



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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Passing on the faith tradition

By Yasuhiro Yano, Head Minister

I was hospitalized for five days from November 11 and discharged on November 15, 2016. On November 16, I was informed of my mother's critical condition that she could live just a couple of days at the most. My mother, Nobuko Yano, passed away peacefully on November 17. She was 92 years old. As I was informed of her passing, I felt convinced that my mother had extended my life through her passing. I could have died at the age of 65. I have regarded myself to be an offering to Kami-Sama in appreciation of the blessings I have enjoyed and the Yano family who have enjoyed expanding family lineage because of the encounter with the Konko faith at Konko Church of Kawanoishi in Ehime.

My grandfather, Tosuke Yano was initiated into the Konko faith because he could not get blessed with children to take over the lineage of the Yano family. He was blessed with three children, two sons and one daughter. Mother, Nobuko got married to one of the boys, which is my father named Ichiro Yano at age of 17. She was totally new to the practice of the Konko faith. She started to practice the Konko faith through her marriage. My parents were blessed with five boys and three daughters. I have witnessed few Konko believers who could have passed down the family religious tradition of the Konko faith to their children. Our parents were one of the rare believers who have enjoyed witnessing all eight children perpetuate the Konko faith in their given conditions. And two of them, my elder brother Sejiro and I have served as Konko ministers. Now my wife, Reiko and three of our children also became Konko ministers. I can attribute all of the blessings I have enjoyed thus far to my parents, especially, my mother, who persevered in pursuit of the Konko faith. Both my wife and I have extended our prayers that the legacy of the Konko faith tradition they have left for us will be perpetuated in Hawaii from generation to generation.

Throughout my life, I have wondered how my parents, especially mother could have been able to pass on the Konko faith tradition to all eight children. For some people it may not be so important to pass on the family faith, but for me, it has been a great prayer of mine even till this day. I left the family at the age of 15 for schooling and the impressions I held about my parents could be limited compared with other siblings, especially, my eldest brother who had to interact with our parents at all times.

I could identify why the Konko faith tradition has dominating effects in the family. Our parents could have ingrained the elements of the religious tradition in our everyday life. The family tradition could have been established by my grandfather who had developed such a conviction that the Konko faith is a true religious faith and should not be forsaken no matter what happens to the family. Because of his encounter with the Konko faith, he was blessed with three children. If he was not blessed with children, the family lineage would have been terminated. The phrase, "Konko-Sama no Okage de" or "Thanks to Konko-Sama" has become a pillar of the family life. Both of my parents used to share that thought to the family members. And they integrated the thought of "Konko-Sama no Okage de" or because of Konko-Sama in our daily family life.

The first thing in the morning as we woke up we had to sit down before the altars and extend prayers and then greet my parents. When we went to school, we sat down before the altars and extend a greeting to Kami-Sama. At least one family member made a visit to church daily. It took just 15 minutes on bicycle. After returning from school, we sat down before the altar and extended greetings to Kami-Sama. Whenever we go out for whatever reasons, we greeted Kami-Sama. When some of the family members got sick, the first thing they did was to extend their prayers to Kami-Sama for healing. Then they called the minister at church or made a visit to church and informed sensei of the situation. If the condition was serious, they took us to see a doctor at the hospital. Occasionally, the doctor made a house visit to treat us. After the visitation to a doctor's office, they took us to make a visit to church and extended a thank you message to the minister and Kami-Sama. The church provided a monthly program for youths. We all attended the program. My eldest brother regularly took us to attend church. Occasionally, we made a pilgrimage to Gohonbu or the Headquarters Church at Konko Town in Okayama. When I look back at those days, I understand that my parents made a substantial investment of money for our getting engaged in faith-oriented activities.

At one occasion, mother told me that the Yano family made a blind offering to Konko-Sama. That remark could show the deep involvement of the parents in the practice of the Konko faith.

My mother was greatly involvement in caring for us to get engaged in the faith tradition that I have never witnessed such

a mother. Whenever one of us moved to live in a new location for schooling, she always tried to find a local Konko church near the place we moved to. When I was in Tokyo, she asked the minister to locate the nearest church to the place I lived. She was informed of the Konko Church of Tokiwadai. She traveled all the way to Tokyo from Shikoku to accompany me to get introduced to the minister of the church. She did this to all of my siblings. In this manner the expanse of church related relationships were substantial. Some of those ministers made a visit to meet our parents at our residence from time to time. For ordinary Konko believers, it could be excessive expenses and engagements of our faith life. There is a Japanese expression of "Ossekai" or unwanted help and engagement from others. But because of her "Ossekai" to have us connected to the Konko-faith it could have contributed in passing on the faith tradition to all of eight children. In a sense, the family has been blessed enough to be in the practice of faith in such a manner for all those years. I am one of the third generation Konko believers. My parents have witnessed more than fifty descendants, including, eight children, their grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

In the Konkokyo faith community they talk about passing on the faith tradition in the family from generation to generations, it would be almost impossible to actualize that endeavor without much involvement and conviction of "Konko-Sama no Okage de."

In corresponding to the exceptional blessings the Yano family has enjoyed, the minister of Konko Church of Kawanoishi extended his thought to our parents from time to time. He said, "Yano-san, in my prayer, I am expecting one or two of your children to serve Kami-Sama directly since your family has enjoyed overwhelming blessings from Kami-Sama." My father was always disturbed by the expressed wish of the minister. My father jokingly responded, "Sensei, you must be kidding. That idea alone is impossible." My father was well aware of a Konko minister's life and its restrictive nature. Ministers have to undergo rigorous difficulties, spiritually and physically and have little financial liberty. He had never imagined that I would ever develop such an idea of entering Konkokyo ministry. To be truthful, I didn't have any inclination of becoming a Konko minister. I simply wanted to serve the faith community through my earned English skills. It was beyond my expectation that my parents would ever express such a positive response for my involvement in the ministry. My father was especially overwhelmed with the feeling of joy and happiness of having two of his children become Konkokyo ministers.

We have a vital tradition of Toritsugi-Mediation which represents the spiritual function of perpetual divine-mediation by Ikigami Konko Daijin, the eternal spiritual presence of the Founder Konko Daijin. In regards to my transfer to the Konko Church of Amagi as a religious trainee, Hosaka-Sensei related to my parents that the only way I could ever survive the religious training was to dedicate myself to be an offering to Kami in appreciation of the blessings the Yano family enjoyed thus far.

Soon after I entered the Amagi Church, while I was sweeping the church yard with a bamboo broom, an aged male church

believer approached me and said to me, "Yesterday, as I also worshipped at the Konko Church of Kokura, Oyasensei told us that there was an offering of a 'shinja' or a believer to our church." He continued to talk, "Through a humanistic approach, we have no way of telling what type of person Kami-Sama utilizes." At that instance, I just felt that the Rev. Hosaka treated me as such. But 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.

I have been extending my sincere thanks for having such pious parents for their extended caring and prayers even after they become Mitama-Spirits.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

Although people live between heaven and earth, they 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 hardships due to these offenses. Tenchi Kane no Kami has sent Ikigami Konko Daijin to provide blessings and teachings so that mankind may prosper. Kami is Kami because of man, and man is man because of Kami. Both are fulfilled through this mutual relationship (Konko Kyoso Gorikai No. 3 in Kyoten Gorikai III).

Although Kami cannot be seen, you are constantly walking within and through the midst of Kami. Even while fertilizing a field or walking along a path, you are in Tenchi Kane No Kami's hiromae. The whole world is Tenchi Kane No Kami's hiromae. (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 6)

Bulletin Board

Monthly Services for January 2017

- 1 Sun -New Year's Day Service (9 am)
- 8 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
- 15 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami
Konko Daijin (9 am)
- 22 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (10 am)
Church General Meeting followed by
New Year's party (till 2:30 pm)
*Bring minimum \$3.00 grab-bag
- 29 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

February 2017

- 1 Wed -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami
(7:30 pm)

Wahiawa Church General Meeting

The annual church members meeting and New Year's party will be held on Sunday, January 22, 2017 following the monthly memorial service at 10:00 a.m.

Mochi pounding evaluation will also be reported. Please bring a grab-bag item of about \$3.00 for the game. The Potluck lunch will be served.

Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace

The regular monthly meeting will be held on Monday, January 30, 2017 at Gedatsu Church at 1:30 p.m.

Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility will be made on Friday, January 13, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.

Mochi Pounding

Thank you all of our church members, volunteer people who helped pound the largest amount of mochi we have ever produced on Friday, December 30, 2016. We processed 345 pound of sweet mochi rice this year. We pounded 39 batches of steamed rice into mochi. The weather was ideal, more local people showed up to enjoy pounding and shaping mochi. The detailed financial account of mochi making will be reported on the day of general meeting on January 22.

KMH Board of Trustees Meeting

The regular KMH Board of Trustees Meeting will be held on Saturday, November 21, 2017 from 10:30 a.m. at Konko Mission of Honolulu

Konkokyo Women's Gathering

An outreach program in the faith community in Hawaii initiated by Mrs. Wanda Tamashiro will invite Mrs. Chie Kawahara from San Francisco as a guest speaker who shares the thought of energy-conscious way of life she has been promoting on Sunday, January 29, 2017 at Konko Mission of Honolulu at 9:00 a.m.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

January

Owari Kaneshige	1/2/1989
Clarence Olsen	1/3/2013
Paul Akita	1/13/2008
Tama Noguchi	1/17/1985
Alesandro Caraballo	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 296, 297 and 298)

No. 296: Eat a lot of your favorite foods because they are like medicine for the body. However, eating too much will make you throw up. It is said that you should fill only eighty-percent of your stomach. Try and fill a bowl eighty-percent with water. The water won't spill even if you take the bowl and run a little. This is a natural law. Remember that eating more of your favorite foods after you are full is being irreverent to Kami. (I Kondo Fujimori 43-1, 2, 3 Kyoten page 285-286)

Fill only eighty-percent of your stomach

In those days when the Founder lived, the sanitary conditions of the villages were poor. They were cautious for their eating habits to prevent food poisoning. At the same time, there was a widely prevailing folk belief about food consumption, such as “Doku-youjo and Doku-date” which implies “Dos and Don'ts of Food Consumption” or restrictive intake of foods for good health. For example, they believe that a mother who gives birth should refrain from eating certain foods. They were imposed of restrictive food culture in those days.

On the contrary, the Founder advocated a totally new concept for food intake. He stressed that they should try to develop the heart of appreciation and gratitude for the blessed nature of foods provided by the work of Heaven and Earth. The Founder related to Saito Sojiro, “People follow unsuitable diets while sick and eat things they dislike. This only weakens their inner strength to live. Practice faith and take the best suited medicines instead. Best-suited medicines are the foods you like. Unless your body regains its strength, you won't be cured. Also, eat the foods with a heart filled with gratitude. When you are sick, partake food with a heart that requests to Kami-Sama” (I Saito Sojiro 5).

The Founder also stated, “Foods you favor are like medicine, while foods you dislike are like poison. However, eating too much will turn medicine into poison. Your favorite food might take your life, so you should partake with gratitude in your heart” (III Jinkyukyogoroku 158). The Founder made such a reasonable and impressive statement in restricting food intake to eighty-percent.

Even when we feel our stomach is full, we are likely tempted to enjoy a bit more of our favorite foods being presented on the table. That excessive food taken could be irreverent to Kami. We should learn to practice mindful food consumption for ourselves.

No. 297: When people eat and drink they've had enough, it is Tenchi Kane No Kami informing them of their limits. Those who go beyond these limits by eating and drinking more, end up getting sick. This is being irreverent to Kami. And those who throw up after overeating or over drinking are also unthinking. Those practicing faith should always respect Kami's protection and not disregard it in everything they do. Pushing others to overeat or over-drink is not being generous. For the sake of the country and for other people and yourself, practice a sincere faith that is not wasteful. (*I Yamamoto Sadajiro 66-1, 2 Kyoten page 400*)

A divine sign to stop eating

When we feel hungry, we respond to eat. It is just a physiological response.

Eating food does not just fulfill our physiological needs, but also fulfills psychological needs, such as enjoyment and fulfillment. But the Founder stated, "When people eat and drink, and think they've had enough, it is Tenchi Kane No Kami informing them of their limits."

If we indulge in going beyond those limits by eating and drinking more, and end up getting sick. We could be irreverent toward Kami, hurt the body that enshrines the extended divine soul given to each one of us. It could be the most irreverent acts.

We should be mindful in consuming foods not to over-eat and over-drink beyond our needs, and get blessed through divine protection and guidance. We would follow intuitions to be able to avoid committing irreverence when we consume foods. Those who practice the Konko faith should also be mindful not to solicit other people to over-eat and over-drink.

As Konko believers, it would be important for us to extend our thoughts and prayers not just for our own concerns, but also for other people and issues in the nation and the world when we consume food.

The Konkokyo Peace Activity Center has been promoting a program called, "Skip a meal in prayer for the children in poverty." The participants of the program are encouraged to save money by skipping three meals a month. They chose their own designated days for skipping meals, such as their own personal days of celebration and the two days of significant historical events of the Konkokyo Religious Organization, including the 15th day of Rikkyo Kinen Shiki or the day of the Konkokyo independence from the affiliation of the traditional Shinto establishments; and the 29th day of the birthday of the Founder on September 29. Personally, I would like to witness as many Konko believers to join the program.

D. Faith and the Family

No. 298: Your family is not to forget about Kami. Whatever happens, don't depend on others. For the good times as well as the bad, rely on Kami. Do not worry. The world is forever changing. Be patient. At any rate, have the family get along well. Even in the manner of addressing each other, use polite words. Don't say things that lack sincerity. (*Oboegaki 21-1-3, 4, 5 Kyoten page 59*)

Do not forget about Kami

The divine message was given to the Founder on February 17, 1873.

In corresponding to the intent of establishing the National Imperial System, the Meiji Government imposed an aggravated restrictive policy of the religions. The Founder lost his certification to get engaged in his religious activities. The family members were at a total loss as to how to deal with the uncertainty. In corresponding to the circumstance, Kami gave the message for the family members.

Kami gave the message, "Your family is not to forget about Kami" as a way to get calm under the extreme circumstances. They just forget to turn their hearts toward Kami.

The family members became so overwhelmed with anxiety under the circumstance and were trying to deal with the situation among themselves totally unaware of their connectedness to Kami. To correct the situation, Kami gave the message, "Whatever happens, don't depend on others." "Be patient at any rate, have the family get along well."

The message could be a reflection of the eventualities of the family members who responded to blame each other and exchanged extreme emotional remarks.

The message was not only intended just for the family members of the Founder, but also to families in the world.

When we encounter troubles in the family it would be better to find solutions within the family, rather than seeking external solutions. It would be important for us to direct our hearts toward Kami, rely on Kami and wait for the most opportune time for the dissolutions. Actually, the Founder followed the divine message and dealt with the most dire circumstance in which he was prohibited to get engaged in his religious work.