



The Konko Missions in Hawaii will fulfill Ikigami Konko Daijin's vision to embrace the world with the Konko Faith.

## Seeking Openness in the Face of Adversity

The following is a summary of a ministers gathering. The lecture is titled, "Seeking Openness in the Face of Adversity" by Rev. Shinkichi Kawai. This lecture was delivered at the Konko Mission of Waipahu on April 23, 2011.

### Opening Remarks

We must seek openness in the face of adversity. However, we must also admit to ourselves that there is a part of us that is not open. One of the fundamental factors which prevent us from being open perhaps have to do with *kegare* (impurity). We are naturally equipped with the ability to fear, be annoyed, and avoid *kegare*, but without overcoming these feelings, we cannot say that we are truly open. We can practice faith to overcome our stance toward *kegare* – our founder too walked this path – for true openness in the face of adversity.

*Kegare* (impurity) is a Japanese word based on the Japanese culture, and I do not know if the term will hold meaning in the Hawaiian context. Moreover, the word *kegare* is hardly used in Japan these days, and so there are many peo-



Rev. Shinkichi Kawai, Konko Church of Nakano

ple in Japan, mainly young people, who are not familiar with this word and its meaning. Therefore, to discuss *kegare*, we must first reconfirm its meaning. Within Konkokyo and its believers, Founder overcame *kegare* for us, and so many do not have much regard for *kegare*.

Many living in this modern society view *kegare* as an old custom and are indifferent to it. However, as long as humans possess the natural instinct to survive, we naturally tend to avoid *kegare*. Though the word *kegare* is outdated and we do not know what this really is, we still sense fear when we are mentally or physically threatened or when we encounter something dangerous. This sense of fear and similar emotions can be applied to *kegare*. As our image of *kegare* becomes more clear, the Founder's teaching, "*kireizuku ga nai*," which means, "do not taboo impurities," becomes a dynamic and powerful message.

Modernization could be the major reason why *kegare* is no longer referred to or used. Konkokyo too became modernized. As the modernized Konkokyo stopped referring to *kegare*, the dynamism of our founder's faith also faded away. I am paying attention to *kegare* to understand Founder's faith as he overcame *kegare*. By understanding *kegare*, we can also understand Kami's deep love and benevolence.

### I. Konkokyo and *kegare*

There is a teaching: "Till now, there have been only kamis which tabooed impurities. If impurities are tabooed, people cannot be saved. The kami I believe in does not taboo impurities. You must understand this." (GI:Ichimura Mitsugoro1:3-1)

In traditional Shinto, kamis tabooed impurities and avoided *kegare*. Sacred matters and *kegare* were strictly separated. The purification rite or the cleansing hands to purify oneself and other similar practices exist in any religion. Only after purifying oneself, can one face kami.

Regarding this, Founder said, "Till now, there have been only kamis which tabooed impurities." He added, "If impurities are tabooed, people cannot be saved." These are very important words since those that are suffering are all in a state of *kegare*, or impurity. If those in such state are not allowed to face Kami, how can they be saved? This is why Founder said, "If impurities are tabooed, people cannot be saved."

He went on to say, "The kami I believe in does not taboo impurities." This is a big surprise as the kami that Founder believed in was Konjin, which was believed that out of all kamis, Konjin tabooed impurity the most. It was believed that you would be cursed if violated, enough to cause one to build seven graves.

I thought that since *kegare* is now outdated, I did not think there would be someone who believed in avoiding impurities like in the old days. But I met a person who belonged to a religion with a kami that taboos *kegare* and impurities. This person felt impure just by hearing the word *kegare* and lived in fear that his life might be taken away. He practiced this faith and strictly avoided *kegare*. This lifestyle eventually suffocated him, and he began practicing the Konko faith, a faith that does not taboo impurities. The experience of this person was widespread in the days of the founder. I believe it was a surprise and difficult for these people to accept the founder when he said: “The kami [Konjin] I believe in does not taboo impurities. You must understand this.”

His words, “You must understand this” are also a message to us living in the present society from our Founder. Particularly those who perform toritsugi mediation face those with difficulties and problems. Dealing with matters we would not want to normally deal with is the act of toritsugi. Ministers who are afraid of these problems cannot perform toritsugi. If Konkokyo ceases to mention and discourse about *kegare*, it will fail to save those facing adversity and suffering from *kegare*.

By wanting to protect ourselves, we still face the very same issues of the people during the founder’s days. However, we reason these feelings in rational and scientific terms, and we are convinced that *kegare*, or impurity, is not the cause since these notions are irrational. We feel content because we believe we understand matters in a scientific, rational, and reasonable sense. However, the emotions that arose during the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant incident is far from being rational and reasonable. In other words, the present society still very much face the issues of *kegare*, and ethnologically speaking, this is a universal emotion shared by humanity. If Konkokyo taboos impurity, *kegare*, and *meguri*, it would mean closing our eyes to this universal human emotion, and we would not be able to see the whole picture of hardship and problem that faces humanity.

I myself must overcome of being scared and worried; I want the strength of Founder who overcame his own faults. Therefore, I am practicing to understand the founder’s sense of *kegare*, and put this understanding into actual practice.

## II. An attitude facing *kegare* (hardship)

According to Yasumasa Sekine the anthropologist, *kegare* mainly has to do with the fear of death. The world for the dead lies beyond the world we live in – you might imagine a sacred world of kamis. It is a world that is separate from the world we live in.

Life moves between the two worlds during birth and death. When we pass on, our life leaves this world to the other side. A new life is also brought into this world. Though our lives continuously pass between these two worlds, there is a boundary that separates them. Despite this boundary, the two worlds interact through birth and death. Moreover, an event which changes the existing world order relates to life and death.

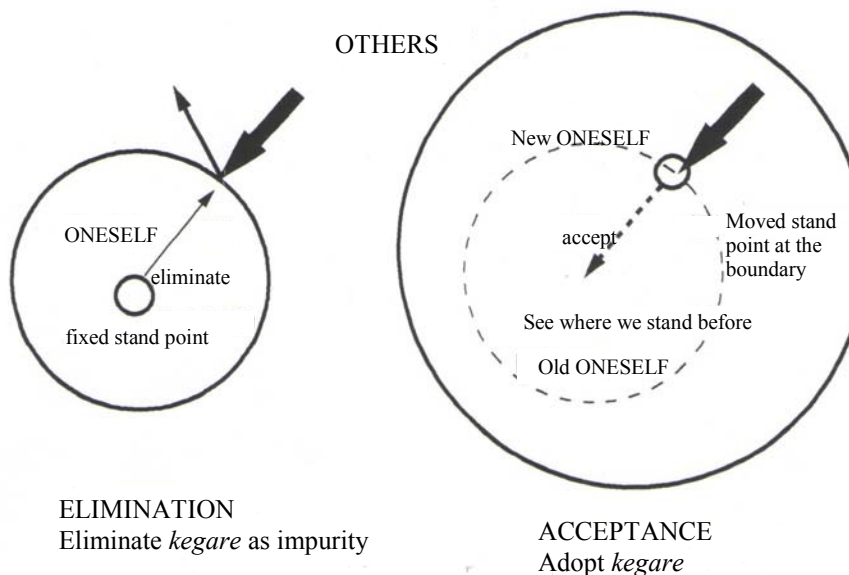
Since death is an unknown experience and an unknown world, we are fearful of death. We call the matter that might possibly bring us fear as

*kegare*. We all desire stability, calmness, and peace without disturbance. Though we coexist with others, there is a boundary between ourselves and others. We live respecting each other’s boundaries. These boundaries also serve to protect and comfort us, our families, and societies. It can be said that this is also a defense mechanism to maintain our steady and peaceful lives. We protect by defending ourselves from foreign interference, calling this *kegare*.

There are two ways to deal with *kegare* – one is elimination and another is acceptance. In our founder’s terms, “tabooing impurity” means eliminating *kegare*, and “not tabooing impurity” is to accept *kegare*.

How can we constructively accept *kegare*? *Kegare* exists in between life and death. Therefore, at the event of birth and death, the life becomes the most active and powerful. “*Kegare*” is closely related to the life. It is a life threatening event, but it gives a power to life at the same time. Ancient people had this feeling. Therefore, they had a custom to accept “*kegare*,” and applied it creatively. For example, in South India, people tried to have a wife who experienced “*kegare*.” They think that those who experienced many “*kegare*” are full of productive energy. However, modernization took away its context. People are told, “Such a thing is superstition. You should think rationally.” or “All men are equal. You should not discriminate others.” This is how Japanese modernization took place. The modernization took away the context of sacred power from people. Then people who have such beliefs would be simply discriminated. Therefore, they lost a folkloric belief such that “*kegare*” dwells a power of life. Eventually they think of “*kegare*” as an unsanitary matter. In this sense, the elimination of “*kegare*” will get stronger because of the modernization.

If modernization takes place all over the world, elimination of the matters labeled “*kegare*” get stronger. It would become far more violent than a pre-modern traditional society. This is a paradox and ambivalence of the modernization. This is what happens without people being aware of it. The modernization values the individual human right. People simply think that discrimination and prejudice by the irrational emotion or sense



will be vanished if we explain everything rationally. Konkokyo, as well, mentioning “*meguri*” or “*kegare*” are believed to discriminate others and stopped using these terms. However, eliminating these words increased our sense of discrimination and fear for the different people. Adopting “*kegare*” is important. As I showed the elimination of “*kegare*” by drawing a circle at the left of the diagrams, without changing (or do not want to change) one’s standing point, elimination takes place violently as if it were threatening one’s life. However, it could be said that the matters that threaten our existence could give us the chance to reborn. I draw another circle with a dotted line at the right to indicate adopting “*kegare*.” Adopting “*kegare*” means to place our stand point to the matters threatening our existence. From that point, we try to see where we stood before. By adopting something that threaten our existence, we renew ourselves. We could create a new self by dismantling our old self and gaining strength from the matter threatening our existence. “*Kegare*” could be a source to create a new self and a new world. It is very important to see in this way. “*Kegare*” could be a cause to create discrimination. However, even if we eliminate the idea of “*kegare*,” life threatening matter which is the source of “*kegare*” will not fade away. By elimination, a different discrimination would be formed. And modernization makes the discrimination much stronger. In other words, it is impossible that discrimination would be vanished by eliminating “*kegare*.” It would be said that the modernization is the one that strengthen discrimination and violence.

### III. “Kami that does not taboo impurities” – adopting difficulties (=events of *kegare*)

The Founder faced Konjin who believed that should be avoided. He listened to Konjin sincerely by saying that he was a man of primal ignorance. Konko-sama was reborn several times and became Iki-gami Konko Daijin.

In this way, he became free from any fear. He thought that everything has meanings, and adopted difficulties with sincerity. This attitude made him a person who served mediation. A mediator listens to people with great care. Then difficulties could be seen as blessings. It would be aware that misfortunes are the blessings in disguised. In this way, Toritsugi was established. What supports Toritsugi is Kami who says, “I do not taboo impurity.” It has an absolute trust that Toritsugi tries to help any people facing difficulties with determination. Difficulties could not be accepted if it were too pure and sacred. If it is so, it is important for mediators to be aware that they also have impurities or accumulated offenses. The sense that they might have difficulties or they are the one who need to be saved is similar to our Founder’s awareness of primal ignorance. When the Founder attempted to build the Hiromae, people in those days tried to build the shrine at another place. However, the Founder strongly disagreed with their idea. He wanted to build the Hiromae at the place where he was told that four legged animal was buried and made irreverence over 400 years ago. He chose the place where there were offenses. He did not seek a pure land to build the Hiromae. Instead, he insisted to stay at the impure land. He could adopt difficulties because the awareness of the irreverence that he had and wanted to stay at the impure land.

Sekine developed similar idea. He said that the most important thing to overcome issues such as discrimination and *kegare* is for troubled people not to be isolated, but to stay at the

connected ground. He pointed out that it is important to be aware of staying on the connected ground where *kegare* exists. However, people try to be right and pure, and they don’t want to get dirty. This is why people tend to look down on others, or try not to see something unfavorable. However, the Founder indicated “Like the way water gathers into a depression, all the world’s problems gather in this Hiromae.” Could we bury ourselves into the depression? Having awareness of primal ignorance, the Founder opened the gate’s sliding door and obstructed the doorsill with a plank, and let anything come into the Hiromae. It is the awareness of primal ignorance and accumulated offenses. When we think about typical old Konko believers, they often said, “I have deadly offenses. Therefore, Kami allowed me to have these hardships. By dealing with this hardship, Kami is taking away my offense.” They could think the hardship positively. The awareness of accumulated offenses makes them practice faith in this way. However, if we lost the sense of *meguri*, we would start saying “Why do we have to go through these difficulties.” They started to think that Kami is not reasonable, and stop believing in Kami. If it were an old type of faith practiced by most believers, the more difficulties come, the deeper their faith become. Such a powerful practice of faith would be gone if we stop saying *meguri* in Konko faith.

If we only seeing Kami’s beloved children without mentioning troubled children, people naturally questioned why Kami gives unbearable hardship to the beloved children. However if we have awareness of having irreverence, we could think about others who suffer from difficulties thinking that we also have the same kind of problems. Then we could stay together with people who suffer thinking, “Let us receive the blessings.” If we think that we are right, we cannot understand why the troubled people cannot do things right. Then, we start blaming them. Or we will say, “I don’t understand what you are saying.” When we think in this way, we will understand why the people who came to the Founder were able to receive blessings.

Lastly, I would like to introduce a new Buddhism established in Kamakura era in Japan. They stopped tabooing impurities. The Buddhism only served for royal family and nobles until this period of time. If we read literature in Heian era, people in those days had feared for irreverence. Therefore, people tried to keep the emperor’s castle pure. The purification ritual was performed to avoid impurity. The Buddhist monks in those days did not have a contact with anything impure to serve for the royal family and the nobles. That was why the monks did not do the funeral service. They were away from women, and did not get close to people who had illness. The monks approved by the Japanese government could not deal with the troubled people. In Kamakura era, however, a new Buddhism was born in these circumstances. They changed their clothes. They used to wear white robes, but they started to wear black robes. The black robes symbolized adopting impurities. The monks after Kamakura era started to have funeral services and wore the black robes. They faced women’s sufferings and illnesses such as Hansen’s disease.

In human history, these events took place. Our Founder also actualized a true salvation excellently. However, this is not only the issues in Konko faith. It has a quite important universal meaning for humanity.

# Kami's Eye



Rev. Hiroshi Takebe  
Director  
Konkokyo Research Institute

## Kami's Appearance and Kami's Will

Takashi Tachibana, an essayist wrote a book summarizing the interview with an astronaut titled "*Uchu kara no kikan*" (Return from the Universe) (1983). This book explains an experience on how the astronaut saw the

earth from the universe. He was able to see the place having a sunset and the place having a sunrise at the same time. At that moment, he felt that he had a Kami's eye.

Konko Daijin taught, "Tenchi Kane No Kami watches over everything." And to those who came from Osaka, he said, "Osaka is a big. But to Kami, it is no bigger than a poppy seed." These teachings indicated Kami's eye. It is not limit to the invisible area. It will include the world beyond human's life.

We could expand our thought from our own lives to family, local community, country, and society with historic background. However, even if we expand our thoughts, we need to know where we belong. The experience to be seen from Tenchi, the source of our existence is needed.

The intensive description of human world and its history from Kami's eye was written in the revelation, which is called "*go-shin-den*, or Divine Message." on October 10, 1873.

Tenchi Kane No Kami wants to say the following: "Though they live between Heaven and Earth, people are unaware of Kami's blessings. Shrines, temples, and homes stand on Kami's land. Unaware of this, people only examine the Days and Directions and commit irreverences to Kami and encounter hardships due to their accumulated offenses. They are to practice faith and receive divine blessings. Tenchi Kane No Kami has sent Ikigami Konko Daijin to the people to give blessings and teachings and to have them prosper forever. Kami is Kami because of man, and man is man because of Kami. Both continue to uphold each other."

After finding the *Memoirs of Konko Daijin*, this revelation was treated among the late ministers as "the clearest statement of the theology of Konko faith." This description surely has a broad vision for how the world and human history has been.

First of all, it pointed out that human who are allowed to live within Tenchi has been committing irreverence without knowing blessings, and they suffer. From Kami's point of view, no matter what nationality and race they belong to, they do not know the truth. If Kami said that we are not aware of blessings, we are at a loss of words. However, Kami did not only point that out, but expressed Kami's agony and wanted people to know about it.

One of the late Reverends explains about "the moment" when Ikigami Konko Daijin was sent to the people. He explained "the moment" had passed an infinitesimally long peri-

od of time.

It was "the moment" that could occur at any time. Also, "the moment" could happen all of a sudden. Konko Daijin who once "lived with the constant frustration and futility" identified his life with the life of ancestors and the life of humanity. Then, he looked at people who had been committing irreverences without knowing the way of Universe and suffered, which made us feel an infinitesimally long period of time. At the same time, neither looking back to the past nor waiting for the future, "the moment" could mean the moment to open by the revelation. "The moment" could happen any time, but the event will suddenly occur for those who experienced it.

At the same time, the Reverend said that he felt as if he saw Konko Daijin who lowered his head toward the altar. And he added "Behind the words, 'Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama was giving me this thankful revelation' was hidden." He read what was written in the *Memoirs of Konko Daijin*. But, he also received the heart and attitude of Konko Daijin who received the revelations. Konko Daijin wrote an indescribable revelation by using common words in *Memoirs of Konko Daijin* and *Record of Revelations*. Therefore the Reverend was also able to capture a mounting energy of the words as Kami's appearance.

## Tenchi and people – where life belongs

After Meiji restoration, Konko Daijin faced difficulties with propagation. In 1871, it was rumored that Konko Daijin committed burglaries in collusion with his followers. The provincial office investigated the rumors, which proved to be false. However, the number of worshippers declined. In 1873, he received the order to take down the altar. He could not propagate for about one month. In addition to this, from 1876 to 1877, the policemen came frequently, and Konko Daijin was almost taken to the police station. Kami revealed, "The Way of the Universe is collapsing." "Endure even if other people urinate on you." "I shall clean you up. Be patient no matter what people say." "I shall clean you up" could be an assurance from Kami. But, this statement could mean that Kami will endure with Konko Daijin.

In such situation, Kami instructed the meaning and working of Tenchi where Konko Daijin should belong.

One is the revelation in 1876. "Trees, bamboo, grass, grains, and other plants grow because of the rain and soil ("*ame-tsuchi*") of the Universe (also "*ame-tsuchi*," but written as *Tenchi*). Without the rain and soil of the Universe, they would not grow and there would be no harvest. If people practice faith, plants will grow and harvests will improve." (*Oboecho*:20.18.7) In this year, they had little rain. In May, villagers came to the Hiromae to request the rain. Near Konko Daijin's Hiromae, there was a bamboo grove. A bamboo stalk grew after the rain, and stopped growing with a fair weather. The bamboo stalk seemed dead. But when it rained, bamboo grew again. In the *Record of Revelations*, he described how bamboo grew. In the draught, he observed the relationship between the water consumption and the bamboo growth, and he had the revelation of "Tenchi (*Ame-tsuchi*), and rain and soil (*ame-tsuchi*)." Konko Daijin made his detailed observation for three months until he came to this revelation.

The bamboo stopped growing so many times and seemingly died. However having rain, it started to grow again. This shows a life working when the bamboo became the weakest. It also shows the power of Tenchi to nurture all things. In this way, taking "ame-tsuchi" as an example, the relationship of the life and Ten-

chi was expressed. As the rain and soil were absorbed to life in each moment, Tenchi gave the life by becoming a part of trees, bamboo, grass, and grains.

I heard the following story at the 60<sup>th</sup> Konkokyo Peace Gathering at Hiroshima in 2005. Right after the World War 2, people said that trees and grasses would not grow for the next 75 years. However, an oleander bloomed in the following year. I imagine how the flower meant for people who lost many lives, people who suffered from the aftereffect, and people who worried about a newly born baby to live on the wasted land. People felt love and received encouragement. They were so happy that they wanted to hold the flower precious. A flower bloomed on the wasted land. People believed that the land would not sustain any life. However, the flower let people know that the great land is still alive, and the land made the flower bloom. People were able to see Tenchi through this experience with the flower.

The revelation regarding Tenchi continued. In 1877, he repeated, “Never forget ‘Tenchi’ (Heaven and Earth) or ‘Ame-tsuchi’ (rain and soil).” It continued, “Water is necessary, but not a flood. Soil is necessary, but not an avalanche.” And he said, “Everything is good in the proper amount.”



Think about the recent weather. We had a continuous downpour after having clear weather day after day. We experienced the lack of harvest because of drought. Facing the works of Tenchi, human’s power is limited. “Ame-tsuchi” is needed for humans to live. However, it might bury us and threaten our lives. We have nothing but prayers for the divine arrangement by saying, “Everything is good in the proper amount.”

The revelation of “Never forget ‘Tenchi’ (Heaven and Earth) or ‘Ame-tsuchi’ (rain and soil)” teaches us two aspects. One is the importance of “proper amount.” The other is urging us to cling to Tenchi.

Many Konkokyo believers will say that blessings and the way of Tenchi are important. However, the revelation that teaches “Tenchi” or “ame-tsuchi” only appears during this period of the time in *Record of Revelations*. We know that Tenchi has been explained as having neither beginning nor end, or as never changing source of life. But, it is interesting that Konko Daijin explained Tenchi in this period of the time. He had to go through the utmost difficulties that he could not do anything. Yet, or that was why, he was able to describe Tenchi clearly and vividly as where he belongs.

Whether we live in a difficult or peaceful period of time, Kami had always sustained our lives. However, we tend to understand Kami’s workings only during the difficult time. Therefore, he felt Kami’s existence and he centralized his life on Kami during the difficult period.

### Tenchi and people – Roots of the faith

In 1873, Kami said, “The Way of the Universe never changes. Like the regular motions of the moon, sun, and tides, human living shall remain the same.” “I shall prevent fires, premature

death, disasters, illnesses, and bad luck for you. There is no need to worry.” (*Oboecho: 17.22*) In this revelation, using the moon and tides, he was taught the “never changing” Universe. At the same time, he was guaranteed to prevent various misfortunes. Kami did not use rigid materials to express unchanging matter. Kami used the moon and tides that have periodical movements. We could detect that Tenchi does not change and keeps living from the continual periodical movement. Japan faced a dramatic modernization after Meiji restoration. Living in such a dramatic change in society, Kami indicated something never changed, and Kami urged us to live based on unchanging aspects.

One spring day, I looked at the sea tirelessly. At first, I was fascinated with the deep blue color of the sea. Then, I realized that no spindrift is the same. It was repeated one after another – even if at the time of peace, or wartime. It was repeated from pre-historic ancient times. It was never ceased, and they are all different. A mysterious feeling came into my heart. I felt “infinity” from the “finite repetition.” I remembered a teaching, which says, “There are people who claim that the Universe works this way and that, but they really don’t understand it. If they did, they would be able to stop the rise and fall of tides.” (*G1: Kondo Fujimori: 9.1*)

However Tenchi is not always calm with fortitude. Tenchi could be disturbed. There is a revelation, which says, “The land is being disturbed. The whole world is being disturbed, and mountains, rivers, oceans, and the universe are all becoming chaotic.” (*Oboecho:24.20.3*)

In this revelation, it was not clear what was actually disturbed. However, Kami pointed out “the land” and “the whole world” was disturbed, and further explained, “Mountains, rivers, oceans and universe.” In 1872, Konko Daijin wrote, “An earthquake struck. Kami-Sama said, ‘I, Tenchi Kane No Kami, am disturbed. The world is chaotic.’” (*Oboecho:16.3.1*)

Having experienced an earthquake, the revelation expressed Kami’s disturbance for the chaos in the world. However in this revelation, the land was disturbed. What does the revelation mean when it says “the land” (not human society) is disturbed?

Although humans seem uninvolved with the movement by Tenchi, Kami indicated that human behavior causes the change in the movement. In a society full of crazy people, if one person is sane, the sane person will be seen as insane. If one tried to be right, one has to disturb the chaos. For these reasons, Tenchi could indicate the dimension of chaos. This revelation could alert people. This revelation also indicates Kami’s grief.

As it was discussed, Tenchi has two aspects – one is unexpected and the other is unchanged. In 1881, Kami taught, “Tell people that they should depend on the Universe for everything in their lives. Then they can be free of suffering and have peace of mind.” (*Oboecho:25.36.3*)

This revelation tells people to depend on Tenchi that embraces every element. Humans are allowed to live within Tenchi, because Tenchi sustains all lives by bestowing nourishment. At the same time, Tenchi itself has a life. Tenchi brings peace or sometimes shows chaos. It means to depend on Tenchi that is sometimes hard to depend on.

In most cases when we say, “It depends on you.” in our daily lives, we mean to say, “It is okay whichever you do. So please do it in your way.” However, the content of request is actually an important matter. But, ironically, we sometimes have to depend on others, although the request is too great to involve others. In other words, we have to depend on others with near im-

possible task. Therefore, “Depending on Tenchi” meant for people to depend on a nearly impossible matter.

Konko Daijin faced many difficulties and depended on Kami many times. In 1855, when he had critical illness, he wrote, “Nevertheless, I held a firm heart and let the kamis and buddhas handle my condition.” (*Oboegaki:3.4.2*)

And in 1873, under the governmental pressure toward termination of his religious activities, Kami said, “Rely on Me for the good times as well as the bad.” (*Oboecho:17.1.3*)

In these occasions, by depending on Kami, Konko Daijin was able to see and hear what he never saw and heard before. The whole new world opened before him. He determined a new way with the spirit of engagement. “Depending on” something literally appears as if one is doing nothing. However, one could live within the society while being submissive to Tenchi.

We need to stand on Tenchi in order to associate with, but not to be influenced by the changing world and people. Anyone, including other living things, is allowed to live within Tenchi even if they do not practice faith. However, Konko Daijin taught to live understanding various meanings in Tenchi.

### The world in mind and invisible matters

In the revelation of 1873, there is a phrase which says, “encounter hardships due to their accumulated offenses” (*Oboegaki:21.21.4*) Kami explained why humans suffered for a long time.

In the same revelation, it says, “people only examine the Days and Directions and commit irreverences to Kami.” (*Oboegaki:21.21.4*) This phrase is related to what Konko Daijin experienced and understood at the critical illness in 1855. This is the matter related to what he had done in the past. On the other hand, “encounter hardship due to their accumulated offenses” is the matter that Konko Daijin was unaware of and hard to take its responsibility. It was beyond personal life experience.

Gorikai describes “*meguri*.” In general, “*meguri*” means circling around, or moving in order. In teachings, this word was used as “their accumulated offenses and those of their families.” It indicates the offenses committed by our ancestors will come to us and become difficulties. What does this mean? The concept is hard to accept.

Konko Daijin recited a prayer for the difficulties. In the first half of the prayer, he prayed to deter unexpected disasters, robberies, fires, misfortunes, illnesses and other calamities. Then in the later part, he prayed for requests such as construction, business, travels, and farming. The contents of the difficulties in the first half of his prayer were, “If we have been cursed by a kami for our unknowing irreverence and carelessness, please forgive us. If there are any living or dead person’s spirits holding grudges against us, please save them through divine arrangement and relieve our distress from them.” (*G1:Okida Kisaburo:6.3*)

Some of them are external factors that we encounter unexpectedly, and they cannot be solved by changing a personal way of life or renewing one’s heart.

A scholar who studied folklore in Okinawa introduced a traditional way of saving people. He said that the cause of misfortune was shifted onto something outside of the person. In this way, the person could avoid severe accusation. Similar to this, from Konko Daijin’s prayer, we could dictate that people prayed for the cause of misfortune. People in those days imagined a chaotic sequence beyond their personal lives.

The heart such as “*ishshin*”, “*waga-kokoro*”, and “*jitsu*” is im-

portant for the practice of our faith, and it is a major concern for us. When we face various difficulties, we are taught that it is important how we understood the situation, or how we live in the situation.

However, the following Konko Daijin’s teaching shows us what kind of heart we should have and something beyond the status of one’s heart.

“When you are angry, you endure and suppress your anger. This will hurt your body. Go beyond this by not getting angry at all. You can do this by thinking that the anger-provoking thing happened because of an offense that you or your ancestors committed. Think that the offense is being cleared away. There is no doubt about it.” (*G2:Tsugawa Haruo:20.2*)

He said, “Think that it is because of an offense.” This teaching explains what kind of heart people should have. However, he added the last words, “There is no doubt about it.” These words indicate substantial matters beyond one’s own heart. The word called “*meguri* or offenses” in this teaching could become rigid, and has the possibility leading us to affirm the present situation or to shift responsibility. However, there are religious or spiritual senses that accept such an unseen sequence related to our daily lives.

If we pretend to see situations through Kami’s point of view, we only perceive circumstances objectively, and we tend to be judgmental towards others. The teachings must explain the truth and convincing to others.

From that sense, by accepting “*meguri*” in the previous teaching, Konko Daijin taught, “Think that the offense is being cleared away.” “*Meguri*” is the accumulated offenses. When the offenses come out, it is the turning point. When the accumulated offenses reach to the maximum level and overflows, with practice of faith, the misfortunes lessens. By being aware of and accepting “*meguri*,” the actual situation can change.

“*Meguri*” could tell the reasons for misfortunes, but it indicates something more that each individual could hold. “*Meguri*” tells an encouraging story for people to move on from unbearable situation by giving a meaning for the incident. The story supported by transcendent factors could influence our awareness. At the same time, it makes us think the reality beyond the awareness.

### Human eye’s, bird’s eye, and Kami’s eye

Similar to the revelation in 1873, Konko Daijin received a transcendent revelation on July 31, 1880.

“All people, regardless of age or profession, act irreverently toward Heaven and Earth. Living things, even animals and birds, are suffering from this irreverence and are reacting against them. I, Tenchi Kane No Kami, shall teach people living in this Universe how to apologize for their irreverence. There is nothing we can do for those who go against the teachings of the toritsugi mediator, Ikigami Konko Daijin.” (*Oboecho:24.5.3-4*)

We may have a hard time understanding what the subject is in the first sentence. However, we could understand that this revelation is regarding irreverences of humans to all the living things. There is another revelation regarding “animals and birds.” It is the revelation on October 25, 1881. “You, Konko Daijin, are able to help with blind eyes, illnesses, troubled lives, and all other problems of people and other living things like birds and animals.” (*Oboecho:25.27.5*)

In this revelation, Kami said that Konko Daijin could make

the request from people, birds and animals come true.

In this way, we could read that as a living thing within Tenchi Universe, humans commit irreverences to all living things including humans.

These words are stated from Kami's point of view. As it was stated, humans cause irreverences toward all living things, even birds and animals. Any one of us, humans, should be blamed. However, if the blame goes to everyone in the world, no individual person is responsible. Therefore, a complainant and a defendant would vanish. The situation could be turned around. Related to this, I remember a Minamata disease patient's words. While he had battled with a disease caused by mercury poisoning, he could blame the company and the country of Japan. However, he started to think about other living creatures – fishes, birds and cats that ate fishes. Then he found that he also should be blamed from those living things.

It might be easy for us to criticize the civilization and society by borrowing Kami's eye. However, we have to be aware where the criticizing person's statements are coming from. We have to remember Konko Daijin who received the criticism as humans in front of Kami.

In the revelation of 1873, an actual irreverence was written as "Checking Days and Directions." However, there is no actual description in this revelation. Konko Daijin taught, "Checking Days and Directions" are humans' arbitrary conduct seeking Kami's absence. This conduct, however, does not harm or bother other people. On the contrary, in this revelation, Kami stated that there is irreverence that humans harm other living things. Making people anticipate a specific matter, Kami stressed that was irreverence.

We need to acknowledge irreverences, so Kami can accept us.

It is similar that Konko Daijin made an apology for his irreverence toward Kami during his critical illness in 1855. The apology that Konko Daijin made at that time denied human's judgment, as exemplified by Yaozo Furukawa. Again, when people take full responsibility for their irreverences (including the "meguri"), Kami will bestow acceptance towards human.

Apologies would make us feel guilt, fear, and enlightenment with deep insight. In the previous lecture, we discussed about Konko Daijin's apology with gratitude. He was able to understand that he was allowed to live receiving divine blessings in the revelation of 1858. The apology with deep insight would have mixed feeling of appreciation toward Kami's care, and regret toward Kami's support. From that perspective, knowing our fault opened the world where we were embraced. With this experience, we accept and are accepted by the world.

For this revelation, we tend to figure out what the impeachment from Kami would be by predicting several phases of faults. However, Kami pointed out that "humans made irreverence," but at the same time, Kami pointed out with sorrow that the irreverence affects humans. Konko Daijin wrote that the irreverences will victimize "adults, children, and even to birds and animals." If weaker and innocent lives are victimized, we feel that it is unreasonable. As we live in the society having these unreasonable problems, Kami requested Ikigami Konko Daijin to help people understand that they are "allowed to live." Ikigami Konko Daijin's mediation includes those who go against the teachings. Considering the tones of Kami's statement, we could realize that Kami sees humans who suffer are closer to Kami who has sorrow. We could also feel that Kami's strong will to live with humans. There are a true human who requests Kami's acceptance and Tenchi who urges for people to have a true faith.

## New Board of Trustees elect KMH officers

Under the newly adopted by-laws, the first KMH board of trustees meeting was held at the second floor of the Konko Mission of Honolulu on November 19, 2011. The new board of trustees are Rev. Koichi Konko and Mr. Ronald Yamanaka of Honolulu, Rev. Makio Nagai and Mr. George Greenhouse of Hilo, Rev. Akinobu Yasutake and Dr. John Tamashiro of Waipahu, Rev. Yasuhiro Yano and Mr. Randy Furusho of Wahiawa, Rev. Setsuko Okuno and Mr. Loren Okuno of Hanapepe, Rev. Roy

Yasuake and Mr. John Yasutake of Wailuku and Rev. Yomisu Oya of the Konkokyo Hawaii Center.

At the meeting the following officers for 2012-2015 were elected.

President:	Rev. Yomisu Oya (Hawaii Center)
Vice President:	Rev. Akinobu Yasutake (Waipahu)
Treasurer :	Rev. Kei Kunito (Hawaii Center)
Secretary:	Ms. Paula Higuchi (Honolulu)



### KMH Mission Statement

The Konko Missions in Hawaii addresses the spiritual needs of the people of Hawaii by promoting the Konko faith through a better understanding of the life and teachings of Konko Daijin, and through the practice of Toritsugi (Divine-Mediation).

**KONKO DAIJIN** said ...

Since New Year's is to celebrate the whole year, it is truly auspicious. Angry people will be told not to be angry because it is New Year's.

Live each day with the same happy heart you have on New Year's Day. When the sun sets, think that it's the last day of the year. It will make your life happy every day, and there will be no discord in your family. Live happily as if each day were New Year's Day.



### **KONKO MISSIONS IN HAWAII**

**HONOLULU** 1728 Liliha St., Honolulu, HI 96817  
Phone: (808) 533-7173  
Fax: (808) 521-7423  
E-mail: [Konko-Honolulu@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:Konko-Honolulu@hawaii.rr.com)

**HILO** 58 Huapala Lane, Hilo, HI 96720  
Phone: (808) 935-3239  
Use same # for Fax.

**WAIPAHU** 94-106 Mokukaua St., Waipahu, HI 96797  
Phone: (808) 677-3716  
Use same # for Fax.  
E-mail: [konko.waipahu@gmail.com](mailto:konko.waipahu@gmail.com)

**WAHIAWA** 207 Muliwai Ave., Wahiawa, HI 96786  
Phone: (808) 621-6667  
Use same # for Fax.  
E-mail: [konko-wahiawa@hotmail.com](mailto:konko-wahiawa@hotmail.com)

**WAILUKU** 2267 Mokuhanu Rd., Wailuku, HI 96793  
Phone: (808) 244-4738  
Use same # for Fax.

**HANAPEPE** c/o Rev. Setsuko Okuno  
1544 Molehu Dr., Honolulu, HI 96818  
Phone: (808) 423-7707

### **KONKO CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA**

**Administrative Office**  
1911 Bush St. #4A  
San Francisco, CA 94115  
Phone: 1(800)719-5262 Fax: (604)-876-4326  
E-mail: [kcnaoffice@konkofaith.org](mailto:kcnaoffice@konkofaith.org)  
Website: <http://www.konkofaith.org/>

## Konko Missions in Hawaii

Malamalama Editor: Kei Kunito

1744 Liliha Street, Suite 304, Honolulu, HI 96817

Phone/Fax: (808) 536-9078 E-mail: [kmhcenter@hawaiiantel.net](mailto:kmhcenter@hawaiiantel.net)

Website: <http://konkomissionshawaii.org/>

Konkokyo Hour : Radio K-ZOO AM1210 at 7:00 a.m., every Sunday

Radio KNUI AM900 at 6:20 p.m., every 2nd Sunday

To: