



# KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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## “Shinjin” and Mindfulness

By Yasuhiro Yano  
Head Minister

The Founder Konko-Sama stated, “Shinjin shite Okage wo ukeyo” or receive blessings by practicing faith. When I have been extending my thoughts and have made some research, I found out that in some instances “Practicing faith” was interchangeably used with the expression of “Ogamu” or by praying to Kami. Both “Shinjin” and “Okage” are key terms in the Konko faith tradition. As for Shinjin, there are 763 references and as for “Okage”, there are 730 references in the Konkokyo Kyoten.

When I extend my thought to the meaning of practicing faith, I remember the statement made by the Rev. Matsutaro Yasuake of Konko Church of Amagi. The title of the booklet is “Michi no Shiori” or A Bookmark for the practice of the Konko Faith.

*In the practice of the Konko faith, we need to fulfill both our intellectual understanding of the faith practice and our determination to get involved in the practice of faith.*

*In the practice of faith, what do we believe in? In the practice of the Konko faith, we believe in the Divine Parent with a true and sincere heart. To believe in Our Divine Parent means we believe in the teachings of the Founder Ikigami Konko Daijin, and to believe in the teachings of the Founder means to believe in Our Divine Parent in turn.*

*How much do we have to believe in Our Divine Parent and the teachings of the Founder? Our belief shall be absolute.*

*To practice faith means to believe in Kami, to believe in the infinite divine power and to believe in unconditional profound divine love. When we turn our hearts to Kami and extend our prayers in request, we shall understand there is a great difference in the power of prayers. Our extended determined prayer with the heart that Kami will heed our prayers, and we shall get blessed for the prayers no matter what, will result in the intended blessings.*

Here is a good reference about the meaning of practicing faith. The episode is found in “Kyoso-Sama II” a biography of the Founder Konko-Sama. The following is an English translation of pages 244 to 247 of the book.

### Rev. Mitsu Katsura

Harada was the maiden name of the Rev. Mitsu Katsura, wife of the founding minister of Konko Church of Kokura, the Rev. Matsuhei Katsura. She suffered from a prolonged acute illness when she was young. The body temperature below the waist was always cold. Once she got out of bed, she had to sit down on three layers of cotton cushions to prevent further loss of her body temperature. She was so desperate in seeking a cure for that acute condition. She went to see Konko-Sama and forwarded her prayer so she could regain good health.

She was resolved to make a daily pilgrimage to see Konko-Sama from Sami which was located four kilometers in the north of Otani Village. She had to climb a mountain to reach Otani Village. She was so determined that she continued to make a daily pilgrimage to see Konko-Sama regardless of the many weather conditions, be it rainy or windy. The village people of Sami expressed their admiration and said, “Omitsu-san (Mitsu) is so devoted in her practice of faith. There would be no one who could be much devoted than her.” But her physical condition didn’t seem to show any improvement at all. She wondered, “The whole village acknowledged my devotion to the faith practice. I also believe I could have practiced faith more than anybody else. But why have I not received blessings for the healing of my illness?”

She was convinced that through the devoted practice of faith she should have enjoyed blessings for her extended prayer for sure. She also witnessed many believers who enjoyed blessed episodes one after another through their involvement in the practice of faith. It was natural she was confused. One of those days, she asked Konko Shijin-Sama, “Konko-Sama, I believe I have practiced faith devotedly, but my physical condition hasn’t improved at all. Why is this?” Konko Shijin-Sama responded to her, “How can you be so sure that you have fulfilled what could be expected from Kami-Sama? If I am the person who grants you blessing, I would have already given it to you. But it is Kami-Sama who grants you the blessings. I believe you have to practice faith in such a manner that Kami-Sama would be prompted to respond to your extended prayer.” Mitsu asked him back, “Konko-Sama, what do you mean by faith that would prompt Kami-Sama to give blessing for my request?” Konko Shijin-Sama replied, “Well, there could be many styles of getting involved in your practice of faith. Those who believe attending church is the best way to get blessed. It can be called ‘Mairi-shinjin.’ Those believers who believe the best way to get blessed is to extend strong and persistent prayers in request is called ‘Tanomi-shinjin.’ There are those believers who believe worshipping devotedly could be the best way to get blessed. Their faith could be called ‘Ogami-shinjin.’ Among those examples, the most preferable manner of getting involved in the practice of faith could be ‘Mairi-shinjin.’ Through your extended attendance to church, you will learn to appreciate some patterns of involvement in the practice of faith that will yield favorable results by witnessing examples of many believers. I encourage you to attend church devotedly.”

She was so much moved by the message and shared it with her parents and the Rev. Tani Harada, who live in the neighborhood. The Rev. Harada advised Mitsu, "Follow what Konko-Sama said, and focus your devotion to extending only thanks when you make a visit to see Konko-Sama." Mitsu continued to attend church without any particular thoughts in mind.

One of those days, she experienced a sudden ache in her eyes. While suffering from this discomfort, she went to see Konko-Sama as usual. Upon her entrance into the worship hall, before she uttered a word, Konko Shijin-Sama stood up from the seat and proceeded before the Kami altar and began to extend his prayer by saying, "Ikigami Konko Daijin-Sama and Tenchi Kane no Kami-Sama, I will extend my prayer to you on behalf of Mitsu Harada, a daughter of Hayashijiro Harada of Sami in Kurosaki Village. I extend my appreciation for the wondrous blessings she has enjoyed thus far from you. She has suffered a prolonged acute illness due to poor blood circulation. Today, she came to visit church while she was badly affected with pains in her eyes. If you would acknowledge not only the believer in suffering, but also her family members to fulfill your thoughts through their devoted practice of faith, please grant her the blessing of relief from her troubled situation as soon as possible."

Mitsu, who listened to the extended message in prayer, felt a sudden spiritual enlightenment. She was awakened that she had never had the heart of extending thanks for anything at all. She learned to extend her thanks and apologies in her prayer from the bottom of her heart thereafter. From this episode, she felt like each and every message given by Konko Shijin-Sama was deeply absorbed into her mind. In corresponding to her inspired heart, her physical condition improved gradually.

I have gotten involved in missionary work for over 35 years in Hawaii. I believe I have identified the most relevant English word that can mean the exact meaning of the practicing faith or "Shinjin" that may fulfill the Founder and Tenchi Kane No Kami. The word is, "mindfulness."

Mindfulness can be used by Buddhist communities and any other faith oriented communities. Mindfulness is defined as "attentive, aware or careful." If you use this expression in place of practicing faith or "shinjin" in any teachings in the Konkokyo Kyoten Scriptures, you may learn to appreciate meaning of the teachings much easier and in a down to earth manner.

In Japanese we use the expression, "atteno" in such manners as "Kami atteno" or because of Kami, and "Konko Daijin atteno" or because of Konko Daijin and so forth.

Mindfulness can be exercised by being aware of the elements of "atteno" or in identifying the elements of blessings that sustains what we are, the cause of blessings we can enjoy in our daily living. Through the exercise of mindfulness, we can understand the quoted message, "Although people live between heaven and earth, they are unaware of Kami's blessings. Shrines, temples, and houses all stand on Kami's land. Without realizing this, people consult the Days and Directions and are disrespectful to Kami. They suffer hardships due to these offenses. Tenchi Kane no Kami has sent Ikigami Konko Daijin to provide

blessings and teachings so that mankind may prosper. Kami is Kami because of man, and man is man because of Kami. Both are fulfilled through this mutual relationship" (Konko Kyoso Gorikai No. 3 in Kyoten Gorikai III).

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

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 1-6)

## **Bulletin Board**

### Monthly Services

- 9/1 Sun -For Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama at 9:00 a.m.  
-Itsukushimi No Inori Peace Prayer 4 p.m.
- 9/8 Sun -For Founder Ikigami Konko Daijin at 9:00 a.m.  
-Volunteer activity at Wahiawa Gen. Hospital at 10:00 a.m.
- 9/15 Sun -Sunday Service at 9:00 a.m.  
-Honolulu Church Autumn Memorial Service at 10:00 a.m.
- 9/22 Sun -Autumn Memorial Service at 10:00 a.m.
- 9/29 Sun -Sunday Service at 9:00 a.m.  
The 199<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the Founder Konko Daijin

### October 2013

**10/11 Fri Wahiawa Church Autumn Grand Service at 6:30 p.m. Due to the KMH group pilgrimage to attend the 130<sup>th</sup> Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Service at the Headquarters Church at Konko Town, the observance of the Grand Services will be changed.**

10/13 Sun Honolulu Church Grand Service at 11:00 a.m.

### HCRP Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace will be held at the Gedatsu Church on Monday, September 9 at 1:30 p.m. Peace cup painting schedule, please see Children's Newsletter.

### Volunteer Activity at Wahiawa General Hospital

The seasonal volunteer activity at the same facility will be held on Sunday, September 9 at 10:00 a.m. following the monthly service for the Founder at 9:00 a.m. Curry lunch will be served in the social hall of the church. And the monthly volunteer activity will also take place at the same facility on Friday, September 13 at 10:00 a.m. Your participation to the program will be very much appreciated.

### 130<sup>th</sup> Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Service at Konko Town

This year marks the 130<sup>th</sup> year since the Founder Konko Daijin passed away on October 10, 1883. The date of his departure coincided with the day of the annual observance of Konko Daijin Service Day observed by the founder himself. 27 people from Hawaii will make a pilgrimage to attend the special

observance of the commemorative service on October 3 at the Headquarters Church at Konko Town in Okayama. From Wahiawa Church, the Rev. Edna Yano, Mrs. Donna Toyofuku and Ms. Andrea Toyofuku will join the pilgrimage. They will join the pilgrims from other overseas Konkokyo faith communities in North America, Canada, Brazil, Paraguay and Korea for a special program at Konko Town.

**Guests from Japan**

The Wahiawa Church welcomed two groups from Japan on the same day, August 24. The first to arrive were the 27 member Konko Youth Goodwill Mission group. Although their stay was short, we enjoyed the vibrant energy that they brought to the church. In the afternoon, the Rev. Michiyoshi Yasutake and his entourage of eight others arrived to extend their prayers at our church. We thank both groups for coming all the way to Wahiawa.



**Honoring Mitama Spirits**



**September**

- |                               |           |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Mrs. Mikiko Yamamoto          | 9/3/2003  |
| Mrs. Harumi Tokumoto          | 9/7/2001  |
| Mr. Tatsuyuki Kataoka         | 9/7/2007  |
| Mr. Ben Furusho               | 9/15/1997 |
| Mr. Kameji Takeshima          | 9/17/2000 |
| Mr. Richard Masao Iwasa       | 9/17/2005 |
| Mr. Richard Tadayoshi Noguchi | 9/27/2009 |

*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 Matsutaro Kōsaka contributed the insightful articles. The translation is provided by Yasuhiro Yano. (Reference pages 55, 56 and 57)*

**No. 55**

**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 Kyoten page 473-4)**

**Whether you are living or dead, Heaven and Earth will always be your home.**

From this section, we discuss teachings pertaining to life and death. How we encounter our own death can be determined by how we live day to day. In other words, how we encounter our own death can determine the meaning of how we lived.

Let’s try to discuss issues pertaining to life and death, such as the relationship between life and death; how we define the meaning of life and death in reference to the teachings of the Founder.

As for the message quoted in this page 55, the Rev. Norio Sato recorded a notation about the message, “This message was recorded during the year of 1883 while the Founder was still alive.” The message reflects a solid state of mind experienced by the Founder who encountered his own death at the end of his physical life.”

The message shows two elements. One is that the statement that suggests, even after we die, we would not depart and settle down at some other places but continue to remain between Heaven and Earth. The other is whether we are living or dead, we are under the care of Heaven and Earth, Our Divine Parent of the Universe.

In general, we get used to a prevailing general perception that after we die, we go to an unknown realm of endless goodness or damnation depending on our deeds while we lived. Some people interpret that death means God go of His hands; or after death, we do not need any protection and guidance of God. While those prevailing perceptions about death are quite different from the ones we hold in accordance with the Konkokyo teachings.

The core concept for life and death in accordance with the Konkokyo principle is that life, death and anything else take place in the working sphere of Our Divine Parent. This unique perception for life and death was actualized only by a person like the Founder who identified his own existence in the life sustaining environment provided by

Heaven and Earth; identified the workings of Heaven and Earth within his own existence; and lived together with Heaven and Earth.

**No. 56**

**The light that the Sun shines upon us is a divine blessing. The rain that falls is a divine blessing as well. All humans are allowed to live in the midst of divine blessings. People are born amid divine blessings, live amid divine blessings, and die amid divine blessings. (II Toshimori Shino 1 Kyoten page 640)**

**Life and death take place in blessedness.**

The teaching parallels to the message quoted in the previous page 55. But a special emphasis is placed on the statement that even death takes place in blessedness. Probably there shall be some people in the world who would refute to the statement that even death takes place in blessedness. It can be assumed that those who feel some disagreement would number more than those who agree with the statement. The Founder seemed to understand how people in general would respond to the forwarded statement. He showed a convincing reference to Toshimori Shino to be able to fully appreciate the deeper meaning of the statement by saying, “The rain that falls is a divine blessing as well.”

Those people who appreciate the blessed nature of the rain could be limited only to farmers and some other people who depend on blessed rain water. We take the rain for granted and show some negatively inclined perceptions, such as rain can be a nuisance for outdoor functions, and some people get depressed. But in reality, both the sunlight and the rain are indispensable elements for human life. Complaining for the rainy weather condition derives from the nature of our self-centeredness. If we learn to appreciate the blessed nature of both the sunlight and the rain as workings of Heaven and Earth, which is beyond human control, who would ever be able to complain about any weather conditions?

Life and death can be likened to the relationship between the sunlight and the rain. People try to avoid talking about death; both life and death are beyond human control; both life and death shall be accepted as blessed elements of human existence. Those elements can exactly parallel the relationship between the sunlight and the rain. The message forwarded by the Founder might have deeply touched the heart of Toshimori Shino in such a manner as blessed rain water seeping into the ground.

**No. 57**

**People think that Tenchi Kane No Kami takes care of them only while they are alive. But they remain under Kami's care even after they die. Since the soul is bestowed by Kami, when one is dismissed by Heaven, one's soul will return to Kami and be in Kami's eternal care. Since the body comes from Earth, it will also return to Earth and be under its care. (II Kashiwabara Toku 5 Kyoten 473-4)**  
**Kami's eternal care**

This teaching is also related to the main subject that we are under Kami's care not only while we are alive, but even after we depart from our physical body. A concrete idea about the care we receive from Kami after our departure is shown in this teaching.

We are born into this world with two basic elements. The first element is the heart, and the other is the physical body.

In Japan, we refer to the ever-changing nature of our heart in such a cynical manner as “kokoro-koro-koro” or an ever-rolling heart like a ball. Our hearts respond to the ever changing surroundings here and there, and to the right path or to the wrong path, depending on the circumstantial elements. How our hearts function has not yet been scientifically proven, but we have a theory that “Tamashii” or the soul within us takes control of the heart. We assume that each of us is bestowed with “Tamashii” or soul that takes control of the mental and spiritual functions and helps sustain life.

The Founder referred to that element within each individual as “Mitama” or “Wake-mitama” or a given divine soul. The Founder developed a unique concept for “Tamashii” or “Mitama” which is different from the concept held by the people in general. The Founder identified that “Tamashii” or “Wake-mitama” or soul is bestowed to each individual for the intent that the soul within helps steer the life of the individual to get fulfilled; and tries to pursue the way of life to bring fulfillment to the individual, as has been discussed in the previous page 47. “Wake-mitama” or a given divine soul can be understood as the work of the heart that helps develop mutual salvation. The reason why our hearts experience good and bad could be a reflection of the state of the soul that deals with the conflicting ever-emerging self-centered wants and greed within us.

The “Tamashii” or “Mitama” departs from the physical body upon death and returns to the original place which came from within Our Divine Parent. The body will transform into bones and eventually become integrated into the ground, the holy body of Our Divine Parent. Both “Tamashii” bestowed by Our Divine Parent to an individual returns to the original place in Our Divine Parent, and the physical body also returns to the holy ground of Our Divine Parent. The core concept for life and death in the Konko faith is that we have been under the perpetual care of Our Divine Parent from the time when we are born into this world; while we live; when we die and even after we depart.