



Examples we can follow



By Yasuhiro Yano,
Head Minister

I enjoyed my visit to Japan in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Konko Church of Tokiwadai back in February of this year. The momentum of the inspiration I received there is continuing till this day. It was there that I received a deep thought, while attending the ceremony. I had a firm conviction that “There is no way a believer can fail to receive divine blessings through the Divine Love of Our Divine Parent, Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama.”

This year marks 154 years since the Founder Konko Daijin received the Rikkyo Shinden or the Divine Call, the divine initiation for the founding of the Konko Religious faith in 1859. For all those years, there must have been countless numbers of people who get blessed through their engagement in the practice of faith. Some of those believers have gotten introduced to the faith tradition through the remarks made by another who said there was a person called Konko-Sama or an Ikigami-Sama in Otani village, where the blessings were guaranteed. It is the same thought I developed when I listened to the presentation by the Rev. Mitsuo Miyake, who was the guest speaker at Tokiwadai Church’s anniversary. The Konkokyo Kyoten Scriptures is a compilation of the testimonials from people who enjoyed blessings through their encounter, engagement and practice of faith. The book is a good reference and resource for us to find out how we can get blessed through the practice of faith. There are also many believers who have demonstrated how they have continued to enjoy blessings through their engagement in the practice of faith.

Many ministers and lay believers showed how they enjoyed blessings through the practice of faith by learning from other believers, through various episodes of how they received blessings, to how blessings can be terminated. There are countless episodes of people’s blessed stories, in the 150 years of the Konkokyo history. Detailed accounts can be found in the Konkokyo Kyoten Scriptures and many other resources in our faith community.

From time to time, my daughter, Edna has introduced many episodes in which the patients in the hospital receives amazing blessings, simply by following what Edna suggests to them. Although none of them have come to a Konko Church and get engaged in the practice of the Konko faith, they have demonstrated that their acceptance of the thoughts introduced by Edna can cause a significant change to occur within their own bodies. In a sense, in those particular instances, Tenchi Kane No Kami could have been

activated to the people who followed the message forwarded by Edna sensei. Her message is simple and specific. To those people who suffer from pains in the bodily parts, try to rub the affected parts and extend thanks for the integral work of that body part. Simply speaking, extending thanks to those parts activate the work of Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama.

The 4th Konko Sama used the expression of “*sewaninaru subeteni reiwo iu kokoro heiwa umidasu kokoro to iwan*” or the heart of trying to extend thanks for any and all those elements which can be integral and helpful in life will help contribute in keeping peace. He shared the concept of “*Inochi no shin no hataraki*” or the core function of all living things. He quoted a tree for example.

The following is my interpretation of his message. When a baby is born, we exchange our greeting by saying *Omedetou gozaimasu and arigatou gozaimasu* among the people involved. When a child grows up and becomes a year older, they also exchange celebratory remarks by saying, “*Omedeto gozaimasu, and arigato gozaimasu*” in return. When the child begins to enroll in a school, they also repeat the same tradition of exchanging greetings of celebration. When the child graduates from school, they also keep exchanging the greeting of celebration. And we try to exchange greetings of celebration continuously, till we die, and even after we die. If there ever is an occasion that we can no longer exchange the greetings of celebration for an individual, that person’s life may most likely encounter hardship.

The same vital function can also be identified in all living things. For example, look at the tree in the yard. A tree keeps growing through the life sustaining function given to it. It is a given condition that the roots system takes up needed water and nutrients in the soil, and the leaves also create food for the body through the blessing of the sunlight. All things work in the given condition. If there is no sunlight, there would be no tree. If there is no water, there would be no tree. The land, the soil, the water, the air and the sunlight are all given conditions of sustaining a tree. We identify them as blessings of Kami. If a tree stops taking up water and nutrients from the soil, the tree may wilt down and die. The same is true, if the leaves and roots stop to creating food for the body, the tree would die as well. The function of the roots and the leaves can be likened to the function of expressing our thought of joy, thankfulness, appreciation or whatever expressions we use in celebrating the state of blessedness.

Konko-Sama also showed us a simple formula to see if we have been in line with the heart of Kami and walking the right path for happiness and prosperity. The formula is to see if we have the heart of thanks and appreciation for any elements in our daily life. The message is very strong. You have to find out the powerfulness of the message on your own.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

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).

The following is an excerpt of an English translation of article found in the Konko Shimbun issued on April 21, 2013. The story was contributed by Ms. Youko Ozaki who belongs to Konko Church of Samachi in Tokushima. The English translation is provided by Yasuhiro Yano.

Blessings I have enjoyed through Konko faith

Mrs. Youko Ozaki, lost her beloved mother two years ago in a car accident. Encountering this tragic death of her mother in unbearable grief, how did she deal with this situation? What helped her to overcome the grave circumstance?

Mrs. Youko Ozaki shared her thoughts for her late mother in contemplation, "My mother is an ideal role model I can follow in the practice of faith."

Her mother who lived a truly sincere faith life by extending her appreciation for anything in life in the gesture of pressing hands together in the form of prayer was loved and admired by many of the people in her living sphere.

In 2011, her mother was killed by an automobile accident. The Mrs. Ozaki's sister happened to be driving, with her mother as a passenger in the back seat when the car collided with a 4-ton truck.

Mrs. Ozaki recalled, "My mother was always consciously aware of safety whenever she got on board a car by extending her prayers to Kami. I was overwhelmed with grief and sadness for the loss of my mother who was killed in a car accident."

Although Mrs. Ozaki felt unbearably sad, she did not ever wonder how something like this could ever happen to someone who is so devoted in the faith. Instead she was able to acknowledge the fact that mother and my sister encountered the accident on their way to pick up my father. She was convinced that the accident occurred in the course of their pilgrimage to church, so there shall be some divine intent for the fatal accident.

It would be quite hard to understand how Mrs. Ozaki could ever have a heart to acknowledge that even the passing of her mother in a car accident could develop into divine blessedness. An episode she encountered before the accident might have helped her to develop such a heart of accepting the tragic death of her mother in appreciation.

Prior to the accident, four years ago, Mrs. Ozaki's mother was chosen as one of the representatives to make an offering of Tamagushi in the observance of the Autumn Memorial Service at the Headquarters Church in Konko. Mrs. Ozaki felt like Kami acknowledged her devotedness in her practice of faith. But one week before the service, she collapsed and was hospitalized. Mrs. Ozaki reflectively thought, "How could she ever have to encounter this bad situation. She was so devoted in her practice of faith."

Mrs. Ozaki raced to see her mother at the hospital. While she met her mother, she developed a thought, "Now is the time the whole family can get together in prayer for her recovery." She understood this circumstance was intended by Kami to let her become single-hearted in her prayer. Then she went to see the minister at the church.

The minister at the Toritsugi-Mediation Desk responded to her extended message, "Your mother will be discharged from the hospital in two or three days." He gave her a bottle of "omiki" sacred rice wine. I raced back to the hospital and gave that "omiki" sacred rice by using a piece of soft cloth. She applied the omiki soaked cloth to her mother's mouth. Her mother reflectively responded by saying, "I have committed some irreverence against Kami. Please relay my message of apologies to Kami."

Her mother revealed that she canceled her intended visit to church because of some domestic issues she had to take care of. She felt it could not be helped and stopped visiting the church. But it could be against the heart of Kami, she reflected. Mrs. Ozaki was shocked by her mother's extended thought, and felt even such a devoted mother could commit some irreverence to Kami. How fragile our devotedness to Kami can be. She further extended her thought that because of our weak nature, we need to be awakened for the irreverence committed by means of encountering an illness. Mrs. Ozaki interpreted the circumstance in such a manner. She used to believe that her mother became ill despite her devotedness in her practice of faith. But she thought because of the illness, her mother was given an opportunity to understand some irreverence she might have committed and give apologies.

Mrs. Ozaki understood that even an encounter of an illness takes place in blessedness. Through her mother who has tried to be consciously aware of Kami's presence, Mrs. Ozaki could see her mother as her mentor in the pursuit of the faith.

Mrs. Ozaki related, "The more I know about the details of the accident, I have been convinced that there could be divinely intended work in the accident and mother died accordingly. This conviction helped me to continue to live, although I still feel sorrow for the passing of my dear mother."

The policemen who investigated the accident told us that it could be impossible for any passengers to survive, given the magnitude of the impact. But her sister who drove the car was seriously injured but miraculously spared of her life. And mother who sat in the back seat showed a smiling face and had no external injuries. They exclaimed it could be a miracle. I could see Kami's work in the accident.

A packet of “*Goshinmai* sacred rice” was dropped on the floor of the driver from her purse. The minister told her, “Your sister could have been dead. But your mother’s single-heartedness saved her.” I believe my mother’s devotion to the practice of faith was true and genuine. Kami heard her extended single hearted prayer for my sister in exchange of her own life. Kami listened to her till the last seconds of her life. In this manner, Mrs. Ozaki understood Kami’s work one by one.

Mrs. Ozaki related, “Through my encounter with the passing of mother, I feel like I have given an opportunity to re-examine my way of getting involved in the practice of faith. I may not be able to lessen the grief and sorrow of the passing of my mother. But I shall never forget to extend my appreciation for the work of Kami. My teacher always reminds me about that aspect of the practice of faith. I want to emulate my mother through the work of Toritsugi-Mediation hereafter.”

Bulletin Board

Spring Grand Service Schedule

Sun, May 5 Wailuku Church at 11 a.m.

Sun, May 12 Hilo Church at 11 a.m.



HCRP Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the interfaith community will be held at the Gedatsu Church, May 6 at 1:30 p.m.

Volunteer Activity at Wahiawa General Hospital

The seasonal volunteer activity at the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Facility will be held on Sunday, May 5 at 10:00 a.m. following the regular Sunday Service. Lunch will be served after the function. The monthly volunteer activity at the same facility will be held on Friday, May 10 at 10:00 a.m. Your participation to the program will be very much appreciated.

KMH Ministers’ Faith Enrichment Meeting

The Rev. Takayuki Kunito, Head Minister of Konko Church of Yao in Osaka will be making a presentation for the local ministers on Saturday, May 25, 2013 at the Konko Mission of Honolulu from 10:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m.

Memorial Day Tradition

We will be visiting the National Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl on Monday, May 27 and extend our prayers for the Konko believers and affiliated people to the Konko faith honored at the cemetery. We will meet at the Konko Mission of Honolulu at 8:00 a.m. and leave for the cemetery. We will also make a visit to the Mililani Memorial Park and pay respect to the church members and friends buried at the place.

3rd Summer Ohana Camp

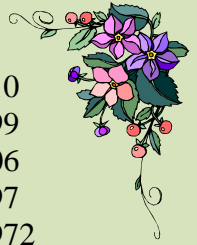
We will be holding Wahiawa Church sponsored 3rd Summer Ohana Camp on June 22 and 23 at Camp HR Erdman in Mokuleia. Deadline for the application will be Sunday, May 26. We are also raising funds for the program through the sale of the Zippy’s tickets. We will appreciate your participation, support and contributions for the educational program.

Church Garage Sale! Saturday, June 8 from 10 am-2 pm!
Proceeds will go to helping with the Summer Ohana Camp

Honoring Mitama Spirits

May

Toshiko Yogo	5/2/2010
Kiyoka Takahashi	5/5/1999
Helen Yoshie Eguchi	5/9/2006
Saichi Eguchi	5/9/1997
Rev. Hidejiro Hosaka	5/16/1972
Fernie Furusho	5/26/2001
Hideo Fujimoto	5/26/2005
Hiroshi Katsura	5/26/1959



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 followings 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 43, 44 and 45)

No. 43

Oxen are different from humans. Oxen can withstand the cold without anything extra; and regardless of how cold it may be, they do not catch cold. This is beyond the strength of the humans raising them. Chickens, wild birds, and other animals are also the same. Only humans can realize that all this protection is from Kami. (I Yamamoto Sadajiro 4, Kyoten page 364)

Humans are to realize all the protections from Kami.

The message found in the previous page 24 referred to the perception that we would be able to appreciate the wondrous nature of divine blessing that sustains lives of birds, animals, plants and any other living creatures. The message in this page 43 corresponds to the message discussed in page 24 that only humans can appreciate the wondrous nature of the divine blessings.

In general, in reference to a dictionary, the word “satori” shown in the original Japanese means to find out rationale for things. In accordance with the Buddhist tradition, it means that getting truth by eliminating any of our self-oriented disturbing elements from one’s heart. In essence, the word “satori” is a form of getting knowledge; develop clear understanding and experience primarily focused on the subject of “dōri” and “shinri.” The word “dōri” is defined as to identify the nature of human existence in relation to all the elements in the universe and find out a clear path how we should live accordingly. The expression of the original expression “akiraka ni shiru” refers to the

state of understanding the ultimate truth that can lead to solve any and all of the difficulties we encounter in life.

“Dori” or the universal principle, the Founder used in the statement implies that every individual is protected by Kami and shall live accordingly. He assured us that if we develop “satori” or deeper understanding of that aspect of human existence, we are able to solve any and all of the difficulties we may encounter in life.

And the original Japanese statement “satoru noga ningen” or only humans are to get enlightened implies that Kami is expecting all people to get enlightened because getting enlightened is the ability given only to human beings. The Founder’s message seems to prompt us to take action either to get enlightened or spend the rest of life without getting any enlightenment.

No. 44
People are a microcosm. Tenchi Kane No Kami protects your head at all times, thus you can use your body at will. (I Yamamoto Sadajiro 2-6, Kyoten page 362-3)

People are microcosm.

The Founder referred to a human being as a microcosm. Microcosm is used in comparison to macrocosm which represents the universe. Microcosm simply represents the limited nature of humanity in comparison to the infinite nature of the universe.

But the Founder seemed to use the expression of “*shō uchū*” or a microcosm not just to show the limited nature of human existence, but because of some identical elements found both in humanity and the universe.

What elements can be identical both to people and the universe? At first, both the people and the universe have lives and active. Macrocosmic Heaven and Earth is not just a body of mass of elements, but have invisible life that help sustains all living things. People also have invisible lives that make it possible for us to live.

Second, both macrocosm and microcosm work as a unified whole body. In the macrocosmic Heaven and Earth, there are the sun, moon, stars, the earth which has oceans, mountains and rivers, and plants and animals thrive in the environment. The whole universe works as a unified functional body. Each individual also have head, face, arms and legs and has a unified functional body as a whole.

Both the universe and people have lives and functional bodies. But it is only through the work of Kami that make it possible for both bodies to be functional. It would be important for us to realize that it is through the work of Kami that makes it possible for the universe to function in accordance with universal rules; and people function freely in exercise of their own will.

No. 45

From Tenchi Kane No Kami, people receive a body and a part of Kami’s soul. They are able to live by eating the foods bestowed by Heaven and Earth. Since long ago, it has been said that Heaven is father and Earth is mother. Tenchi Kane No Kami is the parent of all people. Those who practice Faith will meet their immortal parents and will keep receiving divine blessings. (II Fukushima Gihe'es 2-2,3, Kyoten page 668)

From Tenchi Kane No Kami, people receive a body and a part of Kami’s soul.

The nature of people as children of Tenchi Kane No Kami is specifically stated in reference to a human body. First, Kami bestowed the human body; second, Kami bestowed “*wake-mitama*” or a part of Kami’s soul; third, Kami bestowed food for the sustenance of human life. As for the nature of the human body, it will be discussed in the following page 46. At this page, primary discussion will be given to the nature of “*wake-mitama*” or a part of Kami’s soul.

There are scores of instances where the Founder quoted the expression of “*wake-mitama*” in the new Konkokyo Kyoten Scriptures. Much attention has been focused on the concept of “*wake-mitama*” because the term represents one of the vital perceptions about human existence held by the Founder.

The terminology “*bun-rei*” or “*wake-mitama*” was used from ancient times in Japan. The term refers to a Shinto-oriented tradition in which a part of the deity enshrined at the main Shinto Shrine branched out to another shrine. On the contrary, the Founder used the expression “*wake-mitama*” in such a manner that Kami bestowed a part of Kami’s soul to people. He put his own distinctive meaning to the word apart from the original meaning.

As you may understand, it was an extraordinary statement that the Founder identified humans as beloved children of Kami and “*wake-mitama*” a part of Kami’s soul is given to each individual. The Founder viewed humans in such a manner that each individual has the essential elements and an inherent potential to evolve to a being similar to Kami. His expressed view for humanity is unique and extraordinary.

One element that should be emphasized in the quoted message is that each individual has been bestowed with “*wake-mitama*” from Kami, or a branched out Kami’s soul at birth, contrary to a generally held perception that we transform into the status of “*wake-mitama*” in corresponding to our departure from this world. The primary purpose of practicing faith is to help the growth and evolution of the inherently shared Kami’s soul given to each of us to the fullest potential divinely intended throughout of life.