



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

Konko Mission of Wahiawa, 207 Muliwai Avenue, Wahiawa, HI. 96786. Phone/Fax: (808) 621-6667, Cell: (808) 294-6331
E-mail: konko-wahiawa@hotmail.com. Also, find us on Facebook. Head minister: Rev. Yasuhiro Yano. Vol. XXVIII, No. 7, July 1, 2016

The Divine Reminder as a Divine Vision Board

*By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister*

At our church, we conduct a monthly service in appreciation of the divine work of the Founder Ikigami Konko Daijin, and on October 13, we hold the annual grand service for the Founder Ikigami Konko Daijin.

When I extend my thoughts for the Founder Konko Daijin, I always think of his biological parents and the adoptive parents. Especially, the contributions of spiritual influence the Founder received from the parents are vital for the evolution of an ordinary person to become the Founder of the Konko faith.

There are two things I always admire about the parents of the Founder. We all might know that Konko Sama's father used to carry him on his back and frequented to the village shrines because he wanted his physically weak child to be blessed with good health. The kimono the father wore got worn out at the back and began to tear. Have you ever carried your child to that extent in life? His religiously oriented spirituality could have been deeply settled down in the young mind of Konko-Sama. It can be likened to a message being conveyed in action. Making a visit to the shrines and temples is a fundamental element in the pursuit of the faith. And Konko-Sama inherited and maintained that spirituality throughout his entire life. Konko-Sama said that directing one's heart toward Kami is an essential factor in the practice of faith. This is one thing we all can follow. We can help bring your family members along with your visitation to church. This ensures sure continuation of the faith tradition in the family.

The other element is exhibited by Konko-Sama's mother. Konko-Sama was adopted into the Kawate family at the age of 12, partly because the Kawate household had no child to carry on the family inheritance. From time to time Konko-Sama made a visit to his native house in the village. When Konko-Sama left the house to return to his adoptive family, his mother discreetly followed all the way to witness his safe arrival at the house. This is the ultimate form of prayers in action. She didn't say much, but could not help in witnessing her son's acceptance at the adopted family.

In my understanding these basic spiritual influences Konko-Sama experienced through his parents could have contributed in his emergence as a religious person who became the Founder of the Konko religion.

It is said that what is extraordinary about the Founder Konko Daijin is that an ordinary individual attained to become a religious figure. And Konko-Sama related that anybody can attain the same spiritual salvation he attained. And the basic formula for salvation is shown in the clear four-line statement of the Divine Reminder or the Tenchi Kakitsuke.

The Divine Reminder (Tenchi Kakitsuke)

生神金光大神
Ikigami Konko Daijin
天地金乃神一心に願
Tenchi Kane no Kami isshin ni negae
おかげは和賀心にあり
Okage wa wagakokoro ni ari
今月今日でたのめい
Kongetsu konnichi de tanomei

The English translation of the message has evolved as years passed by. In the past we used to understand the message in a simpler English translation that may reflect the original literal meaning as follows:

*Through Ikigami Konko Daijin,
To Tenchi Kane No Kami
Pray with a single heart,
The Divine favor depends upon
One's own heart
On this very day pray.*

Now we recite the message as follows:

*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.*

Lately I find a much simpler interpretation of the Divine Reminder. It is so simple yet sounds so right for me. Ikigami Konko Daijin represents the Founder himself. As a believer, from his early stage in life he always was aware of the presence of Kami and extended his prayers and relied on Kami. In the process, he evolved to become Ikigami Konko Daijin. He actually received divine names or titles five times, if two of previous acknowledgment of "Shitabano Ujiko" and "Ichi no deshi" Konko Daijin climbed up seven steps of spiritual growth. The point is he never failed to rely on and pray to Kami.

During the process, Kami also evolved from the fearful Konjin deity to merciful and love-full of Tenchi Kane no Kami, in reflection of Konko-Sama's perception about the nature of Kami. So Ikigami Konko Daijin represents the Founder's entire faith life and reached the stage of Ikigami-hood. He relied on Kami in such a manner described as "Tenchi Kane no Kami Isshin ni negae." Throughout his entire spiritual life Konko Daijin did extend his prayer in

such a sincere and wholehearted manner to Kami who evolved to become Tenchi Kane no Kami. And he found the secret of receiving divine blessings or the blessings received always attributable to the state of “Wagakokoro” that he developed through his reliance to Kami and his earnest prayers. And he tried to keep that spirituality of keeping a grateful heart till he died at the age of 70. It may sound too simplistic, but we could be doing just that in our faith life. We can overlap our own name over the name of Ikigami Konko Daijin who may have some potential to evolve to become an Ikigami, just like the Founder attained. Anyway, this is just a notion I developed lately.

As for the Divine Reminder, Konko-Sama put it in such a simple expression. Konko-Sama said to Kataoka Umakichi, “If you think this is an amulet, it will be an amulet. 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). The Divine Reminder can be a reminder how Konko-Sama received blessings. In the Konkokyo religious world, we perceive of the message not just a message intended only to believers of the Konko faith, but it is a message revealed to all humanity regardless of religious differences.

I write down the Tenchi Kakitsuke or the Divine Reminder on the first page of the daily prayer notebook for many years. Nowadays, I feel like that Tenchi Kane No Kami has been calling us to follow the exact message in the reminder, that is to call out the name of Ikigami Konko Daijin and Tenchi Kane No Kami and pray single-heartedly for whatever concerns we may have. It is how we exercise our heart, to keep the heart of “Waga kokoro” is the key element in extending our prayer as we call out the name of Ikigami Konko Daijin. Keep this state of mind, and prayer on this very day. Tenchi Kane No Kami shall have the power to hear extended prayers of all as the Divine Parent of the Universe.

When we put into consideration of the historical background when the Divine Reminder was introduced to the Founder Konko Daijin, we may understand a bit about the deep meaning of the Divine Reminder.

In 1873, during the transitional period of the nation's religious policies, a situation developed that forced the shut down of the operation of Konko Daijin's worship hall. Any tangible items in the hall, such as the altar shrine for Kami, the offerings placed at the altar, the votive lanterns were confiscated. For one month, Kami consoled Konko Daijin by extending, “Take a rest.” The Tenchi Kakitsuke was shown to Konko Daijin in such a given circumstance. Konko-Sama devotedly served Kami through the work of the Divine-Mediation upon reception of the Divine Call to Konko Daijin and His Family in 1859. Fourteen years later, who could have imagined that Konko-Sama had to endure the helplessness that resulted from consequences of governmental regulations?

Although we glorify the Divine Reminder as a universal divine message to all humanity, we have to remind that the message was revealed to Konko-Sama when he was most distressed in his life. What if the message was not revealed to Konko-Sama in such a dire circumstance, would we still have witnessed the presence of

the Konkokyo Religious Organization today? If we do not practice and actualize what is shown in the Divine Reminder, it would be the same as if Konko-Sama did not receive the Divine Reminder at all. The Divine Reminder shows radiance and validity only through the presence of the believers who practice it.

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).

Bulletin Board

Main Services for July 2016

- 1 Fri -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 3 Sun - Sunday Service (9 am)
- 4 Mon -“Shingyo-kikan” intensive church prayer sessions through July 31
- 10 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
- 16 Sat -Rev. Edna and Clayton Matsuoka Wedding (11 am)
- 17 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
- 24 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am) & -Back-to-School Service
- 31 Sun -No Sunday Service, join KMH volunteer activity at Kuakini Medical Center

August 2016

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

KMH Ministers Gathering and Faith Enrichment Meeting

The Rev. Saijiro Matsuda and his family from Minamimuro Church in Mie Prefecture will make a visit to Hawaii. He will make a presentation for the local ministers on Saturday, July 30, 2016 from 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon and the Faith Enrichment meeting for any interested people will follow the morning session from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Konko Mission of Honolulu. He once served in Hawaii for about nine years as administrative minister.

KMH Volunteer Activity at Kuakini Hospital

The annual volunteer activity at Kuakini Hospital Hale Pulama Mau Auditorium for Long Term Care Facility will be held on Sunday, July 31, 2016 from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The Rev. Saijiro Matsuda and his wife, Keiko will also join the program and perform some musical presentations. After the program at the hospital, we will have a pot-luck lunch at Konko Mission of Honolulu. We will have no Sunday Service at Wahiawa Church.

90th Anniversary Celebration of Konko Missions in Hawaii

We will be commemorating the 90th Anniversary Celebration of the Konko Missions in Hawaii on Sunday, September 4, 2016 at the Konko Mission of Honolulu at 9:30 a.m.

Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace

The regular meeting will be held on Monday, July 11, 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, July 8, 2016 from 10:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

Konko Mission of Wahiawa 6th Summer Ohana Camp

We held the annual 6th Summer Ohana Camp organized by the Konko Mission of Wahiawa from June 18 to June 19 at Camp Erdman, Mokuleia. Sixteen people joined the program this year. The theme for this year's gathering was "The Power of Prayer." This program has evolved as a form of outreach program because majority of the attendees were not regular members of the Konko faith. But they have faithfully come to attend the program year after year and have enjoyed the program. For more detailed accounts, please refer to the Children's Newsletter. The Rev. Dr. Todd Zenji Takahashi made an impressive presentation about the theme, "Power of Prayer." It really was interesting in witnessing some improved changes in the attitudes of the attendees after the presentation and the whole programs in the last six years. Basic elements of the Konko faith have been appreciated by those who attended the two-day program. I am looking forward what will evolve from this annual program as we would reach the 10th annual ohana camp. Thank you for your attendance to the program. I also want to extend my deep thanks for our church members and friends who have provided a great deal of support and help for this educational program.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

July

Shimeno Iwasa	7/1/1966
Yasuo Hayashida	7/5/1998
Masao Yoshihara	7/12/2002
Rev. Yoshie Yoshino	7/21/2005
Miyamoto Asa Iratsume	7/23/1933
May Shimaō	7/30/2004

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 154, 155 and 280)

No. 154: Most people come to make requests, but you come to give thanks for the blessings that you are receiving. Kami is satisfied. When people come to give thanks, Kami is happy and so is Kono Daijin. Aren't the people happy too? If people are not happy with the divine blessings they have received, then Kami cannot be happy either. (III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 56-1, 2 Kyoten page 829-829)

Kami cannot be happy if people are not fulfilled.

The author of "Jinkyu Kyogoroku," the Rev. Jirosiro Kataoka made an initial visit to see the Founder in 1868. Because of his strong- faith in his pursuit of faith, the Founder identified his as "Kami's right-hand believer." As has been quoted in the previous page of 153, "When there is no pain, come to worship for faith," he made visit to see the Founder in appreciation of blessings he enjoyed through his engagement in the practice of faith.

In the original statement in the Konkokyo Kyoten Scriptures, the Founder stated, "Whenever you, Saizaki Konko Daijin (Jirosiro Kataoka) came, it is always to give thanks." We seem to be able to picture the scene in which the founder showed an expression of confidence in him.

But he was just one of the exceptional believers. Most people came to see the Founder in requests of personal issues they had to deal with. It looks like deeply seated human nature that we call on Kami only when we are in need.

The statement of the Founder, "If people are not happy with the divine blessings they have received, then Kami cannot be happy either," sounds quite serious. This statement reminds the author of a passage found in the Preamble to the Konkokyo Constitution. That statement can be translated into English, "Kami empathized with children of Kami in suffering as well as in fulfillment." The expressed Divine thought toward us in the statement always touches my heart.

The statement implies that our own personal suffering is not our own, but shared with Kami as well. In the same manner, our own fulfillment is shared with Kami. When we get blessed for difficult issues we have to deal with, we may keep our personal joy and happiness only for ourselves. We should be mindful that the joy and happiness we experience are always shared with Kami as well.

As Konko believers, we should be consciously aware that whatever emotional reactions we may have could be reflected in Kami.

No. 155: The hiromae is where you develop your faith, so train your faith well and return home. You never know what might happen at night, so receive divine blessings at home. Those who have children or jobs cannot leave their homes to come here. When a family member is sick, you cannot leave him or her to come here. Therefore, come here to train your faith only when the whole family is healthy. (II Nanba Ko 6 Kyoten page 647)

Hiromae is a faith practice hall.

The Founder stated, “You never know what might happen at night.” It is so true that we never know any dangers we could encounter not only at night, but even during broad daylight, at home, at our work places—and even while we travel for various purposes. We have been always exposed to some potential dangers in our daily living.

We cannot respond to come to church for each of these crisis situations and seek Toritsugi-Mediation for help. Our work schedules and family affairs may prevent us from attending church.

The Founder stated, “Receive divine blessings at home.” The message implies that we should get blessed not just at home, but wherever we may be.

The regular church visit can be viewed as a preparation for any possible dangers we could encounter through our exercise of faith in Kami. The Founder defined church as such a place to deepen our faith in Kami.

The Founder related to Haruo Tsugawa, “When there are requests, most people come to worship from afar to have toritsugi performed. You need not rely on others to perform toritsugi for you. Practice true faith, pray by yourself, and receive divine blessings. If you think you cannot receive divine blessings without someone performing toritsugi for you, you must always be near a toritsugi mediator. Kami-Sama doesn’t work this way. Pray by yourself and receive divine blessings by yourself” (II Tsugawa Haruo 6).

The Founder might have wanted to witness the believers calling out the name of “Konko Daijin” whenever, wherever and pray by ourselves and receive divine blessings for any encounters. Developing a “self-reliant” engagement in seeking Toritsugi-Mediation could be what the Founder could envision for believers. It takes time for believers to acquire such level of engagement in the practice of faith. The one way to achieve such a stage of belief is to try to attend church to train our faith while we enjoy good health of the whole family.

Section 3

Faith and Daily Life

A. Faith and work

No. 280: People, who are able to live because of the blessings of Kami, should work for Kami every day. The daily work that you do is your faith training. Therefore, if you work with a thankful heart, you can receive great blessings every day.

(III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 28 Kyoten page 818)

Daily work is practicing faith.

The message, “People, who are able to live because of the blessings of Kami, should work for Kami every day,” sounds like the believers are obligated to become Konko ministers and get engaged in our missionary work; or obligated to provide some services to Kami at church, such as helping clean up the church facilities.

But the Founder clearly stated, “The daily work that you do is your faith training.”

The original Japanese expression, “家業” (kagyō) in the quoted message may not be as commonly used in today’s society in Japan. “Kagyō” means family oriented job and business, such as farming, self-employed family business. Majority of people in Japan today are work out of the family as salaried employees. “Kagyō” could be any jobs and daily work in today’s Japan. For a housewife, her daily work such as cooking, laundry, house cleaning are part of “Kagyō.” For students, learning at school can be “Kagyō.”

The concept of “the daily work you do is your faith training” is a revolutionary in the religious world in the secular world.

In general, religious faith training refers to special ascetic training. One of the typical examples is “Thousand-day walk through the mountains from Hieizan to the old imperial palace in Kyoto.” We feel amazed in witnessing their physically and spiritually demanding ascetic trainings practiced by many religious people in Japan.

We have an impression that ordinary people would never be able to undergo such ascetic trainings.

But the Founder stated that whatever joy we get engaged, whatever work we do daily is true faith practice, which help us to advance our faith in Kami and services to Kami. This concept of religious training advocated by the Founder can be unprecedented in the world.

In following the words the Founder and get engaged in our daily work with the heart of gratitude, we are to get blessed in all aspects of our faith life.

Below: 6th Summer Ohana Camp Power of Prayer Workshop

