



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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A Reminder from the Late Rev. Haruko Takahashi

*By Yasuhiro Yano
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The Konko Mission of Wahiawa will be commemorating 78 years of operation as the New Year begins. On December 24, 2017, we held the 45th Memorial Service for the late Rev. Haruko Takahashi who initiated her missionary work in Wahiawa on January 14, 1940. Her nephew, the Rev. Dr. Todd Zenji Takahashi, an associate minister of Konko Mission of Honolulu also joined the service and shared his thoughts about her with the congregation.

On December 7, 1941, the war between Japan and the United States began. On the day of the Pearl Harbor attack by the Japanese Imperial Navy, the doors of all the Konko churches in Hawaii were shut down and the male head ministers were taken into custody. The Rev. Haruko Takahashi was held in the wartime internment camp at Sand Island about one month after the war began because of her status as a dual citizenship of Japan and the United States and her status as a Head Minister of a Japanese-oriented religious organization. She was transferred to the Honouliuli Internment camp in 1943 and was released on July 7, 1944. She served in operation of the church in Wahiawa for two years before the church closed its temporarily. In 1948, in cooperation of the Konko faith community in Wahiawa, the Rev. Haruko Takahashi resumed her missionary work at a new location at 207 Muliwai Avenue in Wahiawa. The time span of inactivated period of the church operation can be part of the church history since the Rev. Haruko Takahashi and the church congregation never gave up the revival of the church operation. If she gave up her belief in Tenchi Kane No Kami during her stay at the internment camps, the history of the church would be erased and the Konko faith community in Wahiawa would not exist today.

The reason why she devoted herself to the divine call of missionary work could be found in the statement she made upon her graduation from the Konkokyo Kokyusho Seminary in 1934. The statement is a reminder for the Takahashi family as well as the entire church congregation of Konko Mission of Wahiawa. The following is an English translation of her Japanese composition:

Futabanotsudohi (A publication issued in commemoration of graduation from the Konkokyo Kokyusho Seminary, 1934)

By Rev. Haruko Takahashi

I was born in Kohala located in the Island of Hawaii, the United States of America (on April 10, 1910). I had a

visual disorder from childhood. The doctor told me that when I reach the age of 15 to 16, I had to undergo a surgery to correct my eyesight. I suffered from nearsightedness and cross-eyes. My eyes looked just like the bulging eyes of a dead fish. When I tried to see things or read books, I had to bring my face so close to the items. When I enrolled at school, I related my visual disorder to my instructors. They provided special attention and care for my needs. When I extended my thoughts for the people who showed great concerns and sympathies to me, I always felt depressed and complained. I feel overwhelmed with the thoughts of suicide every day till the age of 15 because of the situation.

At the age of 16, I went to see an eye doctor. He told me that he could not operate on my eyes. If my eyes were operated on my condition could worsen. He advised me that the cause of the defects should be identified first and find ways to correct them. Through extensive examination, the doctor found out that I also had some irregularities in my nose and tonsils. A corrective surgery was done to the area, and the doctor gave me shots for one month. But there was little improvement at all. The only way I could cope with the situation was to hide my defects by putting on eyeglasses.

At the age of 17, I took a sewing class. Since I could hardly advance my skills, I tried to extend my earnest prayers for my visual improvement through practicing faith in Oyakushi-Sama single-heartedly. My parents who were also concerned about me joined me in extending prayers for the deity. Also, I tried to avoid all fish and meat for about one year. I could only observe my own eating habit at my residence in privacy. When I was invited to a meal at the house of my sewing instructor, she noticed my strange eating habit of avoiding fish and meat and asked me why I was following such dietary restrictions. I revealed that it was for the purpose of healing my visual disorder through faith involvement of Odaishi-Sama and Oyakushi-Sama. Then she advised me by saying, "Would you mind to get involved in the religion I practice?" I asked her, "What kind of religion is it?" She told me, "I believe in the Konkokyo religion which worships both Tenchi Kane no Kami and Ikigami Konko Daijin." She also shared with me many blessed episodes of her involvement in the religious practice.

That evening, she took me to the Konko Mission of Honolulu. I believe it was a deep divine arrangement for me. On that particular evening, the monthly service was in progress, and the minister was delivering a sermon. While I was listening to him, I felt I understood that I had committed grave irreverences against Kami without my knowledge in the past. I felt overwhelmed with the feeling of extending my apologies for all the wrongs I had committed unknowingly. The following day, I attended

church and listened to the minister. I was in shock and awe for the great divine work of the earth which I had not been aware of till that moment in life. At that moment, I felt a ray of the sunlight penetrate into my eyes. From that day on, my vision improved significantly. I was overwhelmed with the feeling of joy, happiness and gratefulness for the apparent blessing and shed tears.

In one week, my vision returned to normal. I was liberated from my visual disorder. I wrote this matter to my parents. They didn't really believe me at first. But on one occasion, I had an opportunity to travel (to the Big Island) and returned home. The moment they witnessed me, they were overwhelmed with happiness and shed tears in gratefulness. I shared many blessed episodes of the Konko faith involvement with my family members. Then my family members all understood the grateful nature of the faith and have joined me in the practice of the faith together. Through such great blessings I have enjoyed, I became overwhelmed with the feeling of gratitude and this prompted me to enroll myself to the Konkokyo Kokyusho Seminary in this manner. It was through deep divine arrangement.

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 2018

- 1 Mon -New Year's Day Service (9 am)
- 4 Thr -Shingyo Kikan to 1/31
- 7 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-Yaki-Mochi Sunday (after service)
- 14 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
- 21 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (10 am)
Church General Meeting followed by New Year's party (till 2:30 pm)
- 28 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

February 2018

- 1 Thr -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 4 Sun -Sunday Service

Wahiawa Church General Meeting

The annual church members meeting and New Year's party will be held on Sunday, January 21, 2018 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. A lunch will be served.

Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace

The regular monthly meeting will be held on Monday, January 8, 2018 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 19, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

Mochi Pounding

Thank you to all of our church members, friends and volunteer people who helped pound the largest amount of mochi we have ever produced so far on Saturday, December 30, 2017. We processed 350 pound of sweet mochi rice this year. We pounded 40 batches of steamed rice into mochi. The weather was ideal, and more local people showed up to enjoy pounding and shaping mochi. The detailed financial report from this mochi making will be revealed on the day of general meeting on January 21.

KMH Board of Trustees Meeting

The regular KMH Board of Trustees Meeting will be held on Saturday, January 20, 2018 from 10:30 a.m. at Konko Mission of Honolulu

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 329, 330 and 331)

No. 329: When people suffer from sickness even while practicing faith, it means that Kami is taking away their offenses. Be patient. Being patient is practicing faith.
(II Kunieda Sangoro 4 Kyoten 489)

Being patient is practicing faith.

The Founder’s messages were based on his own personal experiences. He didn’t find out theories and teachings through academic researches. What would be the intent of the Founder through this message?

Despite the fact that the Founder followed the traditions of Days and Directions and other folk beliefs sincerely, he encountered the loss of his children one after another. Even after he advanced in his pursuit of faith, he had to deal with children’s illnesses that imposed him to undergo spiritual training of developing absolute trust in Kami. I assume that he might experience helplessness as if he would await a judgment of the authority.

Sangoro Kunieda became initiated in pursuit of faith in corresponding to the miraculous experience of healing of his visual disorder. He gained people’s respect for his earned virtuous spiritual personality through his engagement in the practice of faith. People flocked to seek his spiritual help. One of those days, he became curious witnessing a person who could not get any improvement in his ill condition at all. Sangoro went to see the Founder about the situation. He might ask the Founder, “This person is a devoted believer. Why should he suffer from prolonged illness?” The Founder responded to Sangoro, “When people suffer from sickness even while practicing faith devotedly, it would mean that Kami is taking away their offenses.” The original statement in Japanese was, “刑の取りさばきと思えばよい” that would mean the situation can be likened to awaiting a judicial judgment.

While the Founder was sharing his thought to Sangoro, he might have recalled the difficult encounter in which he had

to give up in engaging in his work of Toritsugi-Mediation imposed by the authority who took away all the altar fixtures and ornaments from the worship hall. Through the legal perspective, the authority executed the legal procedure because the Founder lost his license to practice the religious work under the given circumstance. But the Founder was steadfast in his conviction for his religious belief. He confined himself up in a room of six-tatami mats and endured. During the most difficult circumstance in his life, through the situation of impasse, a new chapter in his life opened up. In responding to the Founder’s sincerity, Kami identified Himself as “Tenchi Kane No Kami” for the first time in the world. He also received the message of “Tenchi Kakitsuke” or the Divine Reminder that states, “Become one with Kami and pray sincerely.” The Founder was allowed to start his religious work again.

The Founder might identify the same elements in Sangoro who encountered a believer who was in the state of inertia in the process of getting blessed for his personal issue. Then the Founder shared his thought, “When people suffer from sickness even while practicing faith, it means that Kami is taking away their offenses. Be patient. Being patient is practicing faith.”

No. 330: Usually, it takes three, five, or even ten years before a major illness is cured and your body returns to its original health. However, once your body has returned to its original health, you will not suffer from that illness again. An illness is like a tree growing in your body. The doctor will give medicine to wither away that tree. The branches and leaves of that tree may soon wither away, but the roots will remain. Hence, that tree will grow again. It will take time for Kami to cure the illness, but you will be cured completely.
(II Kondo Fujimori 35-1, 2, 3 Kyoten page 541-542)

An illness is like a tree growing in your body.

Fujimori Kondo suffered from chronic rhinitis. Through the Toritsugi-Mediation of the Rev. Shinichiro Shirakami, the founding minister of Konko Church of Osaka, he learned about the teachings of the Founder Konko Daijin. Through his earnest prayer, he was healed of the chronic illness.

The quotation above is a part of the original message. In the middle section of the message, the Founder related to Fujimori, “Kondo-san, though it has been one or two years since you started to receive divine blessings, it will take ten years for your body to return to its original health.”

Actually, a healing from a serious chronic illness will take a longer period of time. Even one could get healed from a serious condition through a divine intervention, it could be the state of “a temporal remission” as the Founder stated, “Though Kami-Sama has arrested the disease only

temporarily, but they wrongly believe that they are completely cured.” The state of getting blessed for an urgent matter is a sort of an initial stage in getting engaged in pursuit of faith. An initial blessing for an illness can easily be gotten. But what matters the most is how we respond to this initial stage of getting blessed.

There could be a divine intention for a person to enjoy an initial stage of blessing in time of need. Kami expects him to get initiated in the practice of faith for much greater blessings to be enjoyed. It would be important for a person to take that given blessing for granted and indulge only in expressing temporal happiness and fail to take further action.

The Founder stated, “An illness is like a tree growing in your body. The doctor will give medicine to wither away that tree. The branches and leaves of that tree may soon wither away, but the roots will remain. Hence, that tree will grow again. It will take time for Kami to cure the illness, but you will be cured completely.”

Improvement of our physical condition cannot be achieved in a short time. It takes time. Our physical condition could be achieved through our constant engagement in the practice of faith with a hopeful vision to be achieved in the future.

No. 331: When a chronically ill person or a person suffering from the hardships of past generations receives Kami’s divine blessings, it is like a dirty well being cleaned out. If you get tired and stop cleaning after taking out only eighty or ninety percent of the dirty water, the water will remain dirty. If you practice faith and quit midway, you won’t be able to eliminate the roots of the sickness or suffering. Take out the dirty water until the well is completely clean. Pray single-heartedly to Kami until the roots are completely cut away. Practice faith with a cheerful heart for good health and prosperity.

(1 Yamamoto Sadajiro 35-1, 2 Kyoten page 381)

Eliminate the roots of the sickness or suffering

There are many people who suffer from chronic illnesses, hardships from generation to generation. The depressive air in the family overwhelms not only the person in suffering, but also the whole family would be affected. They say, “toubyou-seikatsu” or “a battling against an illness” shows the exact nature of dealing with an illness. Some people develop a fearful thought that the illness could be attributed to their ancestors who would not be able to rest and be unfulfilled.

The Founder likened the condition of people who suffer from inheritable illnesses to cleaning up a water-well in the yard. Nowadays, it would be difficult to find a house which is equipped with a water-well in the yard. In olden times it was common for the family members to clean the water

well. A family member climbs down a narrow tube of water-well to the bottom and scoops up the dirty elements with a bucket all the way up repeatedly until the water becomes clear. It is a laborious work to clean a well. If the person gives up the work at any stage of cleaning, the well water would never be cleaned. And then the Founder stated, “If you practice faith and quit midway, you won’t be able to eliminate the roots of the sickness or suffering.”

The Founder clearly identified how people would respond in such a task of cleaning a water-well. In general people would feel tired and likely quit only when they have finished 80% to 90% of the task.

The same can be said in pursuit of faith. We should try to deal with any difficult encounter with the heart of single-heartedness and conviction of getting blessed. “一心” pronounced “Isshin” is to hold a persistent engagement in a task we get engaged. Getting engaged in pursuit of faith gives us the spiritual power to be able to cope with any difficult encounters.

Pictures from the Mochitsuki (12/30/2017)

