



Nurturing warm-heartedness

Rev. Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister



Whenever the season for the annual Back-to-School Service comes around, I always try to share one thought. I still clearly remember a message given when I attended an English language school in Tokyo. The instructors said that we could produce an educated individual, provided he or she has normal intelligence. An ordinary person can be educated to obtain a higher educational credential by utilizing any available educational resources, monetary resources and time. But it is quite difficult to educate a person to become a warm-hearted person.

I didn't know exactly why he made that remark when he shared that message. But I assume through his teaching career, he might have witnessed the reasons why he made that remark for his students, and I also have been appreciating the truthfulness of the extended message as I get older and witnessed many people in the world.

In regard to this matter, my daughter Edna told us an interesting episode she learned in nursing school. The professor asked the students what they think is one of the most valued elements as a nurse? The majority of the students answered that a caring, warm-hearted nurse would be the most valuable trait the patients will appreciate. Patients also expressed the same thing. Patients are people who are at their weakest physical condition and by instinct they seek somebody who can soothe their pains and anxieties. It is an interesting universal element we want to see in the nurse and any other human we encounter. However, despite that fact, people may experience quite the opposite.

Edna's nursing school professor pointed out that if we think that kindness, care and warm-heartedness is valued by the patients, and the nursing students also identify the importance of those traits, why are there no classes to develop those valuable traits in the course? There should be a course called Caring and Compassion 101 or something like that. But there are no such classes.

The heart of kindness and gentleness is not necessarily a solid condition of a person. And this can be the nature of people in general.

People spend thousands of dollars to educate their children. The rich become even richer, while those who are less resourceful can hardly break the existing barriers. You can see this social pattern through your observation of the people. But it is also true, the government spends millions of dollars for educating young people. We tend not to acknowledge this much. The state

spends thousands of dollars per person every year, but people continually complain about the poor public education. Without governmental educational funds, the public educational system may not exist today. Education has always been the central issue in the political world. Have you ever pondered the extent of generosity given by the government? It can be conceived as an extended will of the governments who want to help educate the young in the same way we want to help our children to enjoy sound growth. It can be a form of divine will actualized through the governments. We take for granted what have been given to us.

Can we ever be appreciative enough for the blessings provided by Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama? 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 love, warm-heartedness and kindness of Our Divine Parent, Tenchi Kane No Kami being extended to each of us. In appreciating the work of our Parent God Tenchi Kane No Kami, we can learn to

appreciate the kindness extended by others. We simply exist in the ocean of Divine Love and unconditional giving, just like a fish in the ocean.

It is true that warm-heartedness alone may not provide us valid credentials to get jobs that sustains our earnings. We need to develop a solid educational credential if we want to sustain our lives in the society based on credits. Helping

others is the utmost expression of thanks we receive through our practice of faith. Study hard and be a person who can help others through your learned skills.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

"Since Tenchi Kane No Kami is the Parent Kami of this world, all people who live between heaven and earth are the children of Tenchi Kane No Kami regardless of whether they practice this faith or not. If you practice faith in Kami, you will become close to Kami. Kami will then bestow divine blessings and turn major misfortunes into minor ones, and will take away the minor mishaps. Those who say that they practice faith but are still unable to receive divine blessings, do not yet know the true virtue of Kami. You should realize that misfortunes cannot be fully understood by man." Even among devout believers, there are some who stop practicing faith because they experienced great misfortunes. They cut the roots of their faith instead of practicing faith to receive divine blessings that can cut the roots of their misfortunes. This is because they do not realize the true virtue of Kami. When people practice faith, they should know the true virtue of Kami. (III Jinkyukyogoroku 32)

The ultimate source
of happiness is not
money and power,
but warm-heartedness

Dalai Lama

Bulletin Board

Church Services for August 2020

- 1 Sat -Monthly Service, Tenchi Kane No Kami
(Facebook Live 7:30 pm)
- 2 Sun -Back to School Service (Facebook Live 9 am)
- 9 Sun -Monthly Service, for the Founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin (Facebook Live 9 am)
- 15 Sat -Ehimemaru Memorial Service at Kakaako Waterfront Park, coordination by Ehime Kenjin Kai, performed by Rev. Yasuhiro Yano at 10 am
- 16 Sun-Sunday Service (Facebook Live 9 am)
- 23 Sun-Monthly Memorial Service (Facebook Live 9 am)
- 30 Sun-Sunday Service (Facebook Live 9 am)

September 2020

- 1 Tue -Monthly Service, Tenchi Kane No Kami
(Facebook Live 7:30 pm)
- 6 Sun -Sunday Service 9:00am
- 20 Sun -Autumn Memorial Service (10 am)

Garage Sale

We will conduct a garage sale in responding to the many generous donations of goods to our church on Saturday morning, August 22, 2020 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. All the proceeds will be deposited to the Konko Mission of Wahiawa Educational Fund.

The Church Door is Open

We welcome you to make a visit to our church and church services. Please wear your face mask for Covid-19 precautionary measures.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

August

Masaru Nakano	8/5/2004
Sunao Hayashida	8/8/1958
Jinpei Hayashida	8/13/1939
Masataka Yano	8/14/2012
Helen Y. Eguchi	8/14/1946
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.



Sharing of Faith



I found an interesting article that can be shared by all who are interested in pursuit of the Konko faith. The article was authored by the Rev. Junichi Watanabe, Head Minister of Konko Church of Habikino, Osaka, Japan. The article was found in the official monthly publication "Ametsuchi" published in July, 2020, reference pages from 36 to 40. An English translation was provided by the Rev. Yasuhiro Yano.

Transformation of a family based on the practice of Konko faith

(By Rev. Junichi Watanabe, Head Minister of Konko Church of Habikino)

Today's Japan is characterized as "Muen-shakai" or an indifferent society in which people are isolated and have weak personal links with other people. Japan has been experiencing an acceleration of dwindling birthrate and an influx of the ageing population. The society has to deal with issues such as poverty, death in isolation, the manner of conducting memorial services and grave sites for the deceased. Those issues are closely related to religious establishments who have to identify the nature of the souls of the deceased and arise as big social issues.

After the Meiji Restoration, Japan adopted a modern ideology from Western Europe that is characterized to perceive any elements in the great nature and the world as a "matter" that is also the foundation of secularism. The concept of "home" affiliated with Judeo-Christian concepts prevailed as the foundation of the family and household in Japan. The functional powers of the local and work place communities weakened, at the same time, the relationship of husband and wife, parents and children also became unstable. Those elements have contributed to the state of isolation held by many people. They feel they are "lonely" because they have lost strong connectedness within families and in the communities they belong. We should have to find some different life-sustaining forms that is beyond the concept of ordinary blood-related families and nuclear families.

Every individual in the world is identified as a beloved child of Kami. Each individual is connected to each other and contributes as an indispensable member of the ever-moving society. Each one of us tries to live "my life." The original perception of family is to provide care for "my life" with love and to nurture spiritual growth and to provide the place for the soul of "my life" so it can be in comfort. But the reality is apparent that they find

little comfort in the family, they witness conflicts. Even blood-related family members turn their backs on each other.

A journalist named Toshiko Kitamura quoted her message in a publication, "Killing of homeless people, why those young people have committed the crime" authored by Shinichi Yoshida, published by Shinchosha in 2004. She quoted an expressed thought held by a middle school student who stopped going to school when he reached the 9th grade and secluded himself in his own room for three years. He was labeled as a "Hikikomori (social recluse)." He interacted with homeless people as a volunteer. The boy stated, "Those homeless people live in a shack without a roof. They live in cardboard shelters and sleep with a sheet of cloth. I live in a large house with a roof. But I do not have a home in which I could sleep in comfort. There is no place in the house where my soul would be able to return peacefully. Every night, when I try to sleep in my own bed, I always have a fear if I would be alive the following morning. I believe all those homeless people also sleep under the cold open sky and ask if they would be alive the following morning. They spend the night in fear. When I think of those homeless people, I feel that I am also homeless."

The thought expressed by this young individual, "There is no place in the house where my soul would be able to return peacefully" would not necessarily represent the thought universally held by those young troubled people labeled as "Hikikomori", "Yankee" and "Neet" in Japan. His remark: "the place in the house where my soul would be able to return peacefully" implies a dimension in which he would just be accepted by his other family members as he is. He would suffer in loneliness and low self esteem, yet he wishes he would get connected with the people at the dimension of souls and life. At that environment, he would not struggle with others and would be able to rest in peace. In today's Japan, many people have difficulty finding a peaceful resting place in the family, at school, at work and the communities they belong. In today's "Muen-shakai" or indifferent society, they can hardly find such an ideal "Tamashii no Kazoku" or the family connected each other at the level of soul, where the souls would be able to rest comfortably. They are conditioned to bear the loneliness, isolation and struggle with other people for survival.

It would be imperative to witness the emergence of a new form of relationship in the family and human relationships in society in which each and every individual can be identified as "Kami no Ujiko" or beloved children of Kami through the perspective based on the infinite divine love of Our Divine Parent. The unobtrusive and inconspicuous way of life perpetuated in the Konko faith tradition will save the current turmoil in the society. Through the efforts of the believers who have been guided to find "the place of unconditional acceptance" at the "Hiromae" or worship hall at church, they would be able to enrich their relationships in the family and the communities they belong. This virtue by Kami-Sama and Mitama-Sama, would help in this age of "loneliness" and many can be saved.

"Sue hanjyo no shinjin" or getting blessed through the practice of faith from generation to generation, does not necessarily mean being blessed with children through marriage. This message also implies a faith in which all people would not hurt each other, recognize each other as child of Kami, support and pray for each

other and enjoy a peaceful life. The Founder used the expression, "Kami-yo" that implies a world in which all people enjoy peaceful relationships and enjoy a prosperous life. Those who practice faith and help their descendants would also enjoy blessed lives from generation to generation. And they also extend their prayers for those people who have no descendants, and any other people to live blessed lives. This is the actualization of "Sue hanjyo" or the way of enjoying prosperity from generation to generation. This is the way to transform the age of "solitary life" into the world of "Kami-yo" or Kami-oriented life.

Being healed of physical irregularities and regaining health can be some of the primary reasons for people to get involved in the practice of faith. But to attain a peaceful life from generation to generation can also be one of the primary reasons why people start practicing faith. The length of steps taken by devoted believers seems to outlive the length of steps they take while they live physically. The virtuous power accumulated by devoted believers seems to get perpetuated even after their physical death. The power of virtue we acquire through our practice of faith seems to continue even after physical death.

The mother of A-san who lived in Ehime Prefecture was 70 years old, and devoted in pursuit of the Konko faith. She was blessed with eight children, including A-san. One day, A-san came to church where I served in Osaka. She showed me a picture and explained. In the picture, there was a large dominating house altar for Kami-Sama that occupied the room. It was well taken care of and could be comparative to ones found in a Konko church. From time to time, all the children and their descendants visit the house. They all enjoyed sleeping on the floor of the room where the altar is placed. While I looked at the picture of the room that was full of generations of family pictures I felt overwhelmed in gratitude. I could see the actualization of blessings received by the family in that picture. The mother of A-san, departed at the age of 93. I have never met her in person. I only knew her image in the picture.

A-san told me that her mother used to say to her children, "When I departed from this world, I shall make all of eight children and their children enjoy to live happy lives without exception." One of those occasions, a grandchild innocently asked her back, "Obaachan, me, your grandchild, too?" She responded in conviction, "My virtuous power will reach all the way to you, too, and the rest of the grandchildren. That could be the extent of my power. I cannot guarantee the virtuous power after that generation."

A-san had to deal with a troublesome husband and suffered financially. They had a daughter and a younger son. The daughter, who had witnessed her mother who had to struggle lack of money at all times. The daughter always complained and said, "My endeavor is to get rich by becoming a president of a company. I don't want to live such a miserable life like you. You have been constantly troubled by your husband. So I will never get married."

Two years after the passing of Obaachan, A-san encountered a serious accident at her work place. She worked at a fabric production factory. An original plastic fabric roll is placed in a production line and the finished products are rolled out onto the

moving conveyer. She was assigned to take the products from the conveyer and put them into boxes for that night. At one occasion, while she was taking a rest, she noticed dirt on the side of the machine that was temporarily stopped. She was prompted to clean the dirt from the machine in fear that the dirt could spoil the products. While she began to wipe off the dirt, the machine started to rotate all of a sudden.

A young operator of the machine, who was around 20 years old, carelessly switched on the machine without confirming safety first. Her right hand got caught in the moving roller and was about to be swallowed into the machine. She reflectively shouted out, "Konko-Sama, please help me!" Miraculously, in corresponding to her shouting out, "Konko-Sama" the machine stopped moving.

Later on, the operator of the machine reported, "Soon after the machine started to move, I found an irregular break in the fabric and responded to turn off the machine immediately." He was totally unaware that the accident took place in the machine. When the roller was about to swallow the wrist of her right hand, the machine stopped moving. She responded to move the roller backward and freed her hand miraculously. Mechanically, it was designed that the roller would not move backward. But for some reason, she could release her hand by moving the roller backward. She fell down on the floor in shock.

She was raced to the ER and hospitalized thereafter. She had fractures in the right hand, some tendons were damaged. She could not move her fingers. She was hospitalized in Habikino City for her rehabilitation for four months. When she was discharged from the hospital, she came to church in appreciation of the recovery from the injuries. She experienced some changes in her heart and learn to have deeper gratitude through the encounter with the accident. She related, "Till I got the accident, I felt I am the only one who takes care of the children. I devoted to take care of the them seriously. When I became bedridden and could not provide any care for them, I learned to appreciate the fact that I could work, I could practice faith through many elements of support and help from my family members and others. Since I could not visit church, my daughter came to visit me at hospital on her way back from her working place. She drove her motorbike to church and parked it at the church yard. She entered into the worship hall, extended her prayers and sought Toritsugi-Mediation. I feel so grateful for these unexpected development taking place in blessedness."

Her daughter came to church and extended her prayers every day and enjoyed to talk with her mother at the hospital for four months. The way she sees things has changed a great deal through her visitation to church. In the past, she held a negative thought about her mother in despise, "She is such a pitiable woman whose life was totally ruined by such a good for nothing fellow (her husband)." But nowadays, she thinks of her mother in such a manner, "She has tried to live under the virtuous

protective influence of Obaachan. The virtuous influence of Obaachan's devotion in pursuit of her faith, my mother has lived. Because of my mother's involvement in the practice of faith, she could somehow manage to live in dealing with such a troublesome husband and find a way to keep the family harmony. I really appreciate a greater perseverance demonstrated by mother. She looks so great to me." She continued to say, "My mother never gives up whatever encounters she has to deal with. She expressed her conviction, 'I can deal with any encounters in life. We have never experienced a day without a meal. There shall be a way to keep on moving under any situation.'" In this manner, the daughter made a great deal of spiritual transformation through her involvement in the practice of faith.

On New Year's Day of the following year, she came to church with her boyfriend. She had some friends in the past, but when she mentioned about the intent of getting married, they all left her. They got married in the summer of that year. After getting married, she wrote to me, "When my husband and I made a trip to visit the native town of my husband, when the train stopped at the station, I was so surprised to find out that the name of the station was the same name as my Obaachan. When I witnessed the name of the station, I remembered that Obaachan's message that she would make me happy even after she departed. Both my

husband and I visited the grave site of Obaachan. When we returned home, I opened up an album and found out Obaachan. When I witnessed Obaachan in the picture, I remembered her message, 'Practice faith and live. You shall enjoy a happy life for sure.' She expressed the

message to us from time to time."

When I finished reading her message, I felt overwhelmed in gratitude. The extent of the steps of the faith initiated by Obaachan outlived her

physical life ended at the age of 93. The prayers Obaachan extended for her descendants have been perpetuated and influenced all the way to her grandchildren as she promised. If the daughter of A-san would be able to pass the message to her own children about the message of Obaachan, "I shall make all eight children and your children to live a happy life." In this manner, the faith initiated by Obaachan would be able to get perpetuated from generation to generation. I felt so grateful in witnessing the blessed nature of practicing faith.

Both A-san and her daughter have happily involved in the practice of faith devotedly. The daughter once said, "I do not get married. I will become rich by working hard and build my own house." But she got married and get their own house to live. She enjoyed a thriving business with the support of her husband. Most of her personal wishes she held before marriage, such as to get rich, achieve a great success in her business or to get her own house have not been fulfilled yet. But through her engagement in the practice of faith, each and every wish she held has been getting actualized one by one. She now enjoys to get blessed through her own practice of faith.



In an emergency
Say
KONKO SAMA!