



The "Divine Reminder" is a list of blessings to receive; not an abstract concept



By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister

For the first time ever in the last 43 years in Hawaii, both my wife and I have been able to own a brand new car without having to worry about it constantly breaking down or needing frequent costly repairs. The car, which is a Honda Fit was a gift from our daughter. She said, "I always wanted to buy a brand new car for Otoosan and Okaasan. So while I can, and while Otoosan and Okaasan are still healthy and able, I wanted to make that happen." We have never expected we would be able to own a new car in this manner.

I still remember the first car I got. It was a Chevy Malibu soon after I got my driver's license, some 43 years ago. It was a used car purchased at a used car garage in Waipahu. The Rev. Masato Kawahatsu at Waipahu Church took me to the car dealership. Every several years, we had to get another used car. But thanks to the many cars we could afford in the past, we have been able to live. Many of the cars we owned were not that reliable and occasionally stalled while we were driving. At one occasion, in the middle of night, on my way back to Wahiawa from Honolulu, the car suddenly lost power and we had to stop at the roadside. Both my wife and I had to find an emergency roadside phone booth near the site and asked for help. Having to deal with car issues was a chronic problem we encountered for a long time. For me, as long as a car was functional, I didn't care about the brand and model of the car. Amidst car breakdowns, I have always remembered to extend my thanks for the cars we have been able to drive before starting the engine.

Soon after our new car arrived at our church parking space, our daughter, Edna is keen to notice that I leave the doors unlocked throughout the night. When Edna comes to the church almost every morning, the first thing she does is greet and pet the cats and then check to see if the doors of the new car are locked. When the doors were not locked she would shout, "Otoosan! You forgot to lock the doors again! You have to lock the doors!" When I forgot to lock the doors several times, her

tolerance was over, and she took a new strategy to make sure the car doors would be locked for sure. She placed several hand-written reminder cards on the doors of each room and even next to the light switch and toilet paper in the bathroom. The message reads, "車のロックかならずかけなされ" "Be sure to lock the car doors at all times."

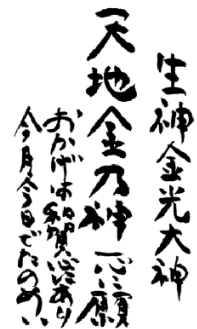
For a few months, both my wife and I have been drawn to the message placed at many places in the house, there would be no way to ignore the reminders because they were placed everywhere. When we see the reminder, I felt I would be hearing Edna's voice again "Lock the car doors!" So, when I see her reminders, I would immediately check to make sure the car doors are locked. Luckily I can lock the car from inside the house using the remote key. The reminder is aimed to take action of securely locking the car doors to deter unauthorized entry.

I learned that the placement of these reminders throughout the house was very effective. This then prompted me to extended my thought about the nature of the "Tenchi Kakitsuke" or the "Divine Reminder." It is basically the entire Konkokyo Kyoten Scriptures condensed into a four-line message. It can be considered the most vital message in the practice of faith. Some 40 years ago, the "Tenchi Kakitsuke" in a frame has been symbolically placed at the center of the Kami altar at Gohonbu Headquarters Church and the rest of the churches.

As for the nature of the "Tenchi Kakitsuke", Konko-Sama explained, "It is definitely not a lucky charm. Place it where it can be easily seen in the morning and evening. Remember to follow what is written on it. It is like the rules of an abacus. The result will be correct or incorrect depending on how you follow the rules. In the same way, if you don't forget to follow what is written on this Kakitsuke, there can be no mistake. You will receive divine blessings" (I Kondo Fujimori 18).

The four line message reads in Japanese:

生神金光大神
天地金乃神一心に願
おかげは和賀心にあり
今月今日でたのめい



A literal translation would be:

Ikigami Konko Daijin
Pray to Tenchi Kane No Kami with a sincere and single-heart. Divine blessings can be actualized through your peaceful and harmonious heart. Pray on this very day.

We currently have been following a new translation of the message in English:

Ikigami Konko Daijin (Divine Mediator)
Tenchi Kane No Kami (Divine Parent of the Universe)

**Pray sincerely,
With all your heart.
Be one with Kami.**

**Kami's blessings begin within
Hearts grateful and caring,
In harmony and joy.**

**Look to Kami always,
Now and forever.
On this very day, pray.**

If we follow the message, we would say "Ikigami Konko Daijin", and "Pray to Tenchi Kane No Kami with a sincere and single-heart." We would be able to try to hold our own harmonious and joyful heart in dealing with the matter in hand that could be resulted in blessing. This third-line element is the most difficult part since we have to exercise our own heart that is intangible in nature. The Founder Konko Daijin related to Sankokichi Sunami about the term of "Wagakokoro" or the harmonious and joyful heart as follows: "Divine blessings are within your own harmonious and joyful heart. The harmony means for you to be calm, and the joy is from the joy of life" (II Sunami Sanokichi 8). This state of heart could be actualized by anybody, regardless of different religious beliefs and spiritual practices. We may need to keep praying in witnessing the faint signs of initial point of getting blessed as we practice the message.

The Founder Konko Daijin related to Juemon Saito, "A sign of Kami-Sama's blessings is the same as a merchant's down payment. Kami keeps promises, but people don't. People nowadays are heartless and complain if the price changes after the down payment. Since you are a single-hearted person, I am sure that you will receive divine blessings" (II Saito Juemon 3).

The message of the "Divine Reminder" is not an abstract concept, but a formula that yields sure concrete results in blessing. When we go shopping, we may have a list of things to be purchased at the store beforehand. The Founder related to Kataoka Umakichi, "When going shopping in Okayama City, you take a memo to remind yourself what to buy. In the same way, take this home to remind yourself how to practice faith" (II Kataoka Umakichi 2).

You should make a list of blessings you want. If you do not have that list of blessings to get blessed, it would be like going shopping without a list. You would be confused and can end up buying unintended items. Through your practice of faith, you can learn to appreciate the wondrous nature of the "Divine Reminder" since we are to enjoy getting blessed.

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. (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 78-1, 2, 3)

Bulletin Board

Church Services for February 2021

- 1 Mon -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami
(Facebook Live 7:30 pm)
- 7 Sun -Sunday Service (Facebook Live 9 am)
- 14 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin
(Facebook Live 9 am)
- 21 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (Facebook Live 9 am)
- 28 Sun - Girl's Day Mochitsuki (8 am) No Sunday Service

March 2021

- 1 Mon -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami
(Facebook Live 7:30 pm)

The Church Door is Open

We welcome you to make a visit to our church and church services. Please wear your face mask for Covid-19 precautionary measures.

You also can make an appointment for your personal visit to church anytime of the days.

Girls Day Mochitsuki

We will pound mochi for Girl's Day on Sunday, February 28, 2021 from 8 a.m. We will process only 40 pounds of sweet rice and produce pink and green (yomogi) mochi with anko sweet azuki beans. Due to COVID-19, participants would be limited. If you would like to order, please contact your minister. Four pieces per pack (2 pink and 2 green) for \$5.00 a package is available. All proceeds will be donated to Gohonbu Headquarters for their main worship hall renovation project.

KMH

- KMH Zoom Conference 2021 skype mtg. (5 pm)
- Community Engagement and Outreach Committee meeting will be held on Friday, February 19, 2021 (Zoom at 5:00 pm).
- KMH General Meeting will be held on Saturday, February 13, 2021 at Konko Mission of Honolulu and via Zoom from 1:30 pm.

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
Rev. Yukio Hiramoto	2/10/2012
Betsy Tomie Maesaka	2/10/2016
Yoshiyuki Momotomi	2/10/2003
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
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.

金光教祖の生涯 瀬戸三喜雄
金光教学研究所 紀要別冊 教学叢書 2

The following is an English translation of a book titled, "Konko Kyoso no Shougai" or "The Life of the Founder Konko Daijin" authored by the Rev. Mikio Seto, and was published by Konkokyo Theological Research Center. The publication was made in 1980. There are many biography about the life of the Founder Konko Daijin. I would like to introduce this article for your reference in your pursuit of faith. An English Translation was provided by Rev. Yasuhiro Yano.

No. 3
Page 11 to 14

(2) Adoption

Arrangement for adoption

The boy who was named as Genshichi at birth was adopted into the family of Kumejiro Kawate at the age of 12 in September of 1825. The Kawate family was located at the current locality of Otani in Konko Town that was one village away from his birthplace, the Kandori family. The boy's birth mother at Kandori

and the adoptive mother at Kawate both originated from the same village and they were also close relatives. The adoptive mother casually visited the Kandori family from time to time. Through their close interactions, the episode of adoption of the boy was arranged.

The birth mother often shared her memories about the upbringing of this boy, such as the distinctive features of the day he was born, and illnesses he encountered as have been mentioned in the previous pages. The dialogues between the birth mother and the boy became deeply embedded in his mind. The birth mother, who was quite aware of the fateful eventuality of the second son who would leave the family sooner or later, might try to pray for his well being through her sharing of thoughts in loving.

Otani Village

Otani Village where the boy was adopted was a relatively small village. The approximate area under tillage was 45-cho and 6-tans; the annual rice crop yields reached to 247-koku; there were 104 households; and the population was 475. The village was under the jurisdiction of the Maita Clan located at Bitchu Ide (current Soja City). The entire households except one or two households engaged in farming. Like any other farming villages in this age, thirty to forty percent of their lands were under the control of a few powerful landlords. Majority of farmers owned only 1-tan or 2-tan of land. They tried to sustain their family lives through the farming practice of "kosaku" or as tenants who were allowed to use lands from the landlords by paying user fees. Most of the villagers were very poor and kept their lives day to day with meager incomes. But the Kawate family owned 2-tan and 6-se of farmlands, and ranked one of the upper class in the village.

Adoptive Family

The Kawate household advanced the economic gains just a few years before they adopted this person. According to the "Record of Farming Households in Otani Village", the once closed Kawate family became revived through the endeavor of Hachibee who branched off from the Oohashi household. Actually, the Kawate household was perpetuated for several generations before Hachibee took over the family lineage. The household head kept the name of Tarozaemon Kawate from generation to generation. The household enjoyed distinguished family status in the village. For some reasons, the household became discontinued. Hachiemon took over the family lineage and revived the household.

According to "Ono Family Record" kept by Village Head of Otani, the grandfather of the adoptive father, Kumejiro, named Bunjiro were a village official titled "Houtou-yaku" or an official messenger who gained a prestigious status in the village. The duty of the official was to communicate the governmental messages to the village people and acted as a supervisor for some village construction works. For some reasons, despite the prestigious status, the family suffered financially. Eventually, he had to give away the household properties to others and earned meager income by the practice of "kosaku" farming. The acute financial difficulty continued on to the generation of Kumejiro. From time to time, they had to depend on the governmental welfare program that provided rice for their survival.

Adoptive Parents

In a desperate attempt to revive the household, Kumejiro made up his mind to find a job as a servant at the Makita Clan mansion in Edo (Tokyo) as his last resort. Serving as a male servant at the mansion secured one time of a big stipends and rice supply for the family. But the nature of the man servant was so demanding and exhaustive that many of them gave up and escaped from the terrible working condition. But Kumejiro persevered and worked hard and fulfilled such demanding and difficult jobs twice. He was the only person from Otani Village who could have returned in fulfillment of the jobs in Edo and revived the once defunct household. He might be a man of true honesty and diligence. His younger brother also tried to serve as a man servant following Kumejiro, but he could not handle the difficult working conditions and escaped from the mansion. His name was removed from the "Japanese Religious Census Record."

After returning from Edo, Kumejiro worked hard to rebuild the household, increased the farmlands and restored financial stability and got married to Iwa from the Nishimoto household in the nearby village. He was over 40 years old at that stage.

Kumejiro was 55 years old and Iwa was 35 years old when they adopted this person. They did not have their own child.

(To be continued.)