



## The 140th Anniversary Grand Ceremony of the Founder, Konko Daijin

“When my form disappears, I will go wherever I am asked.” With these words, our Founder passed away 140 years ago. The work of Mediation has been succeeded for six generations. Currently, Reverend Konko Hiromichi, the present 6th Konko-sama, has been serving at the Mediation Hall since 2021.

On October 1, 8, and 10, 2023, we had the 140th Anniversary Grand Ceremony at the Grand Service Hall in Konko, Japan. In the main prayer, Reverend Konko praised the Founder’s virtue. He stated, “During the drastic change in Japan’s social and political system, our Founder received the divine name, Ikigami Konko Daijin. He then received the Divine Message, which said that Kami had sent Ikigami Konko Daijin to the people. Thus, the Founder established the Way of Kami and people. While he worked diligently for the Kami-centered world, he passed away peacefully at the age of 70 on October 10, 1883. This year marks 140th since he became the eternal mediator.” Reverend Konko then prayed for us to strengthen our relationship with Kami by being aware of the favor, paying back the favor, practicing faith, and receiving the blessings. He prayed that we contribute to world peace and the salvation of humanity.

Following the main prayer, Reverend Konko addressed:



“Congratulations! I am so grateful to have the 140th Anniversary Grand Ceremony of Ikigami Konko Daijin. Our Founder received blessings and dedicated his life to serve for Mediation. He established the way where people are saved and Kami is fulfilled. Let us express our gratitude that the Way has been handed down for many generations by successive Konko-samas, disciples, and predecessors. While we appreciate everything that takes care of us, let us actualize the Way of Kami and people on this very day. Let us continue to practice faith in our lives so that we could return the favor of Tenchi Kane No Kami, our Divine Parent of the Universe. Lastly, let us pray earnestly for the world peace and salvation of humanity.”

During the service, Reverend Iwasaki Michiyo, the Chief Administrative Minister of Konkokyo, shared his thoughts in his address. Reverend Iwasaki pointed out that “the favor” Konko-sama mentioned must be the feeling such as “If someone had not done that, I would not be what I am now.” He looked back at the critical events of our Founder:

The Divine Parent gave life to the Founder 209 years ago. At the age of 42, he followed Kami with awareness of human ignorance. He accepted the Divine Call 164 years ago. One hundred forty years ago, the Founder accepted the role of eternal

mediator following Kami's Revelation.

Reverend Iwasaki added that the Founder's faith reached us through the successive Konko-samas, disciples, predecessors, ministers, and our ancestors. If they had not existed, we would not be what we are now. With their efforts and Kami's

desire, the Way of Kami and people came to us. Reverend Iwasaki encouraged people to the Way of Kami and people. He also extended his prayer for all the local churches to receive the blessings of Kami.

## Voices of the Worshipers

The first Faith Enrichment was held on October 7-8, 2023, at Konko, Japan. Twenty seven believers from South America, North America, and Hawaii joined the Enrichment. They all came to attend the 140th Anniversary Grand Ceremony of the Founder, Konko Daijin. Following the opening prayer by Reverend Robert Giulietti of Konko Church of Seattle in English and Reverend Iwai Ryoichi of Konko Church of San Paulo in Portuguese, attendants shared their thoughts and deepened their faith.

Several participants commented, "I wanted to attend the service with my whole family. I am so happy that my dream came true after receiving a special arrangement from Kami. Wholehearted prayer reached Kami, and Kami made us come here today." "One hundred and forty years have passed since our Founder departed. I came to worship and express my appreciation for the eternal workings as our mediator. Konko town is a sacred ground filled with a special energy. When we come to worship, we receive the divine virtue, and we are revitalized." "I came from Hawaii for the first time to the sacred place because I wanted to know more about the Konko faith. I am happy that I can pray where our spiritual leader, Konko-sama resides."

For the significance of the 140th year and for the thoughts in their daily practice of faith, the following were mentioned: "Our Founder promised, 'When my form disappears, I will go wherever I am asked.' For 140 years, we have had Ikigami Konko Daijin's Mediation. We are allowed to practice faith because successive Konko-samas, including the present 6th Konko-sama, have



performed mediation at the Main Worship Hall in Konko, Japan. This year marks 140th of our Founder. I would like to develop my faith more." "Konko faith is the faith closely related to our lives. Therefore, we are able to practice faith by applying the Founder's teachings in

our daily lives. No matter what happens, we are able to pray to Kami, feel Kami's benevolence, and accept the matter with gratitude. There are many religions, but I am glad that I am a Konko believer." "I enjoy reading Konko-shinbun (newspaper). I sense other people's passion when I find words like 'making Kami as a subject', 'a story of Kami and people', or 'the Way of Kami and people.' They are trying to express the most important part of the Founder's faith. I feel that I want to deepen my faith and understand Kami's Wish. I am reading a book written about the first head minister of my church. I was so impressed that I learned how the hiromae was built by believers who came to the United States. I would like to have as much passion and energy as these predecessors. The way of life with the Konko faith is wonderful and valuable. I wish I could convey my life with appreciation to younger people."

Reverend Iwai Ryoichi of Konko Church of San Paulo shared his experience. The Konko Church of San Paulo celebrated the 45th Anniversary of the Church Establishment this year. Before the service, Kami showed incredible workings of Mediation. A Japanese person came to listen to a sermon given at the Main Worship Hall in Konko. When he overheard a minister who delivered the sermon mentioning "Reverend Iwai of San Paulo", he remembered a task while he stayed in



San Paulo 45 years ago. He told the minister; “I was working in San Paulo. When I visited Konko Church of San Paulo, the first head minister asked me, ‘Please make a request to Konko-sama for San Paulo Church to prosper after you return to Japan.’ I remembered that plea now. I didn’t make that request to Konko-sama at that time.” The minister who listened to this story, hastily said, “Go to Konko-sama right away.” The person went to seek Konko-sama’s Mediation. Forty-five years later, he was able to relay the request made by the first head minister. Reverend Iwai learned about this occurrence right before the 45th Year Ceremony. The members of San Paulo Church have been preparing for the service along with Reverend Iwai and his mother who became the second head minister. Then, they learned about the first head minister’s request to Konko-sama when their church was established. Forty-five years later, the request reached Konko-sama. Now, their 45th Year Service became more meaningful after realizing the prayers of Kami and spirits. Reverend Iwai claimed that if we continue to receive Ikigami Konko Daijin’s Mediation in this way, the Way of Kami and People would spread. He encouraged others to look forward to the 150th Year of the Founder. Finally, Reverend Iwai concluded that he would like to serve Kami who has been entrusting him with wishes.

Participants shared their experiences with guidance and protection from Kami and spirits. They gratefully attended the 140th Anniversary Grand Ceremony of the Founder, Konko Daijin.

These two days of Faith Enrichment became an opportunity to be grateful for encountering the faith. Thus, we renewed our Wishes: actualize the Way of Kami and People, and serve Kami all over the world.

Mr. Rodney Masumoto from Hawaii also attended the 140th Anniversary Grand Ceremony. He expressed his appreciation for the blessings that he received. He said, “When I went to Konko Daijin’s grave, I was overwhelmed with emotions.”

On his previous visit, he stayed at the Founder’s Gravesite overnight. He was able to do that because the restrooms in the park was open 24 hours. Therefore, on this visit, he decided to clean the restroom to express his appreciation. He started with the women’s restroom in honor his mother who introduced him to Konko faith. Coming from a family of four boys, they would go to church countless times for injuries and illnesses. At the time, Reverend Kodama would administer prayers with his mother. Reverend Kodama explained the ailment while utilizing a Japanese/English dictionary. He would then pray for them. They received many blessings with the *goshinmai* (sacred rice) he shared with them.

Mr. Rodney finished cleaning the women’s restroom and the handicapped restroom around 12:30 PM. As he was finishing to take a break for lunch, he attempted to disconnect the hose he was using. The pipe supplying the water to the hose broke. Water flooded the women’s restroom. The security guard shut off the main water line and put the signs up to notify people of the closure. Mr. Rodney said, “In my endeavors to do *goyo*, I caused more trouble! Simple job. Clean the restrooms, but more problems!”

He stopped by Konko Library where *Aoi-tori* group has been working for transliteration. This visitation turned into a divine arrangement. The library staff recognized Mr. Rodney’s deep voice and encouraged him to help with the English audio program. The AI program had been supplying the English audio for the story of the Founder’s life and the Konkokyo religion. This audio would benefit blind people and others who are unable to read. Afterwards, Mr. Rodney recorded for the English pamphlet, “Introduction to Konkokyo (The Konko Faith)”. He said, “In trying to help with putting the English text to audio for blind people to hear, I have learned so much more! In working on ‘THE VOICE OF THE UNIVERSE: Selected Teachings of Konkokyo’, I had read this book in

my youth but misunderstood the importance of the text. I saw the importance of what they are trying to do.” He decided to change his travel plans. He spent as much time as he could to finish this time consuming task. He finished 10 minutes before he had to leave for the *Shinkansen* at Kurashiki station. He stopped at Fukuoka airport and flew back to Hawaii.

He sent an appreciative letter to Konko Library. In the letter, he stated, “When I was leaving Kurashiki station, I saw two women: one who was

completely blind and the other was partially blind. They were walking up the stairs to the station. I felt an overwhelming sense of accomplishment. I know my *goyo* will help English speaking blind people to know the greatness of this simple Japanese religion. The audio would be available for them. I see the blessings that I have received!” He concluded in his letter: “I had a simple heartfelt wish to go to Gohombu on my own! There are so many people helping me, and I know I am truly blessed! Arigato Gozai Masu Kami Sama!”

## Make Kami's Wish Come True Using Gratitude as a Principle

The 140th Grand Ceremony was held on October 1, 2023 honoring the Founder, Konko Daijin. During the Grand Ceremony, Reverend Kuwahara Kazuyoshi delivered a sermon at the Grand Service Hall, Konko, Japan. Reverend Kuwahara is the head minister of the Konko Church of Miyakonojo, Miyazaki, Japan. The title of his sermon was “Wake up, realize a gift of life, and make Kami's Wish come true.” In his sermon, he shared two important teachings while he practiced faith: one was waking up to realize a gift of life and express appreciation; the other was praying for Kami to save others.

About 50 years ago, while he received Meditation, the 4th Konko-sama said, “The building should have a solid foundation. Otherwise, the building would collapse. No matter what happens, you are within the blessings of Kami.” He kept these words in his heart, and he always reminded himself that he has been within the blessings.

Ten years ago, his doctor found cancer and he had to remove his left ureter and kidney. The doctor told him, “There are two kidneys. You will remove one. However, the other one will work twice as much harder. A year later, the working kidney will be bigger. Human's body is amazing.”

Having heard what the doctor said, Reverend



Kuwahara was impressed by the blessings provided by Kami, our Divine Parent. Kami kept us alive since we were born and even when we are facing difficulty. Being aware of this, Reverend Kuwahara always reminds himself to prioritize appreciation.

Reverend Kuwahara once asked his mother, “What is important when practicing faith?” She immediately answered, “Do not rely on others, polish your heart, and be happy for whatever you achieved.” Then, his mother told him that she practiced faith following Konko Daijin's teachings and polished her heart whenever she was about to rely on others. She also said, “I don't know how many times I hurt others with my rough edges of character. I was so happy my personality had been rounded out by practicing faith.” In this way, she broadened her heart by appreciating everything. While she worked as a vendor, she relayed her customers' requests to the church. Then, she told her customers that she made their requests to Kami and gave them the sacred rice she received at the church. She lived to make Kami's wish come true.

Commemorating the 140th Anniversary Grand Ceremony of the Founder, Konko Daijin, I would like to wake up, be appreciative, pray for others, and fulfill my life with Kami's Wish.



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