



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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E-mail: konko-wahiawa@hotmail.com. Also, find us on Facebook. Head minister: Rev. Yasuhiro Yano. Vol. XXVI, No. 10, October 1, 2014

You are cordially invited to attend the
Autumn Grand Ceremony
For Ikigami Konko Daijin
In commemoration of the 200th Year Birth
of the Founder
生神金光大神大祭

Date: Monday, October 13, 2014

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Konko Mission of Wahiawa

Sermon: Rev. Yasuhiro Yano

Kibimai: Ms. Ke'ala Takahashi

Naorai fellowship dinner will follow. Let's receive the divine arrangements of being able to worship on this very important day.

Exercising Kami's heart

By Yasuhiro Yano,
Head Minister

This year marks the bicentennial birth year of the Founder Ikigami Konko Daijin. In corresponding to this auspicious year, I made a pilgrimage to attend the first day of the service on September 28, 2014, at the Headquarters Church at Konko Town in Okayama. A special service in celebration of the 200th Years of Founder's Birth was observed after the annual Grand Service for the Founder Ikigami Konko Daijin. To accommodate a great number of pilgrims, the service will be held over four separate days, beginning on September 28 and the fourth day service will be held on October 11, 2014.

Whenever I attend the Grand Service at the Headquarters Church, I feel overwhelmed with the great number of believers who congregate at the grand worship hall. They all practice faith in following the Founder Ikigami Konko Daijin. And they all have something in common as Konko believers. At the same time, I always extend my prayer that the Konkokyo faith community will continue to expand throughout the world.

Konko Daijin related, "Practice faith. Receive divine blessings by practicing faith. Then, not only you, but also your grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and even further generations can receive divine blessings. Even the spirits of your ancestors will be able to rest in peace because you receive divine blessings through your practice of faith. The blessings you have received stay with you forever. Therefore, you should build as large a foundation of blessings as possible during your life" (III Jinkyogyoroku 87).

One of the few definitive explanations about the practice of faith is given to Ichimura Mitsugoro. Konko-Sama related to him, "Practice faith (Shinjin). *Shin* means your heart, and *jin* means kami. Practicing faith means you direct your heart toward Kami. Though you are surrounded by divine virtue, you won't receive blessings unless you have faith" (I Ichimura Mitsugoro 1-10). But this teaching also does not specify any concrete meaning of "Shinjin." Can you understand the meaning of directing your heart toward Kami? What does that mean? We can have some idea of the meaning of directing our heart toward Kami. If you have some hobbies, such as golfing, you may always extend your thoughts about golfing. This is a sort of reference how you direct your heart toward golfing. If you are parents, you may experience yourself always extending your thoughts and vigilance towards your children. Directing our heart toward Kami can be understood to some extent, but we still feel not fully understand the meaning of directing our heart towards Kami.

Ichimura Mitsugoro interpreted the meaning of directing his heart toward Kami in such a manner that he realized that "even a lamp full of oil could not give light without a wick (shin). Without faith, the world would be dark as night with unlit lamps" (Ichimura Mitsugoro 1-10-2).

For your reference, I would like to introduce my translation of the passages found in the biography of the Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake, the founding minister of Konko Church of Amagi, who stated about the meaning of "Shinjin" in responding to an encounter a believer experienced.

Mrs. Chitose Kaneko, wife of the Rev. Yasuki Kaneko, the founding minister of Konko Church of Yasu in Fukuoka left her message in writing as follows: The writing could be assumed to be made at an early stage of Showa Era. "Her mother, who was aged and had developed hearing difficulty, could not notice the approaching of a horse driven cargo vehicle from behind. Accidentally, the items loaded on the truck fell down on the road, and some of them hit my mother on the feet. The item was the hard-compressed soybean which was remains left after extracting the soybean oil. The thick, heavy rounding disk of remains of the soybean extract was rock-hard. Immediately the people in the scene responded to bring her into the Uchida Hardware shop nearby. In responding to the situation, my mother expressed her thoughts by saying she was sorry for the driver of the truck because she could not notice the approach of the truck because of her hearing difficulty. The spectators all responded to the expressed thought of mother by saying that her expression of apologies was nonsense. It should be the driver who shall be blamed for the accident. Despite the sympathies expressed by the people at the hardware shop and the Sanoya shop across the road, my mother was steadfast in

her belief that she should extend her apologies to Kami-Sama for the development.” Written by Chitose.

The message was written on back of both sides of a used envelop which carried the name of Harada Shoe Store. The envelop also contained a letter forwarded by the Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake in responding to her expressed thought. The letter pad was something looked like a half of the Mino paper which was thick and could be used for Goshinmai envelope or Shoji screen paper. The letter could be handed to Chitose who came to visit church and sought Toritsugi-Mediation about the condition of her mother who was bed-ridden because of the injury.

The Rev. Yasutake wrote, “I will pray for you for two weeks to get recovered. The fact you can feel pain in the feet means you have been kept alive due to the sustenance of Kami-Sama. Give thanks for the life being given to you, extend your apologies for the injuries sustained (because you cannot serve Kami-Sama due to the injury), and have a prayer that since your legs are given by Kami-Sama, ask Kami-Sama to heal the injured legs.” On the reverse side of the paper, he stated, “I believe practicing faith means your heart will be directed to the heart of Kami-Sama. Try to exercise the heart of Kami-Sama as your own heart. I believe our heart in reflection Kami-Sama’s heart can be consisted of 60 percent of Orei (Paying back what we owe to Kami-Sama), 30 percent of Owabi (Reforming your own heart) and 10 percent of Onegai (Reliance to Kami-Sama). Since Kami-Sama promised that you shall be given blessing in responding to the forwarded heart of joy and thankfulness.”

As has been shown in the illustration, the three elements of Orei, Owabi and Onegai are relevantly shown in the main trunk of a tree, branch and leaves accordingly. (Yasutake Matsutaro pages 231- 232).

Actually, the message forwarded to the mother of Chitose Kaneko was in acknowledgement of the advance stage of the spirituality developed by the mother. The illustration exactly showed the nature of the heart held by the person as well as by the Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake. In Japan, they use the expression of “Shinjin ni naru” or a spiritual transformation as a Konko believer. I believe an ideal state of the heart held by a Konko believer can be illustrated in the diagram. Of course we cannot digitalize or quantify the volume of the heart we develop. The reference simply shows the priority of how we deliver our thoughts in the practice of faith.

The 4th Konko-Sama used to express, “Junjo ga chigau” or the sequence of expressed thoughts are not in proper order. At an occasion at the Headquarters Church, a person showed up to see Konko-Sama in delay. In the situation the person expressed “I am so sorry for being late.” To the person, Konko-Sama said, “No, no, you are wrong in the way you express your thoughts. You shall extend your thanks for being able to be here in safe and sound first, and then you shall extend your thoughts of apologies if you

have any. It is like trying to take off your underwear without taking off your suit.”



Konko-Sama Says . . .

I, Tenchi Kane No Kami, want to say the following: “Though they live between Heaven and Earth, people are unaware of Kami’s blessings. Shrines, temples, and homes stand on Kami’s land. Unaware of this, people only refer to the Days and Directions, commit irreverence to Kami and encounter hardships due to their accumulated offenses. They are to receive divine blessings by practicing faith. I, Tenchi Kane No Kami, have sent Ikigami Konko Daijin to people to give blessings and teachings and to have them prosper forever. Man is man because of Kami, and Kami is Kami because of man. Both continue to uphold each other.” (*Oshirasegoto Oboecho 25-3*)

Bulletin Board

Monthly Services for October 2014

- 1 Wed -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 4 Sat -Church clean up for the Grand Service (8 am)
- 5 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-Honolulu Church Autumn Grand Service (11am)
- 12 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-Waipahu Church Autumn Grand Service (11 am)
- 13 Mon -Wahiawa Church Autumn Grand Service (6:30 pm)
- 18 Sat -A-Bombs Peace Exhibition at Palolo Hongwanji Temple through 10/26
- 19 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)
- 26 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-HCRP Peace Prayer at Palolo Hongwanji Temple (4 pm)

November 2014

- 1 Sat -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 Gedatsu Church on Monday, October 6, 2014 at 1:30 p.m.

The HCRP organized “A-bombs Exhibition for Peace” at Palolo Hongwanji Temple Social Hall at 1641 Palolo Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96816 from Saturday, October 18 through October 26, 2014. Daily exhibit will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. At the Opening Ceremony on Saturday, October 18 at 10:00 a.m., A-bomb survivor from Hiroshima will make a presentation. Following the closing ceremony on Sunday, October 26, at 4:00 p.m., the annual

interfaith Peace Prayer will be observed. Dr. Charlotte Frambaugh-Kritzer of UH at Manoa College of Education will make a presentation on “Peace Education for the Youth.” The programs are open to the public. You are encouraged to attend the exhibit and the peace prayer.

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, October 10 from 10:00 a.m.

110th Anniversary of Konko Church of Amagi

The Konko Church of Amagi in Fukuoka, which is a grandparent church of Konko Mission of Wahiawa, and the Rev. Yasuhiro Yano and Reiko Yano and their three children got religious training at the church, will be observing the 110th Anniversary Celebration Services on October 25 and 26, 2014. The Rev. Reiko Yano will be attending the functions.

Church Mini-Bazaar

We will hold a church mini-bazaar on Saturday, November 8, 2014 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Foods, crafts, plants, elephant items are also available.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

October

Janet Kimie Faggard	10/3/2012
Hiroimi Ishii	10/4/2003
Shizue Yamamoto	10/6/2008
Richard Mankichi Hirota	10/8/1990
Henry Yoshiichi Uyehara	10/10/2007
Kazuyoshi Kidani	10/?/ 2006
Founder Konko Daijin	10/10/1883
Francis Toshiji Suwa	10/12/1996
Saku Hasuo	10/12/1996
Isamu Tokumoto	10/14/1995
Pasqualine Webber	10/21/2010
Donald Takeshi Katsura	10/31/1953

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 93, 94 and 95)

No. 93 Practice faith (shinjin). Shin means your heart, and jin means Kami. Practicing faith means you direct your heart toward Kami. Though you are surrounded by divine virtue, you won’t receive blessings unless you have faith. (I Ichimura Mitsugoro 1-10-1 Kyoten page 200-201)

Practicing faith means you direct your heart toward Kami.

In Japan, they perceive practicing faith means when they encounter some difficulties in life they request a priest to provide a blessing to get rid of the obstacles; or get charms and talismans of religious establishments of shrines and temples. When they do not enjoy their expected results for help, they blame the priest who offered blessing service and invalidate the worthiness of the charms and talismans.

Contrary to this sort of generally held perceptions, the Founder explained to Mitsugoro Ichimura, “Practicing faith means you direct your heart toward Kami.” This message implies that no matter how much we have been blessed in sustenance of our lives, if we do not direct our hearts towards Kami, we cannot fully appreciate blessings of Kami.

The Founder clearly stated that the most vital element in the practice of faith is the state of our hearts that should be directed to Kami. Asking some religious professionals blessing services and possessing charms and talismans do not reflect the true nature of the Konko faith tradition.

The quoted message is a partial excerpt from the original statement, “Konko-Sama told me ‘Practice faith (shinjin). Shin means your heart, and jin means Kami. Practicing faith means you direct your heart toward Kami. Though you are surrounded by divine virtue, you won’t receive blessings unless you have faith.’ This was a profound and blessed teaching. Thus enlightened, I realized that even a lamp full of oil cannot give light without a wick (shin). Without faith, the world would be dark as night with unlit lamps” (I Ichimura Mitsugoro 1-10-1). The way Mitsugoro Ichimura responded to the message from the Founder is one of good examples.

Based on this message recorded by Mitsugoro Ichimura, the message No. 21 of Konko Kyoso Gorikai was compiled. Without the enlightening nature of the Konko faith, the world would remain dark.

Today, we enjoy advanced economic prosperity in the world. But we have been witnessing never-ending surge of difficulties we have to deal with in the nation, which could be attributed to those people who do not care to direct their hearts towards Kami.

No. 94

Konko Daijin will teach you how to practice faith and become a kami. (I Ichimura Mitsugoro 1-20-1 Kyoten page 204)

Practicing faith and becoming a kami.

The Founder received a divine title of “Ikigami Konko Daijin” in 1868 and gained reputation in the village community as “Ikigami-Sama” or a living deity. In July of the following year 1869, in responding to Fukushima Gihe’e, who came to visit all the way from Osaka, through the mouth of the Founder who extended his prayer in front of the Kami altar, a divine message was revealed, “Gihe’e, practice faith and become a kami” (II Fukushima Gihe’e 1-3). Back at his mediation desk, the Founder stated, “Though people say I’m an ikigami, I am just human as you. I have been receiving divine blessings just by practicing faith. You should also follow what Kami says, and practice faith in Kami single-heartedly to receive divine blessings. Save others and have yourself become a kami” (II Fukushima Gihe’e 1-4).

The Founder shared with other disciples the same sort of message, “We practice faith not only in seeking our own personal salvation, but to share the joy and gratefulness for the blessings received with others and help those in distress is our expressions of thanks to Kami. In turn, those who have saved others would manifest divine work and gain respect from others. This is the nature of the way of practicing faith.” In responding to the Founder’s enlightening message, many disciples tried to dedicate themselves for saving others through their services to Kami.

The quoted message was originally recorded by Ichimura Mitsugoro. He stated in his writing, “If you become a kami, you shouldn’t rise above kami” warned by Konko-Sama” (I Ichimura Mitsugoro 1-20).

Some of the disciples who were granted divine titles became arrogant and offended the Founder. “Early in the morning on November 15, 1878 (December 8) and again on the seventeenth (December 10) Kami-Sama revealed, ‘I will sever ties with Myojin (Fujii Kiyono) who says that the power of Kami is decreasing’ (Oboecho 21-20).

It is important for us to be appreciative of the nature of the message, “Konko will teach you how to practice faith and become a kami. If you become a kami, you shouldn’t rise above kami.”

No. 95

Tenchi Kane No Kami watches over everything. People are Kami’s children. Turn your body and heart toward kami-Sama and practice faith to receive His many blessings. Rely on Kami wholeheartedly for everything, without worrying about possible irreverence to Kami. Then you can receive divine blessings. Flowers will bloom on withered trees and life near death will be saved. Receive divine blessings and save those who are suffering. (II Fukushima Gihe’e 3-1, 2, 3 Kyoten page 668-9)

Enjoyment of a blessed life

This quoted message was given to Fukushima Gihe’e from the Founder upon his initial pilgrimage in 1869. Fukushima Gihe’e extended thanks for the blessings received to Konko-Sama. Then Konko Daijin promptly went before the altar and informed Kami-Sama in prayer. Konko Daijin turned around and said, “Gihe’e, practice faith and become a kami” (II Fukushima Gihe’e 1-2). Konko Daijin further imparted, “Tenchi Kane No Kami watches over everything” (II Fukushima Gihe’e 3-1).

The original Japanese expression “hitome ni” or watches over everything implies that Tenchi Kane No Kami watches the entire universe at a glance. At the same time, the expression “hitome ni” represents that Tenchi Kane No Kami extends His vigilance over His beloved children who might have to deal with many difficult encounters under any given circumstances.

Fukushima Gihe’e, who made a long journey from Osaka, might have experienced a deep emotional reaction when Konko Daijin stated that “Tenchi Kane No Kami watches over everything.”

Konko Daijin related to him, “Turn your body and heart toward Kami-Sama and practice faith to receive His many blessings.” In reference to the original source document “*Masago Ohiromae To Sono Shodai*” or (“The worship hall at Masago and the founding minister”, page 15) the statement was originally stated in the following manner, “Receive abundant exposure to the light given by Nittenshi (the sun)” or in Japanese, “日天子のお光りを身いっぱいを受けるように。” The day he made the initial pilgrimage to see the Founder was on July 1 and the sunlight was most intense. On his way to make a journey on foot, he might have felt some discomfort for the intense sunlight. He might have experienced discomfort during his trip on foot totally being exposed to a strong sunlight. Contrary to his perception of the sunlight, the extended perception by Konko Daijin, “Enjoy a full exposure of the blessed sunlight” might have a deep impression on him.

The Rev. Fukushima might have experienced in dealing with many difficult encounters in his daily living and economic condition as a merchant who operated a business in Osaka where functioned as the economic center of Japan. The Founder seemed to understand the dire circumstance Fukushima Gihe’e had to deal with. The extended thought “Rely on Kami wholeheartedly for everything, without worrying about possible irreverence to Kami” might have encouraged him a great deal.

The divine message, “Receive divine blessings and save those who are suffering given to him implies that “Kami-Sama might have identified a strong spiritual potential in him not only for his own personal salvation, but also for saving others.