



# KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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## “Meguri” or accumulated irreverence And offenses toward Kami

*By the Reverend Narimitsu Matsuyama*

*I found an interesting episode related by the founding minister of Konko Church of Dairen in Manchuria, the Rev. Narimitsu Matsuyama. At the end of WWII, the churches in China and Korea were all closed. He later opened the Konko Church of Okayama Chuubu in Okayama later on. The original article was found in “Matsuyama Narimitsu Kyowa Shu” published by Konko Kyotosha. The English translation from the original Japanese article was made by the Rev. Yasuhiro Yano. The story was once introduced to our church members at Sunday Service held on April 26, 2009.*

I (Narimitsu Matsuyama) developed a thought in regard to the practice of faith. A traveler who carries an empty basket on his back keeps traveling on foot in good spirits. Occasionally, he picks up stones on his way and puts them in the basket. He keeps hauling in stones one by one in this manner. The burden of the stone he collected in the basket becomes heavier as he continues traveling. He can hardly make progress because of the burden he carries in his back. He becomes tired, cannot keep standing and sits down on the road. He is sitting helplessly in that manner for a while. Then there appears a strongly built and kind looking person. The traveler asks help for the stranger. He supports the basket from under and helps the person to stand up to walk. With his help the traveler can walk step by step. The helper picks one stone from the basket at a time and tosses it away. In so doing, the basket becomes empty. The traveler can continue his journey again in good spirits.

I believe our life can be just like that episode. At the beginning of our life, we lived carefree. We learn to develop a habit of committing some irreverence against Kami's will because we think nobody is watching us in the commitment of wrongs. That act can be likened to the act of putting a stone in the basket we carry on our back. And we keep on accumulating irreverence one by one without much conscious awareness and burden ourselves. Then we experience difficulties of not being able to maintain our normal life and become exhausted. And we may not be able to live in the society. Then we get involved in the practice of faith. Kami-Sama helps support us to stand up and be able to lead a normal life again. But in responding to the slacking of our engagement in the practice of faith, the burden in the basket becomes increased, and we feel hardship in life. Then we try to do good deeds. In reward, Kami-Sama takes away our burdens one at a time. Then we keep on serving good for others, we are blessed with “toku-virtue” in return. Some years later, the burden in life will be taken out from us, and we can experience ease of life. It can be a blessing if we can follow the right path. But there can be people who once enjoyed blessings in such a manner commit wrongs and irreverence and refill the burden in the basket. There can be some

people who commit such wrongs and irreverence knowingly. If they act in such a manner, no matter how much Kami-Sama tries to help ease the burden of the person, there can be no way to help them. Those believers might complain by saying why they have to suffer so much despite their engagement in the practice of faith. I believe it can be Kami-Sama who wants to give up in dealing with those helpless people who always complain and never learn to appreciate the blessings given. We have to exercise our hearts in pursuit of the faith in line with the heart of Kami-Sama.

It was in the summer of 1912. When I was serving as usual at the Toritsugi-Mediation Desk, someone opened the entrance sliding door in a rude manner. I could hear some heavy luggage was placed on the floor because of the way the person breathed heavily. I also noticed some other people were talking noisily. At first I became puzzled at the developing situation. Then two strongly built men were trying to bring in a middle aged woman into the worship hall. She looked so pale from a prolonged illness and her complexion was ashen. Though it was a hot sunny day, the two well-built men were all drenched with sweat and breathing heavily because they had to exert their full power to hold the woman who was dead weight heavy.

I had to understand the developing situation. I helped her to be placed near the Toritsugi-Mediation Desk and managed to sit down. For some reason, she developed the physical condition as if all the muscles and joints in her body become numb. She needed someone's help for her urination and bowel movements. The family took her to as many doctors as possible, and tried every available medicine, but they all ended up in vain. She was like that for over 60 days. The people around her felt so depressed that they could no longer believe in faith healing. But for some reason, they remembered the miracle-working of the Konkokyo faith. They came to visit church on the last straw of hope.

At first, I made a brief introduction about the practice of the faith. As she showed some understanding about the faith, I helped her to sit just in front of the Kami altar. I asked her to join to extend the prayer to Kami-Sama for her attendance to church in blessedness. During the prayer, a thought showed up in mind, “This woman tried everything to get blessed for her illness by seeking any available medical help for over 60 days but there was no improvement at all. Basically, we understand that any medical resources are available for the sick people through the love of Kami who wishes to help them. If the blessings of medicine do not heal the woman, she might be burdened with a substantial scale of 'meguri' or accumulated offense committed against the will of Kami-Sama. She will never appreciate the working of Kami-Sama if her 'meguri' is taken away slowly. For the sake of her spiritual awakening to the wondrous virtuous power of Kami-Sama, her illness shall be healed promptly. I shall let her experience the wondrous nature of Kami-Sama.” In responding to the notion I developed, I tried to draw all my power into my prayer and extended, “Kami-Sama, I do not ask you to grant the blessing of healing to this person some other time. But please bless this person with healing right at this moment, and let her stand on her own.” I returned back to the Toritsugi-Mediation Desk, kept my

heart calm and looked into the eyes of the woman intently and stated in conviction, “You can stand up. Try to stand up on your own. Try to stand up now.” In responding to my encouragement, she tried to stand up with all of her power. Her face turned red and over-strained herself in her attempt to stand up. Large veins showed up in her face, she struggled to muster all of her physical power in her attempt to stand up despite her ill condition. I could understand her true willingness to get healed of the illness at all costs. We felt so stressed in witnessing such a struggle of the person that we tensed up our own muscles in concert with the struggle of the woman. We felt uneasiness in waiting the moment of a miracle to evolve. Several minutes later, she tried to extend her upper body and managed to stand up in exerting as much power, but at the last moment, she squat down on her hams. She tried to do the same several times.

I also extended my prayer to Kami-Sama with all of my spiritual power from the Torisugi-Mediation Desk by saying, “Please bless her to be able to stand up right this moment. She has almost done it. Please help her at this moment.” For about 10 minutes, I consumed myself in my desperate prayer in plea. When I looked at the woman, she was still struggling. For a flash moment I felt doubt if I made a mistake in my assessment of the situation. I could have extended an impossible request to Kami to bless her to be able to stand up right at this moment for such deeply troubled person with 'meguri'.” But I denied that notion and developed additional thought, “It could be impossible to ask Kami-Sama to bless this helpless state that the woman was in at this moment. If she holds onto some support and tries to stand again, it may be possible for her to stand up on her own. I am convinced that this method shall work.” I let her hold onto the wooden fence placed between the worship hall and the sanctuary area and encouraged her by saying, “Now you shall stand up this time. Extend your firm belief in Kami-Sama, and try to stand up with all of your physical strength. You can do it.” I gave her a rhythmic encouragement by beating a stick on the floor. Then, it could be the power of a single-heart; she was able to stand on her own two feet again. She released her hands from the railing. Her 150-centimeter body remained standing alone.

Thank you Kami-Sama. She now stands up on her own. The numb legs she has been tortured by even in her dreams became responsive, and now she is standing all alone on her feet. The wondrous development was so intense that the woman barely could utter, “Thank you. Thank you. Thank you” standing and shedding tears and overwhelmed with the feeling of awe.

I asked the two attendants to join in giving thanks, “You too have to extend your thanks to Kami-Sama for the extraordinary blessings.”

They say “kanten kichi” or an extraordinary jubilation that can reverberate both to Heaven and Earth. The expressed jubilation by the three people who witness the miracle unfolded right before their eyes was just simply overwhelming. All what they could respond to the miracle was to say, “arigatogozaimasu” endlessly.

The episode shows some vital elements in the practice of the Konko faith. First, the person in trouble made every effort in attempting to attend church. Can you imagine the women in the

story would ever be able to travel to church in Wahiawa? But she did with the help of two strong men who helped her.

Second, the minister responded in extending his empathy to the person who needs help and extended his strong determined prayer to Kami. We have to understand the rational nature of the extended message of prayer to Kami.

Third, the person listened to the minister regardless of the situation. It would be impossible to witness the development in the story if we apply conventional secularized perceptions.

Forth, though it was not mentioned in the speech, the act of extending thanks for the blessings received shall be a vital element in continued blessings.

## **Konko-Sama Says . . .**

People exist because of Kami, and Kami exists because of people. Therefore, you should pray to Kami about everything, including sickness and problems, whether it is an emergency or not. Practicing faith is to have a heart like Kami in your everyday life. Praying to Kami by putting your hands together is not the only way to practice faith. A single heart means one heart. So be sure you do not go astray by having a double heart. Depending only on Tenchi Kane No Kami is having a single heart. You should be single-hearted and receive divine blessings fully. (III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 1981, 2)

Konko Daijin said, “Everybody asks me to come to their homes, but since I cannot be absent from Kami’s Hiromae, I do not go. However, I have never failed to help save a person who asked me for help with a single heart.” (Jinkyukyogoroku 55)

## **Bulletin Board**

### **Main Services for June 2017**

1 Thur -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)  
4 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)  
11 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)  
17 Sat -Summer Ohana Camp Day1, Camp Erdman  
18 Sun -Summer Ohana Camp Day 2  
25 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)

### **July 2017**

1 Sat -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)  
2 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

### **Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace**

The regular meeting will be held on Monday, June 12, 2017 at Gedatsu Church of Hawaii at 1:30 p.m.

### **Volunteer Activity**

The regular monthly visit to the Long-Term Care Facility at Wahiawa General Hospital will be made on Friday, June 9, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.

### **Konko Mission of Wahiawa 7<sup>th</sup> Summer Ohana Camp**

We will hold the annual 7<sup>th</sup> Summer Ohana Camp organized by the Konko Mission of Wahiawa from June 17 to June 18 at Camp Erdman, Mokuleia. The theme for this year's gathering is "Orei, Owabi and Onegai." The Rev. Dr. Todd Zenji Takahashi will make a presentation. Attending day-time activities including the lecture alone will be recommended if you hesitate to stay overnight. This time, we will enjoy the usual camp fire and crab hunting. For more information please contact Edna Matsuoka via internet: [ednakazuko@hotmail.com](mailto:ednakazuko@hotmail.com) or call (808) 223-3448.

### **KMH Calendar**

June 3 -Faith Enrichment Meeting at Honolulu Church (1:30 pm to 3:30 pm) Workshop by Rev. Dr. Todd Takahashi

June 7 -Missionary Women's Society Meeting at Waipahu Church (9 am to 4 pm)

June 10 –Young Adult Gathering in Ewa to 6/12

### **Honoring the Mitama Spirits**

#### **June**

Nancie Chieno Oyama	6/3/2013
Clara Kimiko Hiromasa	6/10/2014
Florence Tamaribuchi	6/10/1997
Edith Suzuyo Noguchi	6/14/2014
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 Matsutarō Kōsaka contributed the insightful articles. The translation is provided by Yasuhiro Yano. (Reference pages 308, 309 and 310)*

#### **No. 308**

**A person lives for only a generation, but his or her name can live on for many. During your lifetime, do things that will have our name live on after you die. Then when the elderly gather, they won't complain about young people not showing appreciation to them. Practice faith so that young people will come up to you and say, "Grandfather, grandmother, please tell me some stories." (I Yamamoto Sadajiro 61-6 Kyoten page 396 to 397)**

**Get blessed to gain respect from the young as you get advanced in your age.**

The elderly people are likely to express their unfulfilling thoughts towards the young. In general, it is apparent that there have been wide generational gaps between the old and the young.

It would be sad if we experience the same sort of generational gaps in the faith community. To avoid such consequences, we should always be mindful to extend our caring thoughts to other people.

It is a common tradition we can observe in the faith community that when dedicated residential ministers depart, they compile memories and testimonials about them and share the publications to related people. Whenever I read those publications, I always feel impressed by virtuous reputations the ministers gained through their dedicated services to the faith community.

My grandmother, named Sato Hata of Konko Church of Tokyo, was very quiet, but dedicated to serve at the church. During WWII, the church was burned down by the air raids. She had to start over her missionary work from scratch again. She never complained and did whatever services she could provide in sitting position despite her advanced age.

One of those days, while only my grandmother and I were serving, she related me an inspiring story. When she got engaged to her husband-to-be in April of 1890, she accompanied the wife of the Rev. Fujimori Kondo to see Konko Shijin-Sama, the second Konko-Sama at Konko Town. Mrs. Kondo forwarded her concern about the scheduled date of the wedding to Konko-Sama. She extended, "In Osaka area, they try to avoid a wedding ceremony during the cherry blossom season in April in fear of the prevailing folk belief that those who got married in the cherry blossom season will fall apart in the same manner as the cherry flowers fall down." Konko Shijin-Sama promptly responded to her, "The tree bears fruits only after the flowers fall down."

I still vividly remember my grandmother who shared me the episode that took place in a dire financial condition some sixty years ago. The message she received from Konko Shijin-Sama became instrumental for her missionary work thereafter.

#### **E. Passing on Faith**

#### **No. 309**

**The descendants of those who listen to Konko Daijin's words and practice faith will live without worry. Teaching your children how to live without worry is practicing true faith. (I Yamamoto Sadajiro 68 Kyoten page 408)**

**Teach children to live without worry.**

It is grateful in witnessing the emergence of the second, third and fourth generational believers in the faith community.

I have learned that many Konko ministers, got initiated into the practice of faith as they encountered very difficult circumstances in life, and evolved to get engaged in their missionary work in perseverance. A believer like me has taken for granted the given

faith oriented circumstance in which I can get engaged in pursuit of faith without much difficulty. When I think about it, I feel sorry for them that I have not extended much appreciation for their contributions.

Those ministers who initiated their own missionary work held an unyielding conviction that they didn't mind their own hardship for the sake of the follower so they do not have to undergo much difficulty in pursuit of faith. Those who follow the foundations paved by the founding minister should be mindful in extending their own gratitude for contributions provided by the predecessors.

We also should try to preserve the Konko faith tradition in the family from generation to generation as has been endeavored by the predecessors.

Peace of mind is the ultimate stage of happiness we can enjoy as believers. A true believer who enjoys happiness in pursuit of faith is always consciously aware of the presence of Kami. These people can deal with any matters in life with the help of Kami and be free from anxieties and complaints and enjoy a fulfilling life.

Many of those believers who have recovered from financial difficulties and healing from serious illnesses and have enjoyed happiness can hardly pass on the Konkokyo faith tradition to their descendants. The descendants of the family members remember only the blessed episodes once took place in the families. If they do not witness the same sort of outstanding episodes of blessings on their own, they simply cease to get engaged in pursuit of faith.

The Rev. Yoshizo Yasuda, who once served as Chief Administrative Minister of the Konkokyo Religious Organization, also Head Minister of Konko Church of Odawara, stated in the publication, "Kashin." He stated, "We are to enjoy fulfilling life not because of the outstanding blessed episodes we experience, but through our engagement in pursuit of faith."

## No. 310

**What should be the goal in practicing faith? The sick come to pray for a cure, while the healthy come to pray for a good harvest or for a prosperous business. But these goals are only temporary. When practicing faith, you must look forward to a future free of anxiety, or else your faith won't continue. In order to free your future from anxiety, not only must divine blessings be received by you, but also it is important that you practice a faith that will be passed down to future generations. It cannot be passed down if the family is not harmonious and if the family head doesn't practice faith. Requesting to stop pain is the start of faith. However, after being cured and offering thanks, one will stop coming to worship. Reforming your heart and receiving a healthy child are the most important goals of practicing faith. Kami won't be happy with only one generation of faith. (II Yamamoto Sadajiro 7-1, 2, 3 Kyoten page 718 to 719)**

## A faith passing down to future generations

The Rev. Sadajiro Yamamoto might have a strong memory. He kept many, long messages received from the Founder. The quoted message is just a half of the original message shown in the Konkokyo Kyoten Scriptures. The latter half of the message referred to the tips for getting blessed with a healthy child, such as the expectant mother should be mindful in exercising a good heart to get along with the mother-in-law.

The introductory part of the quoted message reads, "The sick come to pray for a cure, while the healthy come to pray for a good harvest or for a prosperous business. But these goals are only temporary. When practicing faith, you must look forward to a future free of anxiety, or else your faith won't continue."

The Founder stated, "Reforming your heart and receiving a healthy child are the most important goals of practicing faith. Kami won't be happy with only one generation of faith." In this manner, the primary goal of getting engaged in the practice of faith is to preserve the faith tradition in the family from generation to generation.

We are likely to get interested only for the matters that should be resolved soon. While we may not get what we prayed for and have some frustrations, they could serve as the given opportunity to strengthen our engagement in the practice of faith. We learn to appreciate the true meaning of a message such as, "When practicing faith, there are more blessings which cannot be seen than those which can be seen. The blessings you unknowingly receive are more than the blessings you knowingly receive. If you think about it, you will come to realize the many divine blessings that you have already received. When you can do this, you are a true believer" (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 53).

I learned an interpretation of "atode kangaete" or "If you think about it later" found in the original Japanese message from a minister who stated, "The expression 'atode kangaete' does not imply to the immediate past, but it could mean that your children, grandchildren would be able to appreciate the contributions made by your father and grandfather. In this manner, the perspective of Kami-Sama could be far greater than our human oriented perspectives."

We wish to practice true faith as has been mentioned above.