

## *All Is Sacred*

Good Afternoon Everyone! Thank you very much for attending the 2019 annual Autumn Memorial Service of the Konko Church of Chicago. I hope you are all in good health & in excellent spirits.

Here are two quotes of my parent minister in Japan, the late Rev. Soichiro Otsubo. They were his last words left to us:

*It is through Kami's blessings/ and due to this Faith/ that I will be able to enter/ into the next world/ with such gratitude and delight.*

*There are no other words I might leave for the world than Wa-Ga Kokoro (the peaceful, joyful heart). I have been seeking Wa-Ga Kokoro in myself throughout my whole life. I seek Wa-Ga Kokoro at every moment on each and every day. And continuously pray I'll seek Wa-Ga Kokoro in the next world.*

During his lifetime he had achieved such a blessed heart. He had done all this just by doing his best to accept everything that happened as *Kami's Sacred Doing* which had deepened his heart.

His 25<sup>th</sup> Memorial Anniversary will be held on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November at KC Airaku, my parent church in Japan. And that same month, Konkokyo is celebrating its 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Divine Call with the pilgrimage of KCNA joining this celebration to be held on Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>, the actual date our Founder had received the Divine Call 160 years ago. And here in Chicago, we will have the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of KC Chicago on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November. That is three anniversaries all in November this year.

I am now doing my best to reach a heart of *unbreakable peace & joy*. With all my heart I am doing more than ever before. For the longest time I would fail to deepen the *peace & joy* of my heart, no matter how hard I might try. Recently, the more I realize that everything which happens is *Kami's sacred doing*, and that I have no power, no ability & no talent before *Kami*, then I can accept anything at all with more gratitude. It is times like these that I recognize my *peace & joy* becoming *unbreakable*. So now I realize *Kami* is working so vividly & so remarkably all around me. Recently I feel a strong conviction that *Kami's glory* shall surely appear when we try to develop our peaceful and joyful hearts through every happening, whatever happens and no matter how difficult it could be.

With this spirit, I have welcomed today's annual Autumn Memorial Service. Whenever I prayed for the Mitama spirits, I myself felt encouraged to develop my peaceful and joyful heart – by such Mitama spirits as Mr. & Mrs Michinori Takeuchi and Mr. & Mrs. Shinkichi Nishimura, because they knew the vital importance of *a peaceful and joyful heart* and have done their best to develop their hearts in the next world. I really felt as one with our ancestral spirits and any departed souls when I prayed for them and tried to deepen the *peace & joy* in my heart.

The KCNA Conference was held in San Diego from Friday, Aug. 9<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, the 11<sup>th</sup> this year. I joined the Spirituality Bridge which was from Thursday the 8<sup>th</sup> to Friday. The guest speaker for the conference was Rev. Todd Takahashi, the new head-minister of KC San Diego. The title of his speech was “One step at a time.” He talked about many of his experiences which deepened his faith.

To our great pleasure, Rev. Kiyoji Konko joined us in this conference from Japan with his wife, Noriko Konko and two children, Keishi-kun & Ikuno-chan.

What I especially realized at this conference was that every moment was *Kami's sacred doing* and that Kami arranged everything. That was because I really realized Kami's vivid workings all around me as I followed the process of life with respect. Therefore, I really felt we should treasure each & every moment.

In a group discussion on Sunday at the conference we knew that Mr. Glen Yabuki had passed away at age 64 during a trip with his family. He was an earnest believer of the Konko Mission of Waipahu. The grandson of Waipahu's head-minister is Mr. Alex Yasutake who was sitting next to me at the time. He was in tears hearing this news.

I silently prayed for his Mitama spirit to have eternal peace & happiness, and that Kami's wish for his family to be fulfilled.

Alex & Lanna took the overnight flight back to Chicago on United Airlines. I flew overnight through American Airlines. Since Alex had parked his car at O'hare Airport, he kindly offered to drive me back to our church. I thanked him for his kindness, but instead asked him to go home without waiting for me and get some rest, because he had to work that day.

My flight was a little bit delayed. While I was walking in O'hare Airport to catch the train home, I received a phone call from Alex. To my surprise, he was waiting to drive me to the church even though he had to wait for an hour. How sincere he was!

There is a saying, “Though I say you don't need to come on rainy days, if you do come even when it rains, my feelings of loveliness increase for you.” It's speaking of Kami's parental feelings.

Alex has such a sincere heart. He is praying for Glen-san's Mitama spirit with such sincerity. I believe his prayers surely reach the Mitama spirit & relieve it. Through today's Autumn Memorial service, let us all pray together for his Mitama spirit to have eternal peace & happiness & to be the foundation of the Yabuki family & the Konko Mission of Waipahu.

Mrs. Emiko Sada passed away peacefully last Tuesday morning at 5:30 Japan time. She was 89. She was my brother's mother-in-law; a devoted believer of KC Airaku, and well-respected as a model of the faith for all of us.

Let me share my message of condolences: “Mrs. Emiko Sada! We would like to express our appreciation for all you have done throughout your life. Using the peace & joy you developed in your heart you manifested the beauty of Wagakokoro, the peaceful joyful heart. With such joy you travelled east & west helping many people to shine with the light of Konko.

We pray that your Mitama spirit be of great service for establishing the era of peaceful & joyful hearts for all Mitama spirits in the next world. Let us all today pray for her Mitama spirit as well. May she have eternal peace & happiness!

Konko Daijin said, “Whether you are living or dead, Heaven and Earth will always be your home.” Konko Daijin teaches that Heaven and Earth is our one and only home. During our life, and even after death, we continue to live eternally within the divine presence of the Universe.” With this belief, we are able to become one with Kami and Mitama spirits who will have eternal peace and happiness.

Let us honor our Mitama spirits who have gone before us, spirits one with Kami, caring for us eternally. And with those Mitama spirits, let us work hard together to create a new era in which the divine will of Tenchi Kane No Kami will be fulfilled; and have peace and joy shining forth in the hearts of all people of this world and the spirits of all the departed in the next world.