



# KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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## “Shinja (a believer) no Osonae”



By Yasuhiro Yano,  
Head Minister

I was able to attend the 20<sup>th</sup> Year Memorial Service for the late Rev. Fumio Yasutake, the second Head Minister of Konko Church of Amagi in Fukuoka. He passed away on December 23, 1995. The memorial service was held on December 23, 2015. One day before the main service, I join in on a preliminary memorial service held at the church grave site located on a hilltop.

I have attended the commemorative memorial services for late Rev. Fumio Yasutake every five or ten years at the Amagi church in the past. It could be his extended personal prayers and his role in my life that I can't help but extend my thanks and gratitude for this great minister in attending the service in person. Some people may wonder why I should have to attend the memorial service after 20 years of passing.

On the day of the memorial service, I left the hotel and walked to the church at around five o'clock in the morning, and joined the morning prayer session. After the prayer service was over, the Rev. Michiyoshi Yasutake, current Head Minister, asked several ministers in attendance to share their personal thoughts and remembrances about the late Rev. Fumio Yasutake. I was also given an opportunity to share my thoughts for several minutes as time allowed.

I shared one of the most significant encounters I have ever experienced throughout my stay at the Amagi Church for my religious training that lasted for three years. Soon after I entered the Konko Church of Amagi as a shugyo-sei or a trainee, 40 years ago, while I was sweeping the church yard with a bamboo broom in the morning near the large tree of Yamamomo, an older gentleman approached me and said, “Yesterday, as I also worshipped at the Konko Church of Kokura, on the way back

from church, Oyasensei (the Rev. Fumio Yasutake) told us that there was an offering of a 'shinja' or a believer to our church at Amagi.” He continued to talk, “Through a humanistic approach, we have no way of telling what type of person Kami-Sama uses for His/Her purpose.” That was the main subject I shared with the audience.

In remembrance of the episode, at that instance, I just understood that the Rev. Toshihiko Hosaka of the Konko Church of Kawanoishi in Ehime, which was my native church in Ehime, made an arrangement to forward me in the form of an offering from the Yano family for my enrolment as a shugyo trainee at the Amagi Church. He was quite aware that just getting into the church without any deep conviction would cause me deep trouble. The Rev. Toshihiko Hosaka extended his utmost consideration of how I could be able to be of service to Kami and concluded that the status of an offering to Kami in appreciation of all the blessings the Yano family had enjoyed would be the most appropriate under the given circumstance.

As the years pass by, I feel overwhelmed with the feeling of gratefulness for the deep considerations and prayers extended to me by the late Rev. Toshihiko Hosaka. I also feel the same for the late Rev. Fumio Yasutake (past head minister of Amagi Church) who accepted me as an offering to Kami-Sama.

Though I have served here at the Konko Mission of Wahiawa for the last 38 years, and celebrated my 40 years of ministerial life, I have a conviction it could have been meant for me to come to Hawaii and serve at the local church in Wahiawa by divine guidance. I am not sure if I have fulfilled the concept of “Inochi no Ohatsuho” or offering of a believer to Kami, but I can attribute all of the blessings our family have enjoyed thus far to this concept of “Inochi no Ohatsuho.” I simply wish and pray that people in the community can learn to appreciate the wondrous world of the Konko faith in the same manner as I have enjoyed thus far.

It is my habit to take note of a slip of paper, the size of 3X5 for any ideas of interest and stack them in a file container for my reference to such occasions as making a speech. Lately I jot down one of the teachings of the Founder Konko Daijin in regards to the good health we have been enjoying. In blessedness, our family has enjoyed good health for all these years. I have extended my appreciation to Kami-Sama for the enjoyment of good health, relations and finance for the sustenance of the family members, church members and any other related people daily. It is just an extended practice of the mindfulness for extending thanks and gratefulness for the blessings I have enjoyed thus far. That idea can be expressed as “**Konnichi made no orei.**”

From the day that both my wife and I have arrived at the Konko Mission of Wahiawa to be the caretakers of the church, I have kept extending my thanks and gratefulness for any elements of blessings I have been enabled to identify to Kami-Sama for 38 years. I feel just overwhelmed how fast time passes and the fact I have been able to continue saying the same pattern of thanks and

gratefulness to Kami-Sama in the same manner I did 38 years ago. It could be a blessing that we have never expressed our anguish and frustration for our engagement in the operation of the church.

I would like to extend my thanks to the Rev. Michio Miyake of the Konko Church of Tokiwadai who gave me a message in celebration of our departure for our missionary work in Hawaii when we made a courtesy visit to greet him. He has provided a momentous opportunity for me to get engaged in ministry of the Konkokyo faith when I was in Tokyo. He jotted down a message on the cover of the wrapping of goshinmai sacred rice. The message reads, 「有り難きこの思召いつまでも忘れずに行け人助けの道」. I have interpreted this message in this manner, “Never fail to appreciate this wondrous divine mission granted to you for saving people” dated September 27, 1977. I have placed this Goshinmai sacred rice packet at the Toritsugi-Mediation Desk to serve as my daily reminder. Interestingly, the message has never faded away. The message has the same line of meaning of “Konnichi made no orei” or extending thanks for any and all blessings I have enjoyed thus far. I have been deeply appreciative of the message as years pass by. Without the presence of my wife and her support and dedication for our missionary work, and the fulfillment of my daughter, Edna’s childhood wish list for me, I would not have been able to share this thought with you today.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Konko Sama used the expression of “**Sewa ni naru subete ni rei wo iu kokoro heiwa umidasu kokoro to iwan**” or the heart of trying to extend thanks for any and all those elements which can be integral and helpful in life will help contribute in keeping peace. He shared the concept of “Inochi no shin no hataraki” or the core function of any living things. He quoted a tree for example.

The following is my interpretation of his message. When a baby is born, we exchange our greeting by saying “Omedetou gozaimasu and arigatou gozaimasu,” among the people involved. When the child grows up and becomes one year old, they also exchange the greeting of celebration by saying, “Omedeto gozaimasu, and arigato gozaimasu in return.” When the child begins to enroll in school, they also repeat the same tradition of exchanging greeting of celebration. When the child graduates from school, they also congratulate the child. And we try to exchange greetings of celebration continuously until we die as long as there would be no elements that may prevent that tradition. When we encounter such a time when we no longer exchange celebratory remarks, the given life will encounter hardship.

The same vital function can also be identified in all living things. For example, look at the tree in the yard. A tree continues to grow through the life sustaining function given to it. It is a given condition that the root system takes up needed water and nutrients in the soil, and the leaves also create food for the body through the blessing of the sunlight. Everything works in the given condition. If there is no sunlight, there would be no tree. If there is no water, there would be no tree. The land, the soil, the water, the air and the sunlight are all given conditions of sustaining a tree. We identify them as blessings of Kami. If a tree stops taking up water and nutrients from the soil, the tree may wilt down and die. The same is true if the leaves and roots stop creating food for the body, the tree would die as well. The function of the roots and the leaves can be likened to the function of our expressing our

thought of joy, thankfulness, appreciation or whatever expressions we use in celebrating the state of blessedness.

Konko-Sama also showed us a simple formula to see if we have been in line with the heart of Kami and walking the right path for happiness and prosperity. The formula is to see if we have the heart of gratitude for all elements in our daily life. The message is very strong and you must find the powerfulness of the message on your own through the practice of the message. This is the meaning of “shinjin suru/sasete itadaku” or to practice faith.

## **Konko-Sama Says . . .**

People exist because of Kami, and Kami exists because of people. Therefore, you should pray to Kami about everything, including sickness and problems, whether it is an emergency or not. Practicing faith is to have a heart like Kami in your everyday life. Praying to Kami by putting your hands together is not the only way to practice faith. A single heart means one heart. So be sure you do not go astray by having a double heart. Depending only on Tenchi Kane No Kami is having a single heart. You should be single-hearted and receive divine blessings fully. (III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 1981, 2)

Konko Daijin said, “Everybody asks me to come to their homes, but since I cannot be absent from Kami’s Hiromae, I do not go. However, I have never failed to help save a person who asked me for help with a single heart.” (Jinkyukyogoroku 55)

## **Bulletin Board**

### **Monthly Services for January 2016**

- 1 Fri -New Year’s Day Service (9 am)
- 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)
- 31 Sun -Sunday Service (10 am)  
-General Meeting and New Year’s Party (till 2:30 pm)

### **February 2016**

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

### **Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace**

The regular meeting will be held on Monday, January 25, 2016 at Gedatsu Church of Hawaii at 1:30 p.m.

### **Volunteer Activity**

The regular monthly visit to the Long-Term Care Facility at Wahiawa General Hospital will be made on Friday, January 15, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

### Kaka'ako Ehimemaru Memorial

The Ehime Kenjinkai members will conduct regular care for the Mikan trees at Kaka'ako on Saturday, January 30, 2016 at 9:00 a.m.

### JCCH Mochi Pounding program

The Konko Mission of Wahiawa will make a demonstration of traditional mochi pounding with *usu* mortar and wooden mallet for the annual function of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii at JCCH on Friday, January 8, 2016 from 5 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Leave Wahiawa at 3:00 p.m. Arrive JCCH at 4:00 p.m. for prep work.

### The Annual Mochi Pounding

We held the 24<sup>th</sup> annual mochi pounding event on Wednesday, December 30, 2015. Thank you very much for your hard work and support for this annual event. We are grateful for the fine weather condition, and the many people of all ages that came to enjoy this community event from age 6 months to people in their 90s.

### KMH Board of Trustees Meeting

The first KMH board of trustees meeting will be held at the Konko Mission of Honolulu on Saturday, January 23, 2016 at 10:30 a.m.

## Honoring the Mitama Spirits

### January

Owari Kaneshige	1/2/1989
Clarence Olsen	1/3/2013
Paul Akita	1/13/2008
Alesandro Caraballo	1/17/1985
Tama Noguchi	1/17/1985
Mitsuru Miyamoto	1/20/2007
Tsuneko Takahashi	1/24/1997
Chikiko Hayashida	1/24/1940
Marc Perrone, Jr. (MJ)	1/27/2010

*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 137, 138 and 139)*

## Section 3

### Virtue (Toku)

#### No. 137

**Kami's virtue will be with you even after death and passed down to future generations. It can be received by anyone who practices faith. The virtue of Kami is unlimited.** (II Matsumoto Tashichi 1 Kyoten page 695)

**Kami's virtue can be received by anyone and is unlimited.**

The original Japanese term “Saki no yo” refers to the world after death. But the Founder didn't elaborate much about the world after death. He always shared his own experiences and didn't talk about the matters in regard to the world after death since nobody has ever been revived after death. He simply stated, “Death is like a deep sleep, do not fear it” (II Kataoka Jiroshiro 6). In this manner, he always tried to get rid of fears and anxieties we commonly held about death.

The quoted message was also given in such a manner that we cannot take any material possessions, such as money, family members and any other things into the next world in corresponding to our death. The Founder tried to convey the message that the only element we can take with us into the next world is “shintoku” or Kami's virtue which can be even passed down to the future generations of the family. We should enjoy gaining Kami's virtue through our practice of faith.

As for the meaning of “shintoku” the Founder identified three elements. The first is shown in the message, “Practice the true way of faith and eliminate doubt. You are allowed to live in the midst of divine virtue” (III Shinkun 1-2). The message implies that Kami's virtue is universally bestowed upon any living thing.

The second is individually acquired divine blessing as has been shown in the message, “Practice faith and gaining divine virtue will let you live a long life” (III Shinkun 2-5).

The third is the element called “go-shintoku” or a specially granted divine power upon particular believers who would be able to communicate with Kami and could manifest mysterious power beyond normal human power.

These elements of divine blessings can be acquired by anybody who practices faith, and it can never be exhausted.

The message was given to Tashichi Matsumoto, who was a day laborer and advanced his faith in Kami to such an extent that he served as “Shinto sodai” or one of the lay church leaders who helped the operation of the church.

#### No. 138

**Receive Kami's virtue and acquire human virtue.** (III Shinkun 2-4 Kyoten page 774).

**Kami's virtue and human virtue**The meanings of "shintoku" were discussed in the previous page. The difference between "shintoku" and "nintoku" can be identified as follows: "Shintoku" is granted to believers by Kami; while "nintoku" can be acquired through a believer's efforts in the practice of faith.

One of the pioneering ministers once defined that "shintoku" is the power to activate Kami's power; "nintoku" is the power to influence people to move.

The point is that "shintoku" implies the trust of Kami; "nintoku" means trust of people.

Then how do we acquire the trust from Kami? The foremost element for the acquisition of "shintoku" is to develop an absolute belief in Kami first. There would be no way we can gain trust from Kami without our own trust in Kami.

Kami tested the Founder at numerous occasions. At one occasion, Kami ordered him to pick up some money to be found at a town, but came home empty handed. He showed no trace of doubt in following the instruction given by Kami and interpreted the results in such a manner that Kami had solidified His trust in the Founder.

At one occasion, Konjin-Sama (Kami) spoke, "Bunji (the Founder), I'm glad you came, I had you brought here because I have a request for you. Will you fulfill my request?" "I will do whatever I can" the Founder responded. He tried to uphold Kami with true sincere heart. At first he was bestowed the divine title of "Ichi no deshi" or the first disciple of Kami and continued to gain Kami's trust step by step.

He also gained "nintoku" or human-oriented virtue in the same manner as he gained "shintoku" or Kami-oriented virtue. He tried to fulfill any requests from others with diligence and sincerity and offered whatever help and supports he could afford to others. For example, he fulfilled any promises made to others without any excuses; was always punctual for appointments; paid off any debts and settled financial matters without any problems and tried to refrain from making any negative remarks for others. Kami stated, "You have shown sincerity even to the government" (Oboegaki 21-7-4). We should follow the way of life demonstrated by the Founder.

### No. 139

**Without thinking of social position, without arguing, without holding conceit for being educated, and with pure sincerity, Kami's door will be open to you to receive divine virtue.**

*(I Sato Norio 4-4 Kyoten page 317)*

**With pure sincerity, Kami's door will be open.**

The Founder gave this message to Norio Sato in corresponding to his engagement in the work of Toritsugi-Mediation as a reminder. The quoted message is a partial excerpt from a much longer message, "Admonitions concerning toritsugi: Reforming your heart is most important in practicing faith. Even I will be dismissed if I have the wrong attitude. You can easily pick up the food you dropped, but it is difficult to be picked up after being dismissed by Kami-Sama. Without thinking of social positions, without arguing, without holding conceit for being educated, and

with pure sincerity, Kami's door will open for you to receive divine blessings. During toritsugi mediation, treat your family members equally with others." The expression "Kami no oitoma" in original Japanese or "being dismissed by Kami" means death.

Norio Sato, who encountered the Founder for the first time at the age of 21, held an aspiration of becoming a renowned master carpenter like the legendary figure Hidari Jingoro. In responding to the Founder's extended inquiry about personal wishes, he instantly responded, "I have no request to Kami." He was such a young and vibrant individual who aspired for a bright future. He especially enjoyed reading books and always carried a book or two in his toolbox. Whenever he had spare time, he enjoyed reading.

He understood that it was a divine call for him to serve as a Toritsugi-Mediator after encountering many life or death incidents which could be divinely arranged. The Founder was quite aware of some elements of Norio Sato's distinctive personality that could be of disruption for the performance of Toritsugi-Mediation. The first lesson the Founder gave to Norio Sato was, "Reforming your heart is most important in practicing faith. Even I will be dismissed if I have the wrong attitude." That message prompted him to be mindful of renewing his heart daily, as it is the foundation for getting "shintoku" or spiritual virtue. The Founder directed him to get rid of self-oriented aspirations to gain the fame as a legendary carpenter; to get rid of self-conceit for the academic knowledge he gained through learning and to refrain from arguments with others. Those extended messages could be very harsh for a young aspiring person like Norio Sato.

Norio Sato might have appreciated the meaning of the following quote, "With pure sincerity, Kami's door will open for you to receive divine blessings." The message could provide a vital guiding post in his pursuit of faith throughout the rest of his life. The Rev. Norio Sato, who played the pivotal role in the formation of the official status of the Konkokyo Religious Organization, exhausted his energy. But he was humble enough to state, "I am just an ordinary lay believer before Kami. I am just an ordinary student when I learn from books."

**Pictures from the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Mochitsuki at our church:**

