



# KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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The **Annual Autumn Memorial Service** will be observed on Sunday, September 13, 2015 at 10:00 am. Through the service, we will extend our sincere appreciation for the contributions, support and guidance of the deceased ministers, family members and our ancestors for our blessed lives we now enjoy. Please join us in commemorating this vital function of the Konko faith in person and on time. A fellowship lunch will follow the service.

## “Shinjin wa Shijin de kangaeru” or “Think faith to practice faith”

By *Yasuhiro Yano,*  
Head Minister

From time to time, I have introduced the thought of “*Shinjin wa Shijin de kangaeru*” or “Think things out in exercise of the faith” in the Konkokyo faith community in Hawaii. My second son who has been assisting at the Konko Church of San Francisco put that thought “Think faith to practice faith.” For some reason, I feel like I have to introduce the thought again in confirmation of my commitment in my missionary work in Hawaii as well in commemorating my 40 years of services as a Konko minister.

The expression of “*Shinjin wa Shijin de kangaeru*” can be relevantly expressed in such a manner as “Exercising mindfulness in the practice of faith.” The Founder Konko Daijin simply put “Shinjin shite or Shinjin wo seyo” which means to practice faith. The 4<sup>th</sup> Konko-Sama used the expression of “*Shinjin wo sasete itadaiteiru mono*” or a believer who practices faith.

When we speak English, we are naturally thinking in English. I am just applying the principle of the language learning. We learn to speak our language only because we continue to retain what have been spoken in our environment ever since we were in the womb. In about one or two years after the birth of a child, we learn to speak the language. It is the state of saturation of the elements in our head. When our brains are saturated with the elements of the native language, we naturally learn to speak out in that language. Just like a cup filling up with water; the water overflows when filled to its maximum capacity. In the same sense as the elements of the Konko faith saturate our minds, we naturally begin to think things out in exercise of the faith.

Martial arts experts practice to train their mind, body and skills so the whole mind and body would naturally respond to any given situations. Their bodies reflectively respond to protect themselves or attack an opponent. The same thing can be said in the practice of faith. In the practice of faith, it is the exercise of

the heart that would be able to respond to direct our hearts toward Kami under any given circumstances. My wife has been advocating that we need to develop a spiritual awareness that would direct us to say “Konko-Sama” or “Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama” in coping with any encounters. For a believer, the word “Konko-Sama” represents the eternal figure and work of the Founder in the spiritual form of Ikigami Konko Daijin. By saying “Konko-Sama” or “Tenchi Kane No Kami” our hearts has been instantly connected to Tenchi Kane No Kami. This is the Konko Way. A Konko believer would not shout out for help by calling the name of Buddha, Christ, and any other foreign religious figures to get connected to Tenchi Kane No Kami. This state of mind which enables the believers to call out the name of the Founder and Tenchi Kane No Kami can be attained through strong engagement in the practice of faith. I learned the practice of saying “Konko-Sama” when I was under spiritual training at the Konko Church of Amagi before I came to Hawaii. The late Rev. Fumio Yasutake responded to say “Konko-Sama” even for some minor things develop around him. Even during the regular church services, some attendees made a minor mistake, he say “Konko-Sama.” I also witnessed the 4<sup>th</sup> Konko-Sama say “Konko-Sama” while he was responding to my visit at the Toritsugi-Mediation.

Getting connected to Tenchi Kane No Kami is the most important element in the practice of “Thinking the faith to practice faith.” Many believers have already been practicing what I have been trying to say without much of their conscience. At our regular church services, we have an “Okage sharing session” and share our thoughts of identifying blessings we can be aware of. During the session, we usually have some sweets and some beverages, such as water, tea, coffee and juice. Before we enjoy these sweets, we say grace for meal the Konko Mission of Wahiawa way. We simply recite some of the teachings pertaining to the blessed nature of foods we enjoy. This simple act of reciting grace before meal is a typical act of “Thinking faith to practice faith.”

In the past, I have quoted a particular episode related by the Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake, the founding minister of the Konko Church of Amagi in a booklet titled, “Michi no Shiori” or a short guidebook for the practice of the Konko faith. In the opening page of the booklet, the following is stated, “This booklet is a partial script of the speech presentation in which my grandfather shared what could be identified to be the vital elements of the practice of the Konko faith to the young ministers who were affiliated to the church on February 23, 1948. This time, in commemorating the 25<sup>th</sup> memorial year of the minister, the booklet is presented to you as a form of ‘Shinobi gusa’ or an item in remembrance and honor of the deceased.” Our church members in Wahiawa have been quite familiar with the episode.

An identical episode is also found in the biography of the Founder, “Kyoso-Sama” authored by the Rev. Shinsei Konko. I would like to quote the story from this book (Volume II pages 57 to 59) for your reference because it is more detailed in the

account.

At one occasion, Kami-Sama instructed Konko-Sama, "Early tomorrow morning, get up and travel to Tamashima Town. A sum of 500 yen is placed somewhere on the way. It is yours to keep. Bring the money back home . . ." Konko-Sama made an excursion by preparing a lunch bento box and traveled approximately four-kilometers and reached the town of Tamashima. He looked around the town here and there. But there was no trace of money as mentioned by Kami. At around noon, he enjoyed lunch and asked Kami-Sama, "I looked around the town for the money you mentioned, but I could not find it yet. Shall I return home now?" Kami-Sama instructed him, "Try to look around for the money till the sun sets. I am sure you can find it." It became dark. Konko-Sama asked Kami again, "I cannot find the money. Shall I return home now?" Kami-Sama responded, "Do you have your own money?" Konko-Sama answered, "Yes. I have mine." Kami-Sama responded, "If so, others also may not drop their money. Return home now." Even for those seemingly irrational instructions, Konko-Sama followed faithfully.

What can we learn in this episode? Apparently Kami-Sama tested Konko-Sama if he would get a monetary reward in following the instructions. But actually he gained no monetary reward. If we are in the same situation, what reactions would we would take? We would feel fooled by Kami-Sama, confused and may get angry. These are the average believers' responses to a failed divine promise, aren't they? In my understanding, when we encounter a situation like this promise, the majority of us would fail to fulfill Kami-Sama and be instantly disconnected.

What if Konko-Sama responded to Kami-Sama in the same manner as we would respond in anger and disgust? What if Konko-Sama said, "Kami-Sama you have made promises so many times I deserve to be rewarded with monetary gain by following your instructions? However, your promises were all lies. I can no longer practice this kind of fake deity." Had he had doubt in Kami, this religion called Konkokyo would not have come into existence. This sort of negative response would instantly disconnect us from Kami-Sama and there would be no actualization of blessings in this state.

In the original episode quoted by the Rev. Yasutake in the booklet, there was a dialogue between Konko-Sama and Kami-Sama. Upon his return from the excursion in search of money, in corresponding to the extended prayer at the house altar, Kami-Sama point-blankly asked Konko-Sama, "Did you find the money I mentioned?" Konko-Sama responded firmly, "Yes, I did." Then Kami-Sama asked, "How much did you find?" Konko-Sama responded, "I cannot tell you the exact amount." Kami-Sama further questioned, "Why can't you tell the exact amount of money you have picked up?" Konko-Sama responded, "Because of the extensive walking, I got good physical exercise and good blood circulation and have been rewarded with overall good health which cannot be bought with money." Konko-Sama always found ways to bring fulfillment under any circumstances. We should be grateful for this wondrous divine virtue of Ikigami Konko

Daijin who has been always connected to Kami-Sama. Konko-Sama stayed connected to Kami-Sama under any given situation. This is vital and quite difficult to follow in reality. Some people say that this episode was to test the depth of the belief held by Konko-Sama. Konko-Sama always found ways to keep connected with Kami-Sama.

Konko-Sama believed in Kami-Sama and followed all the instructions and teachings in the manner that brought fulfillment to Kami-Sama to himself and the family members and followers. In other words, Konko-Sama always found ways to get connected to Kami-Sama throughout his entire faith life. Normally, we do not hear divine voices and get direct divine instructions and teachings in the same manner as Konko-Sama did. There can be some believers and ministers who may say they do communicate with Kami-Sama in the same manner as Konko-Sama did. But in general, we can believe in the teachings of Konko-Sama in the same manner as Konko-Sama believed and followed divine instructions and teachings. Konko believers can be defined as people who believe in Tenchi Kane no Kami and practice those teachings in life. I enjoy witnessing the emergence of such believers from this faith community in Hawaii.



## Konko-Sama Says . . .

After my physical form disappears, I, Konko Daijin will go wherever I am asked. (III Naiden 13-14)

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

### Monthly Services for September 2015

- 1 Tue -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 6 Sun -Monthly Service, Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)  
-Volunteer activity at Wahiawa General Hospital at (10-10:45 am), lunch will be served.
- 13 Sun -Autumn Memorial Service at 10 am
- 20 Sun -Sunday Service at 9 am  
-Honolulu Church Autumn Memorial Service at 10 am
- 27 Sun -Sunday Service at 9 am

### October 2015

- 1 Thur -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)

## Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace

The next monthly meeting will be held on Monday, September 14, 2015 at the Gedatsu Church at 1:30 p.m.

## Volunteer Activity

The bi-annual volunteer activity visit to the Long-Term Care Facility at the Wahiawa General Hospital will be made on Sunday, September 6 at 10 a.m. Lunch will follow. The regular monthly visit will be Friday, September 11, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. respectively.

## Kaka'ako Ehimemaru Memorial Clean up

The Ehime Kenjinkai members will conduct regular care for the Mikan trees and clean up of the Ehimemaru Memorial at Kaka'ako on Saturday, September 26 at 5:00 p.m.

## Honoring the Mitama Spirits

### September

Mikiko Yamamoto	9/3/2003
Tatsuyuki Kataoka	9/7/2007
Harumi Tokumoto	9/7/2001
Ben Furusho	9/15/1997
Takehige Ootsuka	9/15/1998
Richard Masao Iwasa	9/17/2005
Kameji Takeshima	9/17/2000
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 Matsutarō Kōsaka contributed the insightful articles. The translation is provided by Yasuhiro Yano. (Reference pages 125, 126 and 127)*

### No. 125

**An excellent restaurant may be right next door, but you will never know how good it is unless you try it. It's not necessary to eat at the restaurant, but it is essential that you receive blessings from Tenchi Kane No Kami through Konko Daijin's teachings. Some say it's all right not to pray to Tenchi Kane No Kami. They receive blessings, but are ignorant of their indebtedness. (I Yamamoto Sadajiro 61 Kyoten page 396-397)**

## Ignorant of indebtedness for the blessings received

The quoted message is a portion of a much longer original statement given to Sadajiro Yamamoto.

At the opening statement of the original message, the Founder stated, “There are people who come to the Hiromae from afar and leave happily with abundant divine blessings. There are also those who live nearby in Otani, but don't come to worship. Some of them don't even know my face.”

The Founder stated, “An excellent restaurant may be right next door, but you will never know how good it is unless you try it.” People learn to appreciate the grateful nature of getting engaged in the practice of faith only through their actual experiences, just like eating meals on their own.

To experience the Konko faith means that we get exposed to the messages of the Founder and develop some appreciations of the messages. Without appreciation of the messages given, there would be no way we would be able to get blessed from Tenchi Kane No Kami.

Blessed elements of Tenchi Kane No Kami are so broad that we just take them for granted and never learn to appreciate the blessed nature of those elements, such as the air we breathe, the light from the Sun, waters we use and so forth. There are some people who have no knowledge that they could be committing some irreverence against Kami and boast that they don't pray to Tenchi Kane No Kami, but enjoy receiving divine blessings while ignorant of their indebtedness to Tenchi Kane No Kami. The Founder also stated, “Suppose you have five children. There will be willful ones and ordinary ones. But to the parents, all five are their children nonetheless.” The “five children” referred to his own children. He could identify that some of them show no appreciation for the blessings received. The Founder stated, “But to the parents, all five are their children nonetheless.” The expressed thought is a reflection of how the Founder dealt with any issues arisen in the family as elements for his growth in faith.

### No. 126

**Even the nature of an unreasonable person can be totally changed if he practices faith. This can happen because he will learn to understand the Ways of the Universe while practicing faith. When you enter this faith, you will naturally follow the right path for humans to tread. Some people boast that they know the right path for humans, but still do not understand the Ways of Kami. (III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 51 Kyoten page 827)**

## Human-oriented way and Kami-oriented way of living

They say that even those people who do not follow morals could attain drastic changes to their personalities through their engagement in the practice of faith. It is said that they attain drastic spiritual changes in corresponding to the acquired



knowledge of the truth found in elements in the world through their engagement in practice of faith. But the truth found in elements in the world or expression of “物の道理” refers to the universal truth prevailing in elements in the universe, rather than standards of elements in judging good and bad.

All things come into existence and nurtured through the work of Heaven and Earth. Naturally prevailing inclination of mutual interdependency and co-existence can be found in anything that takes place in the universe. Not a single individual can survive in pursuit of an isolated self-serving way of life.

It is said that an individual can make a drastic personality change in enlightenment of the universal truth. In what way a person would be able to attain such a drastic change? It may vary from person to person. The Rev. Kisaburo Abe depicted the Founder in such a manner, “The portrait of the Founder exhibits no greediness, but shows true nature of humility and compassion” (Kousaka Shotaro Ikyoushu page 47). As followers of the Founder, we would like to emulate him as much as possible.

When we get engaged in the practice of faith, we will naturally live a way of life in line with the generally recognized “人の道” or the righteous way of life as human beings or simply put a moral based way of life. But living a moral based way of life does not necessarily mean it agrees with the way of life as Konko believers. Many people may get confused that as long as we follow the moral based way of life, there shouldn't be any problems.

It would appear that there is no visible differences for morally right demonstrations exhibited by two different people. One person responds to act in corresponding to the human-oriented intuition, while the other person, who is religiously oriented, responds to act in exercise of his faith and extends thanks for the action taken place in the blessedness of Kami. There could be a huge difference of what takes place in the hearts of the two individuals.

#### No. 127

**People with extraordinarily honest hearts and people with extremely bad intentions are able to receive divine blessings most of the time. Those in between receive hardly any blessings because of their lack of devoutness.** (III Kyoso Gorikai 30 Kyoten page 769)

#### People with extraordinarily honest hearts and people with extremely bad intentions

The quoted message is a bit surprising.

“People with extraordinarily honest” represents an individual who is absolutely honest and holds no deceptions at all. The Founder was exactly that type of person. So were his disciples.

It can naturally be understood that an extremely honest person can get blessed. But how can an individual with an extremely bad heart also get blessed?

The Rev. Sugi Ogihara was one of the disciples of the Founder. When she was young she got married to an adoptive husband. She suffered from chronic woman's sickness for two years. Her husband had an opportunity to make a visit to see the Founder. The Founder related him, “Sugi is a very spiteful person who is always complaining.” When the husband relayed the message given by the Founder to his wife, she responded, “Yes, it's all true. I have been wrong. I had an ill-natured character and a disrespectful heart. Yet, my suffering was really minimal. I was selfish and complained about everything. I have been a worthless person who should've been thoroughly punished. I must certainly reform my heart” (I Ogihara Sugi 5-2). From that moment on, she got blessed with good health.

We all may have ill-natured thoughts somewhere deep in our hearts. But ill-natured people could make a drastic change to their hearts once they realized the wrongs in their hearts. Those with ill-natured hearts could have some stronger spiritual powers that can help correct their wrongs. Once they changed their hearts, they are to get blessed accordingly.

My spiritual mentor once told me, “Those who undergo religious trainings shall have the same spiritual strength held by thieves. They engage in criminal acts in full awareness of how they could avoid being caught, and absorbed in their efforts in search of valuables in desperation.”

It would be ideal to have such strong devoutness in pursuit of the faith. The Founder's statement, “Those in between receive hardly any blessings because of their lack of devoutness” is a stern reminder that we should be mindful in pursuit of faith.



*Impromptu Garage Sale happened on Sunday, August 30. Thank you very much for your help. It was a great success. Half of the proceeds will go to Konko Mission of Honolulu for their large church renovation project.*