



Appreciating the amazing nature of the Konko teachings



Yano sensei on left with his Father, Ichiro and Mother, Nobuko '78

By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister

In the past I have encountered occasional requests from the people in the faith community not only in Japan but also in Hawaii that they want to hear and read some interesting stories from the ministers. I can fully appreciate the expressed opinions. I am also one of those believers. For the monthly publications and for speech scripts I have tried to find some interesting stories that can be share with the people in the faith community. But lately, I learned that those interesting stories we want to share could be found in the Konkokyo Kyoten Scriptures. We are Konko believers. If we find the teachings in the scriptures boring, how can we ever be interested in enriching our faith as Konko believers? Only people who follow the messages in the Kyoten Scriptures and listen to the stories told by the ministers and the lay believers would be able to enjoy the wondrous nature of the Konkokyo faith.

At our church, we have tried to read the Kyoten Gorikai both in Japanese and in English daily for more than 30 years. Currently, at our daily services, we have been reading Kyoten Gorikai in Japanese. So far, we have read the book dozens of times over and over again throughout our stay in Hawaii. At every church service held on Sunday, attendees read at least one passage of the teachings in the English version of Kyoten Scriptures. Members who attend the services regularly may have developed some interest in reading the scriptures.

The founding minister of Konko Church of Amagi, the Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake stated, "In pursuit of the Konko faith, the believers have to develop an intellectual understanding of the

teachings. More to it than that the believers also have to develop conviction in their practice of faith. What do we believe in our practice of faith? We as believers of the faith have to develop a true and sincere belief of our 'Oyagami-Sama' or 'Our Divine Parent.' Believing in 'Oyagami-Sama' means that we believe the truthfulness of the teachings given by the Founder Konko Daijin. Believing the teachings of the Founder Konko Daijin means believing 'Oyagami-Sama' 'Our Divine Parent.' We must believe with absolute conviction" (Shinjin no Shiori page 1). Actually the excerpt of the quoted message was shared by the founding minister of Konko Church of Amagi for his resident and student ministers at the church. It acted as a guide for the practice of faith.

When I attended the 160th Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the Konkokyo Religion held in November, 2019, my elder brother gave me a copy of a speech my father, Ichiro Yano delivered at the Believer's conference held during the day of the annual Grand Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami held on April 3, 1975. The Konko Library kept the copy of his speech and my brother gave a copy of the CD. Ever since I returned from Japan, I have been listening to his speech again and again.

In my father Ichiro's speech, he stated that he became a Konko believer at the age of 19. At first, I felt confused that my father said he became a Konko believer at the age of 19. In my head, I was thinking, "Wasn't he born to his parents who were ardent Konko believers?" My grandfather Tōsuke was desperate in getting blessed with children so someone can inherit the family name. For some reason he could not get fulfilled of his wish despite the fact he tried to get blessed through divine powers. He had substantial family resources and so he really wanted someone to inherit it. He tried to visit many shrines, temples and any other sacred places in hoping to get blessed with children. During those days of confusion and frustration, my grandfather Tōsuke encountered the Konko faith that was introduced in the village. Through his involvement in the practice of faith, he got blessed with his son, Ichiro, who is my father. And another son and a daughter also were born. My father used to tell me that his father became so excited and devoted into the faith that he became a "Shinto-sōdai" or a lay leader of the church.

When my father was born, my grandfather, Tōsuke Yano regarded his birth as being so sacred that he put solid gold coins into the tub of water for his first bath and never placed him on the floor.

My father, Ichiro was raised in such a treasured manner. I would have thought that he would say he became a Konko

believer when he was born. But my father said he became a Konko believer through his appreciation of the messages and work of Toritsugi-Mediation provided by the Rev. Hidejiro Hosaka who took over the responsibility of the operation of the church after the predecessors departed. The Rev. Hosaka tried to share the teachings of the Founder Konko Daijin throughout his services. At regular church services, he spoke for more than one hour and occasionally for two hours. Through his intensive sharing of the teachings, my father learned to appreciate the true nature of the Konko faith. When my father was 19 years old, he developed a conviction in pursuit of the Konko faith and declared that he became an official Konko believer.

My father learned to appreciate the teachings of the Founder Konko Daijin through practicing faith. He stated that getting blessed with miracles does not assure that true blessings can be handed down to the family members and descendants. He actually quoted two miracles that his daughters received.

My eldest sister was about to die due to the complications at the time of birth. Only her head came out and her shoulders were stuck in my mother's pelvis. Her face was turning blue. The midwife panicked and could not handle the emergency situation. It would have been too late to call the doctor. In responding to this emergency situation, my father gave a sincere prayer of desperation to Ikigami Konko Daijin and Tenchi Kane No Kami for help and he pressed my mom's abdomen with great force and my sister popped out immediately, saving the life of both my mother and sister.

My second younger sister had a strange skin disorder when she was born. Her entire back was covered with a huge Mongolian spot, which is a bluish skin when she was born. Her whole back was like a giant bruise. The doctor could do nothing about the situation. But eventually, the skin discoloration went away when she reached the age of middle school. These episodes were miraculous, but my father said these episodes alone would be of little help in improving our faith in Kami. We need to understand and appreciate the wondrous nature of the teachings given by the Founder for passing on the Konko faith tradition in the family.

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 join 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 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 Mon -Monthly Service, Tenchi Kane No Kami
(Facebook Live 7:30 pm)

7 Sun -Sunday Service (Facebook Live 9 am)

14 Sun -Monthly Service, Ikigami Konko Daijin
(Facebook Live 9 am)

21 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (Facebook Live 9 am)

28 Sun -Sunday Service (Facebook Live 9 am)

July 2020

1 Wed -Monthly Service, Tenchi Kane No Kami
(Facebook Live 7:30 pm)

5 Sun -Sunday Service 9:00am

Congratulations Class of 2020!

Renee Natsuki Yano (1st daughter of Revs. David and Megumi Yano) graduated safely from Moanalua High School. The online graduation ceremony was held on May 27 on TV and YouTube.

Garage Sale

We will conduct a garage sale in responding to the donations of many items overflowing in the basement room on Saturday, June 13, 2020 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Masks will be required.

Preparation on June 11 @ 1pm and June 12 @ 9 am.

KMH

KMH Board of Trustees' meeting will be held on Sat, June 27, 2020 at Konko Mission of Honolulu from 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

The Church Door is Open from 5/23

We welcome you to make a visit to our church and church services. Please wear your face mask as a courtesy under the precautions of Covid-19.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

June

Matsu Suzuki	6/2008
Nancie Chieno Ooyama	6/3/2013
Katherine Sumiko Araki	6/5/2013
Florence Tamaribuchi	6/10/1997
Clara Kimiko Hiromasa	6/10/2014
Edith Suzuyo Noguchi	6/14/2014
Harry Ching	6/19/2007

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

Ginza Dayori (*Monthly publication of Ginza Kyokai*)
Even before I arrived here to take care of Konko Mission of Wahiawa in 1977, the founding minister of the church, the Rev. Haruko Takahashi already received the monthly publication, "Ginzadayori" and kept the copies in the shelves for many years. We have been receiving two copies of the monthly publication from Konko Church of Ginza every month for over half a century. It is just amazing how the church has been sending us copies of the church publications in this manner without any interruptions for so long. I have been looking forward to receiving the publication and enjoy reading for my reference in pursuit of the faith. I really appreciate the thoughtfulness and prayers of the generational Head Ministers who have kept the initial action of helping us through the mailing of the monthly publication. I would like to introduce the message of Head Minister, the Rev. Kouichi Yukawa for your reference. Original article: Ginzadayori February 2020 issue page 2, message of the Rev. Kouichi Yukawa
An English translation was provided by the Rev. Yasuhiro Yano.

"Otoku no naka de" means in the blessedness of virtue.

*By the Rev. Kouichi Yukawa
Head Minister of Konko Church of Ginza*

The founding minister of Konko Church of Ginza in Tokyo initiated his missionary work at a small housing complex located at the corner of a narrow passage in Kobiki-machi (current locality of Ginza 2-chome) on January 20, 1924, some 96-year ago.

The house used for his missionary work was destroyed by the fire caused by the Great Kanto Earthquake in September 1, 1924. He continued to engaged in his missionary work at the second floor of a rental housing that escaped the damages from the fire. He earnestly prayed for the recovery of Tokyo from the devastation.

In so doing, in the spring of the following year, he had an unexpected opportunity to gain the leasehold to the portion of the land where the current church is standing. A small-scaled church facility was build on

the spot. The construction work finished in August. The founding minister of Tamamizu, the parent church of Ginza church, was invited to officiate the Senza-sai ceremony that was to transfer the altar deity to the newly built church sanctuary.

On September 28, 1925, the Konko Headquarters Office in Konko Town approved the establishment of "Konkokyo Ginza Sho-Kyokai Sho." The ceremony was conducted on November 21, 1925.

The Rev. Seiichi Yukawa, the founding minister of Konko Church of Ginza recalled the memories of the auspicious day of the ceremony. His message was printed in the Volume 7 of "Yukawa Seiichi Kyowa." The following is a brief account of his message.

After the celebration of Senza-sai ceremony, the invited ministers and church believers left. The worship hall was empty and very quiet. A person, who was a banker, became initiated into the Konko Church of Ginza just two weeks ago, showed up in the worship hall. On the day he came to see the minister for help related the issue of his son, he related to the minister, "My son developed a serious disease that affected his hip functions. I've been very much concerned if he would be able to regain his good health. Please ask Kami-Sama to save him from the disease."

He didn't believe any religious faiths at all. But his younger brother had been serving as a Konko minister. His brother informed him, "A new Konko church has opened in Ginza recently. Please make a visit to see the minister at the church and get blessed for your son." He responded to the forwarded letter and came to church for the first time. He worked at a bank branch in Nihonbashi in Tokyo. Responding to the minister's message, he began to visit church daily after his work was over in the afternoon. He began to join the regular church prayer service held on Sunday at 2:00 p.m. He also listened to the messages shared by the minister.

The day for the special ceremony was approaching, but due to his work schedule, he was unable to join the service in person. He tried to attend the service remotely by extending his prayer at his working desk discreetly by reciting the names of "Ikigami Konko

Daijin and Tenchi Kane No Kami." He also asked his son to join the service in the same manner as he did. He asked his son to try to attend the service remotely by reciting "Ikigami Konko Daijin and Tenchi Kane No Kami" even as he was lying down in his bed. His wife also responded to the idea of remotely attending the service. She said, "I will also join the service remotely by reciting 'Ikigami Konko Daijin and Tenchi Kane No Kami' even while I was doing my cooking in the kitchen." In this manner, all the family members joined to celebrate the special ceremonial service remotely.

On the day that service was conducted, he managed to visit church despite the fact the service was already over. After visiting church, when he came home, he witnessed something unexpected. His son was sitting up on his bed and greeted his father by saying, "Otoosan, I can now walk." He kept on talking that while he was trying to extend his prayer in corresponding to the time of the special service was in progress at church, he felt like using the bathroom. Usually, his mother assisted him to move to the bathroom. But on that particular occasion, he felt the area around his hip at ease. He attempted to stand up. He managed to stand up and while holding on to the wall for support, he managed to reach to the bathroom somehow. In responding to his son's blessed episode, father reflectively responded to say, "I cannot stay in this manner. I have to go to church immediately to give my thanks to Kami-Sama for this unexpected great blessing received just now." The Rev. Seiichi Yukawa vividly recalled this episode that took place on the very evening of the opening day of the church.

The founding minister, the Rev. Seiichi Yukawa lost the initial missionary facility by fire soon after he started to get engaged in his missionary work. In the deserted land after the devastation of the Great Kanto Earthquake, he built a new church and on the very first day of the opening of the church, this wondrous episode of blessing took place. It could be attributed to the virtuous work of the Toritsugi-Mediation perpetuated by the founding minister of Konko Church of Tamamizu in Osaka, the Rev. Yasutaro Yukawa, and the founding minister of Konko Church of Ginza, the Rev. Seiichi Yukawa. This great episode was etched deeply into my mind.

This divine function of Toritsugi-Mediation at this church in Ginza has been perpetuated for generations without any disruptions up to this day. What matters the most in pursuit of faith depends on our own heart.

It is important to visit the church regularly. More to it than that, it is important to listen to the teachings. This is the vital element in getting blessed through the practice of faith.

The Founder Konko Daijin related, "The religious training of this faith does not involve traditional physical austerities. Doing your everyday work is religious training" (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 39). I believe that renewing our heart daily to be in line with the heart of Kami is the actualization of this given message.

Free Mask and Toilet Paper Distribution Event 5/11/20

Konko Missions in Hawaii held a toilet paper and cloth mask distribution on Monday, May 11th from 12 noon till supplies ran out. Wahiawa Church distributed 100 care packages to the church members and community. Thank you to Mr. Koichi Hozumi for initiating this event and the KMH Community Engagement Outreach Committee for helping to carry it out. Thank you to KY International Fashion Inc. for donating 500 beautiful cloth masks to KMH and the Konko Mission of Wahiawa for donating the toilet paper.

