



The Konko Missions in Hawaii will fulfill Ikigami Konko Daijin's vision to embrace the world with the Konko Faith.

Konko-Sama's Life, Faith, and Prayers

Konko Sama and I

Konko Sama and I is the second half of Rev. Kiyoji Konko's lecture titled, *Konko Sama's Life, Faith, and Prayers* from the faith training prior to the 150th Anniversary Grand Ceremony of the Divine Call last November. The first half of his lecture, *Odemashi and the True Pathway*, can be found in the previous issue. The continuation and sustainability of our Founder's Faith was a key theme in the first half through the practical example of the daily practice of *odemashi* for 84 years, as evident in the permanent white line engraved in the concrete path from Konko Sama's residence to the Mediation Hall. This theme continues through his personal experiences through his *goyo* and stories he has heard about the Konko Samas' life, faith, and prayers in the second half.



Reverend Kiyoji Konko
Honbu

He shared that the current Fifth Konko Sama once told him, "Due to the Third Konko Sama's extremely long term of sincere devotion, the Mediation desk's surface became worn out from its original shape. Thin boards were then placed on the Mediation desk in the Central Mediation Hall." The Fifth Konko Sama succeeded both the desk and divine task.

Rev. Konko spoke about the significance of the Mediation seat. He mentioned that the Fifth Konko Sama once told him, "This place (Mediation seat) is important." Since hearing these words, Rev. Konko spoke about how he thought about the meaning of its importance through his daily *goyo* at the Central Mediation

Hall. He shared his thoughts that the Mediation seat is the place where Konko Sama is united with

"The Parent" (Kami) and feels the presence of "The Parent" there the most strongly. He furthermore noted that this special place exists due to "The Parent's" continuous patience and prayer.

Third Konko Sama

Rev. Konko spoke about Konko Sama's Mediation desk and mentioned that the Third Konko Sama at age 14 succeeded the position at the Mediation desk after the passing of Second Konko Sama in 1893. The Third Konko Sama devoted himself entirely to serving for Kami Sama's *goyo* at the Mediation desk for 70 years. Rev. Konko asked us whether we could imagine the state of the Mediation desk after half a century of sincere daily practice.

Third Konko Sama's Left Leg

Rev. Konko shared another anecdote he heard from the Fifth Konko Sama about a time when the Fifth Konko Sama was a university student, and he helped his grandfather, the Third Konko Sama take a bath. The Fifth Konko Sama told Rev. Konko,

"This is a story when I was in my twenties in the 1930's. When I helped the Third Konko Sama take a bath, I saw the backside of the Third Konko Sama's left leg being unusually flat. And then, I realized that the center of gravity goes to a person's side he uses more frequently. Therefore, his body weight shifted to the left due to his daily Toritsugi Mediation for over 60 years. Hence, the backside of his left leg only was flat."

Rev. Konko asked what we all thought of this story. He explained that in western culture, one would never think of patiently sitting on a square-shaped *tatami* mat, but this is a very natural sitting style in Japanese culture. He furthermore explained that this also exemplifies a formal attitude toward Kami Sama with the belief that the only matter of concern is whether people will be saved or not.

Rev. Konko spoke about the shock he felt when he first had heard the story and thought about the seriousness and true devotion of Kami Sama's *goyo*. He pointed out that we are all familiar with Konko Sama's devotion to the divine task for 70 years, though we are unaware of such profound stories, which are beyond our words and understanding. He explained that the prayers of the Konko Samas from the Founder to his successors are silent yet strong, for we cannot grasp the meaning. Rev. Konko stated that these silent and strong prayers sustain our lives, whether or not we are aware of them.

Toritsugi Mediation and the "Three Streams"

Rev. Konko shifted his lecture to speak about his thoughts, drawing upon his experience through his daily *goyo* besides the Fifth Konko Sama. He explained that the connection between the Central Mediation Hall and the people is like a stream that freely flows. He described the Central Mediation Hall as the well for all Konko churches, and that an invisible stream to this spiritual source connects each church. Through receiving mediation, these water sources flow into our households, overflowing them with divine blessings, which filter into our daily life occurrences. By receiving Mediation from Konko Sama, he explained that we are in essence drawing spiritual blessings from the source – if not, the well within our families dries out, losing the source of life.

Rev. Konko quoted the Fifth Konko Sama, "The joy of Faith is the joy felt in our daily lives because

practicing faith is within our daily lives." He described that receiving Mediation, receiving divine blessings in our daily lives, and experiencing the joy of practicing faith are all connected; the "joy of Faith" is the ultimate fulfillment for those seeking true happiness in their daily lives. He added that the source of divine blessings is not only limited to the Central Mediation Hall, but all churches can reach as deeply and directly into the source. This, he spoke, applies universally to KMH and KCNA and that there is a strong connection between the Central Mediation Hall and churches in Hawaii and North America. Rev. Konko elaborated on two examples of the interconnected "streams" of Mediation, believers, and churches.

Konko Sama's Prayer includes all Churches

The first example Rev. Konko raised was the spiritual connection with the Central Mediation Hall and all Konko churches. He explained that the Central Mediation Hall is cleaned every evening shortly before *ohike*, or the return of Konko Sama to his residence. While doing the *goyo*, Rev. Konko said many thoughts cross his mind, which he described as his way of seeking Faith. A thought one day came: "What does cleaning the Honbu Hiromae (Central Mediation Hall) mean?" He said he did not have an answer at the time but several months later, another thought came that cleaning the *Honbu Hiromae* means to symbolically clean all Konko church mediation halls. He expressed that this is so because Konko Sama's daily prayers include all churches.

Believers' prayer upon Konko Sama

Another personal experience Rev. Konko spoke about that showed the connection between the Central Mediation Hall and a believer in a Konko church was when he was praying at the Konko Church of Toronto in 1993. While in silent prayer, he said he heard a believer during mediation (*otodoke*) pray, "Please have Konko Sama stay in good health and have divine arrangements for Konko Sama's *goyo* for this day, and let there be prosperity in the Konko family." Rev. Konko expressed his surprise at the time that a believer, whom he never had known, prayed for him.

The Fifth Konko Sama's Teachings

Rev. Konko went on to elaborate on the Fifth Konko Sama's Toritsugi Mediation and shared some of his selected teachings.

<1>

Once a believer asked the Fifth Konko Sama, "How can I have a strong character and pleasant way of life?"

Konko Sama replied, "Have true faith."

This believer quietly thought about this for a while and then asked

Konko Sama again, "What does 'true faith' mean?"

Konko Sama replied, "To be one with Kami."

The believer again asked, "What does 'one with Kami' mean?"

Konko Sama responded, "To direct your heart towards Kami."

The believer asked, "What does 'directing your heart towards Kami' mean?"

Konko Sama said, "People say 'Kami Sama, Kami Sama,' but when you truly understand what it is to be a parent, you will then understand Kami Sama."

Rev. Konko said there are many meanings in this mediation and expressed his hopes that each and every one of us seeks further understanding. He revealed that the concept of "parent", as mentioned in this teaching, represents the core and depth of our faith, and that we will come to understand the significance of respecting Kami as our "parent".

<2>

The Fifth Konko Sama once said, "I am feeling exactly the same way as what Shijin Sama (the Second Konko-Sama) had stated, which was, 'I cannot solely serve Kami Sama's goyo on my own. Because my parent (Founder) had appeared every midnight to the altar and gave prayers from the prayer record book repeatedly for three years, a person like me with no virtue is able to serve Kami Sama's goyo.'"

Rev. Konko explained that Konko Samas' prayers have never ceased for a moment for five generations, resulting in countless okage blessings. He expressed how significant and meaningful these

prayers are, both visible and invisible.

<3>

There is nothing added or taken away from what the Fourth Konko Sama had done.

Rev. Konko mentioned that the Fifth Konko Sama stated this, which shows his earnest admiration toward his parent, the Fourth Konko Sama.

<4>

I devote myself entirely to serving Kami Sama. I am not doing this because I can.

Rev. Konko remarked that the Fifth Konko Sama had also stated, "I am not doing this because I can. I am merely being allowed to take on this nearly impossible responsibility for my training", which reveals his humility and awareness of his human limitations, while exercising his utmost sincerity and devotion. Rev. Konko mentioned that "devoting" and "allowing to train" are mentioned here and asked which should be the priority. He stated that it is a nearly impossible *goyo* to devote oneself entirely to serving Kami, though we should focus on devoting oneself and serving Kami's *goyo*. He explained that the more one relies on Kami with his/her sincere heart, one would come to realize his/her limitations or shortcomings.

<5>

Rev. Konko shared another narrative of the Fifth Konko Sama's service to Kami, which manifests his deep prayers and his devotion. Prior to presiding over the Monthly Services, Spring and Autumn Grand Services, and other services, Rev. Konko remarked that Konko Sama recites the *Saishi* Main Prayer before his home altar with his wife, Yaeko by his side. In the passage, "Tenchi Kane No Kami has sent Ikigami Konko Daijin to the people to give blessings and teachings and to have them prosper forever," Rev. Konko shared that at times, Konko Sama becomes deeply touched and filled with strong emotion that he chokes up, and with this, he said, "I cannot go on to read the Main Prayer slowly."



Rev. Konko compared his own thoughts on prayers and divine blessings to those practiced by Konko Sama, and he expressed his amazement for Konko Sama's true sincerity and attested that Konko Sama's strong prayers to Kami and the strong wish for all to be saved are beyond our imagination.

<6>

The Fifth Konko Sama said, "Watching the news and seeing so much suffering; my heart cannot rest. These kinds of incidents happen when we ignore/disrespect Kami. Even for me to have spoken such words has made my heart in great sorrow." After awhile, Konko Sama continued, "This is the first time I've ever said such a thing."

Rev. Konko spoke about how his heart was touched when he had this conversation with Konko Sama, and he remarked how he is deeply moved every time during *goyo*, for Konko Sama and the Founder's prayers and principles have profound depth.

Conclusion

Through various examples of teachings and stories, Rev. Konko spoke about the divine blessings received in the sacred place of Konko, where the Founder had lived and received the Divine Call one hundred and fifty years ago. As mentioned in the lecture, the Fifth Konko Sama had stated, "The joy of Faith is the joy felt in our daily lives because practicing faith is within our daily lives." Rev. Konko remarked that he strongly believes that the "joy of Faith" is the ultimate joy and fulfillment for those seeking true happiness in our daily lives and prayers.

With this lecture, Rev. Konko expressed his hopes and prayer that the 150th Anniversary Ceremony of the Divine Call officiated by our Principal Mediator will be more meaningful and significant with our deepest humbleness, and that we will all receive bountiful blessings too heavy to carry in our luggage back home

Young Minister's Gathering

By Rev. Koichi Konko
Konko Mission of Honolulu

Konkokyo celebrated its 150th Anniversary last year in 2009. In 1859 the Divine Call was revealed to Ikigami Konko Daijin, who initiated the Konko Faith. He is the role model for ministers and believers; the young ministers along with some older ministers in Hawaii have gathered at the Konko Mission of Honolulu to enrich their faith through sharing their thoughts about the Divine Call on February 20, 2010. We focused especially on the one line, "Dispel all desires." We tried to figure out what "all desires" meant.

Yoku is the original Japanese of "all desires" in the Divine Call. It is greed, avarice, desire, or a passion in my Japanese English dictionary. I remember talking about good and bad desires. Interesting enough, Ikigami Konko Daijin mentioned 3 types of desires in his teachings.

1 → Desires we should have to live

"While people are alive they must pray for good health. Farmers should pray for abundant crops, and merchants should pray for successful business. Such desires are natural." [GIII:Jinkyu Kyogoroku/ed. Kataoka, Jiro:170.1]

2 → Desires to save people.

"I asked Konko Sama about eliminating human desires. He said, 'No, no, I also have desires. I have the desire to save people throughout the world. Do not eliminate your desires.'" [GII:Kondo, Fujimori:54.1]

3 → Desires that are not good.

"Do not torment yourself by succumbing to selfish desires." [GIII:Shinkun/ed. Konkokyo Hombu:P1:18]

He also taught us about putting aside our selfish desires such as "Eliminate your selfish desires, and acknowledge the Konko Faith." [GIII:Shinkun/ed. Konkokyo Hombu:P2:11]



Good desires are the element to advance our faith and promote having the heart of Tenchi Kane No Kami, the Divine Parent of the Universe (Abbreviated as Kami) as much as possible. Good desires make Kami happy because we, Kami's children, are happy. Not so good desires or selfish desires prevent us from having a heart of Kami, thus preventing us from living a Kami-centered life. Simply put, we should try to practice the Konko Faith with good desires and get rid of selfish desires. This is one of many Spiritual Investments to make for ourselves, which is the theme of the Konko Missions in Hawaii Konko Church of North America Joint Conference in August.

Selfish desires are narrow minded and not flexible

because they're based on one person's point of view, which is "me". So it is difficult to accept differences from a narrow minded perspective, we exclude

instead of include. I think even common sense leads the selfish desires because Kami's sense and common sense are not always the same.

Unconditional love is another antonym of selfish desires. We can accept everything as is with unconditional love. Try to understand instead of the attitude of "I know already." In other words, be humble just like Ikigami Konko Daijin. He did his best, but he still thought he was not sure what he did was according to Kami's heart. He was conscious that he was an ordinary farmer, not a superman or great leader. That is why he was able to see the truth and realize Tenchi Kane No Kami as a whole, not only seeing the strict side but also the loving side, like that of ideal parents. He was able to overcome what was once thought as common sense during that time. An example was when Ikigami Konko Daijin realized that Tenchi Kane No Kami was a good and powerful deity instead of

being an evil deity that merely hurt people.

A good desire is to save people. Not so good desires or selfish desires are to satisfy only ourselves. We have to watch out that good desires can turn into selfish desires. Our desires could make people both happy and unhappy even though it comes from a good heart. I can find an example in Ikigami Konko Daijin's teaching. It goes,

"When visiting a sick person, some people make him feel worse by shedding tears and caressing him pitifully. Some people bewail the sick person after seeing how sick he is or how much weight the person has lost. They tell his family depressing stories about other sick people. For him and his family, these depressing stories will leave no room for Kami's blessings. Making them worry won't make it a consolation visit."

Say reassuring words to strengthen the sick person's heart and tell his family not to worry or to be in pain. Encourage them as much as you can. There are many ways you can help. If they are poor, you can give money or grains. Be concerned for all things and practice faith."(extract of Voice of the Universe #387 page 127)

We visit a sick person for him or her; however, our attitude and words coming from a good desire could cause trouble for the person and family.

I try to check my heart before my action to see if there is a negative emotion such as anger. If it comes from a good desire but with anger, it is not going in accordance with Kami's wish. A good desire might turn into a selfish desire to satisfy myself. I may be saying the right thing, but if I force it to others because they didn't listen to me, I become upset and I'll also make them unhappy. Selfish desires intimidate people around me. I should be encouraging with a good desire when doing something. Good desires always encourages cooperation and working together with respectable hearts and behavior. There are good desires and not so good desires, but the important thing is that we must be sincere and humble to have and to manifest good desires. I believe it is the Spiritual Investment, too.



Kansha (Appreciation)

By Rev. Edna Yano

Konko Mission of Wahiawa

Our Divine Mediator, *Ikigami Konko Daijin-Sama*, Divine Parent, *Tenchi Kane no Kami-Sama*, our beloved *Mitama* spirits of our ancestors and friends, and everyone's prayers has allowed the Konko Mission of Wahiawa to celebrate a joyous 70th anniversary on Sunday, March 14, 2010. We have been able to welcome this occasion thanks to the countless supporters of our cozy family church in Wahiawa. About 170 people were a part of the celebration, including 28 people from Amagi, Shiranuhi, Kawanoishi and Iwatani Churches (Japan).

The first portion of the program was held at the Konko Mission of Wahiawa. It was pretty crowded, which is a very good thing for our church. The Reverend Michiyoshi Yasutake, head minister of the Amagi Church was the head officiant for the ceremony. With prayers in unison, it brought on a great sense of awe. My two Kibimai disciples, Ms. Renee Yano and Ms. Hope Morihara both 8 years old, offered the Kibimai Sacred dance to Kami-Sama. Upon the conclusion of the service portion, we transferred to Dots in Wahiawa for the reception, had an onolicious buffet lunch, and enjoyed a variety of entertainment, from the Honbushin Taiko group, our hula group, chorus group, karaoke by wonderful singers and the skit of the "Giant Turnip".

A representative of the Honolulu City and County Councilmember, Donovan Dela Cruz, presented our church with a Certificate of Congratulations. The event ended solemnly as we got into one large circle, held hands and sang "Hawaii Aloha", led by former Councilwoman, Mrs. Rene Mansho.

It is pretty mindboggling how we were able to celebrate the existence of our church for seven

decades.

But the secret's in the theme we have chosen for this occasion... "Appreciation". The reason for choosing "Appreciation" as our theme is because we can



positively say that our church has been able to be in operation because the foundation of the church began with appreciation. The founder of our church, the Late Rev. Haruko Takahashi was a local born minister. She suffered from an eye ailment that left her unable to enjoy the qualities of life—in a sense that



she could not see very well, and because she thought about how disfigured and unattractive her face was. She also had nose and tonsillar irregularities. She

mentioned in her biography that she thought about suicide every day till the age of 15 because of this situation. She also stated that her eyes "bulged out like that of a dead fish" and that she nearly had to stick the book to her face to be able to read.

As people reach their teen years, they become very concerned with their physical appearance. Haruko tried everything to fix her situation. Even the doctors gave up hope for her,



claiming that eye surgery would most likely lead her to an even worse situation than she was already in. Then she started to practice faith in a religion that required her to abstain from meats and fish.

One day, when her sewing instructor, Mrs. Kusunoki invited her for a meal, she noticed Haruko's

strange eating habits, and so questioned her beliefs. Her sewing instructor happened to be a believer of the Konko Mission of Honolulu. She encouraged Haruko to visit the church. Haruko was only 17 years old at that time. Her sewing instructor took her to the church that evening, during which, the Rev. Masayuki Kodama (head minister) was delivering a sermon for a monthly service. While she listened to the sermon, she was struck at the grave irreverence committed to Kami in the past without her knowing. She felt

overwhelmed with the feeling of extending her sincere apologies for these offenses. Then, the following day, she visited the church again to receive personal mediation from the sensei. Again, she was awe-struck with the message given by the sensei. She shed her tears in awe for the unfathomable love and blessings of the earth, which she had never been aware of up till that moment. At that very moment, she claimed to have felt a ray of the sunlight penetrate her eyes. From that day on, her visual conditions improved significantly and in just one week, her vision returned to normal. Haruko was able to have Kami-Sama born within her.

Haruko being so ecstatic of the blessings she received wrote a letter to her family back in Kohala, Hawaii. Her family did not believe her. At one time, she had the opportunity to return back home for a visit. Sure enough, when she arrived home, she didn't even have to mention one word, and her family was surprised beyond words at the significant changes that took place for Haruko—in both her appearance and attitude. They shed tears of joy and gratitude. Haruko shared her blessed episode with her family in detail. Her family members all understood the grateful nature of the Konko faith and began to practice this faith as a family.

Through the over-whelming blessings Haruko received, she enrolled into the Konkokyo Gakuin Seminary and received spiritual training at the Konko Church of Amagi as well. Ordained a Konko minister, she established the Konko Mission of Wahiawa—and here we still exist after 70 years.

Because we set the theme as “Appreciation”, many appreciative things occur within the church and our personal lives. Although, at times, Kami-Sama throws curve balls (challenges), we have been able to catch

each one through the terrific coaching we receive from mentors, family and friends.



I am so amazed at how this little family church in Wahiawa has been able to pull on through for all these years. I thank the Rev. Haruko Takahashi for establishing this church. I thank the Rev. Hiromichi Ishii who took care of this church for a few years during his administrative term in Hawaii and also Rev. Takahashi's family members who kept the doors open till Rev. and Mrs. Yano arrived. I want to thank my parents, the Revs. Yasuhiro and Reiko Yano, who was sent to this church from Amagi, Japan—both at the young age of 26!! Although my parents say that

they never encountered hardship in these 33 years of service at the church, I know that they went through many challenges, but they were able to overcome each one through the grace and love of Ikigami Konko Daijin and Parent God Tenchi Kane no Kami-Sama. It's not easy to maintain a church—in fact; I think it's one of the most challenging



occupations. But I do believe it's very rewarding for the soul. I also want to thank all the dedicated members of the Wahiawa Church, for if it were not for all of you, the church would not be quite a church.

As my parents age over the next few decades, I think to myself very often... what will become of the Konko Mission of Wahiawa? Will this church have members? Will this church grow? And when will we have our MEGA CHURCH!! J. Sometimes I do worry, but I find myself having more hope for the future. I am sure that if we continue to have appreciation as the core element



of our church, it will continue on for generations to come. Let's continue to practice this faith tradition and keep the vitality of the church going strong throughout the entire island chain.

KMH Mission Statement

The Konko Missions in Hawaii addresses the spiritual needs of the people of Hawaii by promoting the Konko faith through a better understanding of the life and teachings of Konko Daijin, and through the practice of Toritsugi (Divine-Mediation).

Upcoming Events and Services

Tenchi Kane No Kami Grand Ceremony

Apr. 11 Konko Mission of Honolulu

Apr. 13 Konko Mission of Wahiawa

Apr. 18 Konko Mission of Waipahu

May. 5 Konko Mission of Hilo

May.16 Konko Mission of Wailuku

KMH Missionary Women's Society Seminar

Jun. 11 (Fri) - 12 (Sat)

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