



## Say "Ikigami Konko Daijin" and pray

By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano  
Head Minister

It has been our daily tradition to read the Konkokyo Kyoten or Konkokyo Scriptures and other related books during our daily prayer sessions. A few weeks ago, my attention was drawn to one message in the section of messages preserved by unknown people who had encounters with the Founder, Konko Daijin.

Konko-Sama always prayed, "Even if I were punished and my body was torn limb from limb, or if I were publicly exposed in villages and at street corners, or if my house was covered with grass, I wouldn't mind at all. When the people of the world pray to Ikigami Konko Daijin with a sincere and single-heart, please fulfill whatever requests they have" (Gorikai II Unknown 7).

In general, I thought it would be only Konko believers who pray to Ikigami Konko Daijin and forward whatever requests we may encounter in our daily living. But the message clearly stated, "When the people of the world pray to Ikigami Konko Daijin with a sincere and single-heart, please fulfill whatever requests they have." The message is directed not only to Konko believers but to anybody that calls this name, "Ikigami Konko Daijin." But a total stranger to the Konko religious faith would never be able to say "Ikigami Konko Daijin." Even if a person is not a committed Konko believer, it would be possible for that person to learn the name "Ikigami Konko Daijin" through various unintended encounters. People learn the name "Ikigami Konko Daijin" through believers who spread the name of "Ikigami Konko Daijin" through their interactions with other people. If believers enjoy blessings through their practice of faith, they would naturally share the name "Ikigami Konko Daijin." Many of those believers who were initiated into the practice of Konko faith through those encounters. The founding minister of Konko Church of Kokura, the Rev. Matsuhei Katsura was one of them.

"When I lived in Yanai-cho, Yamaguchi Prefecture, I heard about Konko Daijin (Ikigami Konko Daijin) from a door-to-door salesman named Aketa Kakutaro. My mother had already been following the teachings of the Faith for some time. She always urged me to practice faith. I once heard Kakutaro conveying one of Konko-Sama's teachings. 'If young people practice faith, their accumulated offenses and those of their families will be cleared away by the age of forty.' I was moved. To initiate about this, I went and bowed before the altar of Konpira-Sama, a kami I had been revering. As my mind slowly

quieted, I rubbed my crystal rosary beads between my clasped hands and said, 'If the Konko Daijin (Ikigami Konko Daijin) which Aketa Kakutaro believes in is a true kami, show me an even number ten times out of ten. If an odd number comes up even once, I will take him to be a phony kami and forget about him from today.' When I opened my hands, the number of beads was even. And out of the ten times, it was even each time. I tried it three more times, and it was an even number each time. I felt apologetic and thought, 'Please forgive my irreverence of suspecting Kami-Sama to be a phony kami. Konko-Sama has sent Aketa Kakutaro to save my family.' I vowed, 'From this day on, I will practice faith firmly and wholeheartedly.' From then on, I yearned to see the Ikigami-Sama (Ikigami Konko Daijin) of Bitchu Province, and always thought of Konko-Sama's Hiromae" (II Katsura Matsuhei 1).

The founding minister of Konko Church of Amagi, the Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake also followed the same pattern of initiation into the practice of faith. The following is an excerpt from the biography "Yasutake Matsutaro-shi." Matsutaro learned the name "Konko-Sama"(Ikigami Konko Daijin) in 1891. A person named Iwa Shigetomi introduced him, "Lately, I learned about Konko-Sama (Ikigami Konko Daijin) at Kokura. They say they have enjoyed blessings for their requests through Konko-Sama on the due time and date promised. I would like to request for my husband. Would you like to accompany me to make a pilgrimage about your concerned father?" The town of Kokura in Fukuoka was approximately 20 kilometers away from his residence. Matsutaro asked Iwa, "What kind of Kami-Sama are you talking about?" Iwa responded, "Then name of Kami-Sama is called Konko-Sama (Ikigami Konko Daijin)." Matsutaro responded, "I have never heard of such Kami-Sama called Konko-Sama. I assume you are referring to Konjin-Sama that is believed to be a fearful and inflicts curses on people, they say." Iwa responded, "But Goroku Shibata went to see his eye doctor for his ailment. The doctor gave up hope for his treatment. He responded to seek divine healing at Konko-Sama (Ikigami Konko Daijin) at Kokura. He got blessed of healing of his visual ailment through the work of Konko-Sama." Goroku Shibata, husband of Iwa was two years older than Matsutaro and was one of the neighbors. Matsutaro accepted the invitation from Iwa and promised to make a pilgrimage to see Konko-Sama at Kokura in two days. The following day, Matsutaro went out to purchase harvested wax tree fruit at Inakuni. On his way to the destination, he encountered a group of people who were trying to catch wild rabbits on the slope of a hill. One of the rabbits escaped and almost hit Matsutaro. Matsutaro reflectively tried to chase down the rabbit and jumped on to the field full of sharply cut bamboo stalks. His right foot was speared with one of the bamboo cut. The injury was so severe that it prevented him from walking. He was totally at a loss. But he was determined to make a pilgrimage to Konko-Sama at Kokura with Iwa. On the day of the trip, at

around 4 o'clock in the morning, he woke up in bed. The pain in the right foot became even worse. In this desperate situation, he remembered the message Iwa shared with him, "Konko-Sama (Ikigami Konko Daijin) gives a blessing for a request from a person on due time and date specified by Konko-Sama." Matsutaro tried to extend his prayer to Konko-Sama. He stepped out of the entrance and postured toward the direction of Konko-Sama at Kokura in the east and prayed, "To Konko-Sama at Kokura, I pray in request. I made a promise with Iwa Shigetomi to make a pilgrimage to see you this morning. But I had accidentally injured my right foot yesterday and cannot walk at all. I heard that you would give blessings for any requests forwarded to you by the time and day you would specify. If this is true, give me a sure sign of blessing for this desperate situation by the time when I wake up from my short rest, and be able to travel to see you as promised. Please grant me the blessings for my request."

Matsutaro rested for a while. Iwa came to see Matsutaro on time. He tried to stand up on his feet. Strangely enough, he felt no pain in his right foot at all. He intentionally stomped on the floor, but felt no pain at all. To further ensure the evidence of blessings, he stepped on the edge of the sliding door railing. He felt no pain at all. Instead, he felt a jolt of some good sensation run throughout his body.

Matsutaro explained the situation to Iwa, "Right now, I feel no pain at all. But I am not sure I could keep this condition throughout our travel all the way to the destination. If I would ever experience some difficulty in walking, I will stop to travel and find a lodging at the spot." In this manner, both Matsutaro and Iwa left for Kokura. Both of them arrived at Kokura safe and sound.

Upon arrival at Konko-Sama at Kokura, Matsutaro forwarded his request about his father. The Rev. Matsuhei Katsura gave him a message, "In the past, some people revered the blessed nature of Heaven, but few had ever revered the blessed nature of Earth. From now on, learn to appreciate and revere the blessed great nature of Heaven and Earth. Heaven is Father; Earth is Mother. Revering only the blessed nature of Heaven and neglecting the great giving nature of Earth can be likened to the situation in which you would acknowledge and revere the contributions of your father and ignoring the giving nature of your mother. Acknowledge the great nurturing of both Heaven and Earth, and call out loudly the divine name of 'Tenchi Kane No Kami' and extend your prayer. If you forward your request through the virtue of Ikigami Konko Daijin to Tenchi Kane No Kami, with a sincere and single-heart, you shall be set free from any burdens of restrictive rules and observations the Days and Directions. You can go ahead with any of your construction projects, your marriage arrangements without any restrictions at all. Whatever you do, you shall have no obstacles at all."

Matsutaro was deeply moved by the enlightening message from the Rev. Matsuhei Katsura and reflected upon his own life. "I understand without the elements of blessings from Earth, we cannot sustain our own lives even one day. In the past, I acknowledged and revered the great nature of Heaven, but I have never extended my thoughts toward Earth. I have never

appreciated and revered the great giving nature of Earth at all. Worst of all, I have committed various irreverence and offenses against Earth. Occasionally I disgraced Earth in such a stupid act of 'hikyakubari' or urinating on the ground in amusement and other acts of stupidity. I wonder how I could be spared of my life despite those irreverent acts toward Earth. They say '足許から鳥が立つ' or experiencing a moment of total surprise in the state of calmness." This enlightening moment could be the very moment of such a surprise spiritual awakening for me" (Yasutake Matsutaro-shi page 9 to 12). The Rev. Matsuhei Katsura, the founding minister of Konko Church of Kokura was 35 years, and the Matsutaro Yasutake, the founding minister of Konko Church of Amagi was 20 years old.

The message, "When the people of the world pray to Ikigami Konko Daijin with a sincere and single-heart, please fulfill whatever requests they have" has been actualized through the presence of the Toritsugi-Mediation Desk and the ministers who serve as Ikigami Konko Daijin at each local Konko Church. Making a pilgrimage to church, just a simple act of visitation is an actualization of the message quoted. But we can learn the valid meaning of the prayer only through the practice of visitation and practice of faith.

## **Konko-Sama Says . . .**

Although people live between heaven and earth, they are unaware of Kami's blessings. Shrines, temples, and houses all stand on Kami's land. Without realizing this, people consult the Days and Directions and are disrespectful to Kami. They suffer hardships due to these offenses.

Tenchi Kane No Kami has sent Ikigami Konko Daijin to provide blessings and teachings so that mankind may prosper. Kami is Kami because of man, and man is man because of Kami. Both are fulfilled through this mutual relationship. (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 3)

## **Bulletin Board**

### **Monthly Services for July, 2019**

- 1 Thr -Monthly Svc for Ikigami Konko Daijin (7:30 pm)
- 4 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)  
\*Adkison Family welcome back luncheon! (After svc)
- 11 Sun -Monthly Service, Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
- 17 Sat -Annual Memorial Service at Ehimemaru Memorial at Kakaako Waterfront Park organized by Hawaii Ehime Kenjinkai (10 am)
- 18 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)
- 24 Sat -Hotokusai Service at Honolulu Church (2 pm)
- 25 Sun -90th Anniversary Celebration at Honolulu Church (10:30 am) No service at Wahiawa Church

### **September 1 2019**

- 1 Sun -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (9 am)

### **Garage Sale**

Thank you very much for your help and support for the garage sale held on Saturday, June 17, 2019. The proceeds of \$729.20 will be used for various expenses for the upcoming 80th Anniversary Celebration scheduled for March 15, 2020.

### 9th Ohana Camp

Thank you for your support and contributions for the 9th Annual Summer Ohana Camp held on July 6 & 7, 2019 at Camp Erdman. Twenty people joined the camp and enjoyed enriching programs in two days. The Rev. Dr. Todd Zenji Takahashi from San Diego came to provide a workshop on the theme of "Subete wo taisetsu ni" or "Treating All with Respect." We are looking forward to the 10th Summer Ohana Camp to be held in the year 2020. Alex Furusho has attended all camps from the very first camp and some other participants also continue to join. Thank you for your monetary donations for the camp and support and participation to the program for all these years.

### Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility will be made on Friday, August 9, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

### HCRP Meeting

The Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace will hold the regular meeting on Monday, August 5, 2019 at Palolo Hongwanji Temple at 1:30 p.m.

### A Day of Spiritual Growth

In commemorating the 160th year of the Divine Call to the Founder, the Konko Missions in Hawaii invited the Rev. Amy Uzunoe-Chin, Chief Administrative Minister of Konko Churches of North America for an open workshop titled, "Why Me? Why Am I Suffering?" The announcement of the meeting was delivered through KIKU TV, Radio KZOO. Approximately 60 people, including first time visitors and regular church members showed up for the meeting held on Sunday, July 28, 2019. She also shared her thoughts with the local minister on July 27 at Konko Mission of Honolulu.

### KMH Meetings

- The KMH Community Engagement and Outreach Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday on Friday, August 30, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. and the 2020 KMH-KCNA Joint Conference Committee Meeting will be held at 4:30 p.m. at Konko Mission of Honolulu.
- KMH Board of Trustees' Meeting on Saturday, August 10, 2019 at 10:30 a.m. at Konko Mission of Honolulu.

### Rotary Hanashikai Meeting at Wahiawa

The Rotary Hanashikai gatherings which have come to a halt since 1997 has been revived this year. The first Rotary Hanashikai gathering was held at Konko Mission of Wahiawa on Sunday, June 30 at 10:30 a.m. Twenty-three people from Honolulu, Waipahu and Wahiawa Churches showed up and shared their thoughts about their practice of faith. After enjoying ono lunch, the meeting was disbanded. The second Rotary Hanashikai meeting will be held at Konko Mission of Waipahu on Sunday, September 8, 2019 from 10:30 a.m. Featured activities are discussion, a calligraphy session and lunch. Please join the meeting and strengthen the Konko community power.

## Honoring the Mitama Spirits

### August

Masaru Nakano	8/5/2004
Sunao Hayashida	8/8/1958
Jinpei Hayashida	8/13/1939
Helen Y. Eguchi	8/14/1946
Masataka Yano	8/14/2012
Shizue Eguchi	8/19/2012
Rev. Masayuki Kodama	8/24/1973
Kima Yamashita	8/1979



*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 386, 387 and 388)*

**No. 386: Those who practice faith don't just worship Kami. They also sincerely help people in emergencies or in sudden adversity without expecting any money or thanks in return. If there's a fire, they quickly go and help extinguish it. Such is true faith and kindness. Bear this in mind in whatever you do. (I Yamamoto Sadajiro 49 Kyoten page 390)**

### **True faith and kindness**

In the practice of faith, our primary concern should be to direct our hearts towards Kami at all times, but we should also respond to any circumstances that arise in our normal social lives.

Whenever any major disasters develop at many parts of the country, we have tried to activate the organizational disaster responses by sending monetary donations and volunteer people to the disaster areas. For this purpose, we have established a disaster relief fund at Headquarters Church at Konko Town. The Founder stated, "Help people in emergencies or in sudden adversity without expecting any money or thanks in return. If there's a fire, they quickly go and help extinguish it." In this manner, we should take a quick response to any disasters. When we need help from others, we really learn to appreciate the thoughts and actions of those people who come to help quickly.

Personally, the author has witnessed many occasions in which volunteer people try to explain their good intentions needlessly or tried to take advantage of such occasions to advertise themselves. We do not usually help people who would cause distress to people already in distress.

The second Head Minister of Konko Church of Nihonbashi in Tokyo, the late Rev. Nagaoki Matsui, was a generous and compassionate person. After WWII, a major storm affected the central area of Tokyo and the Konkokyo affiliated dormitory for college students located at Kawaguchi City in Saitama Prefecture also was affected. The Rev. Matsui who lived in Nihonbashi, didn't care about his own physical condition of hypertension, dare to deliver many packages of bread for the students at the dormitory in Saitama. He could not use the railway services at some portion of his travel. He carried the packages of food on his head and waded through the flooded area on foot and managed to deliver the food to them. In this manner, he didn't care much about himself, but dared to carry out his intentions without fear. He was such a selfless person at all times. He never boasted his giving to others and never tried to demand gratitude for whatever he gave to others. It could be just a reflection of his life as a Konko believer.

**No. 387: Just bringing a gift won't console a sick person. The sick person will get stronger or weaker depending on what you say. If you are kind enough to pay a consolation visit, you should convey words which will strengthen his heart. With a stronger heart, he'll be able to receive Kami's blessings. If you tell him and his family the words of Konko Daijin, they will never think depressing thoughts. The sick individual will look forward to a complete recovery. When visiting a sick person, some people make him feel worse by shedding tears and caressing him pitifully. Some people bewail the sick person after seeing how sick he is or how much weight the person has lost. They tell his family depressing stories about other sick people. For him and his family, these depressing stories will leave no room for Kami's blessings. Making them worry won't make it a consolation visit. Say reassuring words to strengthen the sick person's heart and tell his family not to worry or to be in pain. Encourage them as much as you can. These are many ways you can help. If they are poor, you can give money or grains. Be concerned for all things and practice faith.** (I Yamamoto Sadajiro 36-1. 2, 3, 4, 5 Kyoten page 381-382)

### Many ways for helping others

It is important to make a consolation visit to a hospitalized person. There can be some dos and don'ts as we make a visit for a hospitalized individual.

We should be sincere in making a consolation visit. It would be rude to follow someone who already made such a visit as an obligation. It would be rude to advertise our goodwill intent to the patient. Some people try to outsmart others in the selection of gifts to be given to the patient. Our consolation visit should be pure and sincere without any strings attached, otherwise the patient and the attending family members would be disturbed. If you try to find out details of the patient's condition, and whisper with others in the room, it would not be a consolation visit, but burden the patient with stress.

When I was young, I was hospitalized at one occasion. My elder brother came to see me at the hospital and greeted me by saying, "You look comfortable in your bed. Let me join to enjoy the comfort of your bed." He sneaked into my bed for a

while. I enjoyed the warmth of his body and his caring thoughts. I still remember this episode.

At one occasion, one of my friends from the elementary school was hospitalized with colon cancer. When I made a consolation visit to his room, I was surprised by the overflowing gifts of flowers and dolls and so forth. Each gifted item had a notion of the popular actors and actresses in the entertainment community. He was a popular theatre commentator in Japan. I just gave him a package of old-fashioned traditional Japanese confectionary we enjoyed together when we were young. Compared to the expensive items of gifts in the room, my gift could be too humble. But he expressed his joy by saying, "Thank you very much. This is the one I really wanted to eat."

The Konkokyo Pen Club planned to publish a series of books titled "Hashi" or bridge for general readers not limited to the Konko believers. Since we had no publications about a consolation visit, we responded to an issue the first book entitled, "Yasuragi (peacefulness) for hospitalized people."

*A Day of Spiritual Growth by Rev. Amy Uzunoe-Chin held on Saturday and Sunday July 27 (Minister's Gathering) July 28, 2019 (Workshop with public). This event was held in celebration of the 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Konkokyo.*



Minister's Gathering 7/27/19



Workshop 7/28/19 with Rev. Amy Uzunoe-Chin (Session II)



Welcome to Wahiawa Kyokai Browning Ohana! 7/2/19