



Practice of faith

By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister

From time to time, I have used to share with you an episode related by the Late 4th Spiritual Head of Konko-Sama, the Rev. Kagamitaro Konko. He said that there is a great difference in a Konko believer who is a teacher, nurse, chef, driver, doctor, lawyer, plumber, car mechanic and so forth—as compared to these workers who have Konkokyo as just a part of their life. It may sound the same. I have personally appreciated this message given by Konko-Sama and understand its valid meaning in living as a Konko believer. I believe some of you might have the same appreciation of this message. It's a difference between having Konkokyo just a side element of your life or having Konkokyo be your lifestyle for which everything else revolves around.

A Konko believer is a person who believes in Tenchi Kane No Kami, Our Divine Parent of the Universe. To believe in Kami-Sama is to believe and practice the teachings of the Founder. Believing and practicing the teachings of the Founder makes us mindful of the blessings of Kami-Sama in things we may take it for granted in our daily living. Exercising mindfulness of the blessings we enjoy leads us to appreciate the blessings given as such. Be it a glass of water, a grain of rice, the food we enjoy every day, the bodily functions, abilities, the air we breathe, the rain water and the sun light. The list goes on and on.

The base and foundation of how we act in our daily living is restricted based upon what spirituality we exercise in our daily living. If we are to pursue the Konko faith, we need to exercise our spirituality as Konko believers for anything we do in our daily life.

Are you aware you are a Konko believer? Or are you a person who happened to get involved in the practice of the faith for the time being? We need to define how we get involved in the practice of the Konko faith.

To identify ourselves to be Konko believers cannot be achieved overnight. It takes time to nurture our belief in Kami-Sama. It takes time to lay spiritual ground for us to grow as Konko believers. We need to develop our solid relationship with Kami-Sama through our constant involvement. The messages in the Kyoten Scripture point out we need at least five to ten years of involvement in the practice of the Konko faith to become a full fledged Konko believer who is not swayed around in spiritual distresses we may encounter. To become a full fledged Konko minister, a person may need 12 years of spiritual training after

ordination. These numbers have valid reasons. And you may understand that it may be necessary to be actively involved in the practice of the faith, otherwise we may not enjoy the full blessings of the Konkokyo faith tradition.

The Konko faith is a spiritual way of life. Spiritual practice in our daily living is more important than practicing the rituals of the faith. By doing so, we can attain Spiritual transformation. Spiritual transformation means we have our own distinguished spirituality that can be different from the secular world, driven by materialism.

One example of this spirituality is how we see a glass of water, the food we eat, the air we breathe, the road we travel on, the car we drive, the work we perform, the act of church visitation and so forth. Do we see these things at random based upon the spirituality of the Konko faith? There is an old legendary story about an empty jar. A minister placed an empty jar on a table and asked his students in his church what the jar holds. They replied that there is nothing in the jar; just air. To this, the minister replied, “Why are you unable to identify the air in the jar as blessed air?” The jar indeed holds blessed air. This can be derived only through the exercise of spirituality which can identify Kami's blessings.

As you get involved in the practice of the Konko faith, it is my prayer for all of us to evolve to become believers who can exercise the spirituality of the Konko faith; not just a person who says they are Konkokyo believers.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

Few have a heart that Kami can accept. Those whose hearts can be accepted by Kami will be blessed with good health, wealth, and wisdom for three generations, resulting in a strong family lineage. Those whose hearts are not accepted by Kami may have wealth as well as wisdom, but will get sick. Those who have wisdom and good health will lose their wealth. If they do not lose their wealth, their beloved children will die, leaving no heirs. Since these people are not aware of Kami's blessings, they are always lacking one thing or another. If you practice faith and understand Kami's blessings, you will live a peaceful and stable life. You will have descendants and gain wealth. You will receive divine blessings from year to year, and then from generation to generation. This message is a divine assurance for the believers. Follow the message and we shall enjoy the blessed lives as has been stated. *(III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 78)*

Though Konko Daijin often tells you not to come to worship so often, you won't receive divine blessings if you don't come at all. Konko Daijin tells you not to come because if you come and don't receive divine blessings, it will only make your legs tired and deplete your precious money. You will be troubled. *(I Ichimura Mitsugoro 2-31-1, 2, 3)*

Bulletin Board

Monthly Services for February 2014

- 1 Sat** -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami at 7:30 pm
2 Sun -Sunday Service at 9 am
-Origami and welcome lunch with the Webbers
9 Sun -Sunday Service at 9 am
16 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin at 9:00 a.m.
23 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service at 9 am

March 2014

- 1 Sat** -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami at 7:30 pm
2 Sun -Sunday Service at 9 am

JCCH New Year's Ohana Festival at Moili'ili Mochitsuki

The Konko Mission of Wahiawa participated in the Japanese Cultural Center Ohana Fest for the first time as Mochitsuki Demonstrators on Sunday, January 19, 2014. We would like to thank the dedicated church members who came to help a day earlier and also on the day of the demo. Hundreds of spectators were present to watch, pound and sample the three batches of mochi that have been made. We made white, pink and green yomogi mochi with *an* (bean jelly). It was a day filled with family fun.

Welcome Lunch and Origami Folding

We will hold a welcome luncheon for Rev. Drs. Leon and Linda Webber from Alaska, following the regular Sunday Service at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, February 2. We will also enjoy an origami folding session.

H.C.R.P. Meeting

The monthly meeting of the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace will be held at the Konko Mission of Wahiawa on Monday, February 3, 2014 at 1:00 p.m. Prior to the regular business meeting, a presentation will be made by a guest speaker Rev. Dr. Leon Webber from Alaska on the subject of grief.

Monthly Volunteer Activity

We will make a visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility for our regular volunteer activity of interacting with the hospitalized people on Friday, February 14 from 10:00 a.m.

KMH General Meeting

The annual membership meeting of Konko Missions in Hawaii will be held at the Konko Mission of Honolulu on Saturday, February 15 from 1:30 p.m. through 4:00 p.m.

Ministers Faith Enrichment Workshop

The Rev. Shohei Tsuda from Konko Church of Amagasaki from Hyogo Prefecture will present a workshop for the local ministers for the main theme of Toritsugi-Mediation at the Konko Mission of Honolulu on Saturday, February 22 at 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The second day session will be held on Sunday, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Honoring Mitama Spirits

February



Umi Yasuyo	2/3/1965
Ichiro Yano	2/5/2006
Dennis Fujio Tamashiro	2/6/1998
Thomas Takahashi	2/9/2005
Rev. Yukio Hiramoto	2/10/2012
Yoshiyuki Momotomi	2/10/2003
Mildred Chiyoko Oka	2/12/2004
Rebecca Jean Burns	2/14/2013
Jiro Oho	2/14/1937
Norma Teruko Katsura	2/18/2008
Elisa Albarran	2/20/1977
Marilynn Olsen	2/22/2009
Suetsuki Toyofuku	2/24/1995

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 70, 71, and 72)

Chapter 2 Human Suffering

Section 1 Irreverence towards Kami

No. 70
People, while living between Heaven and Earth, 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 hardship due to these offenses. (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 3-1 Kyoten page 778)

Meaning of “burei” or irreverence we commit against Kami

This is the beginning of a new chapter. The main subject of the chapter is focused on the cause of human suffering; how we can deal with it. At first, we discuss teachings in regard to “burei” or irreverence we commit against Kami which is identified as the root cause of human suffering.

The quoted message is an excerpt of the divine message given to the Founder on October 10, 1873. Prior to the main discussion of the subject, let's try to understand meaning of "burei" or irreverence in accordance with the Konko faith.

"Burei" or irreverence refers to the condition in which we fail to maintain a proper relationship with Kami. The ideal relationship in which both Kami and people enjoy a mutual interdependent relationship is referred to as "Aiyo-kakeyo" in the Konko religious tradition. The elements that prevent the ideal interdependent relationship between Kami and people are defined as "burei" or irreverence towards Kami. The concept of "burei" or irreverence is limited only to the relationship with Kami. We should be mindful that the state of "burei" can be committed against Kami even when we are not aware of doing any wrongs such as breaking moral codes or laws.

One of the typical examples of committing "burei" or irreverence is following the tradition of observing the Days and Directions. The underlying element of committing "burei" irreverence is the condition of unawareness and failure to appreciate divine blessings that provide vital sustenance for us. It is indeed a wondrous blessing that we exist between Heaven and Earth. Even the ground itself is the manifestation of divine presence. But we have little acknowledgement for this great divine nature of the ground. Consequently, we assume that we have to sustain our lives on our own; we believe that we can take advantage of the great nature of the ground for self-oriented purposes; and try to live in pursuit of our self-centered way of living. In this manner, the self-centered way of living resulting from the lack of acknowledgement and appreciation for the great divine blessings represents the state of "burei" or irreverence against Kami, while ignoring the presence of Kami and contributing to the destruction of the relationship between Kami and people.

No. 71
Society today is knowledge-oriented. People create logical explanations for events, and do not recognize the divine favors of the Universe. This is the reason why difficulties increase. (III *Kyoso Gorikai* 22 *Kyoten* page 767)

Difficulties we encounter can be attributed to the "burei" or irreverence against Kami

In the previous page 70, because of the limited space for writing, we could not extend our discussion that "burei" or irreverence we commit against Kami is the underlying element that causes difficulties we have to encounter. Let us try to develop our understandings for this subject.

The "burei" or irreverence committed against Kami does not directly contribute to cause difficulties we have to encounter. It is the elements of "burei" or irreverence accumulated in the course of a prolonged irreverent way of living that contributes to cause difficulties we have to deal with. It can be likened that one time of over-eating or

drinking may not cause direct physical harm. But a prolonged way of such disorderly living may contribute to trigger an illness later on.

In this respect, "burei" or irreverence against Kami can be defined as a state that an individual lives a fundamentally wrong way of living. "Burei" or irreverence against Kami can be identified as the root cause of difficulties we have to endure. The quoted message revealed, "Society today is knowledge-oriented. People create logical explanations for events, and do not recognize the divine favors of the Universe" which can be identified as the state of "burei" or committing irreverence against Kami contribute as the fundamental root cause of difficulties we encounter in life.

I have wondered why the more we get educated, the less we seem to fail to appreciate the favors we enjoy from the great ground and Kami. For example, in corresponding to the acquired knowledge that the rain is formed up in the sky by the evaporated water from the surface on the ground and bodies of water, we tend to fail to express appreciation for the blessed rain water. To learn the mechanism of how rain is formed in the sky is different from having the heart of wanting to express appreciation for the blessed rain water that gives moisture to the ground. For some reason, some people seem to get confused to understand that they are different.

In dealing with difficulties we encounter in life, instead of just trying to find remedies for the difficulties encountered, if we want to get fulfilled in life, we have to try to identify the fundamental root cause of the difficulties we have to deal with.

No. 72

Right now the world is a human-centered world. All things are done by people's own strength, and many people are going against my teachings. Those who do as Kami states will become a kami. Long ago, there was a kami-centered world. Now it is a human-centered world. Because of this, I will teach people how to return to a kami-centered world. Difficulties and sufferings are caused by people's own heart. Whether or not they can live in a peaceful world also depends upon their own heart. (*Oboe-cho* 24-25-1, 2, 3 *Kyoten* page 158)

Kami-centered world in the past and human-centered world today

This message also shows the root cause of difficulties we encounter in life.

The Founder Konko Daijin stated, "Long ago, there was a Kami-centered world. Now it is human-centered world."

The expression of "nin-yo" or human-centered world is not that familiar with us. The term refers to the society or the time in history in which majority of people conceive that they try to do anything at all through their own human-

oriented thoughts and powers alone. In accordance with the Founder, the world of “nin-yo” refers to a particular society or time in history in which people tried to live in fulfillment of their own self-centered wishes; in pursuit of fulfilling their greediness; and caring only for themselves.

On the contrary, “Kami-yo” does not necessarily represent the literal meaning, but refers to a particular society or time in history in which the majority of people appreciate favors of Kami; and appreciate and follow the divine messages.

It seems that today’s world is totally transformed into the world of “nin-yo.” Even while the Founder was alive, he might have witnessed the surging waves of “nin-yo” began to deteriorate the world of “Kami-yo.” He used such remarks, “Today’s world become knowledge-oriented,” “unaware of blessings enjoyed through Heaven and Earth and Kami,” “the world is collapsing,” and “the world is chaotic.” In this manner, the Founder gave warnings for the social transition from “Kami-yo” to “nin-yo.” The Founder had a conviction that “aiyokakeyo” mutual interdependent relationship between Kami and people shall be the true path for fulfillment of human life. He might be overwhelmed with the ever-expanding waves of “burei” or irreverence against Kami that is just opposite to the truth he realized.

At the end of this message, the Founder stated, “Whether or not they can live in a peaceful world also depends upon their own heart.” This statement shall not be interpreted in such a popular manner that we can accept any encounters in life as hardship or blessing through our perception alone. The “heart” in the statement implies the fundamental state of mind that dictates the way how an individual lives.

Thank you very much for helping!

