

## Spring Memorial, Konko Church of Chicago, March 2, 2025

Good Afternoon, Everyone! Thank you very much for attending the 2025 annual Spring Memorial Service of the Konko Church of Chicago. I hope you are all in good health & in excellent spirits.

The Konko Faith has annual memorial services twice a year, in spring & in autumn. They always remind me of our mortality & the next world. Death shall come to every human being. No one can escape from it. The more clearly we understand this fate, the more we cannot help but think of what is most important in our life, and how we might live a more meaningful life during our limited lifespan.

Our founder taught, *When people die, they are reunited with Kami. The body dies, but the soul keeps on living. The body, which was taken from Earth, will return to Earth. And the soul, which was bestowed by Heaven, returns to Heaven. Dying is when your body and soul separate.*

As our founder taught, our soul, bestowed by Kami at birth, keeps on living after death. Therefore, those who practice faith and polish the gem of their heart, do not have to be afraid of death, and can enter the next world with gratitude.

My parent minister, Rev. Soichiro Otsubo lived an admirable life with Kami. Here are two quotes of his. They were the last words he left for 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 & delight.

There are no other words I might leave for the world than **Wagakokoro (the peaceful, joyful heart)**. I have been seeking **Wagakokoro** in myself throughout my whole life. I seek **Wagakokoro** at every moment on each & every day. And continuously pray I'll seek **Wagakokoro** 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 is what had deepened his heart.

Kami is eagerly wishing to establish the Wagakokoro era in this world, in order to attain true world peace and well-being for all humans. Wagakokoro is the essential foundation for human happiness. Seeking the peaceful heart of *Wa* and the joyous heart of *Ga* is life's desire. Wagakokoro is achieved by mutual fulfillment between Kami and humanity.

Through each happening in my daily life I wish to do my best more precisely to develop peace and joy in my heart with the same spirit as *Shodai*

*Oyasensei* to brighten the world with my Wagakokoro. I would like to show the way for anyone to live an ordinary human way of life and become a *Living Divine Being*.

We have one departed soul related to our church during the last autumn memorial service and this spring one. It was my great honor to conduct the 100<sup>th</sup> Day memorial service of the Mitama spirit of Mr. Gary Michael Kubo on Saturday, Feb. 15.

Here are my greetings for it as the head officiant:

“Hi, everyone!

Thank you very much for joining us on this 100<sup>th</sup> Day Memorial Service for the late Mr. Gary Michael Kubo.

He passed away November 12, 2024. At that time, I was on a plane flying to Japan. I was to attend the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary memorial service of my mentor, the late Rev. Soichiro Otsubo, on Nov. 29 at KC Airaku. On the way, I visited our headquarters and attended the Konkokyo Establishment Commemorative Ceremony held on Nov. 15.

And I sought Mediation with our Principal Mediator, Kyoshu Konko-sama, The Right Rev. Hiromichi Konko, about Gary-san’s passing. He gave me this Sacred Rice while praying for his Mitama spirit. I also sought Mediation with Rev. Keiki Otsubo, head-minister of KC Airaku about him. Through these divine arrangements, I could not help but think how blessed Gary-san’s Mitama spirit truly was.

Kami gave Gary-san his Mitama divine name as Kubo Michael Gary Magatama Ushi no Mitama no Kami. ‘Ma’ means ‘Genuine’ and is written in Japanese as ‘真’, ‘Ga’ means ‘Joy’ and written in Japanese as ‘賀’ and ‘Tama’ is ‘Heart’ and written in Japanese as ‘玉.’ ‘Ushi’ is honorable suffix for man’s Mitama spirit and written on Japanese as ‘大人.’

Through this I recognized that Gary-san had been a person who had sought and showed the truth and the joy of life throughout his life.”

Kami’s eternal wish. Kami is always working incredibly to "the manifestation of the world from truth to more truth." In other words, the heavens and earth work extremely hard to make everything round no matter how many millions of years it takes. And it is "Wagakokoro, united with heaven and earth" that can seriously take this work. Wagakokoro is the fundamental principle for the ultimate happiness of humanity.

It was our founder who realized this and revealed this for the first time in human history. Then it was Shodai Oyasensei who made this path clearer and manifested this path for anyone to walk and present.

Here the path of the Wagakokoro was revealed. If we continue to walk this path, there is no way Kami's incredible work will not be revealed. "The time is now and it is me."

For example, if the time is in the Genpei era, more than 1,000 years ago or if you show the "Wagakokoro" to the natives of Africa, even nowadays, no one on those days or in that place would understand the value of it.

"The time is now, and it is us who have been taught the importance of Wagakokoro through the Konko faith," We must serve as an example.

Through today's annual spring memorial service and the many blessings of our faith practice to emulate the peaceful joyful heart in day-to-day life, I pray earnestly the Wagakokoro spirit take root and establish a great era for the mutual fulfillment of Kami and Humanity. May Wagakokoro come alive in each of us. May Kami's smile shine through us. May peace and joy spread worldwide.

As the soul leaves the body, I pray we have the peace and joy within to shine in the next world. Through such sincere faith practice I would like to become such a person that those who know me will mutter at the end of my life: ***All you did & said were for Wagakokoro.***