



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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Appreciation in thoughts and deeds

*By Yasuhiro Yano,
Head Minister*

On December 5, we attended the local ministers' conference held at the Honolulu Church. The main theme of the meeting was to watch a video presentation of a speech made by the Rev. Mitsutoshi Sato, the Chief Administrative Officer of the Konkokyo Religious Organization. The speech was delivered at the meeting convened for the representatives of the faith communities in Hawaii, KCNA, Brazil and other places held at the Headquarters Office in October.

While I was watching the video presentation, I have reaffirmed about the Japanese expression of "Jitsui and Teinei" which represents one of the core elements of practice of faith. Usually, the expression of "Shojiki" or "Kami Shinjin" follows the terms, in such manners as "Jitsui, Teinei and Shojiki" or "Jitsui Teinei and Kami Shinjin." The quality of "Jitsui, Teinei and Kami Shinjin" has been conceived the fundamental personal trait held by Konko-Sama throughout his religious life. Consequently, we try to promote the elements of that expression in our faith life.

The Rev. Sato mentioned there is a reference to those terms in the Konkokyo Kyoten Scripture. In accordance with the definition, "Jitsui" stands for a thorough extension of thoughtfulness for a matter. And "Teinei" means a thorough extension of thoughtfulness in action. And "Shojiki" means honesty. A true Konko believer is an honest person who exercises thorough thoughtful considerations and exercise thorough thoughtfulness in action. This is an ideal state of our being and the way of living everyone may wish to attain, but hard to practice. Even if we may not have attained such a way of life, we can at least try to live keeping that spiritual awareness daily as Konko believers.

The best way to actualize the principles of "Jitsui" and "Teinei" can be accommodated by a simple formula of trying to extend our thanks and appreciation for anything at all in acknowledgement of blessed nature in anything at all. The moment I wake up in the morning, I try to extend my thanks to Kami for the life I have. As we live in the church facility as resident ministers, we have a routine cycle of daily activities, such as offering the first water of the day and first cooked rice offered in the altar as a token of appreciation of the vital nature of the blessed water and food for the sustenance of our lives.

When I eat breakfast, I extend my thanks for the meals I can enjoy in good health and good appetite. When I brush my teeth, I try to extend my thanks for the toothbrush and the toothpaste I use. I can exercise my thoughtfulness in handling the water I use, the food I enjoy, my toothbrush to clean my teeth and so forth in exercise of the basic application of "Jitsui" and "Teinei." I have been trying to follow a message shared with my wife and me by Konko-Sama when we got married and departed for our missionary work some 33 years ago.

When we related our message for our departure for our missionary work in Hawaii, the 4th Konko-Sama, the late Rev. Kagamitaro Konko shared many thoughts with us. One of the messages was the thought of "*Inochi no shin no hataraki*" or the universal core vital function found in any living creatures. He quoted an illustration of a tree in the yard. Through the work of the roots, the tree sustains its life. Once these functions come to an end, the tree will wilt and eventually die. We also have the same thing. What can be relevant to the functions of roots and the leaves of a tree can be the function of extending joy and appreciation in such a way that when a baby is born everyone involved would exchange greetings of happiness and congratulations. As long as we maintain that vital function in life we can keep enjoying our life. And Konko-Sama shared a thought of extending his thanks for the pen he wrote with, for the sheet of paper he used, for the pair of eyeglasses he depended on, the chair he sat on and the desk he used and the list goes on and on. Through my life in Hawaii, I have come to appreciate the message forwarded by Konko-Sama as the ultimate expressions of our thoughtfulness in words and deeds.

People talk about conservation of water, food, natural environment and so forth. If we live based on the simple principle of "Jitsui and Teinei" or extending our thanks and appreciation in acknowledgement of all elements, we will naturally be conserving all those elements. But in today's society, we live based on the principle of greediness which results in abuse and destruction of many things in life for the sheer fulfillment of our thirst in greediness. The only difference between the appreciation-oriented life and greed-oriented life can be the presence or absence of thanks and appreciation for the elements. As Konko believers we practice seeing the divine nature in anything we have in life.

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.

Bulletin Board

Regular Church Services for January 2011

1 Sat -New Year's Day Service at 9 a.m.
 9 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin at 9 a.m.
 16 Sun -Sunday Service at 9 a.m.
 23 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service at 10 a.m.
 30 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, January 14 at 10:00 a.m. by means of offering entertainment for the people cared for in the facility. The program is in Japanese.

General Meeting & New Year's Party

The annual meeting for the Wahiawa Church will be held on Sunday, January 23 following the monthly memorial service at 10:00 a.m. New Year's Party will also follow the general meeting. Please bring minimum \$3.00 grab-bag per person.

HCRP Meeting

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

Honoring the Mitama Spirits for January

Ms. Chikiko Hayashida 1/24/1940

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

Kyoso-Sama Volume 2 (#21)

The following is 21st 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 209 to 221)

Konko Shijin-Sama

(4) Growth into young man

"Rikkyo Shinden" or the Divine Call to the Founder and His Family

On October 21, 1859, in corresponding to the work of sowing of barely in the field, Konko-Sama received a divine request called "Rikkyo Shinden" or the "Divine Call to the Founder and His Family." Upon the Divine Call, Konko-Sama ceased to get engaged in farming and devoted to the task of Divine-Mediation or "Toritsugi-Mediation." Konko-Shijin-Sama was six-year-old. He grew up in such a given circumstance that Konko-Sama devotedly served the task of Divine-Mediation.

Recovery from the measles

A breakout of the measles developed in 1862 in the region. The elder brother, Konko Shojin-Sama's health declined and took a rest from June 14. Kami informed Konko-Sama that his son got the measles. Upon recovering from the illness on June 25, Kami informed Konko-Sama, "For the convenience of your family, I will have the rest of your four children also get the disease within this month." Accordingly, Konko Shijin-Sama and the rest of the children also got the measles. They all recovered by July 1. Konko-Sama expressed his joy by saying, "The five children did not require any care. We allowed them to eat tabooed foods. Kami-Sama had me put forth a good example for people to follow" (Konko Daijin Oboecho 6-2-5). He didn't have to follow the food taboos and any other restrictive customs in regard to the measles in following the divine instruction, and his children all recovered. He showed a good example for the community people to follow in case of the measles outbreak. Konko-Sama seemed overwhelmed with the feeling of awe.

Joining the youth association

In 1868, Konko Shijin-Sama turned 15-year-old. In accordance with the village tradition a boy who turned the age of 15 was admitted to join the community youth association called "Waka-Renju." A 15-year-old boy was acknowledged as a full-fledged individual in the village community. Except the sufferings from smallpox and the measles which affected anybody else, Konko Shijin-Sama enjoyed sound growth. He was in good health and was exceptionally blessed with athletic abilities. He enjoyed helping the household chores, playing with friends and enjoying sound growth. He especially enjoyed swimming, along with many other athletic hobbies. He was also talented in carpentry and other hands-on crafting.

Divine titles received

On November 1, 1868, he received a divine title of "Konko Shijin." Also the rest of the family members were granted divine titles at the same time. The following is a list of the divine titles for the family members.

Tose (mother)	Isshi Daijin
Kaneyoshi (elder brother, Asakichi)	Konko Shojin
Hagio (elder brother, Ishinojo)	Konko Sanjin
Ieyoshi	Konko Shijin

Kura (elder sister)
Kono (younger sister)

Shou Saijin
Suenotamejin

Pilgrimage to Ise Shrine

As a member of the pilgrimage tour group of the Otani Village, Konko Shijin-Sama joined the tour along with his younger sister, Kono. He was 20-years-old. As a token of expressed support, he received monetary gifts for the journey.

Like the other pilgrims, the majority of the village people climbed up Mt. Oomine. But Konko Shijin-Sama and Kono stayed at the base of the mountain which prohibited the female climbers. They stayed at the inn and waited for the return of the other climbers.

The pilgrims made a visit to Ise Shrine on May 21 and returned home safely. In appreciation of their successful pilgrimage to Ise Shrine, he also offered a so-called “Ema” or a wooden plaque at the village shrine. The “Ema” offering made by Konko Shijin-Sama was placed in the shrine, but was removed from display after WWII. The item seemed to have been lost later on.

On May 17, Kami-Sama instructed Konko-Sama, “Don’t follow the custom of making new kimonos and having a welcoming ceremony (at the village border) for Ieyoshi and Kono when they return from the pilgrimage. You may think that I am saying this because I detest Ieyoshi and Kono, However, I do not. They are to be treated in the same way their elder brother Asakichi was treated. You need not even go to meet them upon their arrival in the village. They will at any rate come home. Your family also need not fret over giving gifts to people (who gave paring gifts for Ieyoshi and Kono’s pilgrimage) with the intent of having them think favorably of you. Kami will direct you as to when you should present gifts” (Konko Daijin Oboegaki 21-14). “Machigo” referred to new robes made for the pilgrims who made the long journey to Ise Shrine. The clothes they used for the pilgrimage became soiled and worn out. They changed into new clothes called “Machigo” specially tailored for that special occasion. The pilgrims traveled for a month. When they returned to the village, the village people came to greet them. The pilgrims didn’t want to meet with them in rags. As the village tradition dictated, the family members of the pilgrims prepared newly tailored clothes and greeted them at the border of the neighboring village and helped them to change into new clothes in advance.

Kami instructed Konko-Sama to ignore the tradition of “Machigo” in the same manner his brother Asakichi (Kaneyoshi) was treated upon his return from the pilgrimage. Beforehand, elder brother Asakichi also made a pilgrimage to Ise Shrine. In April of 1864, a group of five young people including Kaneyoshi made a visit to Ise Shrine. They didn’t follow the formal custom for their visit to the shrine. Their style of pilgrimage was referred to as “Nuke-mairi” or a discreet pilgrimage which did not bother other villagers. Because of the nature of the pilgrimage, the family didn’t have to follow the formal tradition of “Machigo.” The family

applied the same treatment for Konko Shijin-Sama. Kami informed Konko-Sama that they should not go out to perform the “Machigo” tradition at the village border and just wait for the return of the son at the house.

Konko-Sama followed the instruction faithfully. Both Konko Shijin-Sama and Kono returned home in good shape on May 21, after spending 23 days in the journey.

The pilgrimage to Ise Shrine was one of the major experiences in life for Konko Shijin-Sama. He made a journal titled “Sangu Yorokobi Uke” or Receipt of Happiness through the Pilgrimage. He referred to many people in the notebook. He described about his own marriage in September of 1878 and the birth of his son, Setsutane Konko, who evolved to become the 3rd Spiritual Head of the Konkokyo Religious Organization, in 1880. These three events in life seemed to be major encounters in life for him.

A legendary story about Konko Shijin-Sama has been preserved in the village community at the surrounding area of the Mount Oomine, such as a remark, “An octopus cannot be a fish,” and his enjoyment of sake. Through these elements, we can assume that Konko Shijin-Sama experienced many new things through his pilgrimage to Ise Shrine.

About the family

On January 10, Kami revealed, “I will have your five children establish and serve at five hiromae. You, your wife, and your five married children will add up to twelve, just like the *junishi* Oriental zodiac. You will all serve Me and pray for the sake of the people” (Konko Daijin Oboecho 17-31).

Konko Shijin-Sama was one of the five children. “Establish Hiromae” may refer to the establishment of churches where they could serve as the Divine-Mediator. And the original Japanese statement “*Kami no moriyaku, ujiko wo negaikoto*” may refer to the functions of the Divine-Mediation. “*Kami no moriyaku*” means both to take care of Kami and take care of the believers who come to seek help.

The divine message implied that kami would use the five children for the work of Divine-Mediation. In response to the divine message, the five children fulfilled the extended divine intent. Konko Shijin-Sama was one of them and evolved to take over the responsibilities held by Konko-Sama after his passing as the Principal Divine-Mediator at the Main Church.

On February 10, 1874, Kami revealed, “Marriage prospects for your four children will come from the Furukawa, Mukai Konko (Fujii) and Abe families. But don’t tell this to your children until you receive my instruction” (Konko Daijin Oboecho 17-33). The four children referred to: Konko Shojin-Sama, Konko Shijin-Sama, Kura-Sama and Kono-Sama. Later on, Konko Sanjin-Sama got married to a daughter from the Furukawa family. Kono-Sama married to the Furukawa family, and Kura-Sama married into the Fujii family. Konko Shijin-Sama got married to Kiyō from the

Abe family four years later.

Seven days after the revelation of the divine instruction, on February 17, Kami revealed, "Isshi Daijin (Tose) you should have Konko Sanjin (Hagio) take over the family finances for this year from today. If you cannot handle something due to his inexperience, discuss the matter with him to resolve it" (Konko Daijin Oboecho 18-1). Konko-Sama was 61 years old and Isshi Daijin-Sama (Tose) was 56 years old. All the children were fully independent. Under this circumstance, Konko-Sama was in search of a new life in pursuit of his faith.

(6) Konko Shijin-Sama in his youth

Work at sake factories

In the village community of Otani, young people were encouraged to work at the local sake factories. The work at the sake brewers was physically demanding. Accordingly, they earned a higher wages. Konko Shijin-Sama also worked at sake factories. Working at sake factories provided him opportunities to develop social skills and knowledge as well as provided him spiritual training under severe cold winter conditions during the period of sake making. A statement made by Konko Shijin-Sama, "Working at the sake factories was not an easy task," revealed the nature of hard work required in sake-brewing.

In 1875, Konko Shijin-Sama was 22 years old. He worked at a sake factory at Kurosaki Minamino Ura, Tamashima in Kurashiki City, which was located coastal southeast from Otani Village. At that occasion, one of his friends asked him to join to work at the factory. He asked Konko-Sama about the matter. In responding to him, Konko-Sama said, "Discuss the matter with your elder brother and you may go."

On March 23, Konko Shijin-Sama returned home after finishing his job. The owner of the sake factory presented him a keg of newly brewed sake. He invited members of the young people's association and treated them with the gifted sake on April 5. The drinking party disbanded at around 3 o'clock in the morning.

He also responded to a request from the sake factory named Maruya in the winter. The factory was located in Takahashi City, which is located in the northern part of Otani Village. He spent the whole winter there.

The sake-making process was very labor intensive. Even carrying out the routine tasks was physically demanding. Usually, the workers took a rest from time to time. But Konko Shijin-Sama tried to do all tasks, such as cleaning the yard, and wiping the floor with a wet cloth and so forth, even while the rest of the workers were enjoying their break. He did his job seriously and with much thoroughness. Because of his tireless work, the employer and other workers began to appreciate his contributions. They commended him by saying, "That young fellow is truly reliable and promising." The factory extended invitation for him by asking, "Please come to help us again next year." The owner of the factory

pleaded Konko-Sama by saying, "I want to adopt your son to my household."

It was told that he purchased a wood field located at the east of Yuzaki Hill with the wages he earned at the sake factories.

Fishing

Konko Shijin-Sama liked fishing when he was young. In this case, the main method of fishing was the throw net. He made his own throw net. Every so often when he went fishing, the net got caught in the rocks and became tangled. He had to fix the net every time he went fishing, even the regular church members find him doing this when they come.

One day, he went out fishing at the area of Houki in Tamashima, Kurashiki City. He found a school of foot-long black sea bream in the water. He threw the net aiming at the school of fish. The net perfectly landed on the fish. Scores of fish were picked up in just one throw of the net. The catch was so big that he could not hold all the catch in a fish holder. On his way home, a professional fisherman stopped him and asked, "Will you sell me all of your catch? Actually, I was asked to provide grilled salted sea bream for a wedding function. But I could not have enough of them. I need adequate quantities of the same sized fish for the occasion."

Around the surrounding area of the coast, they nicknamed Konko Shijin-Sama as "Umi bouzu" or sea goblin. He was also a strong swimmer who could easily make a round trip swim between Mizushima, which was approximately 7.5 miles away from Sami Beach. He also had a large lung capacity. Sometimes people who accompanied him for fishing became wary once he dived because once he dived, he would stay in the water for so long. Once he threw the net, he dived into the water and manipulated the net in such a manner that he released the tangled net to the surface of rocks. His style of throw net fishing was well considered that he could get as many fish with one throw of the net by aiming at a larger school of fish and manipulating the net under the water. He didn't have to spend much time fishing.

Soon after he took over the responsibilities as the Principal Toritsugi-Mediator after the passing of Konko-Sama, he didn't go fishing for a while. Eventually, he continued to fish only through the permission granted by Kami after midnight. No matter how long he spent for fishing, he never failed to report to the designated place of the Divine-Mediation at 4 o'clock in the morning. Frequently he spent the whole night fishing. Some ministers accompanied him to the fishing excursions to the beach at Sami. Konko Shijin-Sama shared many teachings with them during the excursions. Some ministers expressed, "I felt like Konko Shijin-Sama's night excursion for fishing could have been a form of spiritual training for himself." His hobby of net fishing worked as a shugyo training for himself as well as provided an opportunity for the accompanying ministers to learn from him. Occasionally, the catch of fish was shared with fellow believers at dining occasions held. (To be continued.)

