



Trust, a vital element in pursuit of faith

By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister

The world of religious faith is based on trust relationship. Trust relationships cannot be measured. If the trust relationships could be measured, human relationships of any kinds would be at ease and the practice of faith would also be easy.

The society we live in is fundamentally based on credits or merits in assuming trustworthiness of a person or an element. When getting a loan, you'll be asked your credit score. And they will determine if they trust you enough to loan you money based on that figure. The educational system is a typical example of the world of credit. Those who work hard at school and get advanced in schooling are to get rewarded with credits that can be useful in society. The accumulated credits directly affect how we live. If we have a bachelor's degree, master's degree or doctorate degree, society automatically categorizes what they are capable of and are also put into a category of trust. Getting a degree tells people how long they had to go to school and how hard they had to work in order to achieve those goals. But it does not determine their actual level of trust, compassion, kindness, wisdom, or talents. Those things cannot be measured. And there aren't any certificates for those important categories.

No matter how much academic credits we earn, it cannot be an absolute assurance that we would be able to function in society. Without human interactions we would not be able to sustain our normal lives. If there would be no human interactions at all, there would be no need to rely on credit based systems. But most of us are aware that credit scores alone have little meaning. Credits are just one of the elements to prove one's trustworthiness.

Robots can be programmed to produce the same results every time, may be prone to malfunctions. Any machines would be prone to breakdown if used for a while. The power source is their lifeline.

Spiritual practice is not based on credit. It is based on trust. The Founder Konko Daijin was exposed to the religious

practices of his father from an early stage in his life. His father used to carry him on his back and visited village shrines and temples. When he was adopted to the Kawate family at the age of twelve, the adoptive father asked his likes and dislikes. He responded that he disliked "mugimeshi" barley rice. He also requested to be allowed to visit shrines and temples in the village. He followed the common tradition of observing the Days and Directions and tried to deal with many difficult encounters. He even encountered the much feared "Seven-Deaths" of his family members, including two cows that were an integral part of the family life in those days. At the age of 42, he suffered from a life or death critical throat ailment. Still, he kept on believing in Kami and other deities. In corresponding to his unyielding and consistent attitude in upholding the work of the deities displayed by the Founder Konko Daijin, a divine message was given to him, "The village deity and all the kami are pleased with your sincerity and faithfulness during this critical year of your life. You were to have a much serious illness, but because of your faith, it was changed to a throat ailment. . . The sun shall always shine brightly upon you and you shall have good health and lead a full life" (Konko Daijin, A biography 17).

In corresponding to his advanced stage of belief in Kami, the Founder had been granted divine titles seven times from 1858 when he reached the age of 45. Kami also revealed the true nature in responding to the Founder's stage of belief. The divine titles progressed from the initial stage of "Kane no Kami Shitaba no Ujiko" on January 1, 1858; "Kane No Kami no Ichi no Deshi" on September 23, 1858; "Bunji Daimyoujin" on December 24, 1858; "Konshi Daimyojin" on June 10, 1859; Konko Daijin received "Rikkyo Shinden" or "Divine Reminder" on October 21, 1859; "Konko Daimyojin" on February 23, 1862; "Konko Daigongen" on October 24, 1864; and "Ikigami Konko Daijin" on September 24, 1868. A seed of belief planted in the mind of the Founder attained growth to reach the ultimate stage of "Ikigami Konko Daijin."

A divine message was given to the Founder, "Through Konko Daijin, Tenchi Kane No Kami's blessings can now be received. Through Konko Daijin, Kami has been revealed to the world. Konko Daijin works for the benefit of Kami and people. Follow the words of Konko Daijin carefully and practice faith. In an emergency, you need not say, 'Tenchi Kane No Kami!' Just say, 'Konko Daijin', please help me, and you will receive divine blessings" (III Konko Kyoso

Gorikai 4). In a sense, the Founder acquired the absolute trust from Tenchi Kane No Kami in reflection of the exhibited absolute trust of the Founder to Tenchi Kane No Kami. Ikigami Konko Daijin actualized the presence of Tenchi Kane No Kami.

But the Founder Konko Daijin always expressed, "Even I can be dismissed at anytime if my heart is wrong" (II Sato Norio 11-2).

It is said to practice Konko faith is to believe in Tenchi Kane No Kami. To believe in Tenchi Kane No Kami means to believe in Ikigami Konko Daijin. To believe in Ikigami Konko Daijin is to believe in the teachings of Ikigami Konko Daijin.

Konko Daijin was the first teacher who gained tenure from Tenchi Kane No Kami to spread the teachings and save people. Those believers who believed Konko Daijin also evolved as teachers to extend the work of Konko Daijin at their own given conditions. And many followers who believe in those disciples also evolved to become Konko ministers and help the initial work of Konko Daijin at their own given conditions. Over 160 years of the founding of the Konko faith, we have been still thriving. But through the course of a short span of merely 160 years, have we succeeded in activating the initial absolute trust between Tenchi Kane No Kami and each minister who would have assimilated the belief of the Founder Ikigami Konko Daijin? This can be an organizational issue, but everybody who has ever connected to the practice of Konko faith would also be affected.

In 1994, the Rev. Fumio Yasutake, the second Head Minister of the Amagi Church was stricken with a terminal stage of lung cancer. His prognosis was to live up to 500 days at the most, according to the doctor. At that time, the church observed the 90th Anniversary Celebration of the church. Under the circumstance, I felt determined that I should bring all my family members to meet him in person for that auspicious occasion. But we had limited financial resources. It would be impossible for us to make a trip. So I made a request to get a loan from the Amagi Church which allows student ministers who once underwent religious training at the church to borrow money. At that time, the Rev. Masahiko Yoshino (former head minister of Honolulu Church) expressed his encouragement and support for my wish of making a visit to see the minister with all of my family members. I simply felt I should let our children see this great minister in person and be included in the prayer of the minister. I wanted my children to get exposed to a pro bono spiritual figure which saw in the Rev. Fumio Yasutake. They say the only way a person can develop the knowledge to identify a fake from the genuine is to get exposed to the

genuine and study the elements of the genuine items, such as Japanese swords or designer bags. Ordinary people may find little meaning in that endeavor of seeing a person for such intent. My wife was hesitating to make a pilgrimage in such a manner because we were extremely short of money, but I thought this could be the last occasion we would ever see him in good health. I earnestly wished for my children to see a sensei of true faith. Yoshino sensei related that there would be no such a person who would ever make a visit to see him in such a way as we did.

After the anniversary celebration in 1995, I sent both of my sons, David and Rodney to stay at the Amagi Church for three months during the summer vacation to let them get exposed to the Oyasensei, the Rev. Fumio Yasutake as a trial and for their exposure to this great religious figure we have admired. David was a senior and Rodney was a sophomore at Leilehua High School. At that occasion, we had some money to send them to Amagi.

Soon after the passing of the Rev. Fumio Yasutake in 1995, David responded to our prayer and went to the Amagi Church upon his graduation from high school and spent three years for spiritual training in 1996. We could manage to send him off. But all of the expenses at the church were provided by the Amagi church, including some stipends. While David was in Amagi, Rodney graduated from high school and he also agreed to go to the Amagi Church for training in 1998. But that time, we were again very short on cash. I asked the Rev. Yoshino for some financial help for the airfare and borrowed some money from him to send my son Rodney to Japan for spiritual training. He was the only person we could ever ask for such a request. He showed a great deal of support for sending our sons to the Amagi Church. We simply responded to the expressed thoughts of the Rev. Fumio Yasutake. While I was in Amagi, he used to say that we should help our children to become Konko ministers and encouraged us to send our children to the Amagi Church for religious training. David returned back to Hawaii in 1999. Rodney had a year left at Amagi Church. My daughter, Edna graduated safely from high school in the year 2000. She also wanted to go to the Amagi Church and Seminary in 2000 after watching her brothers change so much. This time we could somehow manage to send her to Japan for two years and she came back to Hawaii in 2002. It took six years for three of our children to finish training at the Amagi Church. During the six-year cycle, I sent them my monthly English speech scripts I made via fax machine. This could not have been possible without the trusting relationship between me and Oyasensei, the late Rev. Fumio Yasutake and the Konko Church of Amagi.

If we are to enjoy blessed lives as Konko believers, trusting relationship that can be appreciated by Tenchi Kane No Kami is the vital element in pursuit of faith as the Founder exhibited.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

Tenchi Kane No Kami is the kami who watches over everything. When I tell people that Kami sees all and protects the Universe, they come and ask me for a strict definition of Heaven and Earth. However, it is not necessary to strictly define these terms. They are indispensable to our lives and cannot be divided. It is Tenchi Kane No Kami who put them together for them to function well. If we compare the Universe to people, Heaven is man and Earth is woman. It is good when they are joined in marriage. It is not good when a man and woman are separated. When they come together, things go well. It is Tenchi Kane No Kami who puts them together and arranges for things to go well. Then Heaven and Earth can work together as father and mother to help their children prosper. If you practice faith in Tenchi Kane No Kami, your family will prosper in the future by helping each other, and will not experience the problems of one-parent families. (Gorikai III Jinkyukyogoroku-41)

The Founder Konko Daijin prayed to Tenchi Kane No Kami, "When the people of the world pray to Ikigami Konko Daijin with a sincere and single-heart, please fulfill whatever request they have." (Gorikai II Unknown 7)

Bulletin Board

Church Services for June 2020

- 1 Wed -Monthly Service, Tenchi Kane No Kami
(Facebook Live 7:30 pm)
- 5 Sun -Sunday Service (Facebook Live 9 am)
- 12 Sun -Monthly Service, for the Founder,
Ikigami Konko Daijin (Facebook Live 9
am)
- 19 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (Facebook Live 9 am)
- 26 Sun -Back-to-School Service (Facebook Live 9 am)

August 2020

- 1 Sat -Monthly Service, Tenchi Kane No Kami
(Facebook Live 7:30 pm)
- 2 Sun -Sunday Service 9:00am
-Rotary Hanashikai at Wahiawa at 10:30 am.
Lunch will be served.

Garage Sale

We conducted a garage sale in responding to the many generous donations of goods to our church. It was held on

a beautiful Saturday morning on June 13, 2020 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. It was a great success. Thank you very much for your donations of items and offerings and support. All the proceeds were deposited to the church operational fund.

Congratulations

Mr. Jason Adkison has been promoted to the title of Command Sergeant Major of the 3rd Battalion 25th Aviation Regiment on June 16, 2020. We pray you will continue to contribute to the well beings of the regiment and peace-keeping tasks. Congratulations on your 20th anniversary of your married life and renewed wedding vows held on June 28, 2020 at Konko Mission of Wahiawa.



KMH

The second Rotary Hanashikai will be held at Konko Mission of Wahiawa on Sunday, August 2, 2020 from 10:30 am following the regular Sunday Service. Lunch will be served.

The Church Door is Open

We welcome you to make a visit to our church and church services. Please wear your face mask for Covid-19 precautionary measures.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

July

Shimeno Iwasa	7/1/1966
Wesly Katsumi Ooyama	7/4/1981
Randy Yamamoto	7/5/2014
Yasuo Hayashida	7/5/1998
Masao Yoshihara	7/12/2002
Robert Walker	7/15/2015
Masae Baba	7/20/1987
Asa Miyamoto	7/23/1933
May Shima	7/30/2004

If you wish to have a name added to the church Mitama listing or removed, please contact Rev. Yasuhiro Yano.

The following is an English translation of the special edition of Konko Shinbun published for the purpose of advertisement for the promotion of the publication. The author of the writing is the Rev. Michiko Tanaka, associate minister of Konko Church of Takachiho in Miyazaki Prefecture.

Enjoyment of parenting

By Rev. Michiko Tanaka

After getting married I had prayed to get blessed with children. Many years have passed without any signs of pregnancy. I felt a bit of hopelessness in extending my prayer for children. One of those days, I became so excited to learn that I conceived twins. In corresponding to my pregnancy, a person named A-san made a visit to church. Upon her entrance into the worship hall, she found out I was expecting. She responded to my pregnancy and began to talk about her daughter who got married 15 years ago and had no children. She related me that the family members have already given up hope of getting blessed with child. I shared her my story of a difficult pregnancy and encouraged her to keep praying to Kami-Sama for getting blessed with a child without giving up through the practice of faith. I also forwarded her prayer to Kami-Sama. In less than one year, her daughter was blessed with a daughter. The baby girl was named Mariko. Two years later, a boy was born to her daughter.

Twelve years ago, when Mariko was an 8th grader and her brother turned a 5th grader, her mother passed away in the summer of that year. And in two weeks, her grandmother passed away. A-san also encountered an accident and became bedridden. In corresponding to the situation, both my husband and I took care of the two children in trouble in the house that was also used for church functions. Ten months later, A-san departed.

Mariko exclaimed out loud in deep sorrow and fear, "Why do we have to suffer this much? I cannot stand this anymore" and cried profusely. I could do nothing else but to embrace her and kept reciting, "Konko-Sama, Konko-Sama."

The local agency extended their support for the situation and recommended us to take care of the children through the foster care program called "Sato Oya." At first, both my husband and I had no experiences as foster parents and had little confidence for parenting the children. But we were determined to take care of the children as our

family members. Kami-Sama seems to encourage us for the sake of the children.

At the initial stage of caring of the children, I was sort of driven to assimilate their biological parents. But I learned that my attempt was futile because no matter how hard I tried to take care of the children, it was impossible to become their own parent when Mariko became sick and underwent surgery. When she was ready to be transported to the operating room, I held Mariko's hands firmly and prayed for a successful operation of the surgery with heart and soul. Mariko called out her mother's name loudly in tears as she was wheeled into the operating room. When I witnessed the scene, I was sort of defeated by the reality and became disappointed. I felt no matter how much I would try to become Mariko's mother; I could be of no match to her own mother. From that episode, I prayed to Kami-Sama, "Please allow me to enjoy foster parenting of the children and pray for their sound growth." In the last 12 years, I could enjoy foster parenting to eight children in total.

The Konko faith is the way of life in gratitude and happiness. The parents who have spiritual foundations of the Konko way of life would be able to appreciate the grateful nature of any given lives, share the joy of life, share the happiness of enjoyment of life that could be shared by any other people. This task of helping children to grow in such a manner can be one of the vital missions of the Konko faith.

Last year, Mariko got married. She shared her thought with us, "Both my husband and I would get blessed in our married life together. We also are resolved to become foster parents and enjoy helping children to enjoy sound growth in the same manner as you two have demonstrated." She was full of happiness and gratitude.

When looking back at the past 12 years, who could ever be able to picture what has evolved at this moment. When we looked back at those days spent with Mariko and her brother, we feel overwhelmed in gratitude and had a thought, "There would be no moments of wastefulness in life." No matter whatever encounters we would experience in life, as long as we extend our gratitude for the elements of blessing from Kami-Sama and live in gratitude, we are to secure our life for tomorrow. I really feel convinced to the way of life of the Konko faith.