



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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“Ujiko wa Kami ga hikiyoseru” (Divinely arranged visitation to church)

*By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister*

We say the practice of Toritsugi-Mediation is vital to the Konko faith. The practice is initiated by the Founder Ikigami Konko Daijin. As has been stated in the Rikkyo Shinden or the Divine Call to the Founder and His Family, the form of Toritsugi-Mediation is activated by the people who come to communicate with the Founder for some of their personal issues they needed to deal with. When the Founder was out in the field and engaged in his daily farming tasks, some people came to visit his residence. Some of the family members had to respond to travel to inform the Founder that someone was waiting to mediate with him. Then the Founder had to give up his task in the field and raced back to the house to respond to the individual who was waiting for his arrival. After the communication was over, the Founder went back to the field again and continued to do his job. There were so many visitors daily. Practically, he could no longer sustain his daily work as a farmer in the field. In witnessing the development, Tenchi Kane No Kami might have become assured of the Founder’s viability as a Toritsugi-Mediator, and made a formal request for the Founder to get engaged in the work of Toritsugi-Mediation while giving up his task as a farmer.

Toritsugi-Mediation can only be activated by the individual who comes to communicate with the Toritsugi-Mediator. This is the very fundamental and unique aspect of Konkokyo.

People simply responded to the magnetic spiritual power of the Founder who had demonstrated his own salvation, the salvation of the family members and the salvation of some initial number of people in the village community through the communication he provided. The people responded to call the Founder Konko Daijin as “Ikigami” or who manifested influential spiritual powers he gained through his engagement in the practice of faith. Those people actually witnessed the manifestation of the spiritual power of the Founder who healed the sick, saved those in suffering from various elements of difficulties that imposed impasse for the people. The only hope they could pursue was to get blessed through the intervention of “Ikigami.” People were virtually drawn to this figure of “Ikigami” who helped fulfill their needs to live. We use a simplified expression of Toritsugi-Mediation, but the full functional expression can be Ikigami Konko Daijin Toritsugi-Mediation. Without the divine work of Ikigami Konko Daijin, the work of Toritsugi-Mediation can end up just as common communication between a visitor and the minister.

Ikigami Konko Daijin represents an eternal form of the functional spiritual being actualized by the Founder Konko Daijin whose primary work is to fulfill the extended divine will expressed in the Rikkyo Shinden or the Divine Call to the Founder and His Family revealed on October 21, 1859 that states, “*Tenchi Kane No Kami wo Tasukete Kure*” or please help assist Tenchi Kane No Kami (to help people in suffering).

From the initial engagement in our missionary work here at this local church in Wahiawa 36 years ago, I have developed a conviction about the way we get engaged in our missionary work. The idea is that “*Ujiko wa Kami ga hikiyoseru*” or people will be guided to the church through the guidance of Kami. This is based on a teaching that states “Do not go out for missionary work, just serve at the church and Kami will bring people to help through the work of Toritsugi-Mediation.” Toritsugi is the primary function of the Konko Church. In this conviction about how Toritsugi-Mediation works or not will solely depend upon the power of the designated local minister. At this church, I am the one who has the biggest responsibility for the operation of Toritsugi-Mediation. For 36 years, I have convinced myself I need much power and virtue as a designated Toritsugi-Mediator.

Nowadays, I feel like I am witnessing that my initial endeavor for our missionary work has been passed down to our children who have been trying to find ways to fulfill our missionary endeavors we may not yet fulfill.

The other day, Edna introduced the story she experienced when she visited the Konko Church of Amagasaki in Hyogo when she went to Japan to attend the Grand Service held in commemoration of the 130th memorial year of the Founder at the Headquarters Church at Konko Town in October this year. They said in five years, the church has experienced a phenomenal expansion of people initiated into the practice of faith. So many people come to worship that they need 4 Toritsugi-Mediation Seats to accommodate them. This is a clear indication that Kami has guided those people to that church for salvation.

When I first began my service at this church, I prayed that I would like to see one new church member at every service to be conducted. It could be my dream as a Toritsugi-Mediator. My wife, Reiko has a prayer that 10 percent of the Wahiawa Town population will come to attend church. Will our dreams be actualized sometime in the future? My daughter, Edna pasted an image of a mega church with thousands of people in a worship hall. The Amagasaki Church took over 100 years to experience a sudden surge of church members. It would not be just one minister who manifested that magnitude of influential power to draw people, but the accumulated resourceful elements that particular church has developed is what brought about the

phenomenal operation of the church. Furthermore, it would be the extended work of the Founder Ikigami Konko Daijin that helps manifest the current situation at that particular church.

Personally, I would like to witness one church member who can truly share our dream of expanding the faith community in Wahiawa and in Hawaii at large. If one person brings in one new person, the number of the congregation will rapidly multiply. And helping others to get involved in the practice of faith is the biggest way we can give back to Kami for what we have been enjoying as has been stated by the Founder. Those who bring new people to church are to enjoy the greatest blessings. The history of the church has proven those elements solidly. It is my wish to see this happen in our Konkokyo faith community in Wahiawa.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

Konko-Sama told me, "Practice faith (shinjin). *Shin* means your heart, and *jin* means kami. Practicing faith means you direct your heart toward kami. Though you are surrounded by divine virtue, you won't receive blessings unless you have faith." This was a profound and blessed teaching. Thus enlightened, I realized that even a lamp full of oil cannot give light without a wick (shin). Without faith, the world would be dark as night with unlit lamps. (I Ichimura Mitsugoro 1-6)

Bulletin Board

Monthly Services For December

- 1 Sun -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama at 9:00 a.m.
- 8 Sun -Sunday Service at 9:00 a.m.
- 15 Sun -Monthly Service of Ikigami Konko Daijin at 9:00 a.m.
- 22 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service and Late Rev. Haruko Takahashi's 41st Memorial Service at 10:00 a.m.
- 29 Sun -End of the Year Service at 9:00 a.m.

January 2014

- 1 Wed -New Year's Day Service at 9:00 a.m. Traditional *ozoni mochi* soup and *osechi* dishes will be served after the service.

HCRP Meeting

A memorial function for the late Ms. Alice Mitchell, who was one of the dedicated members of the HCRP organization from its early days, will be observed at the Church of Perfect Liberty on Saturday, December 14 at 4:00 p.m.

Workshop for ministers

The Rev. Shuko Tsuda from Konko Church of Amagasaki from Japan will make a presentation at the Konko Mission of Honolulu on Saturday, December 14 from 10:30 a.m. through 2:00 p.m.

41st Memorial Service for the Late Rev. Haruko Takahashi

We will observe the annual 41st memorial service for the founding minister of our church in Wahiawa, the late Rev.

Haruko Takahashi, on Sunday, December 22 in conjunction with the regular monthly memorial service at 10:00 a.m. Naorai lunch will follow the service. Please come to join the service in appreciation of the dedicated services of the minister who laid the solid foundation for the operation of the church in the last 73 years.



New Year's Mochi Pounding

The annual community function of mochi pounding will be held on Monday, December 30, 2013. We will start pounding mochi at 8:30 a.m. and continue the operation through around 4:00 p.m. We produce mochi in accordance with the authentic tradition from the beginning to end with the use of *usu* mortar, wooden *kine* or mallet and hand-shaped. This year some members of Ehime-Kenjin Kai in Hawaii will come to help with the program. Deadline for mochi order will be on Thursday, December 26. Only the first order of 250 pounds will be accepted.

Volunteer Activity at Wahiawa General Hospital

The regular monthly volunteer activity at the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility will also take place at the same facility on Friday, December 27 at 10:00 a.m. Your participation to the program will be very much appreciated.

Honoring Mitama Spirits



December

Hilda Kazuno Yamamoto	12/14/2007
Fumitake Yoshiwa	12/15/2012
Lillian Tanigawa	12/16/2010
Shizuko Takayama	12/21/2006
Rev. Fumio Yasutake	12/23/1995
Rev. Haruko Takahashi	12/24/1972

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 Matsutaro Kōsaka contributed the insightful articles. The translation is provided by Yasuhiro Yano. (Reference pages 64, 65, and 66)

No. 64

If there is irreverence left by your ancestors, offer a part of your food and apologize. Then the irreverence will be forgiven. Pray, and even the wandering spirit of the deceased will find its way. Pray to Kane No Kami Sama for success at whatever you do. (II Fujii Kiyono 3-1 Kyoten page 683)

The salvation of the soul

In the preceding page 63, the message stated, “While people live in this world, if they do wrong to others, or go against the heart of Kami, their spirits will be admonished by Kami after death.” The message in this page is also closely related to the subject. But an emphasis is placed on different aspect that even those who would be admonished after death could find its way.

The Founder showed two alternative ways for the salvation of wandering spirits. The first is to extend “apologies” for any serious irreverence committed by the ancestors. The other is to extend prayers for the salvation of those ancestral wandering spirits. Both “apologies” and “prayer for salvation” derives from a believer’s sincere reliance on Kami.

There can be two possible elements on how we deal with the souls of the deceased. Turning our hearts toward Kami for the matters pertaining to the Mitama spirits can equal the act of seeking Toritsugi-Mediation through Ikigami Konko Daijin for the spirits. If the ancestors possibly committed irreverence, we extend our message of apologies and salvation for the spirits as well as extend any compliments, appreciation and gratefulness for the contributions of the spirits. At the same time, we can identify that the Mitama spirits also pray for the well being of the descendants to Kami through Ikigami Konko Daijin. There can be mutual exercise of Toritsugi-Mediation between the Mitama spirits and we who are alive.

There is the relationship of “Aiyokakeyo” mutual interdependency shared both by the Mitama spirits and their descendants. Both sides exchange messages of appreciation, apologies, extend prayers, interact, share “toku” virtue and seek ways on how to contribute for the well being of the other.

Even if we might commit some irreverence and wrongs unknowingly and depart from this world, the Mitama spirits of the deceased can enjoy fulfillment through the work of mutual Toritsugi-Mediation and “Aiyokakeyo” mutual interdependency between the two sides. This is a unique aspect of religious salvation actualized by the Founder. How wondrous we can contribute to the well being of the Mitama spirits in such a manner.

No. 65

When people die, they are reunited with Kami. The body dies, but the soul keeps on living. The body, which was taken from Earth, will return to Earth. And the soul, which was bestowed by Heaven, returns to Heaven. Dying is when your body and soul separate. (II Nanba Ko 13-2, 3)

Death is a reunification with Kami.

So far, the quoted teachings pertained to the subject of what would happen to us after death; what would be the religious concept of the Mitama spirits. From this page, the messages are focused to the meaning of death.

The message quoted clarifies two elements of death.

The first is the definition, “Dying is when your body and soul separate.” The Founder stated in such an easy to follow manner. The definition comes from the perception that the soul of the deceased keeps on living, while the body becomes disintegrated. The soul continues to exist from the birth to even after death, while the body is to get disintegrated upon death. The separation of the perpetual existence of the soul from the finite existence of the body is defined as the moment of death. The statement, “the soul keeps on living” appeared for the first time in the writing. This statement holds the vital meaning for the concept of death in Konkokyo religious faith. The Founder stated, “Know that heaven and earth will be your eternal home while you are living and even after you die” (III Shinkun 1-3). He also stated, “People think that they are under Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama’s care only while they are alive. But they remain under Kami’s care even after they die” (II Kashiwabara Toku 5-1). These teachings clearly show a distinctive nature of life and death in accordance with the Konkokyo faith that there is an unintermitted relationship between life and death. This unique concept for life and death can be referred to as “sei-shi fudan” or unintermitted relationship of life and death. This feature of life and death can be clearly shown in the concept of perpetual nature of the soul of the deceased.

The other definition of death is stated, “When people die, they are reunited with Kami.” The body is taken from Earth and returns to Earth upon death, while the soul bestowed by Heaven returns to Heaven upon death. Both the soul and the body return to Heaven and Earth. From our birth to our return to Heaven and Earth is our life cycle.

What matters is the standing of the soul at the time of its return to Heaven. Because of the perpetual nature of the soul, it is important for us to help develop good standing of the soul through our spiritual growth in dealing with many difficult encounters in life. We want to witness that our departed soul would get a lot of praise from Kami.

**Heaven in Konkokyo concept means the Universe; not the angelic paradise that is usually depicted in Western religious traditions.*

No. 66

Konko Daijin asked Kami, “What is death like?” Kami responded, “Death is like a deep sleep, do not fear it.”

(II Kataoka Jiroshiro 6 Kyoten page 480)

Death is like a deep sleep.

This quoted message also shows the nature of death. But this message is a bit different from others because Kami responded to the extended question from the Founder for the meaning of death.

Since there is little reference resources that can provide deeper background elements such as why the Founder asked such a question or what kind of issues the Founder had to deal with prompted that question to Kami, we can only assume some superficial meaning of the quoted message. This does not limited only to this message alone, but also can relevantly be applied to any other messages. The attempt to unveil the meanings of those messages through analytical approach could be the initial mistake, but this is the only manner we can understand the meanings of those teachings. We would like to proceed with great care and in caution of making a possible misunderstanding.

Kami stated, “Death is like a deep sleep.” The expression of “like” implies that death is not necessarily detached from life, even though death is not in active state. The Founder seemed to assert that death is not something we should taboo, but should be accepted as a natural development of our journeys in life.

In Japanese we refer to the death as “*eimin*” which literally means “eternal peaceful sleep.” In general it is a commonly used euphoric expression of death. But if a person departs from this world in the manner as has been shown in “*eimin*” or eternal peaceful resting, his or her life would have enjoyed a truly fulfilling life. We can picture that such a departure is an unintermitted part of a person’s life.

The divine statement, “Death is like a deep sleep” can virtually mean the same manner of departure shown in “*eimin*” or eternal peaceful resting. There could be many hurdles we have to clear to get to enjoy that ideal departure from this world.