



Live the Konko Faith

By *Yasuhiro Yano*
Head Minister

I believe our church members who have been regularly attending the services at Wahiawa are the most informed about the Konko faith in Hawaii, as we have been publishing our church newsletters in the last 31 years. The children's newsletter is in its 27th year, since my daughter, Edna started the publication with the push of her mother since the age of 10. Many vital elements of the Konko faith tradition are included in the newsletters. We have also tried to provide English oriented sermons soon after taking over responsibilities of the church operation in the last 42 years. Also, each attending member is given an opportunity to take turns reading passages of the Konkokyo Kyoten Gorikai or Konkokyo Scriptures as part of the service in the last 20 years or so. Many English-oriented publications are also available about the practice of the Konko faith. And we hold an informal "Okage Sharing Session" after each regular service. These elements are focused in providing knowledge about the practice of the Konko faith. I feel happy to witness the congregation responding in sharing the Konko faith in this manner.

We have been trying to inform our church congregation about the basic elements of the Konko faith in such manners as I have described because without knowledge, there can be no way for anyone to grow in faith. The primary purpose of education is to foster the growth of each individual in the given circumstance.

Although church is quite different from the established academic institutions, in ways that, well, you will not be graded for your advancement in the practice of the faith. You will not be categorized as a "lesser contributing member" and so forth whether one attends church or not. But the ministers are always mindful of how we can help our church members to advance in their practice of faith. From the minister's perspective, the growth of each member is just the reflection of the minister's dedication and effectiveness. It may be simple to understand this concept for frequent church-goers of all religious backgrounds. What the Konko ministers would like to witness is the believers' transformation into Konko believers who are able to develop a clear understanding of the teachings of the Founder, and incorporate them into their faith life. This will enable us to become identical Konko believers.

The Founder Konko Daijin stated, "Practicing faith is easy. It is people who make it difficult. Even if you have practiced faith from three to five years, you can still become easily confused. If you continually practice faith for ten years, then

you can celebrate with gratitude in your heart. Each day is the beginning of all days to come. Therefore, receive divine blessings each and every day so everything will go well. You should practice your faith easily" (III, Konko Kyoso Gorikai 69).

In my understanding, the younger you have been exposed to the church environment, the better you would be able to absorb the elements of the Konko faith. In Japan an old adage goes, "*Mitsu-go no tamashii 100 made*" which means that a three-year old soul will last till they're a hundred years old. In this sense, I am happy that there were children in the congregation for the church services. I would enthusiastically like to encourage youths in the presence of the church functions. Thankfully, we were able to keep our three children involved in the church. I also recall being raised in such a manner. I have witnessed families who have kept the faith tradition for 5 generations. It can definitely be attributed to practicing the faith as a family.

My parents always took us to attend regular services. I am amazed at the wisdom of my parents for the practice. We were rowdy as kids growing up and attending church. But the ministers accepted that behavior as a natural element of growing up. Certainly, some people may be annoyed at the disruptive behaviors of energetic children during a solemn service, but in Konkokyo, children are treasures. Some people do not wish to bring their children to church because they are disruptive. But doing so will not parallel the principle elements of the Konko faith at all. They would instead be spoiling the most opportune time to infuse the basics of the Konko faith during the limited time span before the kids reach maturity and start making decisions for themselves. Children need to be conditioned to be able to make decisions that will impact their lives positively.

Many believers are not able to appreciate the positive aspects of faith practice, but rather try not to include children for attending church functions in fear of disrupting the services. However, the gains they enjoy being in the situation is far greater than the disturbance. And I enjoy the presence of children in church. They are the future of our congregation. We should treasure their presence in church. Without children in our church scene, the church is not lively.

When I think of children's presence in church services, I always remember what my mother used to quote. She had eight children. Sometimes, all eight of us children were attending the church services. It can be considered a chaotic situation in present times. Normally we may discourage the parents from bringing in all eight of the children to church services. The Konko faith is definitely different in that sense. The Rev. Hidejiro Hosaka of Konko Church of Kawanoishi in Ehime used to talk to my mother, "Since children may become

disruptive during the service, you should also extend your prayer to Kami that your children will behave during the services. I also pray for your children as well” and encouraged her to bring children to church services. I enjoyed going to church for the festive mood and the overall warm atmosphere prevailing in the church.

While I was attending the services, I was sort of tormented by the length of the speeches given by the minister. The ministers in Japan keep on talking for hours. During the presentation, there is a special speech tone that indicated the ending of the speech, but the minister would bring in another topic and keep on talking. While we were sitting on the tatami floor in seiza style (Japanese style). My feet became numb and when I tried to stand up I fell down as if my legs were dead. But all the information the ministers have infused in their speeches have somehow been stored in some part of my brain unconsciously. The needed information in responding to various situations is withdrawn from the filing cabinet of our brain. This helps us to cope with the many life challenges. This may not directly apply in American culture. But being exposed to seemingly boring speeches over and over again may help the audience to over-learn the vital elements of the Konko faith. Without knowledge of the faith, one may never be able to advance his or her faith.

As a Konko minister, the size of the church is of no concern to me. All I wish to see is the growth of each individual as a Konko believer who can appreciate the teachings of the Founder Konko Daijin, and incorporate them into their faith life. If a person would ever evolve in that sense, the believer shall enjoy good human relationships, good health, good financial rewards and so forth as the Founder imparted, “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” (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 78).

I believe it is our day to day faith life of incorporating the teachings of the Konko faith that help us to achieve a solid transformation as Konko believers who can enjoy good health, wealth and good relationships for generations.

The Founder related to Sojiro Saito, “Those who have practiced faith and followed Konko Daijin’s ways all come here and claim they had received divine blessings. Sojiro, practice faith. You can receive divine blessings like everyone else” (I Saito Sojiro 8-5).

Konko-Sama Says . . .

Everyone around the world is a child of Tenchi Kane No Kami. The world is full of Tenchi Kane No Kami’s blessings. Not having these blessings is like not having any air. So without divine blessings, people cannot live, not even for a minute. (II Sato Mitsujiro 14-3)



“Konko” means “golden light shines.” The “kon” comes from the “Kane No Kami.” The “ko” comes from “hikari” meaning sunlight. Sunlight provides the world with light. Therefore it means that the entire world is being blessed by Tenchi Kane No Kami’s light shining throughout the world. (II Konko Hagio 21)

Some people have decided to serve the Faith by conveying truthful teachings. If there were such people in each town and village, this Faith would spread easily. (I Kondo Fujimori 80)

Those who are able to live due to Tenchi Kane No Kami’s blessings are in between two mirrors. Kami sees all good and bad things that are reflected in the mirrors. You must practice faith and have a sincere heart. (Yamamoto Sadajiuro 3)

Bulletin Board

Monthly Services for February, 2019

1 Fri -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin (7:30 pm)
3 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
10 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
17 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)
24 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

March 2019

1 Fri -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
3 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

KMH General Meeting

The KMH General Meeting will be held on Saturday, February 16, 2019 at 1:30 p.m. at Konko Mission of Honolulu.

Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility will be made on Friday, February 8, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

KMH Meetings

The KMH Community Engagement and Outreach Committee Meeting will be held on Thursday at Konko Mission of Honolulu on Thursday, February 28 at 5:30 p.m.
Joint KMH-KCNA Committee meeting will be held at Konko Mission of Honolulu on Wednesday, February 13 at 6 p.m.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

February

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Umi Yasuyo | 2/3/1965 |
| Ichiro Yano | 2/5/2006 |
| Dennis Fujio Tamashiro | 2/6/1998 |
| Thomas Takahashi | 2/9/2005 |
| Yoshiyuki Momotomi | 2/10/2003 |
| Betsy Tomie Maesaka | 2/10/2016 |
| Rev. Yukio Hiramoto | 2/10/2012 |
| Mildred Chiyoko Oka | 2/12/2004 |
| Jiro Oho | 2/14/1937 |
| Rebecca Jean Burns | 2/14/2013 |
| Robert Yoshikazu Hirota | 2/16/2014 |
| Norma Teruko Katsura | 2/18/2008 |
| Elisa Albarran | 2/20/1977 |
| Rev. Michio Miyake | 2/21/2017 |
| Kay Yamamoto | 2/22/2015 |
| Marilynn Olsen | 2/22/2009 |
| Suetsuki Toyofuku | 2/24/1995 |
| Terry Anne Takase Shlaes | 2/27/2018 |



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 368, 369 and 370)

No. 368

Practice faith and receive divine blessings. You should have a heart that would like to be allowed to help troubled people. You can give thanks to Kami by becoming one with the heart of Kami and by spreading this true Way of Faith by telling others about the blessings you have received. This will make Kami happy. Though people practice faith, they only used Kami. They are not aware of how Kami uses them. Tenchi Kane No Kami uses people. Look forward to being used by Kami and practice faith. (II Fukushima Gihe’e 11-1, 2 Kyoten page 673)

Kami uses believers for His purpose.

In the first half of the statement, the Founder related a similar message discussed in the previous page of 367. The Founder stated, “Practice faith and receive divine blessings. You should

have a heart that would like to be allowed to help troubled people. You can give thanks to Kami by becoming one with the heart of Kami and by spreading this true Way of Faith by telling others about the blessings you have received. This will make Kami happy.”

On the other hand, the Founder made a stern statement in the latter half of the message. The Founder stated, “Though people practice faith, they only used Kami. They are not aware of how Kami uses them. Tenchi Kane No Kami uses people. Look forward to being used by Kami and practice faith.”

We assume that to practice faith means to believe in the work of Kami and worship. Through this general perception about getting engaged in the practice of faith, it would be nothing to do with the concept of “Kami uses us.” In general, practice of faith implies that we only extend prayers of requesting in fulfillment of our individual needs and wishes alone. In a sense, we simply use Kami in fulfillment of our individual needs and wishes.

Are there any other way how we could get engaged in practice of faith other than simply using Kami for our personal causes? The Founder stated, “You should have a heart that would like to be allowed to help troubled people. You can give thanks to Kami by becoming one with the heart of Kami and by spreading this true Way of Faith by telling others about the blessings you have received. This will make Kami happy.” Getting blessed for our individual life through our practice of faith would not be bad at all. Actually, the Founder related, “Ask Kami for anything. Kami exists to receive requests” (II Komoto Torataro 2). But asking Kami in fulfillment of our personal needs and wishes alone would not be good enough. We should learn that we could be of service in fulfillment of divine purposes.

Kami has tried to identify those believers who have enjoyed getting blessed through their practice of faith for the purpose of spreading this true Way of Faith, who would be able to tell others about the blessings received. But there could be only a few of such believers who could be of service to Kami. The concept of being used by Kami in fulfillment of His purposes sounds something overwhelming for ordinary believers. But those believers who have responded would enjoy deeper fulfillment in gratitude and happiness for being able to serve Kami.

No. 369

Someone asked, “Konko-Sama, since I have been receiving many divine blessings, I would like to offer thanks to Kami. What could I offer that would please Kami the most?” Konko-Sama answered, “If it were possible to give thanks to

Kami for your divine blessings by offering things, you would never be able to offer enough. Offering such things won't make Kami happy, and Kami doesn't ask for them. "Tell others in the world, who are unaware of Kami's blessedness, about the divine blessings you have received. Then those people will be saved. Giving thanks this way will make Kami most happy." (II Senda Shima 3-1, 2, 3 Kyoten page 605-606)

Helping others is the ultimate thanks-giving to Kami

In reference to Konkokyo Kyoten Scriptures, the original of this message was a response from the Founder for inquiry made by Sano Mimura, who asked, "Konko-Sama, since I have been receiving many divine blessings, I would like to offer thanks to Kami. What could I offer that would please Kami the most?"

As has been mentioned in the previous page of 368, the majority of the believers were concerned only for their own individual fulfillment of needs and wants through their engagement in practice of faith. But Sano Mimura was one of a few who tried to extend thanks to Kami for the blessings received.

In general, the believers respond to make offerings to Kami as tokens of their thanks for the blessings received. But the Founder denied the ordinary manner of offerings forwarded to Kami. The Founder pointed out two elements for this matter. First of all, "If it were possible to give thanks to Kami for your divine blessings by offering things, you would never be able to offer enough." And secondly, "Offering such things won't make Kami happy, and Kami doesn't ask for them."

The most fulfilling response the believers would be able to offer in appreciation of the blessings received is, "Tell others in the world, who are unaware of Kami's blessedness. Then those people will be saved. Giving thanks this way will make Kami most happy."

The only concern of Kami is the well being of each and every individual in the world. As long as Kami witnesses the sufferings of people, Kami would never be able to be fulfilled. This is the true nature of Tenchi Kane No Kami, Our Divine Parent of the Universe. Kami has tried to save people in distress through the believers who have enjoyed blessings through their practice of faith. In this manner, the ultimate offering the believers would be able to make is to "Tell others in the world, who are unaware of Kami's blessedness, about the divine blessings received." After all, what Kami would expect from the believers who enjoyed blessings is not material-oriented offerings, but being help of Kami through guiding

people to get blessed through practice of faith. The Founder always clearly expressed this vital element of helping others in pursuit of faith.

No. 370

Without becoming a kami while living, how can you become a kami after death? (I Shimamura Hachitaro 10 Kyoten page 328)

Becoming a kami

The Buddhists say that they will become one with Buddha in the next stage after they die. While traditional Shinto believers say that they will become kami (Mitama Spirit) after their passing.

They use those expressions for the transition after death based upon their religious conventions. The Founder explained about the meaning of becoming a kami. Only those believers who attained the state of "kami" while they are alive would be transformed as "kami" after they die. The Founder showed the example of becoming a kami after his passing. Kami recognized the Founder as "kami" as well as the people also revered him in such a manner while he was alive. Because of the depth of virtuous nature of the Founder acquired through his practice of faith, he gained the power to be able to perpetuate as a "kami" even after his departure from the physical existence. The virtuous nature of the Founder who was revered as "kami" while he was alive and even after his passing could be attributable to the way of life the Founder lived. Namely, he saved people as we have discussed in the previous pages.

I have coined an expression of "生死不斷" pronounced "seisi-fudan." The term means "a seamless transition of life into death in perpetuity." The life the Founder lived has been perpetuated even after his passing. The best way to describe the life and death of the Founder is expressed in this term, "seisi-fudan," a seamless transition of life into death in perpetuity." The Founder was recognized as "kami" while he was alive and even after his passing. He saved people while he was alive and even after he passed away.

The message of this page 370 is based on the perspective of "seisi-fudan," "a seamless transition of life into death in perpetuity." What we could not be while we are alive would not materialize after death. It would be interesting to find the valid meaning of the message. Just try to replace the word "kami" with "saving people." Without saving people while we are alive, how can we save others after death?" We should learn to appreciate the message and try to save others.