



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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You are cordially invited to attend the
**Spring Grand Ceremony
For Tenchi Kane no Kami-Sama**
天地金乃神様 御大祭

Date: Wednesday, April 13, 2016

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Konko Mission of Wahiawa

Sermon: Rev. Michie Kimura (Konko Church of Sako)

Kibimai: Ms. Ke'ala Takahashi

Naorai fellowship lunch will follow. Let's receive the divine arrangements of being able to worship on this very important day.

Building a broader and deeper relationship with Kami

*By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister*

While I was in search of subject for the article for the April monthly church bulletin, I found a speech script I made some seven years ago, in 2009. I made some editing to the writing for publication.

We attended a ministers' seminar held at the Konko Mission of Waipahu in 2009. Dr. Yōtarō Miyamoto, who was staying in Hawaii for a sabbatical program was the main speaker. He also was a professor of religion at Kansai University. His main theme of presentation was spirituality.

One of the lingering thoughts keep on bothering in my mind from time to time in regard to the spirituality I learned at the meeting is the thought of "Okage no tsumamigui" that can be translated into English as random sampling of foods or "Shopping around for objects that can fulfill one's spiritual needs." This spirituality of getting engaged in practice of faith to fulfill one's spiritual craving could be shared by many people who believe in not just the Konko faith but any other religious faiths. Any religious communities would instantly collapse if they fail to provide fulfillment of the needs the congregation wish to enjoy. Some Konko ministers used the expression of "Okage dorobo" or stealing of blessings without paying due compensation. Although this expression may show some aspects of the religious faith, could harbor a sort of insult to the believers and may not reflect true nature of the religion.

The speech presentation reminded me of an episode in the Kyoten Gorikai that may relate to the subject of believer-oriented perspective for the meaning of getting engaged in the practice of faith.

The story goes like this, "There was a rich man from Nagasaki who fell seriously ill. He spent money on various treatments, but to no effect. Then he heard about the Ikigami-Sama of Otani, Bitchu Province, and went to Otani. He found lodging and went to worship every day. Konko Sama asked him, 'Would it be enough just to cure you?' He answered, 'All I need is to cure my illness, nothing else.' The next day, Konko-Sama again asked, 'Would it be enough just to cure you?' Again he answered, 'All I need is for my illness to be cured; nothing else.' He was blessed with a cure for his illness, and returned to Nagasaki. But some time later, he passed away" (II, Unknown 12).

While I was under spiritual training under the late Rev. Fumio Yasutake, the past Head Minister of the Amagi Church, some four decades ago, he provided us trainees to find out the true intent of the Founder in the quoted episode. The Rev. Yasutake questioned us why Konko-Sama just kept asking the person from Nagasaki that specific question, "Would it be enough just to cure you?" I also wondered why Konko-Sama didn't elaborate much about the vital elements, such as being cured in not enough, but being cured is a blessing and so forth? To let a believer understand the meaning of getting engaged in the practice of faith is the vital task of the Toritsugi-Mediator. But he simply asked the person to find the answer for himself without any further help.

If he could develop much understanding about the meaning of getting involved in the practice of faith, he could have prolonged his life. Why didn't Konko-Sama try to provide the person more caring thoughts about the situation? One of the assumed reasons why Konko-Sama didn't care to provide much communication was that the person might not accept whatever thoughts being presented for him because he was rich and focused only on his own personal interests. Konko-Sama might evaluate that the person was not ready to listen to him. The person could have responded to Konko-Sama's extended thoughts in the emphatic question made twice? Why didn't the person try to ask back and try to understand the true intent of Konko-Sama? It could be possible that Konko-Sama was aware that the wealthy individual's only concern was healing of his illness and nothing else. He might not have had room in his heart to accept there could be different elements he can incorporate into his prayer. In Japanese we have a distinctive expression of such a situation of speaker-oriented communication, "kiku-mimi-wo-motanai" or not ready to accept or digest the messages forwarded, or the messages could be incomprehensible to that particular person at a particular situation. Aka: selective attention. But he was one of the believers the Founder addressed as "Taigan no ujiko" or a beloved child of Kami with a big wish to be fulfilled in reliance of Kami.

The episode can be relevant to the idea of spirituality, in search of ways to fulfill one's needs besides religious reliance.

How would you respond to the situation if you were the wealthy man from Nagasaki and asked the same question from Konko-Sama, "Would it be enough just to cure you?" If you are in need of money, the question could be, "Would it be enough to be blessed with financial gain and security?" If you encounter some physical ailment, you would be asked by Konko-Sama, "Would it be enough just to be cure of your physical ailment?" If you experience frustration about your child rearing, Konko-Sama could ask you, "Would it be enough for your child to be disciplined?" Would we respond, "Only my immediate concerns needs to be handled; nothing else?"

My grandfather, Tōsuke Yano was initiated into the practice of the Konko faith because he was not blessed with children. Like the person from Nagasaki, he was rich and tried everything he could to get blessed for his children, but was not fulfilled. Even if a child was born, he/she died. It was only through his involvement into the Konko faith that he was blessed with three healthy children. Through his involvement, he developed a conviction that the Konko faith is a true religion and shall not be given up no matter what may happen in the future. He was initially introduced to the Konko faith in wanting to be blessed with children. But he realized that was not the only meaning of his getting involved in the practice of faith. And he told his children, to my father that the Konko faith is a true religion and is to be perpetuated in the family. He had developed his own unyielding conviction about the treasured nature of the Konko faith through his own engagement in the practice of faith.

If my grandfather was like the person from Nagasaki and felt fulfilled by saying, "All I need is to get blessed and nothing else." His descendants, including myself, would not have gotten involved in the practice of faith and the tradition of the family would have stopped at one generation.

We enjoy blessed lives and can do whatever we wish only because we have been blessed enough through the work of Kami. Extending our thoughts that we can be free to do anything and can enjoy blessed life can all be attributable to Kami is the way we pursue as Konko believers. And we shall show our thoughts of gratitude and appreciation and prayers in words and in deeds. Through our engagement in the practice of faith, we are to establish broader and deeper relationship with Kami in our daily living.

According to the speaker, one of the distinctive elements of difference between religion and spirituality is shown in an analogy. When a wounded bird is cured, the religion puts the bird in a cage, while the spirituality treatment is to set the bird free. Keeping the bird in the cage can be relevant to the thought of religious community, while the spirituality treatment does not put restrictions, thus, set the bird free and there is no sense of community, just focused on individual fulfillment. There seems to be the theory of free market. Services can be provided in responding to the needs.

As a minister of the Konko faith, the size of the church is of no concern to me. I am also not concerned whether or not there are scholars among the congregation or not. There is no distinction to any member whether one is more financially better off than another. All I wish to see is the growth of each individual as a Konko believer who can appreciate the teachings of the Founder Konko Daijin, and incorporate them into their faith life. If a

person would ever evolve in that sense, the believer shall enjoy good human relationships, good health, good financial rewards and so forth as the Founder imparted, "Few have a heart that Kami can accept. Those whose hearts can be accepted by Kami will be blessed with good health, wealth, and wisdom for three generations, resulting in a strong family lineage. Those whose hearts are not accepted by Kami may have wealth as well as wisdom, but will get sick. Those who have wisdom and good health will lose their wealth. If they do not lose their wealth, their beloved children will die, leaving no heirs. Since these people are not aware of Kami's blessings, they are always lacking one thing or another. If you practice faith and understand Kami's blessings, you will live a peaceful and stable life. You will have descendants and gain wealth. You will receive divine blessings from year to year, and then from generation to generation" (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 78).

Konko-Sama Says . . .

People exist because of Kami, and Kami exists because of people. Therefore, you should pray to Kami about everything, including sickness and problems, whether it is an emergency or not. Practicing faith is to have a heart like Kami in your everyday life. Praying to Kami by putting your hands together is not the only way to practice faith. A single heart means one heart. So be sure you do not go astray by having a double heart. Depending only on Tenchi Kane No Kami is having a single heart. You should be single-hearted and receive divine blessings fully. (III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 1981, 2)

Konko Daijin said, "Everybody asks me to come to their homes, but since I cannot be absent from Kami's Hiromae, I do not go. However, I have never failed to help save a person who asked me for help with a single heart." (Jinkyukyogoroku 55)

Bulletin Board

Main Services for April 2016

- 1 Fri -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 3 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
- 10 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-Honolulu Church Spring Grand Service (11 am)
- 13 Wed -Wahiawa Church Spring Grand Service(6:30 pm)**
- 17 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-Waipahu Church Spring Grand Service (11 am)
- 24 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)

May 2016

- 1 Sun -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (9 am)
-Wailuku Church Spring Grand Service (11 am)

Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace

The regular meeting will be held on Monday, April 25, 2016 at Gedatsu Church of Hawaii at 1:30 p.m.

Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Long-Term Care Facility at Wahiawa General Hospital will be made on Friday, April 22, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

Zippy's fundraiser tickets for the Ohana Camp

Zippy's fundraiser tickets are available from April 11 through June 5, 2016. All proceeds will go toward the church educational fund and help with the Summer Ohana Camp that will be held on June 18 and 19 (Saturday and Sunday), 2016 at Camp Erdman, Mokuleia. Your help and support for the annual educational program will be greatly appreciated.

Konko Mission of Wahiawa 6th Summer Ohana Camp

We will hold the annual 6th Summer Ohana Camp organized by the Konko Mission of Wahiawa from June 18 to June 19 at Camp Erdman, Mokuleia. The theme for this year's gathering is "The Power of Prayer." The Rev. Dr. Todd Zenji Takahashi will make a presentation. Attending day-time activities including the lecture alone will be recommended if you hesitate to stay overnight. This time, we will enjoy the beautiful night sky with a telescope we purchased, and also the usual camp fire and crab hunting. For more information please contact Edna Yano via internet: ednakazuko@hotmail.com or call (808) 223-3448. Please apply by May 22, 2016.

KMH Young Adult Workshop

The KMH Young Adult Workshop will be held on Saturday, April 16, 2016 at the Konko Mission of Honolulu. The theme of the meeting is, "Prosperity from generation to generation." The Rev. Michie Kimura from Konko Church of Sako from Tokushima in Shikoku will be a featured speaker. The deadline for the application will be April 9, 2016. For more detailed information, please contact Mr. Roger Kiyomura at 546-9440 or Ms. Aimee Yasutake at 385-5367.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

April

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Gilbert Toshio Iwasa | 4/9/1999 |
| Zenji Takahashi | 4/12/1966 |
| Frances Shigeno Takahashi | 4/13/2009 |
| Yoshiro Kamitono | 4/16/2000 |
| Kiku Takahashi | 4/26/1967 |
| Robert Mendoz | 4/27/2006 |
| Shinichi Furushima | 4/30/1996 |

If you wish to have a name added to the church Mitama listing or removed, please contact Rev. Yasuhiro Yano.

Insight into the teachings in "Tenchi wa Kataru" or "Voice of the Universe"

The following are excerpts of series of an English translation of "Tenchi wa Kataru—Kanwa-shu" or "Compilation of Insight into the teachings in the Voice of the Universe" which contains 400 selected teachings from the original "Konkokyo Kyoten" or the "Konkokyo Scriptures." Three authors, namely, the Revs. Mikio Seto, Yasushi Hata and Matsutarō Kōsaka contributed the insightful articles. The translation is provided by Yasuhiro Yano. (Reference pages 146, 147 and 148)

No. 146: People say, "I cannot go to the hiromae because I am so busy." I will not force people to come even when they are busy. I know that if they are receiving divine blessings in their daily work, it is only natural that they have no free time. They should, however, try to make spare time on rainy days or holidays and come to the hiromae to receive divine blessings. (III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 31-1, 2 Kyoten page 819)

Try to schedule your church visit

While serving as a minister at a church, I often hear casual expressions, such as, "I can hardly find time to come to church because of my busy daily schedule." While I was listening to their remarks, I sometimes reflect on myself and find out I am also one of those church members who try to make excuses for a pilgrimage to the parent church and the Headquarters Church from time to time.

The quoted message reveals that some of the visitors who made a visit to see the Founder also exhibited the same sort of excuses. It is interesting that the people in the past also made excuses in the same manner as we do today.

I wonder how the Founder would respond to those believers who expressed such excuses. I assume that the Founder might felt a bit of let down in acknowledgment of difficulty in letting believers to appreciate important elements of getting engaged in practicing of faith.

In my understanding, we make excuses based on our busy daily schedule might hold a wrong perception about the practice of faith. We do not appreciate the perspective of getting blessed in our personal lives through our own day to day engagement in the practice of faith, but rather, only when we encounter problems, we go to church and ask our ministers for help dissolve the issues. As long as we practice faith in such a manner, there would be no way for us to be able to appreciate true fulfillment of getting blessed through our own engagement in practice of faith.

The expressed thought, "If they are receiving divine blessings in their daily work, it is only natural that they have no free time" is a reminder for us that we have been kept busy and could hardly find any spare time to make church visit only because we have been blessed enough through the work of Kami. If we would be able to appreciate this element in their busy life, we are to find time out of busy schedule to make a church visit in appreciation of the blessings we have enjoyed. This is the practice of faith in our religious tradition.

No. 147: Practice faith conscientiously. Saying that you practice faith at home and using it as an excuse is the start of losing your faith. (II Kondo Fujimori 30 Kyoten page 540)

Practice faith conscientiously

The quoted message, "Saying that you practice faith at home" is the same excuse as the message discussed in previous page that stated, "I cannot go to the hiromae because I am so busy." Saying that you practice faith at home reflects that you deny your true heart and dissatisfactions held within and try to justify your inaction to attend church.

On the other hand, the Founder stated that the believers didn't have to make a pilgrimage by exhausting personal resources from afar. If they have true sincere heart, they can practice faith at their own home or anywhere else. But the Founder understood that those believers who said, "I practice faith at home" had already lost their zealotry in pursuit of faith.

In corresponding to the state of our heart in practicing faith, some of us would say, "I am grateful I can practice faith; I cannot feel grateful in practicing faith; I feel grateful that I can attend church; I don't feel like going to church." If we wish to advance our faith life, we should try to identify wrongs and irregularities in our own hearts, honestly.

In the original message of the quoted excerpt, the Founder stated, "Those who practice faith conscientiously should not even take their dreams lightly. Kami will teach you good and bad even in your dreams."

While we get engaged in pursuit of faith devotedly, we live with faith. Under the circumstance where the elements of faith are integrated in our day to day living, whatever we see, whatever we hear, and anything at all help us to advance our faith life. We understand that even a dream we have during sleep helps us in one way or another.

Kami-Sama seems to work constantly to help us realize something important. To respond to this constantly emitting divine message is to live faith conscientiously.

No. 148: You need not come to this Hiromae so often. After worshipping, if you think about how much money you've spent, or what you could've done with the money you've spent, it will worry Kami. Since Kami is the parent of all human beings, Kami will worry if the child worries. Instead of using much money to come here, practice true faith at home and you will be protected by Kami. (II Tsugawa Haruo 10-3 Kyoten page 629 ~630)

No need to come to this Hiromae so often

The message really shows warm and caring heart of the Founder. The tone of statements quoted in the previous pages of 144, 145 and 146 sound somewhat serious. But the tone of the quoted message is quite different from those previous statements. How could we interpret the difference?

Haruo Tsugawa who received the message from the Founder was a person of sincerity and well organized. Accordingly, he got engaged in pursuit of faith in that manner. His personality is clearly shown in the way how he described his first impression of the Founder, "His speech was not that eloquent, but well organized and persuasive without any doubts. I fully appreciated his present thoughts that were quite different from other epidemic religious faiths. I was convinced to pursue this faith seriously hereafter" (Konko Daijin Jinbutsu-shi page 58).

The quoted passages were just a fraction of a much longer original statement. One paragraph before the quoted message reads, "On busy day, tell Kami about the work that you must do, then excuse yourself to go to work. While harvesting the barley or fertilizing the fields, pray with a true and pure heart. Kami-Sama will hear."

The way Haruo Tsugawa got engaged in his pursuit of faith was so determined that he wouldn't mind spending money and time to meet the Founder who would give true and inspiring messages. In corresponding to that much exhibited devotedness of Tsugawa Haruo, the Founder gave him a sort of compliment and encouragement for him to be able to practice faith on his own.