



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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From this year, for the first time ever in the history of Konko Mission of Wahiawa, we have scheduled monthly testimonials by our church members. The following is the fifth speech script contributed by Ms. Doreen J. Hirota who shared her thoughts about his involvement in the practice of the Konko faith on Sunday, May 23, 2011.



The unforgettable blessing received

By Ms. Doreen J Hirota

One Friday morning in December 1975, I woke up with a heavy pressure on the right side of my chest, pain in my upper back, and I had a hard time breathing. I was scared but I went to work thinking I would get better, but I didn't.

The next day, I went to the doctor, and he told me to go to Wahiawa General Hospital to get x-rays done. I walked to the hospital since it was close to the doctor's office and walked back with the results. The doctor told me I had pneumothorax and explained that it was a collapsed lung.

Mom asked Ishii Sensei, who was at our Wahiawa Church at that time, if he could pray to Kami-Sama for me. Mom sewed a cloth bag and put a whole Goshinmai in the bag. She then told me to pin it in the inside of my clothing on the right side against the collapsed lung.

Mom constantly prayed for me every day at home and kept telling me to drink plenty of Goshinmai. While I rested, she walked to church and she and Ishii Sensei prayed for me. In less than a month, the collapsed lung healed.

This was really Okage because a co-worker in my office had 30 percent collapsed lung and he was hospitalized. I had 50

percent collapsed lung and I was able to stay at home and get well.

I was so thankful to Kami-Sama for watching over me because this was a scary and painful experience to go through.

Always connected

(Sermon delivered for the Grand Service at Waipahu Church)

*By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister*

Good morning everyone. Thank you for your presence here today for the annual observance of the Grand Service in Appreciation of the Work of Tenchi Kane no Kami, Our Divine Parent of the Universe. I feel grateful for this given opportunity to be able to share with you my thoughts about the faith tradition.

One thing for sure is that Konko-Sama believed in Kami-Sama and followed all the instructions and teachings in the manner that brought fulfillment to Kami-Sama to himself and the family members. In other words, Konko-Sama always found ways to get connected to Kami-Sama throughout his entire faith life. I understand that Konko believers are those people who believe in Tenchi Kane no Kami and practice those teachings in life. To believe in Tenchi Kane no Kami is to believe in the teachings, and in turn, to believe in the teachings means believing in Tenchi Kane no Kami.

In the past, I have quoted a particular episode related by the Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake, the founding minister of Konko Church of Amagi in a booklet titled, "Michi no Shiori" or a short guidebook for the practice of the Konko faith. In the opening page of the booklet, the following is stated, "This booklet is the partial script of the speech presentation in which my grandfather shared what could be identified to be the vital elements of the practice of the Konko faith to the young ministers who were affiliated to the church on February 23, 1948. This time, in commemorating the 25th memorial year of the minister, the booklet is presented to you as a form of 'Shinobi gusa' or an item in remembrance and honor of the deceased." Our church members in Wahiawa have been quite familiar with the episode.

An identical episode is also found in the biography of the Founder, "Kyoso-Sama" authored by the Rev. Shinsei Konko. I would like to quote the story from this book

(Volume II pages 57 to 59) for your reference because it is more detailed in the account.

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. It is yours to keep. 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 can we learn in this 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, what reactions we would take. We would feel fooled by Kami-Sama, confused and may get angry. 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.

What if Konko-Sama responded to Kami-Sama in the same manner as we would respond in anger and disgust? What if Konko-Sama said, "Kami-Sama you have made promises so many times I would be rewarded with monetary gain by following your instructions. However, your promises were all lies. I can no longer practice this kind of fake deity." This religion called Konkogyo 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. We should be grateful for this wondrous divine virtue of Ikigami Konko Daijin who has been always connected to Kami-Sama.

Konko-Sama stayed connected to Kami-Sama under any given situation. This is vital and quite difficult to follow in reality. Some people say that this episode was to test the depth of the belief held by Konko-Sama. Konko-Sama always found ways to keep connected with Kami-Sama. Another good example can be the episode of the "waraji straw sandals."

Kami-Sama instructed, "Practice training during autumn. When you get up in the morning, change into formal robes, proceed to the worship hall, engage in your daily offering of prayers; upon your completion of prayer

offering, let your wife bring in a set of breakfast for you; as soon as you finish your breakfast, change into your work-clothes, and walk to the field for work on bare feet."

Bunji followed the instruction faithfully and underwent the training. It was the first time Kami provided a specific instruction for his spiritual training.

In reference to the matter, there is an implication in "Konko Daijin On-Oboegaki" or the memoirs of Konko Daijin that reads, "My wife knows blessings received but has not yet learned to appreciate true blessing of Kami. She just becomes concerned only about other people's thoughts and responses. But I don't care about what others would say. I faithfully follow the instructions of Kami. I never go against Kami." Konko-Sama was persistent and constant in this manner of being connected to Kami-Sama regardless of the circumstances.

Kami-Sama could have been giving us instructions in the same manner by promising sure blessings as we get involved in the practice of faith. Have you ever wondered why this local Konko Church in Waipahu has been in operation in the last 73 years? Have you ever wondered why the church conducts regular functions such as Grand Services, seasonal memorial services, monthly services and Sunday Services? Those services and functions are not intended to raise monetary offerings from the church congregation. The services and functions are divinely intended Points Of Salvation, it could be abbreviated as POS, not point of sale, but point of salvation where you are to get blessed, while fulfilling Kami-Sama in the same manner as Konko-Sama responded. In other words those church services and functions could be divine instructions extended to each member of the congregation. We are to get blessed through this physical presence of the church and the presence of the ministers who have served here.

In my understanding, this church and any other local churches are the actualization of the divine message, "Tenchi Kane no Kami wo tasukete kure" or "Please save Tenchi Kane no Kami." My only concern is to help save people through the perpetual Divine-Mediation of Ikigami Konko Daijin. At this church, the founding minister, the Rev. Santaro Sonoda and his wife Mrs. Sueka Sonoda, and the Rev. Masato Kawahatsu, and the Revs. Tetsuro, Mitsuko Yasutake and the associate ministers have served as mediums through the work of the founder Ikigami Konko-Daijin-Sama.

If you find the seemingly empty divine promises given to Konko-Sama as nothing but empty promises, then you would view all the church services and functions in the same manner. Even if you attend church and seek Toritsugi-Mediation, you would find nothing but unfulfilled results if you do not exercise your heart in identifying blessed elements in your life. Your enjoyment of blessings to be received will be very much limited. And some of those

people who felt unfulfilled might have left this faith community in one way or another.

If you find church services and functions as meaningful divine instructions, you are to enjoy unlimited blessings. Ministers may have encouraged you to come to church, seek Toritsugi-Mediation for any of your concerns in life and get engaged in any church services and functions as much as possible because ministers know it would maximize your quality of life.

I have witnessed some believers who expressed, “I don’t think I have enjoyed blessings through the practice of the Konko faith.” They became disengaged from church even if some of them say they have been in contact with Kami-Sama on their own. It could be my fault as a minister for their failed engagement in the practice of faith because each and every church believer has been guided to attend church through divine guidance. I may have been responsible for the disconnectedness of the church members to the church. But if each of us has the same spirituality of being able to identify blessedness in any given situation, we are to get connected to Kami-Sama without interruption.

It could be a divine promise that we are to get blessed through the practice of Toritsugi-Mediation and attending church services and functions because all those functions are divinely oriented. But it would all depend upon how we exercise our own hearts, namely in the same manner as has been demonstrated by Konko-Sama.

When you come to attend today’s Grand Service for Tenchi Kane no Kami, Our Divine Parent, Kami-Sama has already made a promise to each of us that we would be blessed by attending the function. We can be here today because of many elements of blessings we can identify and some blessings we may not be able to identify specifically. I can be here in attendance because I have been blessed in all aspects of life, such as my good health, good relationships at home and any other communities I belong, financial stability and so forth. Today’s Grand Service provides us the best opportunity to look back at our own engagement in the practice of faith and sums up all the blessings we have enjoyed from Kami-Sama till this day. With this review of blessings received, we can continue to get blessed hereafter.

One thing for sure is that Konko-Sama believed in Kami-Sama and followed all the instructions and teachings in the manner that brought fulfillment to Kami-Sama to himself and the family members. In other words, Konko-Sama always found ways to get connected to Kami-Sama throughout of his entire faith life. Normally, we do not hear divine voices and get direct divine instructions and teachings in the same manner as Konko-Sama did. There can be some believers and ministers who may say they do communicate with Kami-Sama in the same manner as Konko-Sama did. But in general, we can believe in the teachings of Konko-Sama in the same manner as Konko-Sama believed and followed divine instructions and teachings. Konko believers can be defined as people who believe in Tenchi Kane no Kami and

practice those teachings in life. To believe in Tenchi Kane no Kami is to believe in the teachings, and in turn, to believe in the teachings means believe in Tenchi Kane no Kami. I enjoy witnessing the emergence of such believers from this faith community in Hawaii. The same could be the said for your respectable local ministers here at this Waipahu Church. The best reward your ministers can ever enjoy through their missionary work is to witness a strong faith community whose members appreciate the religious principles of the Konko faith as has been demonstrated by Konko-Sama, the Founder.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

One day, when I went to Konko-Sama’s Hiromae with Mimura Sano-san of one of my branch hiromaes, Mimura-san asked, “Konko-Sama, since I have been receiving many divine blessings, I would like to offer thanks to Kami-Sama. What could I offer that would please Kami-Sama the most?” Konko-Sama answered, “Mimura-san, if it were possible to give thanks to Kami-Sama for your divine blessings by offering things, you would never be able to offer enough. Offering such things won’t make Kami-Sama happy, and he doesn’t ask for them. Tell about the divine blessings you have received to those who are unaware of Kami-Sama’s blessedness. Then those people will be saved. Giving thanks this way will make Kami-Sama most happy.” (Gorikai II Senda Shima 3)

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 humankind may prosper. Kami is Kami because of humans, and humans are humans because of Kami. Both are fulfilled through this mutual relationship. (Gorikai III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 3)

Bulletin Board

Regular Church Services for June 2011

- 1 Wed -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane no Kami at 7:30 pm
- 5 Sun -Sunday Service at 9 am
-80th Anniversary, San Francisco Church
- 12 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin at 9 am
- 19 Sun -Sunday Service at 9 am
- 26 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service at 9 am
-Testimonial by Rodney sensei

Monthly Volunteer Activity at Wahiawa General Hospital

We will make a monthly visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility on Friday, June 17 at 10:00 a.m. by means of offering entertainment for the people cared for in the facility. The program is in Japanese.

Summer Ohana Camp

For the first time ever in the history of Konko Mission of Wahiawa, we are planning a Summer Ohana Camp at YMCA Camp HR Erdman on Saturday, July 9 from 10 a.m. through 2:00 p.m. Sunday, July 10. The main theme of the camp is the **ABC's of KONKOKYO**. This is a family oriented camp, please try to join the function and enjoy natural beauty and deepen your understanding about our religious tradition. Thank you very much for your support for the Zippy's fund-raiser tickets. We have sold out all the tickets. Please support the fund-raising for the function by means of Church Garage Sale on Saturday, June 4 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Some food items such as cone sushi, ohagi and tsukemonos are available.

HCRP Meeting

The regular meeting will be held on Monday, June 13 at 1:30 p.m. at the Church of Perfect Liberty.

KMH Faith Enrichment Seminars

The Rev. Hiroshi Takebe, Director of the Konkokyo Research Institute, will be making presentations about the Founder Ikigami Konko Daijin for a three-day seminar at the Konko Mission of Honolulu from Friday, June 17 through Sunday, June 19, 2011. The presentations will be made in Japanese and English translation will follow. If you are interested, please contact your minister.

80th Anniversary of Konko Church of San Francisco

The Rev. Yasuhiro Yano will be attending the 80th Anniversary Celebration of Konko Church of San Francisco to be observed on Sunday, June 5, 2011.

Invitations from Konko Mission of Honolulu

Ms. Tsugumi Matsunaga of Konko Mission of Honolulu will be making a presentation about her academic major as a Nutritionist on Sunday, June 19 from 10:00 a.m. following the regular Sunday Service at the Church.

Mr. Gary Shimabukuro will be making a presentation about drug education on Sunday, August 7, 2011 from 11:00 a.m.

If you are interested in those programs, please contact your minister.

Church Picnic

Rodney sensei will be back to Hawaii in June for ten days. We will be holding a church picnic on Sunday, June 26 from

11:30 a.m. at Waimea Beach Park. Food will be prepared by the church. Please join to enjoy BBQ with Rodney sensei.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits for June

Harry Ching	6/19/2007
Florence Tamaribuchi	6/10/1997
Matsu Suzuki	6/2008



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

Kyoso-Sama Volume 2 (#26)

The following is 26th of the series of the English translated excerpts from the second of the two volumes of "Kyoso-Sama" a biography of the Founder of the Konkokyo Religion, authored by the Reverend Shinsei Konko for young readers. The publication is a compilation of articles in series featured in the monthly publication, "Wakaba" or "Young Leaves" issued by the Administrative Office of the Konkokyo Youth Organization. The first article was published in 1950. Translation by the Rev. Yasuhiro Yano. (Reference to "Kyoso-Sama Volume 2" pages 258 to 268)

"Shugyo" Religious training

Matsuhei Katsura told his mother about his resolution of serving Kami in responding to the message forwarded by Konko Shijin-Sama. He also shared his determination to many of his relatives. To those people who expressed rejection for the extended thought, he related the dialogue with Konko Shijin-Sama. Then all of them changed their minds and supported his determination by encouraging, "We will take care of the consequences hereafter. Do not worry." By gaining wholehearted support from the family members and relatives, he moved to live in Otani Village and got engaged in the practice of "Shugyo" religious trainings under the guidance of Konko Shijin-Sama.

After spending days in Otani Village, Konko Shijin-Sama told Katsura, "Katsura-san, there is a person named Fujimori Kondo in Nanba in Osaka. He is a believer with great virtue. Go there to get further training. I will tell him about your visit." In accordance with the arrangement, Katsura underwent 100 days of training at the Konko Church of Nanba during the winter.

He returned to Otani Village and got engaged in rigorous training again under the guidance of Konko Shijin-Sama. He staked his life for the training in such a manner, "I shall glorify the great nature of Kami in this world. For the sake of the Konko religion, I shall continue to go forward and never make a retreat." He treasured every message extended by Konko Shijin-Sama. Here is an episode that showed close interactions of the two people. One day, Katsura asked

Konko Shijin-Sama, “Konko-Sama, I love to smoke. What do you think about smoking?” Konko Shijin-Sama responded, “Tobacco is also referred to as ‘aiso-kusa’, ‘wasure-kusa’, and ‘tama-habaki.’” Katsura was expecting further explanations about the subject. But Konko Shijin-Sama changed the subject. He didn’t make any further discussion about the subject. Katsura responded to the situation by developing his own thought, “It would be devastating if I forget to convey ‘gorikai’ message to believers. And ministers do not need courtship for the believers.” He then took out his tobacco kit and presented it to Konko Shijin-Sama and declared that he would give up smoking. Sometime later, while Katsura was communicating with Konko Shijin-Sama, he subconsciously tried to reach to his tobacco kit at the waist. Konko Shijin-Sama, who witnessed the movement, told him, “Your tobacco kit has been placed over there” and pointed the direction of the entrance door. The tobacco kit was hanging at the entrance. He took the kit and gave it to one of the employees at Kibinoya Inn.

Through this episode, we can take a glimpse of how Konko Shijin-Sama helped develop the faith of the Rev. Katsura. But we have very limited reference resources that can tell more detailed accounts of the circumstances in those days. What would be the interactions between the two? It could be assumed that the Rev. Katsura deepened his faith during this period of time.

Konko Church of Kokura

One day, Konko Shijin-Sama instructed the Rev. Katsura who was in religious training, “As of today, start your own missionary work in Kyushu.” The Rev. Katsura asked him about a prospective destination for his missionary work. He responded, “Kokura is good for your destination.” The Rev. Katsura was aware that in those days, the town of Kokura was ruined because of the conflicts during the Meiji Restoration, and didn’t recover from the devastation and in the state of confusion. He expressed his concern about that aspect of town. In responding to his concern, Konko Shijin-Sama stated, “You will accompany the Deity of Happiness (Fuku-no-Kami) to that town of desolation. If the aged people here and there in town begin to get involved in the practice of faith, they will enjoy incremental prosperity day by day, months by month and year by year. In three years, the whole town will be blessed with prosperity.” In encouragement, Konko Shijin-Sama stated, “Your final destination in life is Kyushu. Dedicate the rest of your whole life in serving Kami in the land of Kokura. If you start your missionary work as soon as possible, the people in town will be saved accordingly.” The Rev. Katsura was resolved for his destined fate and accepted the offer. He extended, “Thank you very much for your thoughts and prayers.” The following day, the Rev. Katsura went to see Konko Shijin-Sama and extended his greeting for his departure, and added, “I have suffered from a prolonged brain discomfort. I wish this condition will be getting blessed at first.” Konko Shijin-Sama replied, “Do not worry about it. Kondo-san, who initiated his missionary work in Osaka, also suffered the same nature of brain discomfort.” He then proceeded before the Kami altar and extended a prayer for a

while. He took out a piece of “Daidai” bitter orange from the offertory tray and returned to his seat. He took a brush pen and a sheet of paper and inscribed, “代々、まるくなるも我が心、おかげは、和賀心にあり。桂さん。四月二十七日。金光” or “Whether you will continue to enjoy well rounded spirituality from generation to generation can depend on how you will exercise your own heart. Divine blessings can also be actualized through the exercise of your ‘waga-kokoro’ or the heart of joy and happiness. To Katsura-san (Rev. Katsura). April 27. Konko.” Konko Shijin-Sama gave both the orange and the written message to the Rev. Katsura as departing gifts. The Rev. Katsura expressed his utmost solemnity and reverence to Konko Shijin-Sama for the gifts. Konko Shijin-Sama added, “Go straight to your destination without any side trip.”

The Rev. Katsura, holding a portable shrine presented by Konko Shijin-Sama, began his journey for his missionary work. On the first day, he stopped over at the town of Onomichi in Hiroshima. One of his friends in the faith community provided an accommodation for his stay. Both the Rev. Katsura and his friend engaged in a lively talk over their religious experiences. While the people who overheard about the rumors of the Rev. Katsura flocked to seek help and prayers for their personal matters one after another. In responding to this overwhelming number of visitors, he extended his stay for several more days there. While he was staying in town, his face became swollen and his hair on the head began to fall off. Surprised at the sudden irregularities in his body, the Rev. Katsura became conscious if he could have done something wrong against the warning given by Konko Shijin-Sama who stated, “Go straight to your destination without making a side trip.” He raced back to see Konko Shijin-Sama at Otani Village and extended his apologies. In responding to the Rev. Katsura, Konko Shijin-Sama replied, “You seem to have difficulty in just making a fuss over details, don’t you?”

Konko Shijin-Sama didn’t elaborate further and kept silence. The Rev. Katsura extended his prayer for a considerable period of time in the worship hall, and returned to the Kibinoya Inn. He became a bit desperate and asked the innkeeper to bring some sake. He became drunk and went to sleep. The innkeeper, Kura Fujii (an elder sister of Konko Shijin-Sama) became worried about the Rev. Katsura who was in trouble, and went to see Konko Shijin-Sama and informed about the circumstance. Konko Shijin-Sama responded to her with a smile and related, “He will become well again pretty soon.” While the Rev. Katsura, who awoke from a deep sleep, found out the swell in his face was gone and returned to his normal state. He felt so euphoric for the sudden turnaround of his physical condition and expressed his happiness, “I’ve got blessing. How grateful I feel.” And he went to see Konko Shijin-Sama. Konko Shijin-Sama just stated, “Be aware of your own behavior hereafter.” In the evening, he found the bitter orange he received from Konko Shijin-Sama turned black and yielded an undesirable stench. He thought he should keep that spoiled orange instead of discarding and brought it along with

him all the way to Kokura.

A strange phenomenon happened to the spoiled orange. It became black and hardened, keeping the original shape. In corresponding to the decreased odor of the spoiled orange, the hair on the head of the Rev. Katsura began to grow thick again, and his head discomfort also had ceased. The orange had been preserved as a treasure at the Konko Church of Kokura.

The Rev. Mitsuo Sawai

The Rev. Mitsuo Sawai, the founding minister of Konko Church of Wakayama was also one of the devoted believers being influenced by Konko Shijin-Sama. He was initiated into the practice of faith in 1883.

He moved from Hiroshima to Kobe. In the winter, he encountered a difficult circumstance and went to see Konko Shijin-Sama for help at Otani Village. In responding to the request from the Rev. Sawai, Konko Shijin-Sama related, "When you try to cross a wooden bridge, you may see through the current of water down below. Even if you may drop a piece of log down into the river, it may sink deep down to the bottom once, but it may rise up to the surface sooner or later. If you get involved in the practice of faith with the heart of hope for the future, you will feel at ease." After the reception of the message, the Rev. Sawai stayed at the Kibinoya Inn for seven days and made daily pilgrimages to see Konko Shijin-Sama. During the day time, he was stationed in the worship hall and observed how Konko Shijin-Sama executed his duties as a Toritsugi-Mediator. No detailed accounts for the teachings and messages were received from Konko Shijin-Sama. But it could be assumed that the Rev. Sawai made a substantial leap in his engagement in the practice of faith through the direct exposures to Konko Shijin-Sama.

At some occasions, the Rev. Sawai visited the grave of Konko-Sama at around one o'clock at night, engaged in extending prayers and returned back to the worship hall. He continued to spend the night without sleep and kept the daily routine. The Rev. Sawai wrote in his memoir about the daily scenes around the worship hall and the residential areas of Konko-Sama as follows, "I felt somewhat strange that I have heard little or no voices and sounds made by many of the children in the household despite the fact I kept all night vigils. I also didn't hear any noises associated with the mice that were scurrying around in the building. The size of the structure was 4-ken by 6-ken, including the worship hall. The entire floor space, including the sanctuary was 16-tatami mats. In consideration of this very limited living space of the structure, I felt strange why I didn't hear any sounds made by the family members living in the given space."

After a week of stay at the Kibinoya Inn, he checked out to leave. He found only 32-sen in his purse after paying off for his stay at the inn. He extended his greeting to Konko Shijin-Sama for his departure by saying, "Konko-Sama, I am going to return to Kobe on foot." Konko Shijin-Sama responded to him by saying, "I see. When will you be arriving at Kobe if you travel on foot now?" In those days, there was no railroad

system. The only available means of transportation were boats, rickshaws and the walking. The Rev. Sawai responded to Konko Shijin-Sama, "I am expected to arrive at Kobe in the evening of the day after tomorrow. I will stay at loggings for two nights." Konko Shijin-Sama told him, "Taking a journey is interesting. You can enjoy different scenes every day. Practicing of faith also can be likened to a long journey. Enjoy your journey without encountering mishaps such as slipping and falling. Don't haste and continue to travel without stopping. You can enjoy your journey in pursuit of faith because you are approaching your destination step by step. Don't try to take a short cut and get into trouble. There is no broader byway. Look forward to your future, and devote yourself in pursuit of faith. You will be at ease."

The Rev. Sawai kept the message deep in his heart and left for Kobe. Three days later, in the morning in winter, he spent 3-sen for the meal at Akashi. His last meal on the way was a piece of steamed sweet potato at Suma. He spent the last 1-sen for the meal and his wallet was empty when he arrived at Kobe.

During the summer of the same year, the Rev. Sawai made a pilgrimage to see Konko Shijin-Sama on foot. As he traveled on foot, he developed many corns on his feet. The corns at the big toe were so big that he could hardly tie the strings attached to the straw sandals. Upon arrival at the worship hall, he extended his prayer of thanks for his safe trip and showed his feet with many corns to Konko Shijin-Sama, "Konko-Sama, I have many corns on my feet, but they didn't bother me at all." Konko Shijin-Sama responded, "If you feel no pain, you are all right. They all say that they gain 'toku' virtue through their strong belief. Only those who actually practice the faith can appreciate the true nature of 'toku' virtue. If you can learn to appreciate virtuous nature of 'toku,' you have fulfilled your pursuit of faith. But don't get relaxed even if you reached that stage of belief in Kami. You should be resolved that there would be no end in your pursuit of faith throughout of your entire life."

The Rev. Sawai felt overwhelmed with the sense of gratitude that Konko Shijin-Sama gave him a blessed message even for the corns formed in his feet. In this manner, he advanced his pursuit of faith. (*To be continued*)