



# KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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## Prayers with determination

*By Yasuhiro Yano  
Head Minister*

Ever since both my wife and I came to serve at this local church in Wahiawa, I have treasured one booklet for my reference to my missionary work. The book is a compilation of a monologue provided by the founding minister of Konko Church of Amagi, the late Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake. The nature of the dialogue is not a logical presentation of his deep thoughts delivered three years prior to his passing. The message was directed to the ministers who served at the church and may contain some inconceivable expressions for the lay believers, but I have always tried to decode the message for the last 33 years. I have tried to translate the message in English for your reference. I would like to introduce just the first two pages of the booklet. And this year, on February 4, the 60<sup>th</sup> Memorial Service in honor of this great minister will be observed at the Konko Church of Amagi.

The title of the booklet is “Michi no Shiori” or A Bookmark for the practice of the Konko Faith.

### **“Atama to Hara” or an intellectual understanding and resolution in the practice of faith**

In the practice of the Konko faith, we need to fulfill both our intellectual understanding of the faith practice and our determination to get involved in the practice of faith.

In the practice of faith, what do we believe in? In the practice of the Konko faith, we believe in the Divine Parent with a true and sincere heart. To believe in Our Divine Parent means we believe in the teachings of the Founder Ikigami Konko Daijin, and to believe in the teachings of the Founder means to believe in Our Divine Parent.

How much do we have to believe in Our Divine Parent and the teachings of the Founder? It must be absolute.

We can deal with matters within the normal range, but we become disoriented and become confused when we encounter grave matters that are beyond our normal perception. For example, we can easily afford any items which are priced in an affordable range. We have no worries in purchasing such items.

If the item we really wish to get is beyond our means and we cannot get sufficient monetary resources in any way, such as borrowing from others, there would be no way to get the things we really wish to get. We have to give up our wish. In the same manner, if we encounter any developments in life which can be beyond our capacity and beyond our belief system we have built, we simply cannot deal with the matter. We may doubt our own belief in Our Divine Parent we have cultivated so far. Therefore, we have to try to deal with all situations in life with a firm determination and belief in the Divine Parent. Even when we encounter an illness, we shall try to deal with the encounter in exercise of our belief in Our Divine Parent and pray for our restoration of good health.

If we prayed to our Divine Parent wondering whether our prayers would even heal our illness, our prayers may not be heard by the Divine Parent. It’s much like testing Kami-Sama’s ability and potential. If we develop an absolute determination that we shall be healed of the illness through the divine work of Kami-Sama, our prayers in that determination can become true.

Children may request many things from their parents with a strong conviction. Another child may reluctantly ask his parents for something. There is a great difference of persuasive power between the two.

To practice faith means to believe in Kami, to believe in the infinite divine power and to believe in the unconditional profound divine love. When we turn our hearts to Kami and extend our prayers in request, we shall understand there is a great difference in the power of prayers. Our determined prayer that Kami-Sama will listen to me no matter what will activate the powers of Kami.

The first passages in Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake’s book really emphasizes the message above—how determined we are in our belief in Kami.

We may find it quite hard to define what the Konko religion is all about. But we can clearly define a Konko believer. A Konko believer is an individual who believes in Tenchi Kane no Kami, or Our Divine Parent and practices the teachings of the Founder Ikigami Konko Daijin. The quoted message of the late Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake of Konko Church of Amagi clearly defined the fundamental elements of getting involved in the practice of faith.

From this year, for the first time ever in the history of Konko Mission of Wahiawa, we have scheduled monthly testimonials by our church members. The following is the first speech script contributed by Mrs. Trisha Teruko Adkison who shared her thoughts about her involvement in the practice of the Konko faith on Sunday, January 30, 2011.

## “An indescribable feeling of calm”



By Mrs. Trisha Teruko Adkison

The first time Edna mentioned having members give testimonials, she said that it was something our church wanted to do “some time in the future.” I wanted to do it but I wasn’t sure if I would be here when they decided to do it. And I didn’t want to ask because I wasn’t sure if the church was ready to go in that direction just yet. So I guess me being up here is *okage* in itself.

Another *okage* is all of our good health. Two weeks ago, we sat in the back of the church after a Sunday Service and talked about what we wished for the New Year. My mom said that she wished for good health. I said “focus so that I can finish my degree.” Auntie said good health, and so on... One day later, I got a really bad case of the flu. I thought, Darn it! I should have said good health as my first wish, because if you are sick, you can’t do anything else you want to do. So, I would like to officially add Good Health as my wish for the New Year.

Anyway, back to *okage*... After one of the services last Nov, we discussed *okage* and when it was my turn, I said that I know I receive *okage* but I couldn’t remember specific incidents. I told myself that I should write them down when they happen so the next time I could share them. My iPhone is my secretary, dictionary, watch, alarm clock, library, doctor, dietician, babysitter, and husband-sitter... it’s safe to say that it is my life assistant. So I thought it was the perfect place to keep my “*okage* log.” But when I looked in my notes for specific incidents of *okage*, it wasn’t in there. I guess, in my head, I thought OOH, I better write that down. But then I forgot to write it. ☺

So I just wanted to cover some of the major *okage* that I have received... I am thankful for my mom who has worked so hard (and continues to work so hard) so that my elder sister, Kim and I were able to grow up without hardship. I am thankful for my Grandma and Grandpa for helping raise us, feed us, and baby us (well, baby me). And I am thankful that they let us live with them, especially now so that we could save money. I am thankful that I have been kept safe all these years because I’m pretty adventurous.

Once, I was stuck in a really strong current way out in Hanauma Bay and no matter how hard I swam, the current kept pushing me out further. The waves were really choppy and the deep water was really murky and scary looking. One of my guy friends, who is a really strong swimmer, tried to hold my hand and pull me in but even he got stuck. I think he got freaked out so he let go of me and swam in himself. I had a snorkel/mask and flippers but at one point, one of my flippers slipped off. I could see it sinking and I knew I had to get it immediately or else I wouldn’t be able to see it in the murky water. I thought, “Konko-sama please help me!” Then without really thinking, I took a deep breath and dove for it. I was able to get it, put it back on and swim back to shore.

I also had several really close calls when I was in Iraq. I had three scary moments when I was on guard duty. Another time, a rocket blew up part of the cliff by our living quarters just seconds after I stood up and walked in the door. And the 5 ton truck that I had to drive from Iraq to Kuwait had brakes that appeared to be cut so I had to get out several times to try to patch them, and at one point, I had to run into the back of one of my other trailers just to stop. But every time I deployed or went somewhere new for training, I wasn’t scared. And I believe that it’s because everyone was praying for me and Konko-sama, Kami-sama and the mitama spirits were all looking out for me... and Jason too!

And speaking of Jason, I am thankful for such a wonderful, patient and loving husband. I am thankful that he has been kept safe all these years. I am thankful that we can afford for me to stay home and help Grandma. And I am thankful for the small every day blessings like walking the kids to and from school, watching soap operas with Grandma, and even the ability to bask in nature’s beauty.

But I think I am most thankful that my mom and Grandma brought me to church and let me stay for Sunday School. It is this faith and it’s teachings that give me an indescribable feeling of calm because I trust, without a doubt, that everything will be ok. And I hope that one day my kids can say the same. I know there’s hope even if they don’t come all the time...

The other day, Bryce told me that he was learning Japanese in school. He said Good Afternoon was *Konnichiwa*. And then he said, “When you call the teacher, you say *Konko-sama!*” We all giggled. But it made me really happy inside. Because I know that even if they drive me crazy, and they don’t sit still or pay attention, some of it is still seeping in.

## Konko-Sama Says . . .

Divine virtue will be with you even after death and passed down to future generations. It can be received by anyone who practices faith. Divine virtue is never exhausted. (Gorikai III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 2)

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. (Gorikai III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 3)

## Bulletin Board

### Regular Church Services for February 2011

1 Tue -Monthly Svc. for Tenchi Kane no Kami at 7:30 pm  
6 Sun -Sunday Service at 9 a.m.  
13 Sun -Monthly Service for the Founder at 9 a.m.  
20 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service at 9 a.m.  
27 Sun -Sunday Service at 9 a.m.

### Monthly Volunteer Activity at Wahiawa General Hospital

We will make a monthly visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility on Friday, February 11 at 10:00 a.m. by means of offering entertainment for the people cared for in the facility. The program is in Japanese.

### HCRP Meeting

The regular meeting will be held on Monday, March 7 from 1:30 p.m. at the Church of Perfect Liberty.

### KMH Strategic Planning Committee Meeting

The final meeting of the committee will be held at the Konko Mission of Honolulu on Saturday, February 12 at 1:30 p.m.

### KMH Head Ministers Meeting

The local church Head Ministers will meet at the Konkokyo Hawaii Center on Friday, February 25 at 10:00 a.m.

## Honoring the Mitama Spirits for January/February

Chikiko Hayashida	1/24/1940
Tsuneko Takahashi	1/24/1997
Owari Kaneshige	1/2/1997
Tama Noguchi	1/2/1989
Alesandro Caraballo	1/6/1909
Mitsuru Miyamoto	1/20/2007
Thomas Takahashi	2/9/2005
Ichiro Yano	2/5/2006
Suetsuki Toyofuku	2/24/1995
Dennis F. Tamashiro	2/6/1998
Umi Yasuyo	2/10/1965

Mrs. Marilyn Olsen 2/22/2009

Ms. Elisa Albarran 2/20/1977

*If you wish to have a name added to the church Mitama listing or removed, please contact Rev. Yasuhiro Yano.*

## Kyoso-Sama Volume 2 (#22)

*The following is 22<sup>nd</sup> of the series of the English translated excerpts from the second of the two volumes of "Kyoso-Sama" a biography of the Founder of the Konkokyo Religion, authored by the Reverend Shinsei Konko for young readers. The publication is a compilation of articles in series featured in the monthly publication, "Wakaba" or "Young Leaves" issued by the Administrative Office of the Konkokyo Youth Organization. The first article was published in 1950. Translation by the Rev. Yasuhiro Yano. (Reference to "Kyoso-Sama Volume 2" pages 221 to 230)*

### An errand to Soja Town

The Rev. Norio Sato related about Konko Shijin-Sama in his youth as follows:

One cold day in winter, in answering a request for an errand from Konko-Sama, Konko Shijin-Sama traveled to Asao in Soja Town, which was located approximately 30 kilometers away from Otani Village. It was cloudy and rain fall seemed imminent. He asked Konko-Sama, "Shall I bring an umbrella with me?" Konko-Sama answered, "You may need no umbrella." Since it was cold, he put on an additional layer of kimono and set out without an umbrella.

When he arrived at Nagao after passing Tamashima Town, it began to rain. He took a rest at a tea house he was familiar with for a while. The shop owner kindly offered an umbrella for his use. Konko Shijin-Sama responded, "Thank you very much. I appreciate your kindness. But my father told me I would not need an umbrella. So, I would like to decline your kindness." He then left the shop and continued to travel on foot.

After fulfilling the errand asked by Konko-Sama, he took the same route back home. It began to rain rather heavily. Even while he was passing through the street in Asao, some people came out and offered an umbrella for him. But he repeatedly declined their forwarded kindness and continued to travel in the rain. When he arrived at Tamashima Town, the rain fall was quite heavy. People in the path also came out and tried to provide him umbrella, but he courteously declined them all.

He was soaked in rain and returned home. He related to Konko-Sama about his trip in the rainy condition and extended thanks for his safe return home. Konko-Sama expressed his satisfaction.

Konko Shijin-Sama was surprised when he took off the outmost layer of clothes which worked just like a raincoat and protected the inner layer of clothes from becoming wet. He also extended his appreciation for the blessed nature of the eventuality.

Ever since Konko Shijin-Sama began to understand things, he became inclined to get involved in the practice of faith through daily exposure to the way of life exhibited by Konko-Sama. As he grew up, he helped Konko-Sama in various manners. Following an instruction from Konko-Sama, along with his brother, Konko Sanjin-Sama, he made many copies of “Tenchi Kakitsuke” or the “Divine Reminder” from March 12, 1874. From January 23, 1881, in place of Konko-Sama, Konko Shijin-Sama began to make copies of calligraphic display of names of the deities for the purpose of worship. The task was one of the services he provided. He exhibited his single hearted devotedness in pursuit of the faith in such a manner shown in the episode of a rainy day errand. In this manner, in respect of the virtuous figure of Konko-Sama, he was determined to accept any encounters in life as form of “Shugyo” religious training and earned “Toku” virtue.

At one occasion, the Rev. Tomie Takahashi of Rokujoin Church made a pilgrimage to see Konko-Sama and talked with him till late at night. She stayed overnight that day. While she was asleep, she was awakened by a strong voiced recitation of prayers in the midnight. The following morning, she asked Konko-Sama, “Did anybody come to see you yesterday evening?” Konko-Sama replied, “It was my son (Konko Shijin-Sama) who recited prayers out loud.” She thought that Konko Shijin-Sama was engaged in a 30-day intensive religious training during the coldest of winter.

One cold night in winter, a believer who attended church was puzzled by the sound of someone splashing water. The following morning, the believer asked Konko-Sama about the splashing sounds created by water. Konko-Sama told him that the sounds were caused by Konko Shijin-Sama who underwent cold water ablutions. That was the last time the believer heard the sound of water being splashed. Actually, he found out that Konko Shijin-Sama seemed to undergo cold water ablutions in such a manner that he didn’t cause any splashing sounds at all. It could be assumed that the episodes of working at sake making factories also reflected how Konko Shijin-Sama tried to integrate the practice of “Shugyo” religious training through the work. He also underwent various forms of “Shugyo” practices even when he got engaged in the work of Divine-Mediation.

One of the documents kept by Konko Shijin-Sama showed a list of the number of “Goshinmai” sacred rice distributed as follows:

1879	19,911 sheets
1880	14,222 sheets
1881	17,437 sheets

The list indicates that the average number of “Goshinmai” sacred rice packets distributed was approximately 15,000 a year. The record also shows that Konko Shijin-Sama was engaged in the processing of “Goshinmai” sacred rice.

He also recorded daily amount of rice consumed. At one distinctive portion of the record, a notation was made, “Konko Daijin, Kami-agari-you” or consumed in corresponding to the

passing of Konko Daijin. The amount of rice consumed far exceeded the regular quantity. Extra consumption of rice was recorded on October 10, when Konko-Sama passed away, and on October 13, the date of the funeral service. These records also show that Konko Shijin-Sama was closely engaged in the management of the stored rice.

There are no reference materials that show how Konko Shijin-Sama lived around the time span of the passing of Konko-Sama. Many accounts were perpetuated about the elder brother Konko Sanjin-Sama who acted as the chief mourner for the funeral service and related functions. In accordance with the local tradition, the family members of the deceased were not directly involved in the conduction of the services. The fact that there were no recorded materials were founded about Konko Shijin-Sama could be assumed that he didn’t do anything particular. Usually, he tried to work inconspicuously. Under that particular circumstance of the passing of Konko-Sama, his nature of inconspicuousness prevented him to take any noticeable actions.

“Konko Daijin *On Oboegaki*” or “Memoirs of Konko Daijin” showed record that in responding to the instruction in February of 1873, Village Head Kawate, who instructed Konko-Sama to get rid of the Kami altar, Konko Shijin-Sama made an official visit to the office and conveyed a message that the altars were cleared away in the evening of February 18. Another record showed that Konko Shijin-Sama helped distribute mochi rice cake to Village Head Kawate, former Village Head Ono in Tsu and the neighbors after the service held in celebration of the Divine Parent on September 24, 1875.

At one occasion, the bank of Yokoike reservoir was in danger of imminent collapse due to heavy rain. In responding to the emergency situation, Konko Shijin-Sama, with his strong swimming skills, dared to carry a piece of futon bedding with him and swam to the spot of collapsing and plugged the hole with it, and managed to prevent the total collapse of the dam. On the contrary, when the dry spell hit the region, Konko Shijin-Sama was assigned to a heavy responsible task to prevent the leaks of the pond water. Because of the demanding nature of the task, he was awarded with a daily wage of 30-sen, while the ordinary workers got only seven- to eight-sen wages.

Konko Shijin-Sama was also good at carpentry. He changed the floors of the house, fixed the yard and wooden fence around the property.

The Rev. Kisaburo Abe told that Konko Shijin-Sama worked with him to build the rock fence around the church premises in 1883.

Those random episodes show some personal aspects of Konko Shijin-Sama. He was consciously trying to be positioned in support of Konko-Sama, extended his services for the household affairs and the work of the Divine-Mediation, and tried to emulate Konko-Sama in pursuit of the faith. He was always inconspicuous, yet diligently tried to

pursue the work of the Divine-Mediation initiated by the Founder Ikigami Konko Daijin.

## **(7) Marriage**

Konko Shijin-Sama got married on October 5 of 1878. The bride was Kiyō Abe from Yamori in Kurosaki Village which was bordered by Otani Village in the south. Kiyō was 20 years old. Her father was named Sampei Abe, mother, Yoshi. She was the eldest daughter. The day of wedding coincided with September 10 in lunar calendar. On that day, Konko-Sama used to observe the annual Konko Daijin Matsuri Service as well as the memorial service for the family ancestors. Many believers from far and near and neighborhood people joined the festivity. On such an auspicious day, the couple got married being celebrated by so many relatives and neighborhood people.

The Abe family was engaged in farming and was related to the family of Konko-Sama from long ago. When Konko-Sama began to serve as the Divine-Mediator, the whole Abe family got involved in the practice of faith.

“Negainushi Toshigaki Oboecho” record is a daily prayer notebook kept by Konko-Sama showed the names of Sanpei Abe and two of the children on the portion of page written on October 20, 1860. A notation of (0) which indicated the believer with advanced stage of devotion was placed over the names of the Abe family. The Abe family perpetuated the religious tradition from generation to generation, and many of them have gotten engaged in missionary work in one way or another.

Konko Shijin-Sama made visits to his wife’s household from time to time after his marriage. The two families were related from long time ago, and the family members of Konko-Sama used to visit the household on such seasonal occasions like the annual village festivity of Onzaki Shrine. Through the marriage, the relationships between the two families became more extensive. Occasionally, Konko-Sama told Konko Shijin-Sama, “They must be in need of help for their heavy seasonal work. You’d better go there and help them.”

Father-in-law, Sanpei Abe really appreciated the visitation of Konko Shijin-Sama. He enjoyed working in the field together and dined together after work. He really treasured spending time with his son-in-law.

One of the brothers of Kiyō settled at the newly established reclaimed land in Kurashiki. Kiyō stayed at the residence of his brother for a while before she got married. One of the neighbors told her brother, “I was wondering about your sister. I didn’t see her for a while. I was really surprised to learn that she got married to the son of Konko-Sama.”

Because of the family relationship, Konko Shijin-Sama also provided help at the brother-in-law’s house in Kurashiki. Shigeno Fujii once related an episode that one day she got on one of the baskets hanging from the “Tenbin” pole carried by Konko Shijin-Sama and arrived at the brother-in-law’s house in

Kurashiki from Otani Village. In the midst of crossing a river, he changed the position of the pole from time to time. She was entertained by watching the comical movement of Konko Shijin-Sama who turned around in the water for the maneuver.

## **Birth of Setsutane Konko, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Spiritual Head**

In the summer of 1880, a baby boy was born to the family of Konko-Sama. He was to emerge as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Spiritual Head of the Konkokyo Religious Organization. Konko-Sama’s first grand daughter was Shigeno Fujii. And the first grandson was Sakuramaru Konko born two years before Shigeno. Setsutane Konko was the third grandchild. “Konko Daijin” a biography, referred to the birth of Setsutane Konko as follows: On August 5, 1880, the first son Setsutane was born (to Konko Shijin-Sama). At that occasion, Jinkichi Akiyama (father of Yonezo Akiyama, the founding minister of Konko Church of Amase) from Okayama made a visit to see Konko-Sama. Upon entering the worship hall, he witnessed that Konko-Sama was holding up the baby boy in both hands toward the Kami altar in the posture of extending a prayer. Then he turned around and faced toward Jinkichi and related, “I have been blessed with a grandchild” with a full smile. Jinkichi returned home and related the matter to the family members, “(Konko-Sama) held the new born so tenderly as if he was holding a baby bear.”

Of course Konko Shijin-Sama and the Abe family were also celebrating the birth of the child.

(To be continued.)