



“Relay of Life”

by the Reverend Konko Hiromichi
Spiritual Leader of Konkokyo

I was born into a Konkokyo family. I grew up enfolded in the grand prayers of my grandfather and father. My grandfather was the 4th Konko-sama, the Spiritual Leader, and my father was the 5th Konko-sama.

My grandfather cherished his words, “Seek a daily life that is based upon gratitude,” and “Try to have a heart that expresses gratitude towards everyone and everything that takes care of oneself.” The 4th Konko-sama not only cherished these words but also put them into practice. And he did so consistently. When I passed by my grandfather’s room, I always heard him say “Thank you very much.” His voice was clearly audible, because the door to his room was a shoji door, the wooden sliding door covered by thin Japanese rice paper. Whenever I think of my grandfather, it seems to me that he was a person who always showed me what practicing faith in Kami is like. Showing examples to someone is quite important,



I believe, when we want that person to carry on our faith.

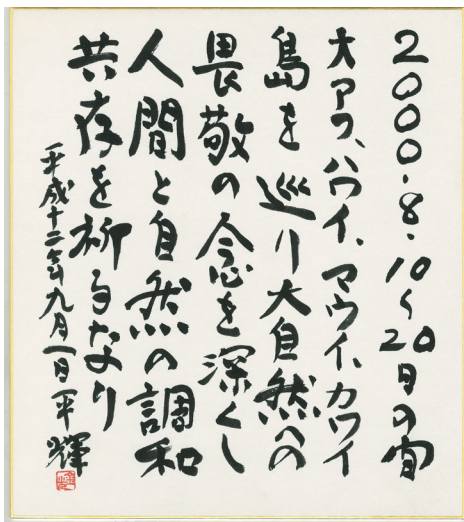
My father often said, “I intend to do exactly what the 4th Konko-sama did.” My father inherited the position of the Spiritual Leader from my grandfather. And he kept those cherished words in his heart. A remarkable greatness of my father, in my opinion, is that he let me do whatever I wanted to. My father, never said to me, “Do this!” or “Do that!” When I lived in Tokyo in my youth, my father made sure to send Goshinmai or Sacred Rice to me at the beginning of each month. Goshinmai is rice carefully prepared by people who give deep, earnest prayers to Kami while preparing it. He never forgot to do this for me.

Back in those days, I often felt like my life was being driven forward by the speed of the city. I felt deep inside that something was not quite right. When I was all by myself in my room and thought about my future, I felt ex-

tremely anxious. Amid such a deep concern, prayer gradually began to bud in my heart. Until then, I had not really thought about it. But there came a time when I gradually began to realize that I was an individual who people prayed for, and who was enveloped by my them, my family. And I finally came to feel it keenly.

I believe that parents who are connected to Konkokyo spend years, even decades, in instilling their faith-based beliefs in their children. In my case, years had already passed since I had left Konko Town where the sacred grounds of the Konko Faith resided, to live in Tokyo. I was away from Konko for many years, but I had this vague feeling that there was something special about the Sacred Grounds and so there was nothing for me to worry about. I would never have had such a feeling if my parents had not practiced faith in Kami. I am truly grateful for that. "To know gratitude and to try to repay their kindness and affection" are enormously important concepts when one practices faith. What I mean by this is that I am here today BECAUSE OF and THANKS TO my parents' deep prayers for me.

I left Tokyo and came back to the home of my parents. I got married and am blessed with three children. They too were born into a family. They are fortunate, because they were able to grow up in a home where they could see and talk to their grandfather and grandmother every single day. We lived with the 5th Konko-sama and his wife. We had our meals together, did our evening prayer service after dinner, took a bath, and went to bed, like a custom. These were the regular family routines in our home, and I am thankful about this. Their dear grandpa, the 5th Konko-sama embraced each of our children physically and mentally with a great,



The 5th Konko-sama's writing can be translated thus: "From August 10th through the 20th of the Year 2000, I traveled around the Islands of Oahu, Hawaii, Maui and Kauai, then deepened awe and respect towards great nature. Now I do pray for harmony and coexistence between human beings and nature. September 1st, 2000. Heiki"

grand sensitivity. Maybe not very often, but Konko-sama taught and guided his grandchildren. Our children have grown up to be warm-hearted, caring individuals thanks to their grandpa and grandma. I have no doubt about it.

I firmly believe that world peace starts with peace in the home. I am keenly aware of how difficult it is sometimes, to practice faith in our family, day in and day out. For example, when our children get injured or have pain somewhere, I make it a rule to give Sacred Rice, Goshinmai to them. When something painful happens to them, I say to them, "Take Goshinmai into your body." They nod their heads, saying "OK" and take Sacred Rice

obediently. They do so probably because they believe in the presence of Kami in the Sacred Rice. To me, they believe, "All right, we will receive blessings from Kami, because we have just taken Sacred Rice into our bodies." Our children respond to my words of encouragement positively and obediently because they believe what I teach them, and I am truly grateful for this. Our three children quarrel from time to time, but overall, they get along with each other very well. Their joyful, peaceful relationship shows that they receive grand blessings from our Parent Kami daily. I have no doubt about this.

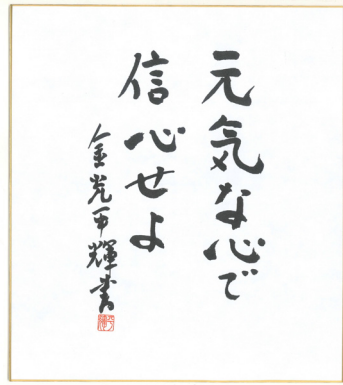
We clean the Kami altar of our home on scheduled days. It was my mother who used to do this, but my wife has taken up this cleaning work. I do not want our children to say, "OK, this is what mom is supposed to do, so we don't need to help." My desire is that they instead consider this cleaning work a service in which all members of our family can engage. Therefore, I join my wife on cleaning day, and I invite our children to join us too. I try to involve as many of our children as

possible. They sometimes say, “Why do we have to do this?” but when the designated time comes, they gather in front of the Kami altar and help.

What delights me is that during our cleaning our children have asked questions sincerely and curiously. As the children wiped the photographs displayed on the altar, for example, they have asked, “Who is this?” “Is the 4th Konko-sama the father of our grandpa?” “Doesn’t grandpa’s photo stand too close to that of Uncle Akinobu?” In this way, we have often talked about Kami and our ancestors, and this makes me very happy. We are a happy family when we spend some time at the altar together.

Through generations, our ancestors have

passed life onto each one of us. I am already grateful when I think of this. Moreover, I cannot help but think of how much we are all being saved through doing goyo for Kami. I am also allowed to realize how much we should be grateful for being blessed with an unshakable anchor, Kami. I also believe that being thankful is not enough. I believe that we need to think about what we must do to repay the grand favors our



The 5th Konko-sama’s writing. “Practice faith with a cheerful heart.”
By Konko Heiki.”

Parent Kami and ancestors have given us. We make sure that we will neither get lost nor lose faith itself. We also

should speak to our younger, future generations about the Way of Konko faith. And I pray earnestly that we will all be allowed to work hard on this important mission.

“Appreciation Is Paramount”

By the Reverend Tsukamoto Kazumasa
Director of KIC

On July 21st this year, the Reverend Konko Heiki, the 5th Konko-sama passed away. His passing gave each one of us great surprise and sorrow, yet I am deeply thankful for his selfless service which lasted for 3 decades, 6 consecutive terms as the Spiritual Leader.

Just like our Founder and his successors, the 5th Konko-sama also has become a “kami of Toritsugi.” As such, he continues to perform Toritsugi for the entire Konko congregation, and he also continues to pray to our Parent Kami for “world peace and the fulfillment of all humanity” on a constant basis. Konko-sama’s sincere prayers for us are far more than we ever deserve, I believe, and I cannot help thanking him deeply again and again.

When I was a student of the Konkokyo Seminary, I trained myself as an apprentice of the 5th Konko-sama. After graduating from the Seminary, I asked the 5th Konko-sama for his Toritsugi at each of my life’s turning points. Each time, he showed me the way to

the sunny side of the street.

Among these Toritsugi Mediations with Konko-sama, one Mediation stands out as unforgettable. In 2006, an asbestos removal work was done at the Konkokyo Headquarters’ Central Worship Hall. Because of this, the Headquarters’ Mediation Seat was moved from the Hall to the Faith Training Center. Today, we call this wooden building “Shutokuden,” but it was in fact the building for the Sacred Mediation performed by the 3rd and the 4th Konko-samas (until the construction of the Central Worship and Mediation Hall was completed). Compared to the present-day Hall, the Kami Altar and the Mitama Altar of Shutokuden are nearer to the tatami-mat space for worshippers. The Mediation Seat of Shutokuden is elevated above the space for worshippers, but not so much as the one at the present-day Mediation Hall. Thanks to this, there was an atmosphere which allowed us to feel the distance between Konko-sama and ourselves was shorter than usual, when we were there.

Back in 2006, I was appointed the Director of the Konkokyo Seoul Activity Center. At that time, I was with my wife and my 15-month baby boy. I knew when I was arriving in Seoul for my new goyo. The closer that date came, the more seriously I came to feel my responsibility as the Director. The big sense of responsibility gave me much anxiety, and I honestly expressed such a feeling to Konko-sama.

The 5th Konko-sama looked around the Worship Hall from one edge to the other and spoke to me, “Our Founder teaches us, ‘The whole world is Tenchi Kane No Kami’s Hiromae.’ Therefore, I advise you make yourself see that you are doing goyo in South Korea as if you were doing goyo in one corner of the Headquarters Worship Hall. Then you will feel more at ease. Receive such a blessing from Kami.”

I had already known that teaching of Konko Daijin, but it was a huge impact when Konko-sama orally quoted the teaching for me at the Mediation Seat. This very teaching struck a deep chord within me. And the 5th Konko-sama’s words were always a great support and powerful encouragement for me during my tenure in Seoul.

In the address of the chief mourner of the main, official funeral ceremony for the 5th Konko-sama on August 29th, 2024, the Rev-

erend Konko Hiromichi, the present Konko-sama, gave us the following words:

“I have begun to more fully realize the meaning of ‘rooted in appreciation’, as my grandfather, the 4th Konko-sama used to say. I felt sad about his passing and how much I would miss my father. However, this sentiment deepened to a broader and truer appreciation for my father, as a father, a spiritual leader of our shared faith and his life. I now understand more



Rev. Tsukamoto is second from left in the front row and Rev. Suenaga Kinya, a former director of the Konkokyo Seoul Activity Center, October 2024.

fully the importance of appreciation and gratitude as it pertains to the Konko faith.”

As we all know, the present Konko-sama serves our Parent Kami at the Headquarters’ Worship Hall day in and day out, seeking and showing the faith of the successive Konko-samas. The present Konko-sama imparts, “Appreciation is paramount.” He, in other words, says that nothing is more important and worthy than gratitude. In my mind, these words of Konko-sama sparkle like a precious gem. It shines so brightly that I can feel nothing but deep thankfulness and awe. And I now renew my resolution to follow the present Konko-sama’s teaching as much as I can. I would like to contribute to “world peace and the fulfillment of all humanity” every single day with a healthy body and mind, making the feelings of gratitude the foundation for everything I do and/or say.



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