



Likeness of the Founder

*By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister*

More and more recently these days, I see myself reflected in my daughter, Edna. Even if I depart from my physical state, I already live on in Edna. This may sound funny, but this is how similar we are in many aspects. The faith I have pursued for all these years has already been passed down to Edna in a tangible manner. My wife Reiko, jokingly points out that Edna takes off her shoes and slippers in the same exact fashion as I. We have a habit of leaving them misaligned, even to the same angle. Even Edna's gut functions the same as me—where we both get stomach aches if we eat certain foods, but my wife Reiko rarely get stomach aches. The way Edna reacts when certain things happen are strikingly similar to the way I would react. It's a comedy!

Edna has been in charge of running the regular Sunday Service program soon after she returned from religious training at the Konko Church of Amagi in Fukuoka and at the Konkokyo Gakuin Religious Seminary at Konko Town in Okayama (Japan) for two years. These days, I really find that Edna has been sharing my thoughts and messages in her sermons. In her delivered speeches, I find myself speaking through her. It's a very interesting phenomenon. I believe she will continue to pursue the Konko faith on her own and can contribute to help people in Hawaii and other English-oriented places. As my wife jokes about how strikingly similar Edna and I are, I can appreciate it as the greatest compliment as a Konko minister.

After having shared my thoughts with the church members at the regular church service a week ago, the thought has persistently shown up in my mind

from time to time. And I wonder if I have identical elements of the Founder in my faith life in the same manner as I find the elements of myself in my daughter? It would be a great pleasure for me if the Founder says, "I find myself in you." If I would ever get such a message, it could be the biggest compliment for not only for me but to anybody who have gotten engaged in ministerial work of the Konkokyo Religious Organization.

Through the reference to the Konkokyo Religious Scriptures, or Konkokyo Kyoten, I believe there could be only one individual who was identified to be such a follower by the Founder Konko Daijin. The Founder might have identified himself in Kataoka Jiroshiro of Konko Church of Saizaki in Okayama. Ichimura Mitsugoro related, "To practice faith, you must know the real meaning of the teachings. Kami will teach you the real meaning. If there's something you don't understand, go to Kataoka Jiroshiro's hiromae. I have taught him well, so he will take his time to teach you. I can't recommend you to go to any other person" (I Ichimura Mitsugoro 1-48).

I believe you know that the Founder was addressed as "Shinjin Bunsu" or devoted believer by the village people. They identified the elements of the devotion in practicing faith in the Founder. Later, the villager and many believers found the elements of the likeness of kami in the Founder and addressed him affectionately by saying "Ikigami." They found the elements of Ikigami in the Founder.

Since most of us have gotten involved in the practice of faith, you already have acquired some of the elements held by the Founder Konko Daijin. One of the most common elements is the recitation of Tenchi Kakitsuke or seeing the message in our daily life as the Founder did. The Founder might have recited the message in the same manner as we do today. But he would never have imagined that we are reciting the message in English and other foreign languages.

If we have a look at the teachings in the Konkokyo Kyoten Scripture, there are many messages that show

the Founder might have practice in his faith life. For example, we recite the grace for meal. I am not sure the Founder would have recited the message “All food is provided by Tenchi Kane No Kami to sustain our lives. Let us be thankful for whatever foods we may eat or drink. Pray for good health, for good health is the foundation of all things.” Even if he might not have recited the grace as we do today, he may have held the conviction about the nature of the food in such a manner.

He also shared a message to a believer about the blessed nature of water we use in daily living. He stated that we should pray that the water we use is blessed water. He further stated to a believer who had been suffering from stomach ailments never to curse water as being bad. The Founder Konko Daijin stated, “The light that the Sun shines upon us is a blessing. So too, for the rain that falls. Kami lets all humans live amid divine blessings. People are born into divine blessings, live amid divine blessings, and die amid divine blessings” (II Toshimori Shino 1).

These are just few examples we already have learned and practiced in our faith life. We already have acquired some of the elements of the likeness held by the Founder Konko Daijin. As we continue to expand to acquire the likeness of the Founder, we are to evolve to be true Konko believers who can be identical to the eyes of the community people at large.

The underlying core spirituality of the Founder is the keen sense of mindfulness of any elements of blessing we enjoy from Tenchi Kane No Kami, Our Divine Parent.



Konko-Sama Says . . .

There are no requests that cannot come true. Request through Konko Daijin. You can receive divine blessings for anything. (II Shiota Hachiemon 2)

No matter how well-educated or how smart you are, merely having knowledge about the faith of Kami is not enough. You cannot receive Kami’s virtue unless the teachings of the faith are deeply absorbed into your heart and your faith is expressed in your life.

(III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 151)

Bulletin Board

Monthly Services for June 2014

- 1 Sun -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (9 am)
- 8 Sun -Monthly Service, Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
- 15 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)
- 21 Sat -4th Ohana Camp at Camp HR Erdman to Sunday
- 22 Sun -Day two of the camp
- 29 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

July 2014

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

HCRP

The monthly meeting of the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace will be held at the Palolo Hongwanji Temple on Monday, June 9, 2014 at 1:30 p.m.

Monthly Volunteer Activity

We will make a visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility for our regular volunteer activity of interacting with the long-term care patients on Friday, June 27 from 10:00 a.m.

Wahiawa Church 4th Summer Ohana Camp

We will hold the 4th Summer Ohana Camp at Camp HR Erdman (Mokuleia) from Saturday, June 21 through Sunday, June 22, 2014. The theme of this year is “Blessed Water.” Seventeen participants have already been confirmed. Thank you very much for helping through the Zippy’s fund-raising and many people who made generous monetary contributions for this annual educational program.

Presentations by the Rev. Michio Ide

The Rev. Michio Ide from Konko Church of Yukuhashi in Fukuoka will make presentations for the local audience. On Friday, June 6, he will share his thoughts with the local ministers from 10:00 a.m., and at the KMH Conference for faith enrichment for general audience on Saturday, June 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Konko Mission of Honolulu. The title of the presentation is “Tamawaru” or acceptance of encounters in appreciation and gratefulness. Lunch will be served.

KMH Missionary Women’s Society Seminar

The local missionary women and daughters of the ministers will hold the 40th anniversary meeting of the group from Thursday, June 12 to Friday, June 13 at the Konko Mission of Honolulu.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits



June

Florence Tamabayashi	6/6/1998
Harry Ching	6/19/2007
Matsu Suzuki	6/2008

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 Matsutaro Kōsaka contributed the insightful articles. The translation is provided by Yasuhiro Yano. (Reference pages 82, 83 and 84)

No. 82

Distrust is the worst thing. Depend on Kami and practice faith wholeheartedly. He will have everything go well. Eliminate distrust and you will receive divine blessings. (I Ichimura Mitsugoro 2-33, 1, 2 Kyoten page 229-9)

Distrust is the worst thing.

The Founder pointed out that those people who are distrustful against Kami prevents them from enjoying full blessings from Kami, and cannot be set free from the cycle of misfortunes. In the original Japanese statement, the Founder expressed in such a manner, “distrust is the worst thing in the world.” There can be many forms of distrust. If we hold some distrust of a person, we do not believe whatever messages would be expressed by that person. To hold suspicion about a particular individual means that person’s personality is invalidated. Scientific theories and principals would be meticulously examined for the trustworthiness to clear away any doubts. In this manner, some forms of distrust are necessary, and not necessarily implies negativity.

The “distrust” expressed by the Founder in this statement does not pertain to those examples shown in a secular world, but it refers to distrust against Kami. The Founder used two opposing thoughts in the statement. First of all, “distrust is the worst thing.” Secondly, “depend on Kami.” “Utagai” or distrust expressed by the Founder implies the heart that cannot trust Kami. This type of distrust against Kami is the worst thing under any conditions for us who are engaged in the practice of faith, the Founder pointed out.

Even believers who identify themselves to be Konko believers have two pillars in their hearts. One is their own heart, and the other is Kami-Sama. Even if we declare we believe in Kami, we keep an area in our hearts that can be reserved only for ourselves. To some greater extent we direct our hearts towards Kami, but we adhere to our own hearts in our daily living. In other words, the reason why we can hardly develop single-heartedness is because of the two pillars we keep in our hearts.

The Founder firmly stated, “Depend on Kami, and practice faith wholeheartedly. He will have everything go well.” “Eliminate distrust and you will receive divine blessings.” Kami-Sama provides a solid assurance for the eventuality after we extend our solid trust towards Kami. What we need is just to believe in the divine statement and get into the state of absolute trust.

No. 83

Even though you practice faith, if you think “I haven’t received any blessings yet,” or that you are receiving divine blessings too slowly, you still do not know the importance of having a sincere heart. You pray to Kami, and after a week, you are still not cured. Then, you complain that you are not yet cured and that there are no divine blessings. So, you bear a grudge against Kami. Although you go to a doctor and take medicines for three to five years without being cured, you still go back to see him without complaining. Kami is to be pitied. (II Kunieda Sangoro 5-1, 2 Kyoten page 489)

The primary reason why we cannot enjoy blessings of Kami

The message clearly shows what takes place in the heart of a believer who tries to get blessed through the practice of faith.

Even if we try to get blessed for our personal concerns through our engagement in the practice of faith, as has been shown in the quoted message, in about a week, we feel insecure and uncomfortable if we do not get what we would have expected. We will be bothered in our hearts in such manners as have been illustrated, “I do not know why I have not get blessed for so long,” “I wonder Kami may not have the power to respond to the request I made” and so forth.

The Founder stated, “Although you go to a doctor and take medicines for three to five years without being cured, you still go back to see him without complaining.” How can we respond differently in such a manner?

The biggest reason why we respond differently exists in the way of our perception. When we get medical help from a doctor for our physical disorders, and the condition does not improve much, we are inclined to think that it is not the doctor nor the medicines we take, but because of the serious nature of the illness that we cannot get blessed with

healing. We perceive the elements that prevent the healing of the disorder are within us. On the other hand, when we try to deal with some problems through our engagement in the practice of faith, we do not believe the reasons why we cannot get blessed exist within ourselves, but try to blame and discredit Kami, the Toritsugi Divine-Mediator and the religious faith itself for not getting positive results.

There are two elements that can be identified through the examination of the message. When we try to get blessed through our engagement in the practice of faith, it would be preferred to have the same heart as we try to get medical treatment for illness. First of all, we should try to deal with issues with patience even while we have not gotten what we wished for. The other is to try to convince ourselves that the reason that prevents us to get blessed could be found within us. These two perceptions are very important if we want to get blessed through the practice of faith. The elements that prevent us to get blessed exist within us is stated, “The importance of having a sincere heart.” To have that sincere heart or not is the critical element whether we can get blessed or not.

No. 84

People may talk about irreverence and shortcomings, but no one is more irreverent than a merchant who cheats or deceives others; a farmer who changes the border of his field to his own advantage; or a person who wastes water and food or neglects his work. When one tries to make profits by deceiving others, he loses and ends up bankrupt. When a greedy person tries to gain property by changing a boundary, he ends up losing his own fields. When a person wastes food, he becomes unable to eat. When one neglects his work, he becomes unable to work and loses his job. All these troubles are caused by an irreverent and careless heart.

(III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 79-1, 2, 3 Kyoten page 838)

Self-centeredness is a path to ruin

The Founder referred to our thoughts and behaviors in daily living that contribute to the difficulties we are to encounter.

He showed examples of merchants who cheated or deceived others, a farmer who changed the border of his field to his own advantage, a person who neglected his work, who all encountered difficulties in life. What they have in common is the self-centeredness.

Those people who waste water and food may not be self-centered or cause troubles to others directly, but their acts reflect the nature of irreverence and negligence against Kami, and the work of Heaven and Earth.

Consequently, they are to encounter just the opposite results they never wish. Those who try to gain end up in loss; those who steal from others end up in losing their own possessions; those who try to live in comfort end up in

hardship. Those who waste food end up unable to eat food. Why do they encounter such miseries against their wants and desires?

In my understanding, they act in violation of the universal laws of truth or “Tenchi no dōri” which implies the universal principle of sustenance that holds the entire universe as is. In other words, the concept can be described as the principle of interdependent relationship, such as man is man because of Kami, Kami is Kami because of human existence, an individual can exist because of other people, others exist because of an individual, things become valued because of the people who use them for purposes, we exist because of things we need for sustenance. Committing irreverence against Kami, living in pursuit of self-oriented fulfillment, wasting things, all these acts and thoughts are in conflict against the principle of mutual interdependency and they are to encounter impasse in life.