



# KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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## *In Reflection*

*By Yasuhiro Yano  
Head Minister*

In the latest issue of the Children's Newsletter of Konko Mission of Wahiawa, through the professional perspectives of health care worker, my daughter, Edna has already made a detailed account of my hospitalization at Pali Momi Medical Center. I had complications of my gallbladder that caused a serious condition of sepsis that could have been life-threatening from November 11 through November 15, 2016.

I would like to share some of my thoughts I have contemplated through my encounter with my hospitalization as a Konko believer. In the last 39 years since both my wife and I have settled down in Hawaii to take care of the Konko Mission of Wahiawa after succeeding the founding minister, the late Rev. Haruko Takahashi, who passed away five years prior to our arrival. From the day one, we have tried to extend our thanks for the day spent in good health, good relations and whatever we have been blessed in getting engaged in our missionary work. The only hospitalizations my wife has experienced was when she gave birth to our three children at Kapiolani Children's Hospital. Childbirth is not an illness. For all those years, we have enjoyed life with little medical interventions. We have taken no medication for any disorders except the occasional Tylenol for minor pains and fevers. The only other occasion I have had to be treated at a doctor's office was when I sustained a deep cut on my right toe some twenty one years ago. It was right before the passing of the Rev. Fumio Yasutake of Konko Church of Amagi. Under his spiritual guidance, I underwent "shugyo" at the church. While I was preparing for the regular church service, I cleaned the ceramic "omiki-suzu" for holding sacred rice wine. With much force, I tried to shake off the remaining water in the container, and then something unexpected happened. The upper part of the bottle broke off and hit my toe with much force. At first I didn't feel any pain at all. But I could see the white tendons of my toe fully exposed. I put "goshinmai" wrapping paper soaked with sacred rice wine and applied it to the wound. My wife became concerned about the condition because the bleeding would not stop and took me to see the doctor. I got some stitches and returned home. Since this accident coincided

with the passing of the Rev. Fumio Yasutake, I took it as a reminder for a person who influenced much.

I have been aware of subtle changes to the good health I have enjoyed for all those years since two years ago. In February of 2014, I have experienced an excruciating pain in the right leg and toe. I had swelling on my right ankle. It seemed like a gout flare. For the first week, the pain was so intense that it was hard to even walk to the bathroom. In one month, I regained my normal condition of my body. In 2015, also in February, I had a high fever and pneumonia-like symptoms. I stayed in bed for three days, taking little food and drink. I lost some body weight. Soon I enjoyed eating and drinking and regained good health.

In preparation for my daughter, Edna's wedding in July of this year, I wanted to paint the exterior of the church building. When I finished only one-third of the painting job, I felt something wrong with my health that I have never experienced before. From mid-July, I have experienced an occasional episode of high fever, chills and heavy sweats. But the following day, my physical condition returns to normal. This pattern of bodily irregularities lasted almost 4 months. The moment I felt I could be in a serious condition was the eve of the annual Grand Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin on October 13, 2016. After supper, the episode returned suddenly. I had a high fever and uncontrollable shivering of the whole body and cold sweat. I experienced shortness of breath and could not take deep breaths. Even lying down on the bed was torturous. Still I refused to go to the hospital. I thought I should ask my wife to conduct the Grand Service in place of me. But the main *saishi* prayer was not completed. Edna was in Japan at that time. I took two doses of Tylenol. Soon after, I went to sleep. If my daughter, Edna saw me in that situation, she would have rushed me to the ER for treatment. Doing so could also disrupt the observance of the most important church function of the year. The following day, the day of the Grand Service, I could wake up as usual. I could prepare for the service without any problems. The service was conducted as usual. My wife made a main speech and extended her thoughts for the previous night's serious condition I had to undergo. She said at one point, she should be prepared for my departure. It could be the time given for me. It could be a miracle that we have been spared of any grave encounters in life since we have gotten engaged in our missionary work in Hawaii. After that serious health episode, I changed my diet to avoid any fatty or rich foods. That strategy worked well for about three weeks. In the meantime, Edna took me to see a doctor to get labs and imaging done. No gallstones were detected. It was very puzzling.

And then the condition returned with force on November 11 from the morning. Edna and her husband, Clayton drove me to the ER at Pali Momi Medical Center. In the past, the doctors tried to identify the cause of the disorder through conducting blood tests, urine test, ultrasound imaging and radioisotope imaging. After my discharge from the hospital, I went to see my primary physician. And I later learned that she had already made an arrangement for the surgical removal of my gallbladder since she could identify the disorder of the gallbladder through the diagnostic isotope imaging (HIDA scan). But the condition

became so critical on Veteran's Day that Edna decided to take me to the ER at Pali Momi Medical Center, which was indeed a good decision.

As soon as I was admitted in the hospital, they put me on IV hydration therapy and drew many tubes of blood for testing. They took a CT scan which clearly identified a big stone that blocked the common bile duct. The following day, the stone was taken from the body via endoscope (ERCP). I had no idea what happened during the procedure because they knocked me out with general anesthesia. I found myself back in my hospital room. My daughter and my wife came to see me. It was a bit of disappointment that another procedure to remove the gallbladder was scheduled the following day, when they had told me I could go home after the ERCP. The surgery was done in the evening. After the surgery, I found myself in my room again. Edna and her husband were waiting in the room for me. I felt little pain and felt so peaceful. Edna and my wife were very worried about my vital signs after the gallbladder removal surgery. My heart rate was 36 and breathing just 5 or 6 times a minute and my blood pressure was extremely high. Edna related her concerns to the attending nurses, but they remained calm. So she trusted their judgment.

The following day, on November 15, I was ready to return home. But the blood pressure showed occasional high of over 200 and the least number was 178. The nurse tried to give me a medicine to lower my blood pressure. I refused to take the medicine because I knew my normal blood pressure was around mid-140s. She understood my intent and took away the medicine. And in the afternoon, I was allowed to get discharged from the hospital. At one occasion, I became fearful of remaining hospitalized with more problems.

Throughout my stay in the hospital, I was amazed at the improved medical technologies of imaging and procedures for treatment and the dedication of the entire institutional endeavor of helping patients to get better. From the moment I was admitted to the hospital, the staff members were awaiting the arrival of each patient. The nurses of various functions took care of me to the best of their abilities. Virtually, I was tethered to many wires and tubing, which acted as a restraint as well. Every time I got out of my bed, they responded to what help I needed. I had to use the bathroom almost every two hours. I felt sorry for bothering the nurses, but I had to ask their presence whenever I used the bathroom. Whenever I used the bathroom, I thanked them for their assistance. My daughter, Edna says to her patients that we eliminate three vital elements on a daily basis to maintain good health: liquid gold (urine), natural gas (flatus) and golden nuggets (bowel movement). Just taking care of one patient, I could identify many administrative people, health insurance people, doctors, anesthetists, a team of surgery room staffs, nurses, case managers, discharging nurse, nurse aids, blood technicians, imaging technicians, transporters, housekeepers, food nutritionists and so forth. I felt thankful for their dedication for their given tasks. I should have acknowledged and thanked my personal household nurses more. My wife was a Japan Red Cross RN in Japan, who used to take care of patients that underwent gallbladder surgeries. Back in the days, patients who had their gallbladder removed had to remain in the hospital for 1 month. Now it's only a day—or same day! I am also grateful for my daughter, Edna who is also an RN. She always watches out for me with a caring and loving heart.

Just a day after my discharge, I was informed of my mother's acute condition that she could live just a couple of days at the most. She passed away peacefully on November 17. She was 92 years old. As I was informed of her passing, I felt convinced that she traded in her life for the extension of my life. I could have died at the age of 65. I have regarded myself to be an offering to Kami-Sama in appreciation of the blessings I have enjoyed and the Yano family who have enjoyed expanding family lineage because of the encounter with the Konko faith at Konko Church of Kawanoishi in Ehime.

My grandfather, Tōsuke Yano was initiated into the Konko faith because he could not get blessed with children who could take over the lineage of the Yano family. He was blessed with three children, two sons and one daughter. Mother, Nobuko got married to my father. She got engaged in the practice of the Konko faith through her marriage. My parents were blessed with five boys and three daughters. I have witness few Konko believers who could have passed down the family religious tradition of Konko faith to their children. Our parents were one of the rare believers who have enjoyed in witnessing all eight children perpetuate the Konko faith in their given conditions. And two of them, my elder brother Sejiro and I have served as Konko ministers. My wife, Reiko and three of our children also became Konko ministers. I can attribute all these blessings to my parents, especially, my mother, who persevered in pursuit of the Konko faith. Both my wife and I have extended our prayers that the legacy of the Konko faith tradition they have left for us will be perpetuated in Hawaii from generation to generation.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude for the warm support, thoughts, prayers and visitations I received from people in the faith community and friends.

## **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 (Konko Kyoso Gorikai No. 3 in Kyoten Gorikai III).

Although Kami cannot be seen, you are constantly walking within and through the midst of Kami. Even while fertilizing a field or walking along a path, you are in Tenchi Kane No Kami's hiromae. The whole world is Tenchi Kane No Kami's hiromae. (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 6)

## **Bulletin Board**

### **Monthly Services for December 2016**

- 1 Thur -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 4 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
- 11 Sun -Monthly Service for Founder (9 am)
- 18 Sun -44<sup>th</sup> Memorial Service for the Late Rev. Haruko Takahashi (10 am)
- 25 Sun -End of the Year Service (9 am)
- 29 Thr -Mochitsuki prep-day (1 pm) making anko-balls
- 30 Fri -25<sup>th</sup> Annual Mochi Pounding (8 am)

## January 2017

1 Sun -New Year's Day Service (9 am), traditional New Year's dishes will be served after the service

### Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility will be made on Friday, December 9, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

### KMH Head Ministers' Meeting

Head Ministers will have a meeting on Tuesday, December 20, 2016 from 10:30 a.m. at Konko Mission of Honolulu.

### 44<sup>th</sup> Memorial Service for the Late Rev. Haruko Takahashi

We will observe the annual 44<sup>th</sup> year memorial service for the founding minister of our church at Wahiawa, the late Rev. Haruko Takahashi on Sunday, December 18, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. She passed away on December 24, 1972.

### JCCH Mochi Pounding Demonstration

We will hold a mochi pounding demonstration in a traditional manner with "kine" and "usu" on Saturday, December 17. The first batch will be at 8:30 a.m., the second at 10:30 a.m. and the third at 11:00 a.m.

## Honoring the Mitama Spirits

### December

Frederick Michael Conti	12/6/2015
Hilda Kazuno Yamamoto	12/14/2007
Fumitake Yoshiiwa	12/15/2012
Lillian Tanigawa	12/16/2010
Isamu Iwasa	12/17/1943
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 Matsutarō Kōsaka contributed the insightful articles. The translation is provided by Yasuhiro Yano. (Reference pages 293, 294 and 295)*

### **No. 293: Food becomes medicine or poison depending on your heart. (III Shinkun 2-14 Kyoten page 775)**

#### **Food becomes medicine or poison**

This teaching reminds me of the Rev. Matsuhei Katsura, the founding minister of Konko Church of Kokura. Upon his initial encounter with the Founder at the Hiromae worship hall, he got a

divine revelation called "go-saiden" through the mouth of the Founder. The message was, "Though you think that water is bad, don't think so. Think of water as medicine. Then you won't have a stomach illness. Don't say that water is the cause of your stomach illness. Without water, you cannot live even for a day. What is the earth made from? It's made from water. Don't they say that a single ear of rice needs a liter of water to grow? Be aware of the benefit of water" (II Katsura Matsuhei 1-6, 7).

In those days, the water they used was not that sanitary compared to the water we use today. Through his extensive travel experiences, he noticed that waters were different in their qualities depending on the localities. He was cautious in consuming water that could do some harm to his health. The Founder knew Katsura's negatively inclined perception about the water he used. He stated, "Think of water as medicine. Then you won't have a stomach illness."

Whenever we consume food, how do we appreciate them? We may simply judge the tastes of food based on our own personal preferences, but show little appreciation for the grateful nature of food being prepared for consumption. It would be of no meaning in reciting grace for meal out loud if we have no sense of gratitude for the food to be consumed.

When I attended a faith enrichment program at the *Shutokuden* facility at Headquarters Church, I encountered a totally new concept about the food we consume. One of the senior ministers in attendance stated, "The food we consume is not just a blessing from Tenchi Kane No Kami, but it represents Kami. To consume food in gratitude is to take in Kami inside our body." I still vividly remember a sort of spiritual shock by the unexpected concept being forwarded by the minister.

When we consume food, try to believe that Kami enters into our body as we swallow the food. This could be an ultimate manner to consume food as medicine for our body.

**No. 294: Humans are made by what they eat, so if they don't eat, they will soon get thin. When ill, they will be unable to eat their favorite foods. While having this disability, do religious training by not complaining and worrying about your predicament. Don't be dissatisfied. Pray wholeheartedly to Kami for all matters, and polish your heart for it to receive all matters gratefully. You will receive divine blessings sooner.**

*(I Yamamoto Sadajiro 41-1 Kyoten page 385)*

#### **We are made by what we eat.**

The first food we take is the mother's breast feeding. We continue to increase the intake of food as we keep on growing. How much food do we consume throughout of our entire life since we are born?

The Founder Konko Daijin related to Kenji Tokunaga, "We were born into this world to eat" (I Tokunaga Kenji 5-2). The Founder encouraged us to get good health through the food we consume.

Because of the Founder's conviction about the nature of food, he firmly stated, "Humans are made by what they eat."

Actually, if we have little appetite for food, we will lose physical strength. The founding minister of Konko Church of Nihonbashi in Tokyo, the Rev. Tsuru Matsui got blessing of healing when she got a grave illness. She served to Kami-Sama till the age of 91 years old. Whenever people came to see her for health concerns, she always kindly asked them, "Can the sick person you mentioned eat food?" She tried to encourage them to get blessed with good health through the food they consume.

Nowadays, hospitalized patient are hydrated fluid food through IV and a feeding tube through the nose. Here is an interesting episode. One of the family members of our church was hospitalized. He thanked the nurse who fed him fluid food through nose tube by saying, "Gochiso sama deshita" even though he could not taste the food.

We are likely to experience a great deal of restrictions once we become sick. It would be important for us to accept the situation as a valuable moment of undergoing a "shugyo spiritual training" and try to become mindful of elements of help and support we receive from the health care people at hospital and any other people. We can learn to extend our sincere thanks for any foods that could be consumed.

On the contrary, if we become overcome with the thoughts of negativity and complaints when we get sick, there would be no way we can get improved for the condition. If we could appreciate the inconveniences of getting sick as a reminder for us to show our thanks for anything we have taken for granted when we are in good health, we are to get blessed in the healing of our condition.

The episode of Ogihara Sugi shows a great example how she got blessed with healing of her illness. The Founder related to Toyomatsu Ogihara, husband of Sugi, "There is one thing I must tell you. Sugi is a very spiteful person who is always complaining. Complaints won't bring divine blessings. When Rikizo came here for the first time, and when he came yesterday and you came today, she said that going to the Hiromae was unnecessary. Hence, she probably complains day and night about everything.' He cited many of my complaints without error. 'This is why she is ill and doesn't get better. Go home and tell her this. If she comes to realize from the bottom of her heart how ill-natured she has been, decide with your family as to which faith to practice in. There will surely be divine blessings. If Sugi realizes her ill-nature, and decides to receive divine blessings from this Faith, come here again,' Konko-Sama directed" (I Ogihara Sugi 4-3).

"Filled with gratitude, Toyomatsu hurried home and came to my bedside to tell me everything Konko-Sama had told him. I answered, 'Yes, it's all true. I have been wrong. I had an ill-natured character and a disrespectful heart. Yet, my suffering was really minimal. I was selfish and complained about everything. I have been a worthless person who should've been thoroughly punished. I must certainly reform my heart'" (I Ogihara Sugi 5-1, 2, 3).

## **No. 295: Overeating and overdrinking are the causes for becoming unable to eat or drink.**

*(III Shinkun 2-13 Kyoten page 775)*

### **Overeating and overdrinking**

The Founder Konko Daijin related, "Food is made and provided by Tenchi Kane No Kami to sustain one's life" (III Shinkun 13). If we disregard this message and indulge in overeating and overdrinking in fulfillment of our own appetite in excuse of our need to socialize, we are to get sick and end up in the condition that prevents us to consume any food.

Nowadays, we can obtain whatever foods we want to enjoy and lose control of our eating habits. For some people, it would be their business necessity that may result in overdrinking and overeating. They might end up damaging their internal digestive organs.

We should be mindful that we truly appreciate the blessed nature of food and drinks yielded through the work of Heaven and Earth.

The Founder Konko Daijin related to Yamamoto Sadajiro, "When people eat and drink and think they've had enough, it is Tenchi No Kami-Sama informing them of their limits. Those who go beyond these limits by eating or drinking more, end up getting sick. This is being irreverent to Kami-Sama. And those who throw up after overeating or overdrinking are also unthinking" (I Yamamoto Sadajiro 66). The Founder gave a stern warning to those people who indulge in greedy eating and drinking habits that they would end up in the condition that would prevent them to consume any food at all.

The Founder gave personalized messages in such a manner, "He once asked me (Kataoka Jiroshiro), 'Do you like sake?' 'No, I don't drink,' I replied. The he said, 'You should at least drink a little.' Later, my younger brother Jitsusa went to the Hiromae, and was asked the same question. 'Do you like sake?' Jitsusa liked sake, and having heard of my story, answered, 'Yes, I drink a little.' Then Konko-Sama said, 'You shouldn't drink sake. It will devour you'" (II Kataoka Jiroshiro 5).

The current Konko-Sama stated, "It would be important for you to find ways that can give comfort to your physical body." His message sounds so reasonable.

We should learn to appreciate our physical bodies as gifts from Kami-Sama and take good care to give comfort to them accordingly.