



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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Transformation as a Konko Believer

By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister

We have been publishing our church newsletters in the last 27 years and the children's newsletter for 23 years since Edna started the publication with the push of her mother since the 5th grade.

After every Sunday Service we open the Kyoten Gorikai and take turn reading passages as part of the service in the last 17 years or so. Many English-oriented publications are also available for the Konko faith. These elements are focused in providing knowledge about the practice of the Konko faith. I am grateful to witness the congregation responding in sharing and practicing the Konko faith in this manner.

We have been trying to inform our church congregation about the basic elements of the Konko faith in such manners as I have described because without those knowledge, there can be no way for them to grow their faith. The primary purpose of education is to foster the growth of each individual in the area of education.

Although church is quite different from the established academic institutions, in ways that you will not be graded for your advancement in the practice of the faith. You will not be categorized as a "bad member" and so forth whether one attends church or not. But the ministers are able to witness how well each believer will advance in their practice of faith. From the minister's perspective, seeing the growth of faith in each member is crystal clear. The critical elements of faith in each individual are identifiable. It may be simple to understand this concept for frequent church-goers of all religious backgrounds. What the Konko ministers would like to witness is the believers' transformation into Konko believers who are able to develop a clear understanding of the teachings of the Founder, and incorporate them into their faith life. This will enable us to become identical Konko believers.

The Founder Konko Daijin stated, "Practicing faith is easy. It is people who make it difficult. Even if you have practiced faith from three to five years, you can still become easily confused. If you continually practice faith for ten years, then you can celebrate with gratitude in your heart. Each day is the beginning of all days to come. Therefore, receive divine blessings each and every day so everything will go well. You should practice your faith easily" (III, Konko Kyoso Gorikai 69).

In my understanding, the sooner you have been exposed to the church environment, the better you would be able to absorb the elements of the Konko faith. In Japan an old adage goes, "*Mitsu-go no tamashii 100 made*" which means that a three-year old soul will last till they're a hundred years old. In this sense, I am happy that there are children in the congregation for the church services. I would enthusiastically like to encourage youths in the presence of the church functions. Thankfully, we were able to keep our three children involved in the church. I also recall being raised in such a manner. I have witnessed families who have kept the faith tradition for 5 generations. It can definitely be attributed to practicing the faith as a family.

My parents always tried to take all eight children to attend regular church services. I am amazed at the wisdom of my parents for the practice. We were rowdy as kids growing up and attending church. But the ministers accepted that behavior as a natural element of growing up. Certainly, some people may be annoyed at the disruptive behaviors of energetic children during a solemn service, but in Konkokyo, children are treasures. Some people do not wish to bring their children to church because they are disruptive. But doing so will not parallel the principle elements of the Konko faith at all. They would instead be spoiling the most opportune time to infuse the basics of the Konko faith during the limited time span before the kids reach maturity and start making decisions for themselves. Children need to be conditioned to be able to make decisions that will impact their lives in a positive manner. Many believers are not able to appreciate the positives of the practice, but rather try not to include children for attending church functions in fear of disrupting the services. But the gains they enjoy being in the situation is far greater than the disturbance. And I enjoy the presence of children in church. They are the future of our congregation. We should treasure their presence in church.

When I think of children's presence in church services, I always remember what my mother used to quote. She had eight children. Sometimes, all eight of us children were attending the church services. It can be considered a chaotic situation in present times. Normally we may discourage the parents from bringing in all eight of the children to church services. The Konko faith is definitely different in that sense.

The Rev. Hidejiro Hosaka of Konko Church of Kawanoishi in Ehime used to talk to my mother, "Since children may become disruptive during the service, you should also extend your prayer to Kami that your children will behave during the services. I also pray for your children as well" and encouraged her to bring children to church services. Actually I enjoyed going to church for the festive mood and the overall warm atmosphere prevailing in the church.

While I was attending the services in my youth, it was torture for me to listen to the lengthy sermons given by the minister. The ministers in Japan keep on talking for

hours. During the presentation, there is a special speech tone that indicated the ending of the speech, but the minister would bring in another topic and keep on talking. While we were sitting on the tatami floor in seiza position (Japanese sitting style). My feet became numb and when I tried to stand up I fell down as if my legs were dead. But all the information the ministers have infused in their speeches have somehow been stored at some part of my brain unconsciously. The needed information in responding to various situations is withdrawn from the filing cabinet of our brain. This helps us to cope with the many life challenges. This may not directly apply in American culture. But being exposed to seemingly less attractive speeches over and over again may help the audience to over-learn about the vital elements of the Konko faith. Without knowledge of the faith, one may never be able to advance his or her faith.

As a minister of the Konko faith, the size of the church is of no concern to me. I am also not concerned whether or not there are scholars among the congregation or not. There is no distinction to any member whether one is more financially better off than another. All I wish to see is the growth of each individual as a Konko believer who can appreciate the teachings of the Founder Konko Daijin, and incorporate them into their faith life. If a person can evolve in that sense, the believer shall enjoy good human relationships, good health, good financial rewards and so forth as the Founder imparted, "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).

I believe it is not an occasional exposure to the minister's sermons we listen to, but it is our day to day faith life of incorporating the teachings of the Konko faith that help us to achieve solid transformation as Konko believers who can enjoy good health, good wealth and good humanity for generations.



Konko-Sama Says . . .

Whether you are living or dead, Heaven and Earth will always be your home. Be enlightened that, whether you are living or dead, you are under the care of the Universe. (I Sato Norio 21-20, 21)

The light that the Sun shines upon us is a divine blessing. The rain that falls is a divine blessings as well. All humans are allowed to live in the midst of divine blessings. People

are born amid blessings, live amid divine blessings, and die amid divine blessings. (II Toshimori Shino 1)

Because humans are born through the blessings of Kami, they must also die with the blessings of Kami. Therefore, if a child's birth is a happy event, then death is a much happier event since one becomes a kami. The reason why death is so abhorred is because people have not yet developed enough peace of mind to accept death. Practice faith, so that you will be blessed with peace of mind. There is no knowing when one is to die. It is determined by Kami. It is too late to practice faith after a crisis has already arisen. People must always have faith which will be strong enough for crucial times. (III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 23-1, 2, 3)

Bulletin Board

Monthly Services for June 2015

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

7 Sun -Monthly Service, Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)

14 Sun - Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)

20 Sat -Summer Ohana Camp Day 1 at Camp Erdman

21 Sun -Summer Ohana Camp Day 2 at Camp Erdman

28 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

July 2015

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

Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace

The next meeting will be held on Monday, June 8, 2015 at the Gedatsu Church at 1:30 p.m.

Monthly Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Long-Term Care Facility at the Wahiawa General Hospital for volunteer activity will be made on Friday, June 12, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.

5th Summer Ohana Camp

The annual 5th Summer Ohana Camp organized by the Konko Mission of Wahiawa is scheduled for June 20 and 21, 2015 at Camp Erdman. This year, 18 people registered for this annual function. The theme of this year's camp is "Blessed Earth." The Rev. Dr. Todd Zenji Takahashi of Konko Mission of Honolulu will make a presentation.

KMH Ministers' Gathering/ Faith Enrichment Meeting

The Rev. Dr. Shinkichi Kawai from Konko Church of Nakano in Tokyo will be the featured speaker for the local ministers in Hawaii. The meeting will be held at the Konko Mission of Honolulu from 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Friday, June 26. The next day, June 27, same speaker will make a presentation for the Faith Enrichment Meeting open to the Konkokyo faith community members in Hawaii from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Konko Mission of Honolulu.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

June

Clara Kimiko Hiromasa	6/10/2014
Florence Tamaribuchi	6/10/1997
Edith Suzuyo Noguchi	6/14/2014
Harry Ching	6/19/2007
Matsu Suzuki (興語)	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 Matsutarō Kōsaka contributed the insightful articles. The translation is provided by Yasuhiro Yano. (Reference pages 116, 117 and 118)

No. 116

You wash your hands and mouth with water, but how do you wash your temperament? It is sincerity and conscientiousness that washes it away. (I Shimamura Hachitaro 25 Kyoten page 330)

Washing your temperament “shoukon”

In accordance with the Japanese religious tradition from ancient times, when they make a visit to a shrine, they wash their hands and mouths with water. The tradition is based on Shinto religious tradition that taboos impurities. Only pure and innocent people are allowed to approach to deities.

The Founder also might follow the tradition, but developed some doubts about the practice. He might have questioned that true Kami would ever demand the worshippers to cleanse their hands and mouths. He also might question about the nature of people who would follow the established tradition in hoping of setting themselves free from any wrongs committed. In this manner, the Founder might try to pursue the truth in his religious endeavor.

The Founder made a stern statement, “How do you wash your temperament?” He might have reached to a conclusion that people would not be saved unless they keep their temperament pure and clean through his own religious experiences.

The Founder developed a conviction that only through sincerity and conscientiousness could help us to keep the temperament pure and clean. To exercise scrupulous mindfulness in

extending sincerity is the most important attitude we need to keep.

The Founder who worked diligently as a successful farmer, learn to appreciate that the infinite work of Heaven and Earth represents true sincerity and conscientiousness.

On the contrary, the Founder identified untruthful and insincere nature in majority of people who tried to put on fine clothes, wash their hands and mouths with water, but hold deeply hidden greediness and pretence to be faithful that prevented them to live sincerely. The message reflects the outcry of the Founder who challenged and overcame the popular belief held by the majority of people.

No. 117

I do not tell you to chant prayers or anything else. I only tell you to practice a sincere faith. Can’t you even do that? (I Shimamura Hachitaro 29 Kyoten page 331)

Can’t you even do that?

This teaching was also given to the Rev. Hachitaro Shimaura, who served as Head Minister of Konko Church of Okayama. He once was a samurai served at the Okayama Clan at the accounting department. Because of his strict personality, he recorded many teachings stated in serious tone without any hesitation.

Identifying the deity we believe in is the primary issue for getting engaged in practice of faith. We assume that when we worship any deities we are practicing faith. We also would be bothered with such earthy thoughts of what we should offer or how much we should offer while we worship.

But the Founder related to those common people, “I do not tell you to chant prayers or anything else.” The people who heard this message might be puzzled.

While they were puzzled at the forwarded message, the Founder firmly stated, “I only tell you to practice a sincere faith.” They could hardly perceive the meaning of “a sincere faith” forwarded by the Founder since they perceived to practice faith meant to get blessed through worshipping.

But Hachitaro Shimaura might have grasped the meaning of the extended message. When he raised his head and looked at the Founder, he might have gotten the unspoken message delivered by the Founder, “Can’t you even do that?”

In corresponding to the forwarded message, Hachitaro Shimaura might have developed a thought, “I shall help spread this message to others.” There can be many people who have never appreciated the true meaning of getting engaged in practice of faith. I feel sorry for the Founder who would have grieved for the poor people who knew little about the meaning of their engagement in practice of faith.” The quoted message reflects the conviction of the Rev. Hachitaro Shimaura. The author feels like to picture the meeting of the two people.

No. 118

Practice faith with a sincere and considerate heart. (II Kondo Fujimori 29 Kyoten page 539 to 540)

Exercising scrupulous heart in getting engaged in practice of faith

The Rev. Fujimori Kondo preserved many inspiring messages given by the Founder. At one occasion, the Founder stated, “Instead of worrying, practice faith” (III Shinkun 2-18) which was originally stated in Japanese, “心配する心で信心せよ” (shinpai suru kokoro de shinjin seyo) that literally implies, “When you worry you exercise scrupulous heart, do the same in practicing faith.” But at another occasion, the Founder read the same character “心配” in a different manner, “心配りする心で信心せよ” (kokoro kubari suru kokoro de shinjin seyo) which is translated, “Practice faith with a sincere and considerate heart” (II Kondo Fujimori 29). The message implies, “Exercise your scrupulous attentions in practicing faith.” This is a unique teaching that nobody has ever provided.

“心配” (shinpai) is the state of mind in which a person holds some fear or uncertainty for future. On the contrary, “心配り” (kokoro kubari) refers to the condition of the heart in which a person is alert and exercising the utmost scrupulous attentions in the given circumstance. It is a very positive and constructive state of heart. The way the message was presented to the Rev. Fujimori Kondo seemed to reflect the distinctive personality of the Founder.

In reference to publication titled “A biographical History of Fujimori Kondo,” one of those days in 1882, when the Rev. Kondo made a visit to see Konko-Sama, he exchanged greetings with the wife of the Founder in the kitchen. The Rev. Kondo witnessed a rare scene in which the Founder was trying to grind some black substance in an earthen mortar. The Rev. Kondo asked the Founder for his strange activity. The Founder responded, “Kondo-san, I shouldn’t have let you witness what I have been doing. You shall keep this to yourself. I have witnessed many believers have learned to consume a fish in such a manner that they put fish bones in a bowl and pour hot water over it and drink the soup. But even the fish bones consumed in that manner can be baked and powered in this manner for future consumption.”

The biography stated, “The Rev. Kondo was deeply impressed about scrupulous considerations extended in such a manner” (Shinden Kondo Fujimori page 372 to 373).

In this manner, the Founder tried to let people learn to appreciate the blessed nature of any foods given by Heaven and Earth.

“Keep this to yourself and don’t let people know what I have been doing” is also a reflection of the Founder’s scrupulous considerations for other people.



Punchbowl National Cemetery of the Pacific visitation on May 25, 2015 with KMH members and ministers



Ehimemaru Memorial Service and Prayer for Ocean Safety held on Saturday, May 30, 2015 By Ehime Kenjinkai. Tamagushi offering by Mr. Richard Matsu (President of Ehime Kenjinkai)



48th KMH MWSS at Wailuku Church, Maui held on Wednesday, June 3, 2015