from serving Kami & people as their mediator. It was the most critical time of his missionary life. He accepted it with sincerity, and would sit in the next room. That is where he sought Kami’s wishes and intentions for this incident. The founder prayed wondering if there was any way for people to fulfill their lives with Kami without a mediator or any place to worship. It was then Kami revealed the ***Divine Reminder***.

By embodying the *Divine Reminder*, anyone will come to be blessed in every aspect of life. I have come to realize Kami’s wishes are much more than that. The ***Divine Reminder*** was given to the founder in 1873. It was the 6th year since Meiji Restoration began. Those were very turbulent and chaotic years. Japanese society was in turmoil after such major transformation. Samurai rebellions arose one after another. So, Kami revealed the ***Divine Reminder*** not only for the Konko faith, but also for saving society and the world.

Kami wanted to save the whole world by having each and every person embody the ***Divine Reminder***. There can be no true salvation for the whole world except through *Wagakokoro* (the peaceful joyful heart) in which “Kami’s dignity appears and the world can be healed.”

Our founder gave the following teaching to his disciple, Mitsugoro Ichimura:

If people lose belief in, On this very day pray with a single heart. Divine blessings are within your own peaceful joyful heart, the world would be in turmoil. And the glory of Kami and the glory of parents would be gone.

It means Kami’s glory should appear first and save the world from chaos. The world will be healed for the first time through Kami’s glory. There is no true salvation for the whole world except through *Wagakokoro*. I fervently wish to deepen my own heart, seeking for “a *Wagakokoro* that saves the world.” I definitely believe *Wagakokoro* saves the world.

One of the things I cannot help but pray for every time I pray is:

May the *human era*, in which we do everything by our own power, come to an end, and may the *Kami era* be realized. May we put an end to thousands of years of history, where humans ruled by power. And may we realize an *era of Wagakokoro* in which Kami and humans worship each other, rejoice in and enjoy each other. To that end, please allow me to receive a *Wagakokoro* (peaceful joyful heart) in a way that resonates throughout the heavens and earth and enriches the world.

As much as possible I have prayed sincerely for this, and tried to deepen peace & joy in my heart through each happening in my life. I have therefore realized more blessings than I ever expected. It has been as if I could develop peace & joy in my heart, even though I could not.

Though still, I cannot help but see my training to develop peace & joy in my heart has been insufficient. Compared to myself, Kami's workings through our founder were tremendous beyond measure. His Mediation attracted and influenced so many people. His words through Mediation changed their lives and spread far and wide.

I realize I have still been doing things in my own way; I still have not left everything up to Kami. Therefore, I have not deepened my heart as Kami has wished me to do. I have always been asking Kami for forgiveness.

When I was 18, I received my first revelation from Kami as a divine dream. In the dream I sat facing Mino Mountain range. There was a small puddle beside me. Shodai Oyasensei appeared from the puddle, like from Aladdin's Magic Lamp, and said,

"わびて悲しゅうなれば、おかげをやる" [wabite kanashuu nareba, okage wo yaru]

"With deep heart-wrenching apology, Kami provides blessings."

Then he disappeared. I was so awestruck by this scene in the dream I was moved to tears. Waking up, I was enveloped in brilliant sunlight and found, in reality, I actually was in tears. I felt at that moment this revelation, and the words of Kami, would support and guide me throughout my life.

I have sought a true way of living throughout my life. This journey of mine has been decided and guided by the *Divine Parental Heart*. It is to pray single-heartedly on this very day to deepen my peaceful joyful heart to the extent that, incredibly, Kami's glory would appear. There's no other way for me.

But still, I have done it on my own way. I have not sufficiently left everything up to Kami. I have still not realized enough that I have no power, no ability and no talent. Every time I have always asked Kami for forgiveness. However, I cannot help but admit such apologies have not been enough.

I am doing my best to acknowledge my lack of power, lack of ability and lack of talent each and every time, believing in this way, Kami's marvelous works shall appear for me like our founder.

In order for me to do that, I solemnly devote myself to a life of faith development, to deepening peace & joy in my heart as far as my physical limitations and spiritual abilities permit, and ridding myself of selfishness.

Thank you!