



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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Think faith to practice faith.



*By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister*

I have spent over 40 years in Hawaii as resident minister of Konko Mission of Wahiawa. Throughout my missionary work with my wife, Reiko, I have developed a wish of what I would like to witness in the Konko faith community in Hawaii. When I arrived in Hawaii for our missionary work, there was a sensei who told me, “This is America. This is not Japan. It’s impossible to think that children of ministers would evolve to become Konko ministers.”

The moment I heard the message, I was prompted to think of the meaning of doing missionary work if their own children wouldn’t want to follow the faith their parents spread through sacrificing their own lives. Missionary work would be meaningless if I can’t even inspire my own children to practice this faith. It was a terrifying thought for me. I also thought it was an insult against Kami-Sama who gave us the divine mission to help people in this community.

One of the biggest fears I have held as a missionary was the failure to pass on the Konko faith to our own children. Their rebellion against the Konko faith engagement could nullify all the dedications and endeavors both my wife and I would have rendered. As for my fears, Kami-Sama seems to have responded to grant blessings of erasing the fears as for now in witnessing the evolution of three of our children to get engaged in ministry of the Konko faith. I believe they would continue to enjoy the blessings of their acquired spirituality through the basic practice of the Konko faith that could be summed up in the phrase: “Shinjin wa shinjin de kangaeru” or “Think faith to practice faith” as my second son, Rodney translated in English.

To practice faith is equivalent to learning a new language, such as learning to speak English. In order to learn

English, you have to think, speak, and practice in English. It has to be practiced. Just like faith, think faith, speak faith, and maybe just maybe the elements of faith will come to fruition.

I also want to witness the believers who practice the concept of “Shinjin wa shinjin de kangaeru” or “Think faith to practice faith” in the faith community. This expression implies that our minds have been saturated with the elements of the faith. Without the knowledge and elements of the faith being stored up in mind, there would be no way we can think things out in faith.

I remember a statement once made by my father when I was young. The Rev. Hidejiro Hosaka of Konko Church of Kawanoishi in Ehime told my father, “Yano-san, Shinjin wa shuuyou dewa naidesukarana” or “Yano-san, to practice faith cannot be actualized through training of self-discipline.” I have been wondering about this statement for all those years, till this age. Now I feel like I understand the meaning. The Reverend might try to tell my father the practice of “Shinjin wa shinjin de kangaeru” or “Think faith to practice faith.”

A typical example of how we practice “Shinjin wa shinjin de kangaeru” can be found in the following episode experienced by the Founder Konko-Sama. The episode was quoted by the Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake, the founding minister of Konko Church of Amagi in Fukuoka in a booklet titled, “Michio no Shiori” or a guidebook to the practice of Konko faith, originally intended to the ministers under the spiritual guidance of the Rev. Yasutake.

At one occasion, Kami-Sama instructed Konko-Sama, “Early tomorrow morning, get up and travel to Tamashima Town. A sum of 500 yen is placed somewhere on the way. I will give you the money. Bring the money back home . . .” Konko-Sama made an excursion by preparing a lunch bento box and traveled approximately four-kilometers and reached the town of Tamashima. He looked around the town here and there. But there was no trace of money as mentioned by Kami. At around noon, he enjoyed lunch and asked Kami-Sama, “I looked around the town for the money you mentioned, but I could not find it yet. Shall I return home now?” Kami-Sama instructed him, “Try to look around for the money till the sun sets. I am sure you can find it.” It became dark. Konko-Sama asked Kami again, “I cannot find the money. Shall I return home now?” Kami-Sama responded, “Do you have your own

money?" Konko-Sama answered, "Yes. I have mine." Kami-Sama responded, "If so, others also may not drop their money. Return home now." Even for those seemingly irrational instructions, Konko-Sama followed faithfully.

What do we see in the episode? Apparently Kami-Sama tested Konko-Sama if he would get a monetary reward in following the instructions. But actually he gained no monetary reward. If we could be in the same situation, how would we respond? We would feel fooled by Kami-Sama, confused and may get upset. These are the average believers' responses to a failed divine promise, aren't they? In my understanding, when we encounter a situation like this promise, the majority of us would fail to fulfill Kami-Sama and be instantly disconnected with Kami-Sama.

What if Konko-Sama responded to Kami-Sama in the same manner as we would respond in anger and disgust, "Kami-Sama you have made promises so many times that I would be rewarded with monetary gain by following your instructions. Your promises were all lies. You must be kidding. I can no longer practice this kind of fake deity," then this religion called Konkokyo would not have come into existence. This sort of negative response would instantly disconnect us from Kami-Sama and there would be no actualization of blessings in this state of disconnectedness. But most of us would be responding in that manner as we engaged in the practice of faith. But we would be glued or joined by the work of Toritsugi-Mediation even if we distance from Kami-Sama from time to time. We should be grateful for this wondrous divine virtue of Ikigami Konko Daijin who has been always connected to Kami-Sama.

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 July 2018

- 1 Sun -Monthly Svc for Tenchi Kane No Kami (9 am)
- 7 Sat -8th Ohana Camp Day 1 (9 am check-in. 10 am start)
- 8 Sun -8th Ohana Camp Day 2 (No church service)
- 15 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
-KMH Volunteer Activity at Kuakini Hospital (9:30 am)
- 22 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)
-Back to School Service
- 29 Sun -KMH Faith Enrichment Mtg at HNL Church (9 am),
the guest speaker, the Rev. Alfred Tsuyuki from
the Konko Church of Los Angeles.
-No Church Service for Wahiawa on this day

August 2018

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

Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace

The regular monthly meeting will be held on Monday, July 23, 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, July 13, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

KMH Volunteer Activity at Kuakini Hospital

The annual volunteer activity at Kuakini Medical Center will be held on Sunday, July 15, 2018 at 9:30 am.

8th Summer Ohana Camp

The 8th Summer Ohana Camp organized by Konko Mission of Wahiawa will be held on July 7 & 8 (Saturday & Sunday) at HR Camp Erdman, Mokuleia. This year's theme is "Ancestors." The Rev. Dr. Todd Zenji Takahashi, associate minister of Konko Mission of Honolulu will make a presentation. Even if you have not registered for the program, anybody, who wishes to listen to the Rev. Dr. Todd Takahashi will be welcomed. The workshop will begin at 10:30 am.

KMH Faith Enrichment Meeting

The annual KMH coordinated Faith Enrichment Meeting will be held on Sunday, July 29, 2018 at Konko Mission of Honolulu. We will join the church prayer service at 9:00 a.m. At 9:30 a.m., the Rev. Alfred Tsuyuki from Konko Church of Los Angeles will speaker for the subject of "Omichibiki" or introducing and guiding new people to the faith community and followed by Q & A session will follow. The three believers from Honolulu, Waipahu and Wahiawa Churches will also share their thoughts on the theme, and a half an hour Q & A will follow. The formal program will end at 12:30 p.m., and lunch will be served.

Garage Sale to support the Big Island Volcano Evacuees

A fund-raiser garage sale will be held on Saturday, August 18, 2018. All proceeds will be donated to the cause.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

July

Shimeno Iwasa	7/1/1966
Curstin Abe	7/2/2015
Wesly Katsumi Oyama	7/4/1981
Yasuo Hayashida	7/5/1998
Randy Yamamoto	7/5/2014
Masao Yoshihara	7/12/2002
Robert Walker	7/15/2015
Masae Baba	7/20/1987
Rev. Yoshie Yoshino	7/21/2005
Miyamoto Asa	7/23/1933
May Shimao	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 347,348 and 349)

No. 347: Present-day society is knowledge-oriented. People always try to outsmart others, thus they are losing the virtue within themselves.

(II Unknown 24 Kyoten page 250)

Losing the virtue

During the Meiji period, the government reformed the educational system that provided equal educational opportunities even for women. But the Founder criticized the so-called “Bunmei-kaika” or the introduction of western culture into Japan in such a manner, “Present-day society is knowledge-oriented.” “Chie” in the original text refers to intelligence to be able to think, plan for future and deal with complex matters. “Chie” cannot necessarily mean negative elements. But the Founder identified the hidden elements of “Chie” or intelligence in general.

The Founder received tutoring and developed basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills from Mitsuemon Ono. Mitsuemon was a highly educated scholar in the village. The Founder showed his respect to Mitsuemon who naturally displayed dignity in his personality.

The people were influenced by the newly evolving social change that drove people to gain knowledge. The

Founder might have felt something wrong in witnessing some people who boasted their gained knowledge alone without any dignity.

The Founder referred to those people by saying, “People always try to outsmart others, and thus they are losing the virtue within themselves.” The original Japanese expression, “minotoku” could refer to the naturally emitting elements of respectable personality that could be identified in Mitsuemon Ono. Those people who develop over confidence for their gained knowledge could degrade their own personalities.

Modern society has evolved to become even more knowledge-oriented. There seems to be no ending to the development of new technologies. The “juku” cram schools have enjoyed thriving businesses in Japan. On the other hand, many crime-oriented schemes have been perceived and inflicted damages to the society. The exact picture the Founder showed, “Present-day society is knowledge-oriented. People always try to outsmart others, thus they are losing the virtue within themselves,” could be identified in today’s society.

In pursuit of the faith, we should be mindful of the message given by the Founder, “Man cannot completely comprehend the matters of the Universe. You should be filled with awe” (III Shinkun 1-20).

No. 348: People today are very fashion-conscious. They follow the style of the times, but without receiving Kami’s virtue, they won’t receive divine blessings. *(II Kondo Fujimori 48 Kyoten page 741)*

Kami’s virtue

The Meiji Government tried to emphasize the advancement of the power of the nation. As a result, the people had to deal with unprecedented social changes in such a manner of compliance in unison, “For the sake of the nation.”

The Founder had to deal with the imposed religious restrictions resulting from the governmental change. The government prohibited the missionary work of Christianity at first. The Meiji government imposed much greater religious restrictions that affected not only Christianity but any other religions in Japan. The restrictions on religions were aimed to solidify the Emperor-oriented governance of the nation. The government imposed a compulsory education for the young people to worship the Emperor through public schooling. For adults, the government tried to institutionalize established religions entities to promote Emperor-worshipping.

The Meiji government abolished the commonly practiced religious system and introduced “Kyodo-shoku” certificate to those people who were in compliance to the national religious policy. They had to follow the “Sanjo-no-kouken” or a creed for religious workers consisted of three messages.

In corresponding to the developing circumstance, the Founder instinctively understood a danger for his engagement in the practice of faith. He did not comply with the regulations imposed by the authority. Consequently, the worship hall was shut down.

“On July 12, 1879, the two officials arrived (from Shinto Office in Osaka), accompanied by Shirakami and Kondo. We met at the Kibinoya Inn. The visitors said that Kanayamahiko No Mikoto, the deity of the Nangu Shrine in Mino Province, could be installed at the Hiromae so that it could be officially recognized as a branch shrine of the Nangu Shrine. Before the visitors saw the Founder, I told him about their proposal. The founder said, “This Kami is different. Please tell them that it is not possible. Having purified their bodies, the visitors were taken to the founder without being told of what he had said. Then they told the founder their proposal. The founder merely replied, ‘Thank you. I will let Sato Norio speak to you about this matter.’ After returning to the inn, they both said, ‘It’s incredible, just incredible.’ Then I explained in detail what the Founder had told me earlier. Both of them just said, ‘He is a great religious person.’ We treated the Shinto priests well, and they returned to Osaka accompanied by Shirakami and Kondo. The proposal made by the visitors from Osaka was very kind, but the founder did not accept it. If he had been swayed by the kindness at that time, the Konkokyo of today would not exist” (III Naiden 7-21, 22, 23, 24, 25).

In those days, the police strengthened their powers to regulate religious activities, especially at rural areas. Some Konko ministers got engaged in their missionary work in disguise of other religious sects. Although they could get engaged in their missionary work in dealing with the given circumstance, the Founder adhered to his conviction that without receiving Kami’s virtue, they won’t receive divine blessings.

No. 349: Although the government was established through Kami, it tries to control Kami.

(II Kondo Fujimori 48 Kyoten page 546)

The government and Kami

While the Founder was alive, those people who engaged in their missionary work in Osaka experienced the greater governmental restrictions. The quoted message could be the Founder responded to Fujimori Kondo who explained

about difficult circumstance for his missionary work in Osaka.

The statement, “Although the government was established through Kami” implies that despite the fact that everything was possible though the work of Kami, including the perpetual existence of humanity and communities, but the government tried to control Kami.

The commoner used the expression “Okami” or higher ones when they referred to the governmental authority in euphoric manner.

The “Okami” government that feared the possible uncontrolled invasive spread of Christianity in Japan, tried to restrict any religious activities. The commoners took for granted such a governmental policy on religious world and show little opposition. While the Buddhist-oriented temples and institutions enjoyed some governmental protection to help suppress the spread of Christianity. The government imposed so-called “Teraueke” system that enforced the compulsory adherence to Buddhist temples of the residents throughout Japan.

The Meiji government imposed much stricter religious regulations to solidify the Emperor governance system.

The modern liberalism has been based on the principle that the governmental authority should not restrict the freedom of thoughts, speech and religion. The Founder might have grasped the concept of the freedom through his own religious perspective, not through academic discussions. The Founder did not succumb to the governmental authorities and continued to get engaged in his pursuit of faith. Consequently, the government shut down the operation of the Founder’s religious work.

Under the desperate circumstance, the Founder might develop criticism against the government and shared his thought to Fujimori Kondo in the quoted message.

The Founder prioritized religious faith over the governmental authorities. At the same time, the Founder tried to show compliance with the governmental regulations based on his conviction that any religious entities exist within the country under the governance of authority. But the Founder always tried to keep the dignity and reverence of Kami that governs the whole Universe.