

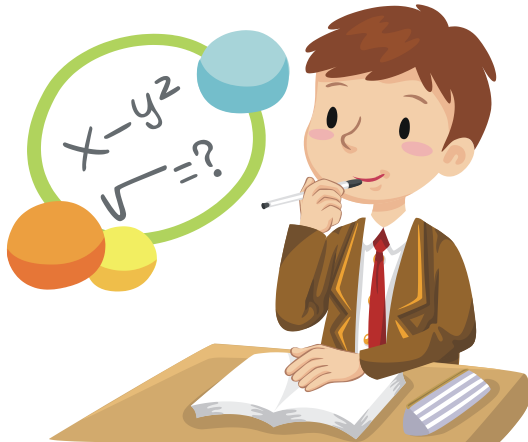


KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

Konko Mission of Wahiawa, 207 Muliwai Avenue, Wahiawa, HI. 96786. Phone/Fax: (808) 621-6667, Cell: (808) 294-6331
E-mail: konko-wahiawa@hotmail.com. Also, find us on Facebook. Head minister: Rev. Yasuhiro Yano. Vol. XXIV, No. 8, August 1, 2012

Back-to-School Service

By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister



There is one thought I still clearly remember when I attended an English language school in Tokyo. Mr. Iwashita, one of my instructors made a lasting remark, “We could produce an educated person, provided he or she has normal intelligence. A normal person can be educated by utilizing the available educational resources, monetary resources and time. But it is quite difficult to educate a person to become warm-hearted.” I didn’t know exactly why he made that remark when I first learned the extended message. But I assume through his teaching career, he may have witnessed the reasons for making that statement, and I also have been appreciating what he meant as I get older and encounter people from different walks of life.

In regards to this statement, my daughter, Edna told me an interesting episode she learned as a student in nursing school. The professor asked the students, “What do you feel is one of the most important elements that patients want in nurses?” The vast majority of the students answered that a nurse that was caring and warm-hearted is most wanted by the patients. The patients also express the same qualities in a nurse, as they are cared for in the hospital. Two local Konko ministers who had to be hospitalized also stated that a kind and caring nurse was one of the most important qualities of nurses. While I was listening to a remark expressed by the Rev. Yoshino of the Honolulu Church, among the many nurses, there are only about one or two nurses who are especially favoured by the patients. She is one who is caring and warm-hearted. Patients are people who are at their weakest physical condition and by instinct they seek to receive warm-hearted care from somebody in that given physical and mental condition. It seems to be a universal element

we want to see in the nurse and of course in any other human relationship we may have. It is interesting how we sometimes tend to request for that element in others but fail to expose such trait at the individual level.

Edna’s nursing school professor then pointed out, “If you think that kindness, caring and warm-heartedness is valued by the patients, and the nursing students also identify the importance of that trait, why are there no classes to develop those traits as college courses? There should be a course called, ‘Kind Heart Development Class 101.’ But no such class exists.”

In my understanding, there can be no way to mathematically evaluate warm-heartedness. It’s something that cannot be gauged in numbers. This can be easily understood when you look at yourself and the people you associate with in your daily life. A person who is usually kind suddenly changes into a furious person. The heart of kindness and gentleness is not necessarily a given condition of a person. And this can be the nature of people in general.

Some people invest tens of thousands of dollars to educate their children in private schools. The rich becomes even richer and educated, while those who are less fortunate can hardly break the exiting barriers. We can see this social pattern through our observation of the people. But it is also true how the government invests millions of dollars for educating young people who have the determination to learn. We may not be much aware of. The state spends thousands of dollars per person every year. But we have been complaining about the poor public education. However, without these generous governmental education funds, the public educational system may not exist today. Education has always been the central issue in the political world. Have you ever pondered to extend your thoughts of appreciation for the given learning opportunities made possible by the funding of the government? We take for granted what have been given to us.

But who would ever appreciate what we have been given by Kami-Sama, Our Principle Parent of the Universe. In the Konko faith tradition, the basis of our faith life is to appreciate the blessings of Kami that have been transformed in many visible and invisible forms.

The warm-heartedness or caring heart we may develop in the course of our involvement in the practice of the Konko faith may come from our appreciation of the universal warm-heartedness and kindness of our Parent God. It is the manifestation of divine love and caring we appreciate in the work of our Parent God. We simply exist in the

ocean of Divine Love and Giving, just like a fish in the ocean.

It is true that warm-heartedness alone may not provide us valid credentials to get a job that sustains our earning. We need to develop a solid educational credential. Study hard and be a person who can help others through your learned skills.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

“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).

A divinely arranged encounter in a journey

The following is an English translation of an article found in the Konko Shinbun issued on July 22, 2012. The title of the article is “A message of heaven and earth shared by a stranger during a tour.” The episode is based on a true story experienced by a Konko believer, but his name is kept out in the story. The English translation is provided by Yasuhiro Yano

An episode took place while I was traveling in Shikoku with six of my collage age friends in Tokyo.

The train we got on board was heading toward Matsuyama in Ehime Prefecture. It was raining and I was starting to doze off, when I was awakened by an elderly man who sat next to me and a friend sitting on the the opposite seat. My friends were enjoying their boxed lunches.

They were complaining about the rain that spoiled the view from the windows. The man next to me revealed he was a traveler from Osaka and began to talk in an assertive manner, “You seem to be annoyed by the rain. But have you ever stopped to think that you wouldn’t be able to enjoy your lunch if there were no rainfall?”

One of the friends asked him back, “What do you mean by that?” The person responded, “Take a look outside.” The scene of rice fields with hard-working farmers in the rain came into view. The man continued to talk, “Because of

those hardworking farmers, the rice plants grow well. If there is no rain, rice wouldn’t grow.” “I understand what you mean,” a friend responded. The elderly person continued to talk, “Have you ever extended your thoughts for not only the rice, but also for the other food items such as meat, fish and vegetables? Have you ever imagined how many people have been involved in helping deliver the lunchbox to you? For example, take a look at the tempura fried food: first there must be farmers who harvest barley for flour; there must be people who deliver the material to the flour factory; there are factory workers who produce flour; there must be fishermen who catch the fish and shrimp; there also must be people who deliver the catch for food preparation; there must be people who cook dishes; there must be people who put all the food elements into the bento box; there are also people who delivered the prepared bento box. Just for a piece of fried shrimp in your bento box, you will understand the substantial number of people who have been involved. Try to extend your thoughts in this manner to the other dishes such as meat, fish, vegetables and nori seaweed, tsukemono pickles and umeboshi in the box. Can you estimate how many hands have been needed just for one lunch box you are now enjoying?” A friend of mine responded, “I suppose more than 100 people were involved.” The elderly person responded, “You are right. Now you understand so many people helped to prepare your lunch box you are now enjoying. Besides all those people’s help, they also need the vital elements, such as the rain and the sunlight. All the vegetables grow because of those blessed elements of nature. And only by taking in the lives of all those blessed food elements, we can sustain our lives. That is why we should always extend our appreciation for any and all foods we eat.” His words made so much sense.

Because we belonged to a college based on religion, one of us asked the elderly person, “Just curious, but what kind of faith are you practicing?” I had a hunch that the messages sounded the same as that of a Konko faith believer, but I never thought I would ever have a random encounter with another Konko believer. The man stated, “Do you know Konkokyo?” Not only I, but the rest of my friends were all surprised at the answer. One of us responded, “Did you just say Konkokyo? The student who sits next to you is a son of a Konko minister.” The elderly person was also surprised and expressed his pleasant surprise.

We were so overwhelmed with this encounter with this elderly man. As the gentleman was about to get off at his destination, we shook hands and bid farewell. The train stopped at the station for 15 minutes long. As the train began to pull away from the station, we noticed the elderly man standing in the rain without an umbrella. We opened the windows and waved our arms towards him in gesture of thanks. He responded by bowing his head as if he was extending his prayers for our safe journey. As the train gradually gaining speed, he raised his head and waved his arms with a warm smile. We became so emotional by the demeanor of that elderly man.

After that encounter with another Konko believer, one of my friends suggested, “Since we have come all the way to Shikoku, why not extend our legs of journey to make a pilgrimage to the Gohonbu Headquarters of Konkokyo in Okayama.” We all agreed to make a visit to the Gohonbu Headquarters. Some 30 years have passed since that blessed episode, and can I still vividly remember the warm, gentle smile of that elderly believer till this day.



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 followings 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 Matsutaro Kōsaka contributed the insightful articles. The translation is provided by Yasuhiro Yano. (Reference pages 17 and 18)

Bulletin Board

H.C.R.P.

The Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace will hold its regular monthly meeting on Monday, August 6 at the Church of Perfect Liberty at 1:30 p.m.

Volunteer Activity at Wahiawa General Hospital

The regular monthly visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility for volunteer activity of entertainment will be scheduled for Friday, August 17 at 10:00 a.m. Also, we will make a visit to the facility on Sunday, September 2 at 10:00 a.m. After the program lunch will be served at the church.

39th Memorial Service for Rev. Masayuki Kodama

The annual 39th Memorial Service for the Late Rev. Masayuki Kodama of Konko Mission of Honolulu will be observed on Sunday, August 19 at 9:00 a.m. The regular Sunday Service at the Wahiawa Church will be held at 9:00 a.m.

Autumn Memorial Service

The annual Autumn Memorial Service will be held on Sunday, September 23 at 10:00 a.m.

Honoring August Mitama Spirits

Jinpei Hayashida	8/13/1939
Sunao Hayashida	8/8/1958
Helen Y. Eguchi	8/14/1946
Masaru Nakano	8/5/2004
Rev. Masayuki Kodama	8/24/1973

No. 17: Tenchi Kane No Kami does not say impurities are tabooed. There are no impurities.

Till now, there have been only kamis which tabooed what was thought to be impurities. If these so-called impurities are tabooed, people cannot be saved. Tenchi Kane No Kami does not say such things. It is important that you truly realize the meaning behind this. (Kyoten Gorikai I Ichimura Mitsugoro 1-3-1, Kyoten pages 197-198)

This message shows how the deity of the Konko faith deal with the social convention of taboos and impurities.

The original Japanese statement goes, “*Koremade wa kireizuku wo suru Kami bakari. Kireizuku wo shite wa tasukarazu,*” which literally means, “So far all deities have spoken only of pure and clean elements. But people will not be saved only through the messages of purity and cleanliness alone.” The expression of “*kireigoto*” implies taboos and impurities but more to it than that, it refers to a much broader perspective. The quoted interpretation seems to have defined the term a bit narrower than it should have been. Based on that understanding of the term, let us try to elaborate a bit more about the deity who does not speak about taboos and impurities.

“*Imi-kegare*” or taboos and impurities refers to the social custom of trying to restrain their contact with others because of impurities associated with such occasions of death, birth and menstruation. For example, they refrained to go before the sacred places such as the altar for a limited span of days when they encountered the death in the family or a child birth.

In accordance with the traditional Shinto custom, a person who is allowed to enter into the sanctuary area of the shrine should maintain purity of heart and body. An active implication of this custom is seen in such an occasion in which a Shinto priest undergoes religious purification by abstaining from eating fish and meat, and engages in religious work. Passive implication of the custom is that they try to refrain from approaching the altar when they experience “*Kuro-fujo*” which literally means black-impurities and implies death, and “*Aka-fujo*” which literally means red-impurities and implies menstruation and child birth.

The Founder firmly stated that the social customs pertaining to “*Imi-kegare*” or taboos and impurities are groundless, and Tenchi Kane No Kami shows no restrictions for those occasions.

How Tenchi Kane No Kami can ignore the customs pertaining to “*Imi-kegare*” or taboos and impurities? The reason is in the statement, “If these so-called impurities are tabooed, people cannot be saved.” Kami may demand us seriously to find out if it is important either to adhere to the social customs or to be saved without the customs. The same thing could be applied to many other aspects of social customs we may blindly adhere to.

No. 18 The world is full of Tenchi Kane No Kami’s blessings.

Everyone around the world is a child of Tenchi Kane No Kami. The world is full of Tenchi Kane No Kami’s blessings. Not having these blessings is like not having any air. So without divine blessings, people cannot live, not even for a minute. (II Sato Mitsujiro 14-3 Kyoten page 574)

The message from this page and the following pages imply mainly about the work of Tenchi Kane No Kami. The message on this page 18 states the prevailing nature of the work and blessings of Tenchi Kane No Kami throughout the entire Heaven and Earth.

Some people may simply accept and some other people may doubt the forwarded concept of the prevailing nature of Kami’s work in the universe. The Founder was quite aware of those people’s natural inclinations and tried to fulfill both of them through thoughtfulness.

The Founder referred to the prevailing nature of the air we breathe to parallel that of blessings of Tenchi Kane No Kami.

In addition, the air is provided to all living creatures equally, indiscriminately and unconditionally.

We can get the air equally at anywhere; we don’t have to pay for the air we breathe and can use as much air as

possible; the supply of air is inexhaustible. Air can be the best example to recognize the unconditional nature of Tenchi Kane No Kami’s blessings.

The second reason why the Founder referred to the air as the blessings of Tenchi Kane No Kami is because it is the fundamental and vital nature for the sustenance of life. This vital nature of life-sustaining air shows the absolute nature of Tenchi Kane No Kami’s blessings. In the Konkokyo vocabulary, we have the expression, “*Ikasarete ikiru*,” or we live through a sustained condition provided by Tenchi Kane No Kami. We can appreciate the meaning of “*Ikasarete ikiru*” through the conditional availability of the air and our breathing abilities.

The third blessed reason is that air is available to anybody unconditionally anywhere, and is so vital to the sustenance of human life. Yet we fail to appreciate the vital presence of the air. The same is also true to the blessings of Tenchi Kane No Kami.

The quoted message may present some deeper thoughts for both those who appreciate the blessings they receive from Tenchi Kane No Kami and to those who have little appreciation for the blessings given.