



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

Understanding and digesting "the Divine Call"

The following is a summary of a faith training lecture titled, Understanding and digesting "the Divine Call" by Rev. Kojiro Takahashi, which was delivered just prior to the 150th Anniversary Grand Ceremony of the Divine Call on November 15, 2009 for believers in Hawaii, North America, Brazil, and Korea. The lecture highlighted key aspects of the Founder's life and applied these with his own experience, bringing our Founder's issues to relate directly to the issues of the present time. The lecture was held on a warm sunny morning at the Administrative Office Building in Honbu Headquarter.



Rev. Kojiro Tkahashi

Opening Remarks

Rev. Kojiro Takahashi expressed his enthusiasm for meeting everyone and that he had greatly looked forward to this day. He shared his thoughts as he received mediation from Konko-Sama that morning, that the Founder had picked all worshippers up from their homes in a special airplane and train to worship together in this special service. Rev. Takahashi remarked that this occasion not only serves to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Divine Call and the manifestation of His Wish but it also serves as a point to renew His Wish and further develop this Faith. He said he had called this in the beginning of the year, "Seeking this eternal way in a lifetime."

Following these words, Rev. Takahashi spoke about his efforts to deepen his faith in the lead up to the 150th Year of the Divine Call. He spoke about the importance of practicing faith together with the Founder, and he has done so physically, using his hands and feet. As an example of using his feet, he spoke about going out to buy five colored papers on the day before receiving the Divine Call just as the Founder had done, as noted in the *oboegaki*. As for his hands, on the day of the Divine Call, he remarked that after Konko-Sama's *odemashi*, he prays at the Founder's gravesite, and he copies the Divine Call as shown in the *oboecho* and *oboegaki* using his ink brush. He stated that these practices became a sort of a ritual every year for the Divine Call.

He expressed that our Founder is always with us. He outlined his lecture in the following three issues: the Divine Call and Work, the Divine Call and Life and Death, and the Divine Call and Family, and for each issue, he spoke about the Founder and then applied the Founder's experience to his own life.

The Divine Call and Work

Rev. Takahashi introduced the Founder's conscientious faith while experiencing series of misfortunes. He spoke about how the Founder prospered as a farmer yet lost many children along the way, and through these experiences, he received numerous blessings in his family and financial life; those around him were amazed with the Founder and they in turn began to practice faith. Rev. Takahashi

noted that it began to be difficult for the Founder to work as a farmer and help people, and that was when he received Kami's Divine Call, requesting him to give up his work and perform mediation for those who suffer. Rev. Takahashi

explained that quitting his job meant no income. He stated, "Staying at the mediation place all day means no job and no money, an extraordinary and unfathomable situation."

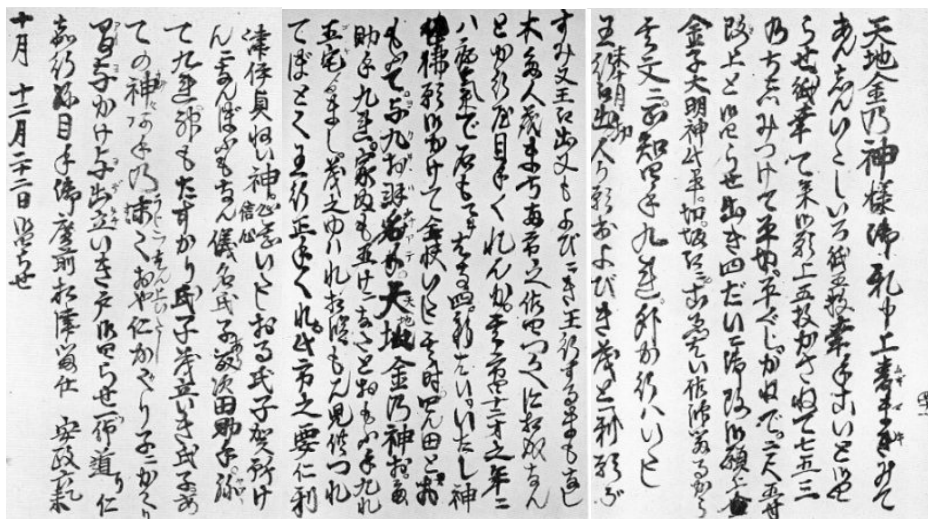
While he spoke about the Founder's work, Rev. Takahashi spoke about his own work experience. Currently 69 years old and Konko Kindergarten Principal, he noted he worked for 38 years at the Konkokyo Research Institute, Konkokyo Seminary, and Konkokyo Library until retirement at age 60. He expressed his dislike of the word, "retirement" and instead prefers to use words such as "rebirth" and "reborn", which was the state of our Founder with no work and no income. He explained that he sought for ways to receive continuous faith even at retirement age, and thought about enrolling in an imaginary university called Konko University as a freshman or becoming a trainee at an imaginary church named Konko Church of Heaven and Earth. He remarked that retiring is also a beginning; he now volunteers to deliver a sermon daily for 28 days a month at the Central Mediation Hall.

Rev. Takahashi further explained that the Founder never stated that it was he who established this Faith or that he started to propagate, but did all this very naturally as if he was reborn. Similar to this, Rev.

Takahashi mentioned that he was able to naturally quit his banking career and decided to become a minister when his grandfather, Rev. Takahashi Masao passed away.

Rev. Takahashi elaborated on the deep emotions of both Kami and the Founder expressed at the same time; Kami cried with joy when the Divine Call was realized, and the Founder noted that he received true blessings when he was 42 years old.

Rev. Takahashi asked, "How did this happen?" And he answered, "Because there was rebirth". He remarked that Kami was saved and born as the Founder abandoned his farming career, dispelled all desires thinking



he had died to assist Kami.

Divine Call and Life and Death

Rev. Takahashi shared his experience regarding life and death. Six years ago, he was diagnosed with esophagus cancer and had operation, which gave him 40 stitches in his body. He smiled and said he received encouragement from teachings and Hanshin Tigers (Osaka's baseball team). One teaching was the third Konko Sama's teaching, "Difficulty is blessings" and another from the late Rev. Kikuyo Konko's teaching, "If your fath is the same before and after having the operation, it would be not good for the illness."

He recalled how sorry he felt to make a scar in his body that his mother provided him, but at the same time felt grateful for the scar, for it spared his life. This scar, he said, is a valuable evidence of his rebirth. He noted that he began to feel common things as wondrous; the experience allowed him to be awakened to the greater workings in our daily lives. He remarked that every meal he consumes sustains his life. The cancer, he stated, was a gift from Kami and Konko Sama for this rebirth, and with this new strength, he looks forward to developing his new life and faith.

Divine Call and Family

Rev. Takahashi explained about the uniqueness of the Founder's relation with his family after receiving the Divine Call. He explained that in Buddhism, one leaves the family behind in paving the way, though with our Founder, he established his Faith at home maintaining his relationship with his wife and children. Rev. Takahashi expressed that it must have been difficult for the Founder to maintain family life without working and sitting at the mediation desk to help others; he wondered how the family members felt. He explained that the Founder shouldered everyone around him – his wife, children, relatives, believers – and practiced faith. In a sense, Rev. Takahashi stated, the Founder's entire family performed the goyo and he received the Divine Call with his family.

Comparing the Founder's life with his own, Rev. Takahashi spoke about his own family experience and shared his difficult experience of his wife's passing in April last year. He expressed deep regret of his shortcomings as her husband. His wife, he said, was not a Konkokyo believer yet followed him to Konko town, a very unknown world for her when she was 25 and stood by his side for 40 years; she raised three children with much lower income than before. Rev. Takahashi expressed deep gratitude for his wife and for being able to practice faith with her. Though she has passed away, he continues to practice faith with her mitama spirit. He remarked that both the challenges and joy of practicing faith with family is a truly wonderful aspect of this way of faith.

Closing Remarks

Rev. Takahashi closed his lecture by inviting all to offer our sincere heart and robust faith at the 150th Year Service, just as we would offer a robust looking fish rather than an unhealthy looking one. He urged all to practice calling out Konko Sama's name at every moment – when we are grateful, worried, upset, or even just when we remember. He encouraged everyone to practice saying “thank you” 150 times, just as when our Founder expressed his thankfulness for the stump to rest on. This, he ended, is our faith's origin and a universal passport for peace.

(Y.O)

NEW STAFF MEMBER



Aloha! My name is Kei Kunito. I am an associate minister at the Konko Church of Yao, Osaka, Japan and a new staff at the Konkokyo Hawaii Center. After having served at the Konkokyo International Center and Honbu for three years, I was appointed to the staff at the Konkokyo Hawaii Center by Konko-Sama, our Spiritual Leader on March 10, 2010. It is a great privilege to be able to carry out the heartfelt prayer of Konko-Sama.

With my family, Kiyomi(wife) and Wakana (daughter) I am looking forward to a new life in Honolulu, Hawaii where we have never been before. Listening to stories and teachings of our mission's pioneers from the history of our church in Hawaii, I would like to learn from the past and pray for the Konkokyo future in Hawaii.

In the practice of my Faith, I always keep the third Konko-Sama's words in my mind: “All you need is a kind heart” Also our Founder said, “An education is unnecessary to perform toritsugi. A sincere heart is all one needs. Kami speaks through those who perform toritsugi. Even if they say something mistaken, Kami will make the intention clear. There's nothing to worry about. Therefore a sincere and kind heart is very important for practicing faith. Having a lively heart and energetic body, I would like to be a more compassionate person who may someday receive the blessings of the Great Universe.

I hope that I might serve Kami's wishes and Konko-Sama's prayer in Hawaii. .

Finally, I pray for the Konko Missions in Hawaii to be the place where Kami and people are mutually fulfilled through Konko Daijin's Faith.

Mahalo

Kami's mysterious workings

This is the sermon for the Spring Grand Service at Hilo mission that was given by Rev. Roy Yasutake (Wailuku)

Even after all this time I still get amazed at how Kami sama works. True, as a believer, I have read many stories of the incredible blessings that so many have received. Some still sound like miracles to me. But today, let me bring things down to Earth a bit, just a teensy bit. There have been two episodes in my family's recent life that illustrate to me how, depending upon your attitude and faith in Kami, a bad situation is revealed as blessings in disguise.

I am a big believer of "nothing happens without reason". Everything that happens in life has been arranged by Kami Sama. How we deal with each "situation" depends heavily on whether or not we believe that it is one of Kami Sama's mysterious workings.

Everyone has a bad day. Right? No one here has ever had a day start off bad? The alarm doesn't go off. Your hair dryer chose that morning to quit working. Maybe you couldn't get a seat on the bus or traffic is so bad you get more and more irritated. It goes on and on. By this point your irritation begins affecting those around you. Your spouse gets yelled at for something they had no control over. Your mind starts forming ugly thoughts at the driver who apparently is in no hurry to go anywhere. Your children pick up on your bad mood and this can affect their day. Your co-workers might try to distance themselves to avoid catching any flak. All this misery from such a minor thing. What happens when something major happens?

I strongly believe that everything is arranged by Kami-sama. This is easy to accept when things are going good, but it is most important to remember when things aren't so good. Episode one involves our dog, Hana. I adopted her from friends in Kahakuloa and brought her home with me. She was the runt of the litter and had been picked on by her stronger siblings. Hana had bite marks on her ears and she was malnourished. Having been picked on by her older siblings, you could say I rescued her. She was small enough to fit in the palms of my hands and was very weak and timid. My dog Lei, a pit bull, even tried to kill her that first day when I introduced little Hana to her. We asked friends and family but no one could adopt her at the time so we ended up caring for her. My youngest brother Alvin became the official owner and was registered as such. . Now let's fast forward a few years . Hana is now much bigger and is a very healthy, rambunctious dog.

She loves her daily walks as well as playing catch in the afternoons. My aunt Kanae spoils her. Although she was against our adopting another dog, citing that we couldn't even properly care for Lei, Auntie Kanae has grown to love Hana. Kanae spends the most quality time with Hana during the day. She is very much a treasured member of our family.

One fateful day as we played with Hana on the church property a 13 year old boy, who was skateboarding, paused at the foot of our driveway to take a sip from his saimin that he had just bought from the snack wagon. The next thing I know there's a black flash and Hana runs up to the boy and bites his ankle. He screams, throws his saimin at Hana in defense (which missed widely) then hobbles home. By this time I had caught up to her, grabbed her collar and pulled her back but the damage had been done. The boy's mother is outraged, the Humane society is called in and a police report is filed. Alvin was made to pay a fine and was informed there would be a hearing.

Everyone thought that Hana would be taken away and destroyed as a violent, problem animal. The thought of losing a member of our family shocked us. There was some intense praying, our emotions are running high, bad feelings toward the boy's mother who (still very angry) threatened all kinds of things, and there was the fear of the many consequences this would have on us and the church. My aunt Kanae seemed to be the most devastated. The thought of Hana being taken away actually drove her to tears! That was even more shocking to me than anything else. (She had originally had been against adopting Hana since we already had a dog)

We prayed to Kami for a resolution. We sought advice as to how to proceed. We were desperate to keep Hana but we were angry too. I felt the boy's mother was over reacting or perhaps even trying to extort money from us or the church.

Ah, bless my mother, Rev. Hisayo. She pointed out to all of us that this had been arranged by Kami. There were blessings in the middle of this crisis and we had to find them. Keep the faith and while doing what we can, we also had to have the faith to leave the rest to Kami. Nothing happens without a reason. Kami Sama does not arrange for meaningless things to happen. With a change of heart we stopped being angry and spiteful towards that woman and instead prayed for blessings for all. I was still worried though. Long story short, we ended up borrowing \$7,000.00 to build a fence around the property.

We also purchased a muzzle for Hana. These things were done to show the community at large that we were serious about keeping everyone safe. Also in order to build the fence, we had to cut down some badly overgrown mock orange trees (these things hadn't been trimmed in over 15 years and had grown tall enough to hide our neighbor's two story house. We did everything we could to make construction easier and as a result did more landscaping and cleaning up than we normally would before daisai. The place looks great! Throwing away that mountain of branches took me about 8 trips. The court hearing went very well and after another small fine, Alvin paid the medical bill and a small restitution. We saw a number of small things all coming together to make for a good result for all involved. A number of members of the court knew Alvin because he works at the McDonald's across the street from the courthouse. Our neighbors get more air and light and we even got to know them better. The agent from the Humane Society was extremely helpful and while the fence was expensive, the benefits far outweighed the cost. We have been blessed



Episode 2

My Aunt Kanae is the healthiest member of the family. Despite being in her 70's she is active, taking Hana for a walk every morning, doing the various chores around the house, balancing the budget, pretty much keeping things running. We would be lost without her. I think we take her for granted. I think we took for granted her good health because one day Kami Sama arranged for a reminder.

One day my Aunt Kanae complained of dizziness and nausea. She lied down to rest. Now this may sound like we panicked too easily but, Aunt Kanae is a tough ole bird. Rarely even catches a cold. So, when she sud-

denly has symptoms that are unusual, especially for her, the family gets worried! She complained of not being able to open her eyes because of dizziness and also of a headache. I started to think that maybe something was going on in her head... something like a mild stroke. My mother, who was off island at the time, is a mess, her normal calm voice is gone. Her strong, big sister was sick! That's horrible! She could be in serious trouble! (continue story) Trying to convince her. Mom calling every few minutes. Finally calling clinic and being told to come in. Trying again to convince Kanae to go. She insists we pray to Kami if we have time to worry. Going at last to clinic only to find out that it was a common case of vertigo, possibly from a ear infection or cold.

By the second day afterwards she's back to her usual self. Everybody breathes a collective sigh of relief. Whew! So what was our lesson?

From time to time Kami Sama arranges for little situations such as this. Many times the results are laughable at best but sometimes going to the doctor in a panic has led to the discovery of something else that COULD have become a major illness. I believe these situations also serve to remind us just how important that particular member of the family is. We take for granted our family and Kami Sama as the ultimate Parent will remind us. To us this was also a test of faith. For Kanae, she saw it right away and insisted on goshinmai and prayer being all she needed. I was leaning towards deferring to her wishes but Mom is in full panic mode! We almost argued on the phone but in the end these kinds of things serve to bring us closer.

How mysterious is Kami Sama's workings. We can rarely understand at that moment. How many of us can immediately see the blessings? Not many but some of us can. Even sadder is how too many of us cannot acknowledge the blessings afterwards.

In our daily life, in our daily faith practice many things can happen. Life is full of bad days and disasters. While we are fortunate here in Hawaii to have a 3 foot tsunami being the latest, major disaster, we should reflect on the minor disasters in our everyday life. Actively seek understanding and strengthen your connection to Kami Sama. Deepen your faith and when those disasters, big and small come calling, you and your family will be prepared. The very act of actively seeking understanding of the many hidden blessings will bring us that much closer to Kami Sama.

Let's practice true faith. Let's continue to practice Konko faith. Thank you

Congrratulation Rev. & Mrs. Koichi and Seiko Konko



On June 18, 2010, the Konko Mission of Honolulu was filled with joy and happiness of many people who gathered from all the islands of Hawaii and Japan. The wedding ceremony for Rev. Koichi Konko and Mrs. Seiko Kitahara was solemnized by the Rev. Michiyoshi Yasutake of Amagi Church and Rev. Roy Yasutake of Wailuku Church.

The ceremony was performed by Konkokyo tradition. During the service, a solemn pledge was made by Rev. Konko in English and Miss Keiko in Japanese. We all prayed for their love and commitment to one another would grow ever-wider and ever-deeper with every day they spend together as husband and a wife. We also prayed that they find the strength and courage to overcome any problem they may encounter by working together in harmony with one another receiving protection and guidance from our Divine Parent.

Congratulation Koichi-sensei and Seiko-san!

(K.K)



A Big Circle

Rev. Yomisu Oya

to see how man has been able to be saved, and how Kami has been able to be realized. Continue with your writing.” (Oboegaki 3-5-6)

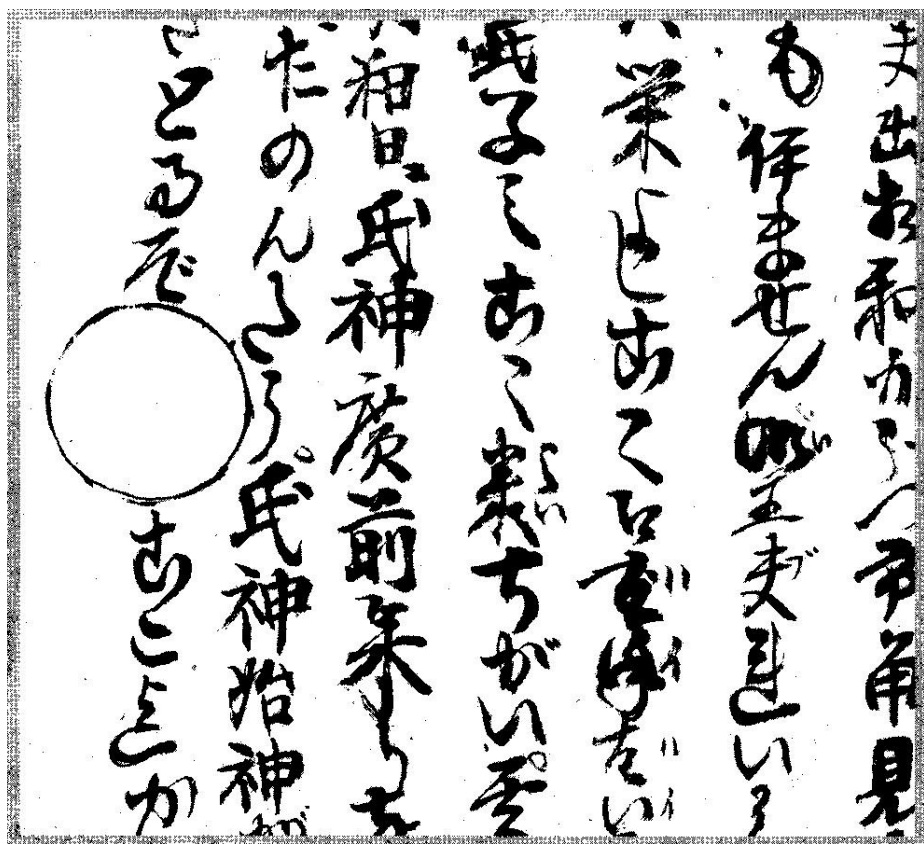
We understand here that our Founder got emotional. However, Kami was also, it seems, deeply moved.

Rev. Hiroshi Takebe of the Konkokyo Research Institute wrote an article entitled “*Kami tono deai* (Encounter with Kami)” in the May 16, 2010 issue of *Konko Shinbun* (newspaper). According to his article, the main reason why the Founder received the blessings from his critical illness was the Founder’s apology toward the possible irreverence recognizing his primal ignorance. However, in his memoir the Founder also described that his New Year’s prayer for his ominous year had been granted by kamis, and his near-fatal fever was reduced to a throat ailment. Yet, the Founder was still facing a critical condition even after his fatal fever had downgraded to a throat ailment.

Rev. Takebe claimed that Kami’s favor was necessary for the Founder to recover, however it was not enough. Kami needed the Founder’s sincere attitude for him to be saved. This was the moment for the Founder to open up a new relationship with Kami. In this way, the way of “*aiyokakeyo*,” mutual fulfillment of Kami and people was established. Rev. Takebe wrote:

“Kami did as much as He could (for the Founder to be saved). However, Kami’s working alone could not make this happen. Of course human could not achieve salvation by himself. The Founder drew a big circle in his memoir. He might have had an indescribable impression at that moment. He might have felt a mysterious and miraculous principle of Kami and man when he drew this circle.” (“*Konko Shinbun*”)

When we think or talk about “*aiyokakeyo*,” mutual fulfillment of Kami and people, we should imagine how our Founder felt while he was drawing a big circle with his deep emotion and joy of finding the way.



Our Founder started writing the *Oboegaki*, or memoir, on November 23, 1874, upon a divine instruction from Kami. This autobiographical record is very valuable for us to learn his faith. Among the events he wrote of from his birth in 1814 to 1876, there is a description in which both Kami and our Founder seemed to get overwhelmed.

It happened when he wrote about the blessings he received from his critical illness in 1855. He drew a big circle while he was describing this event. We interpreted this as the “symbol expressing Konko Daijin’s great awe and gratitude.” Below this symbol, he stated:

As I write up to this point, I am filled with deep emotion. Then Kami-Sama encouraged, “Konko Daijin, these deep emotions are not only your own. If I, Tenchi Kane No Kami, were a poet, I would express these emotions through poetry. However, I am incapable of doing so. I am overjoyed, and even overcome with emotion

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).

2010 KCNA/KMH JOINT CONFERENCE "Spiritual Investment"

Place: Camp Erdman

Date: 8/13 ~8/15,2010

Time: Check in from 2:30 p.m.

Guest Speakers:

Rev. Mitsutoshi Horio (Hita Church)

Rev. Todd Takahashi (Honolulu Church)

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Radio KNUI AM 900 at 6:20 p.m., every 2nd Sunday

To: