



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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In Gratitude

By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano

Head Minister of Konko Mission of Wahiawa

Both my wife and I were given an indispensable opportunity to make a pilgrimage to join the 160th Anniversary Celebration of "Rikkyo" or the Founding of the Religion held on November 15, 2019 at Gohonbu Headquarters Church in Konko Town. Our son Rodney, his wife Fong, our daughter Edna and her husband, Clayton also accompanied us throughout our journey. It may have seemed impossible for six of our family members to travel together, but somehow Kami-Sama granted that special blessing for all of us. Initially, Fong Yip, our son's wife encouraged us to travel to Japan at this special occasion by saying we would regret or she would regret it if we do not go. In gratitude, we accepted the offer from them and forwarded their thoughts to Kami-Sama in my prayer. Both my wife and I were able to fully enjoy the comfortable travel in company with the help and support of our children and their spouses throughout our stay in Japan. We didn't really do any sightseeing while we traveled in, but we visited seven churches (my wife and I went to 8 churches) and met with relatives. I am grateful I still have places I can visit in comfort.

When we arrived at the Kansai International Airport on November 12, soon after we got out of the airport gate, Mr. Masahiko Taniguchi of Waipahu Church happened to be at Kansai Airport when we landed. We raced to get our JR rail pass at the station annexed to the airport. My wife and I stayed at a hotel situated at the skirt of the airport. When we got into the hotel room, my wife took out a packet of goshinmai sacred rice holder and placed it at the corner of the room in an elevated place and extended our prayer of thanks to Kami-Sama together.

When we arrived at Gohonbu Headquarters Church, we checked in at Tosaya Ryokan on November 13. We visited the Main Church Hall and sought Toritsugi-Mediation and extended thanks for the blessings we have enjoyed for all those years. We joined the people from Hawaii. Some people from Hawaii were arrived late due to mechanical problems on the airplane. The following day, people from Hawaii made a visit to Konko Church of Kasaoka. The Rev. Toyoo Saito, Head Minister guided the tour of the church facility and shared interesting historical elements of the church. We were taken to a restaurant named "Arigatoo." We enjoyed the finest Japanese lunch. Thank you very much for your extended hospitality and prayers for us from the Rev. Toyoo Saito.

We joined the first day of the 5th International Gathering coordinated by the Konkokyo International Center. We enjoyed the reception and the dinner party with believers from Hawaii (19 people), Konko Churches in North America (71 people), Brazil (17 people), Korea (5 people), Australia (one person), and churches in Japan (17 people). Including the staff members and volunteers, the total number of people joined the reception were around 150. We enjoyed an extravagant bento boxed dinner. A special vendor from a church provided wonderful yakitori dishes on site. The greatest enjoyment of the party was witnessing the Rev. Hiromichi Konko, who used to be a professional musician and the Rev. Saijiro Matsuda, who served at Konko Missions in Hawaii approximately for 10 years. They exhibited their lively and wild musical display of rocking roll.

The following day, November 15, the second day of the International Gathering, we woke up around 3 o'clock in the morning and greeted the procession of Konko-Sama to the Main Worship Hall at 3:40 a.m. The Faith Enrichment Workshop was held at Tamamizu Hikaesho building. The format of the workshop was interesting. And the Konkokyo Establishment Day Service was held at 10 a.m. There were eight officiants, the Chief officiant was the Rev. Hiromichi Konko, I was one of the officiants and two ministers from KCNA, Brazil and Korea joined the service. It was my first time I had ever served as an officiant at the Main Worship Hall at Gohonbu. I was assigned to the role of "shidori" for serving the pastoral message to the Chief Officiant. While I was serving at the sanctuary at Gohonbu, I felt overwhelmed in gratitude and reverence. The thunderous stream of prayers recited in unison by thousands of believers in the hall was something I had never experienced before. I actually visualized a powerful current of prayers flowing into the other side of the sanctuary wall. I have never experienced this phenomenon before.

After the service, my elder brother Kiyoshi showed up to join us, and seven of our family members visited Konko Church of Iwatani in Hiroshima where my elder brother has been serving. He attends Konko Church of Mizushima and occasionally at the Konko Church of Mojiko. We enjoyed the finest Kobe beef, matsutake mushrooms, abalone, mantis shrimp, unagi kabayaki and sashimi for the dinner. We also made a visit to Konko Church of Fuchu where Edna stayed for a short period of time while she was enrolled at the Konkokyo Gakuin Seminary. We stayed at the Iwatani Church. The following day, we departed the church to visit the Amagi Church early in the morning at around 6 a.m. It was very cold in Hiroshima. I enjoyed the cold winter season in Japan. We arrived at Konko Church of Amagi before noon on November 16. We enjoyed seeing Oyasensei, the family members, spiritual trainees and some church members. We were served a mochi dish with the trainees in the dining room. Oyasensei arranged a van to transport us to the nearby rail station. Next we visited the Konko Church of Hirao where my wife, Reiko used to frequent while she worked as an RN at the Fukuoka Red Cross Hospital. Rev. Momoyo Yoshino drove us to Hakata Station, where we headed to Kokura Station and then to Nakayamaga Station, where my wife was born and raised.

Reiko's younger brother, Masami moved in the house to take care of the farmland cultivated by his father. There are no other houses in the deep mountain area. As soon as we arrived, Masami instructed us to wash our hands and pray at the household altar. I felt assured of his firm belief in the practice of faith. The family treated us very well with delicious dishes for dinner. We stayed over at the house. Reiko-sensei's mother Minako, who has been staying at a nearby elderly care facility, was brought to the residence to meet us. Mr. Toyoda, husband of the late sister of Reiko-sensei and his son also joined us. Edna performed a hula dance in tribute to the Mitama Spirit of the late Mr. Masataka Yano, her grandfather. We were taken to the onsen resort in the area and enjoyed lunch together. We also visited the grave site of the late Hiroko Toyoda and offered flowers and extended a prayer by reciting "Sosen sanji." We also extended our leg of journey to Konko Church of Tateishi. Late in the evening, we headed to Beppu Harbor to get on board the ferry to Yawatahama in Ehime. The ferry arrived at Yawatahama Harbor at around 2:30 a.m. We remained on board till 5:30 a.m.

Kunihiro, my younger sister's son picked us up and drove us all over the place. My sister Mitsuyo made the schedule of the day. First we made a visit to Konko Church of Kawanoishi, where the native church where the Yano family became initiated into the Konko faith. We made a visit to my native house. At the house, one room is dedicated to Kami-Sama and the house altar with hassoku, sanbo offertory trays are arranged like a church altar. I felt comfortable to witness the well-taken care of altars. We extended a prayer by reciting "Shintoku Sanji." I made a brief greeting for the initiation of the family religion of Konko faith.

We headed to see my brother Masateru who has been in rehabilitation treatment for his condition which left him paralyzed from the hip down. We met him and assured hope of recovery from the condition. He had some pains in the legs. I pray that he will regain his good health. After visiting my brother Masateru, we were taken to Uwajima Fishery High School and offered a prayer at the Memorial of Ehimemaru that was sunken on February 9, 2001.

We returned to the Ninomiya residence late in the afternoon. As I entered the house, I could not find the Kami altar at the usual place. I asked my sister where the altar went. She responded that due to some conflicting reasons, the house altar has been kept in storage. It was a bit of a disappointment that I did not expect. I hope the house altar will be restored in the house for the well-being of the family.

The following morning, we departed from Yawatahama station and headed to Osaka and returned home safe and sound on November 19, 2019.

When we stayed at Konko Church of Iwatani, my brother Kiyoshi gave me a recorded copy of the speech made by my father at the Grand Service held at Gohonbu on April 3, 1975. While he was taking a look at a publication of the Konko Library, he found out the name "Ichiro Yano" in the list of speeches made at Gohonbu. He made a copy of the message. Soon after I returned from Japan, I have been listening to his speech every day. He showed the history of the family's initiation to the Konko faith by his father and his own initiation to the Konko faith at the age of 19. I wondered why my father identified the year of his initiation into the Konko faith. It was actually his father, Tosuke Yano who became initiated into the Konko faith because his wish of getting blessed with children were actualized through the work of Kami-Sama. My father used to talk to the family members, "You should never forsake the Konko faith because it is the true way." I have shared his message to my children as well. My father was born through the work of Kami-Sama and the blessings received through Konkokyo.

When the founding minister of the Kawanoishi Church passed and his wife took care of the church and also passed away, the Rev. Hidejiro Hosaka took over the operation of the church. He was trained at the Konko Church of Amagi. My father was 19 years old. The Rev. Hidejiro Hosaka engaged in his missionary work in line with the tradition of the Konko Church of Amagi. His primary services were focused in sharing the teachings of the Founder. He usually spent hours sharing the teachings of the Founder to the people at the Toritsugi-Mediation Place, and over two hours during regular church sermons. For the first time, my father realized that there were teachings in the faith tradition. Through his exposure and understanding in the teachings of the Founder, he felt he was initiated to the Konko faith. Till the age of 19, my father thought the Konko faith was like any other

Shinto Shrine where one just goes to give requests. There are no teachings like Konko faith. My father's father did not share the teachings of the Founder to the family members. When I learned my father's initiation to the Konko faith, I really began to appreciate his insights of the Konko faith.

In my father's message, he shared two extraordinary episodes of blessing received. When my younger sister, Mitsuyo was born, her back was all blue from the Mongolian spot. It is a fact that many Asians have this strange blue "Mongolian birthmark" that appears near the buttock area. But her birthmark was unusually wide and extensive. The doctors all responded that this was not a birthmark and there would be no way to get rid of that condition. My father might have felt anxiety for the future of his daughter, but my mother was not worried. She had a solid belief that the child was born through the blessings of Kami-Sama and she would be all right. Actually, when she reached high school, her skin became normal. My father said that experiencing these extraordinary blessed episodes alone would be of no help in preserving the faith tradition in the family. We should develop true appreciation of the teachings of the Founder. In a sense, each believer should have the mind-set of becoming a professional in pursuit of faith.

I feel grateful in encountering my father's message delivered at Gohonbu when I was under spiritual training at the Amagi Church in 1975. This could be one of the greatest blessings I have enjoyed through my pilgrimage to Japan.

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.

No one is aware of the blessings of Heaven and Earth which enable people to live. Kami shall have people become aware of the blessings of Heaven and Earth by having Konko Daijin be born throughout the world. (Oboecho 26-22-3)

Bulletin Board

Church Services for December, 2019

- 1 Sun -Monthly Svc. for Tenchi Kane No Kami (9 am)
- 8 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
- 14 Sat -10th Memorial Svc for late Mrs. Chieno Hirota (10 am)
- 15 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-Okage testimonial by Ms. Doreen Hirota
- 22 Sun -47th Memorial Service for the late Rev. Haruko Takahashi (10 am) Naorai lunch will follow.
- 29 Sun -End of the Year Service (9 am)
- 30 Mon -28th Annual Mochi Pounding (8 am)

January 2020

- 1 Wed -New Year's Day Service (9 am)
- 3 Fri -Mochi demo at Ritz Carlton Waikiki Hotel (10 am)
- 5 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

- Church painting prep after the service (Help needed)
- 10 Fri -Paint the church day 1 (Help needed)
- 11 Sat -Paint the church day 2 (Help needed)
- 19 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service and General Meeting
-New Year's Party

Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility will be made on Friday, January 13, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

Garage Sale

We held a fund-raising garage and white elephant sale for the 80th Anniversary Celebration of our church on Saturday, November 30, 2019. It was the most successful fund-raising garage sale. Thank you very much for your support, donations. All the proceeds will be used for the coming 80th Anniversary functions, including the building renovations.

Scheduled Mochi Pounding

- 12/21 Sat -JCCH Mochitsuki Demonstration (10 am)
- 12/26 Thur -Mochi Demo at Hilton Waikiki Beach Hotel (5 pm)
- 12/27 Fri -Mochi Demo at Prince Hotel Waikiki (10 am)
- 12/30 Mon -28th Mochitsuki at Wahiawa Church (8 am)

47th Memorial Service for the Late Rev. Haruko Takahashi

We will be observing the annual memorial service for the founding minister of our church, the late Rev. Haruko Takahashi on Sunday, December 22, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. We will be observing the 80th Anniversary Celebration of our church on Sunday, March 15, 2020. It could not have been possible without the dedicated and unyielding spirit of services to Kami-Sama by the Rev. Haruko Takahashi. Please join the service in person and on time to forward our sincere thanks for this great founding minister of our church.

KMH

- KMH Head Ministers Mtg at HNL 12/2/19 at 10:30 am
- The KMH Community Engagement and Outreach Committee Meeting will be held @HNL on Tuesday, 1/10/20 at 6 pm
- KMH-KCNA Joint Conference Committee Meeting will be held @HNL on Sunday, 12/1 at 4:30 pm.
- KMH Board of Trustees Meeting will be held @HNL on Saturday, 1/25/20 at 10:30 am.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

December

Frederick Michael Conti	12/6/2015
Francisco Bareng	12/12/2017
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
Hitoye Higuchi	12/25/1969

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 397, 398 and 399)

No. 397: "We must spread this Way of Faith throughout the world," Konko-Sama used to say. (II Kondo Fujimori 53 Kyoten page 549)

Spread the Way of Faith in the world

Nowadays, the people of Japan enjoy trips abroad freely. But this popularity of traveling abroad was unimaginable before WWII. I was puzzled how the Founder would ever be able to perceive of the affairs of foreign countries while he lived a secluded life in a modest thatched farm house in a village in Okayama during the transitional period from Edo to Meiji. How could he ever hold a vision of spreading the Faith in the world?

When the Founder talked about foreign affairs, he initially meant only to "Kara and Tenjiku" regions around China and Southeast Asia. However, his insight about foreign countries expanded in corresponding to the arrival of the "Black Ships" from Western Countries.

The message in the following page of this book, page 398, was given to Yosabe'e Teramasa upon his initial encounter with the Founder in 1883. The last portion of the message reads in Japanese, "世界の金は海に7分あります." In accordance with the official translation of the Konkokyo Kyoten Scriptures in English read, "Most of the people who need to be saved live outside this country" (II Teramasa Yosabe'e 1). But the literal translation of the original Japanese could be "Seventy percent of the gold in the world exist in the ocean." The author interpreted the message as follows. "Gold in the world" could be referred to the mineral resource of gold in the ocean water or economic resources in the world. And "sea" also could refer to the oceans or foreign countries. It is interesting to know that the Founder, who lived a modest life as a farmer would ever perceive of matters in the foreign countries.

The endeavor the Founder held, "We must spread this Way of Faith throughout the world" would be based on his perception that the people in the world should be saved.

The vital element for the salvation of the world is elimination of violence and conflict among the people in the world. The endless conflicts in the world is the conflicts of self-assertiveness. One of the persistent elements of self-assertiveness is the negative prevailing cultural traditions and observances. The self-righteous religious traditions could also contribute to conflicts in the world. The Founder never discriminated religions in the world.

The Founder stated, "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). We should strive to spread this way of faith in the world.

No. 398: Practice faith. At first you will be alone. But later, everyone in Japan will be practicing faith. People in other countries will also be practicing faith. I also used to be the only one, but as you can see, there are now many who are practicing faith. (II Teramasa Yasube'e 1-2 Kyoten page 638)

Initially, I was the only one.

The message was given to Yasube'e Teramasa who traveled from Yamaguchi Prefecture to see the Founder at Okayama in February of 1883. The Founder departed eight months later. His body might become weakened at that stage.

The Founder's message forwarded to Teramasa, "Practice faith" might sound so vibrant and encouraging for him. He later related, "I have received this teaching directly from the Founder at the ohromae worship hall. He was overwhelmed in gratitude for the message.

In general, the majority of the people who would come to church for the first time would experience some sort of uneasiness if they would be saved through this religious faith through the impressions they would have developed through the observance of the surrounding elements. I hear many remarks made by the first-comers to church, such as, "How many believers do you have in your church?" The remark implies the notion held by the person who would think if there would be many believers in the church that would be an assurance of the effectiveness of the church operation. Even those believers are likely to respond to the extended question by saying, "We have only a limited number of believers in our church."

But to practice faith is a personal matter. If we are determined to get involved in the practice of faith, we should develop convictions that regardless of the number of the believers, I shall get blessed through our practice of faith."

Any great things are initiated by a single individual. The Founder was also all alone when he initiated this faith. The Founder's conviction, "Everyone in Japan will be practicing faith. People in other countries will also be practicing faith" has been actualized today.

In the faith community of America, we have been witnessing ministers born in America. Even from South America, many believers make pilgrimages to Headquarters Church at Konko Town. I feel like the message of the Founder, "Practice faith" seems to reverberate in today's world.