

Monthly Service at Konko Church of Chicago November 5, 2023

Good morning! Happy Sunday in this *new* week of Kami's blessings! And thank you very much for joining today's service. This is our monthly service for November 2023. I hope each one of you is in good health & excellent spirits on this beautiful autumn morning.

I've just returned from a two-week trip for celebrating the 140th Anniversary of the Konko founder's passing and was able to visit with family in Japan, too. I left for Japan on Oct. 5th and returned to Chicago on the 22nd. Through Kami's workings this trip was full of awesome Divine arrangements. During this trip there were many enjoyable & meaningful experiences. I would like to share much of it with you today.

Konkokyo is celebrating the 140th anniversary of our founder's passing. He passed away on Oct. 10, 1883. I was in Hombu, on the very day he had passed 140 years ago. I was attending the *Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremony* celebrating his 140th anniversary last month on Oct 10th. That morning, before welcoming Kyoshu Konko-Sama's *morning procession* at 3:45, I offered prayers in front of the founder's gravesite. There Kami led me to understand:

The *true Way of Konko* started by the founder, has been passed down with great care to the 6th generation Konko successor.

Kami requested me to shine forth to the world with this true Way of Konko.

Our founder, Konko Daijin spoke with conviction of the true Way of Konko:

"The true Way of Konko makes the world bright, shines through Heaven and will last forever."

The true Way of Konko is what convinces us that *everything that happens is Kami's doing, even major upheavals*. It is a request for us to manifest in the world that all is Divine Love,

That evening, KC Otoshima held a summit meeting titled, "What should we do for Konkokyo." The senior minister, Rev. Tokuo Iwamoto, invited some of us ministers. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, talking over drinks & delicious food.

The next day I took the train to KC Airaku and stayed there, enjoying conversations with ministers from Brazil. I attended the *Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremony* at KC Airaku on Sunday, Oct 16 held in conjunction with the 140th anniversary celebration of Konko Daijin's passing. I was asked to be the assistant head officiant for the ceremony. My brother, Kazunori, offered *Tamakushi* as one of the church elders. And my sister, Emiko, played the Koto. Someone had said to us,

“You are such brilliant brothers & sisters. There may be no other brothers & sisters like you for taking such important roles in the grand ceremony.”

This had made us realize again the greatness of our parents’ faith. We truly cannot be thankful enough.

Lately, I have been doing *LINE* mediation every Sunday with Seth Carter who lives in Maryland. I’d like to read the message he so kindly sent to KC Airaku for their grand ceremony:

140 years ago, something amazing happened: Ikigami Konko Daijin passed into the world of the spirit and his mission, previously restricted to a region of Japan by the circumstances of his earthly life, was suddenly unfettered by his new state as a Mitama spirit.

With his passing, the Founder is now able to help people all over the world, and that is exactly what he has done. Many people in North America and Europe are learning about Ikigami Konko Daijin and Tenchi Kane No Kami, and it is my wish that many more people will continue to learn about this faith.

It is a true blessing to be able to participate in this 140th anniversary memorial service, and thanks to Ikigami Konko Daijin's efforts and the efforts of those ministers who came after him, people all over the world will be participating with you today. May you be blessed fully by Tenchi Kane No Kami!

How wonderful a message! I realized just how much he had deepened his faith day by day, and the great importance of *LINE* mediation. Like him, I wish I could have such *LINE* mediation everyday with those young Americans to whom I send my sermons.

After the grand ceremony my sister, Emiko, drove me to Imari city where my brother lives with his wife, Noriko, and their daughter’s family. They had a secret that they planned for me. Kazunori, Noriko and Emiko took me to the town of Tara in Saga prefecture. It’s located alongside the Ariake Sea and is famous for crab. We stayed in a hotel there and enjoyed to our hearts’ content, a delicious crab dinner.

The hotel had an open-air bath on the roof-top with beautiful scenery could enjoy. The next morning we saw the sunrise from there. The sun rose from across the sea in front of us. How gorgeous it was!

I feel totally refreshed since going to Japan and now cannot help but feel a surge of passion to serve Kami. At KC Airaku I delivered a passionate sermon for the Oct. 18th monthly service. To conclude these impressions from my trip, let me share the main point:

“Kami’s wishes are huge. I would like to take with me what has been instilled in me during this visit to Airaku. And from here on, may Kami’s glory emerge more vividly through my Wagakokoro. I would truly like to play a part in establishing the Wagakokoro era in the world and shall work hard to achieve that goal.”