



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

Second Episode: The Great Suffering at the Age of 42 and the Encounter with Kami The Thoughts of Kami Manifested in the Human World

Last time, we followed the life of the Founder until he reached the age of 40. He was adopted into the Kawate family in Otani Village and after getting married, he steadily expanded the family business. However, with a series of deaths in the family, both he and those around him felt the looming presence of the "Curse of Konjin". This time, we will look back at the "great suffering at the age of 42" that marked a significant turning point in the Founder's faith.

Despite Praying for Good Luck in Various Places, He Suffers from a Life-Threatening Illness

In 1855, the Founder turned 42 years old. This age is commonly referred to as the "yaku-doshi" or "unlucky year" in Japan, and for men, turning 42 is considered to be a particularly unlucky year where the possibility of disasters is high.

The Founder visited his local shrines from New Year's Day and prayed for good luck and to ward off misfortune. He may have felt a strong desire not to neglect customs related to the gods, especially given the continued misfortunes that had befallen his family in recent years, in addition to his strong faith.

On January 4th, despite heavy snowfall, the Founder walked over 30 kilometers (about 18 miles) one way from Otani Village (Konko-cho, Asakuchi City, Okayama Prefecture) to Tomonotsu Gion Shrine (currently known as Nunakuma Shrine in Fukuyama City, Hiroshima Prefecture). There, he prayed for good luck and to ward off misfortune, and received a wooden tablet as a sign of protection. He then returned home.

On the 14th, the Founder visited the Kibitsu Shrine in Okayama City. Here, he participated in the "Narukama" ritual, where rice was put in a kettle and boiled, and it was said that if the kettle made a sound it was a good omen, but if it didn't, it was a bad omen. This is called the "Odouji," and the Founder reported



that the kettle made a sound twice, which is quite unusual. He pondered the reason why, but ultimately concluded that it was a sign that his family's prosperity would continue. He then traveled eastward to participate in another ritual at the Saijo-ji Kannon Temple. This was an elaborate and thorough pilgrimage for good luck, involving a round trip of over 100 kilometers (about 62 miles) on foot.

In April, while the farmers in Otani village were sweating over the harvest of wheat, on April 25th, the Founder suddenly began to feel unwell. His condition rapidly deteriorated, and when a doctor was called, he diagnosed the Founder with "nodoke," an illness in which the inside of the throat becomes inflamed, causing a high fever and making it difficult to speak, eat or drink. The Founder's condition became critical, and the doctor even declared that he was "nearly dead and would be lucky to survive."

What would you do if you were told that your life is in danger? The worries about your family's future and job won't go away, and it's not surprising if you become depressed, anxious, and scared.

However, at this time, the heart of the Founder was rather clear and calm. He had done everything he could with the help of the gods and Buddha up to this point. Upon reflecting on this, he became determined that there was nothing else to do but entrust everything to the gods and Buddha.

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Despite his condition, he communicated with his wife Tose, who was always worried and by his side, through gestures and urged her to go out and work. Even though he couldn't speak, he conveyed his thoughts through hand gestures. Relatives who learned of his situation came to help, but conversations like "Bunji (the name of the Founder) probably won't make it" also reached his ears. However, they believed that there was no other option but to entrust everything to the gods and everyone joined in to pray for his recovery.

The Founder apologizes to Kami-Sama for disrespectful behavior during the construction and relocation of his home

On the night of April 29th, family members gathered in the room with the *kamidana* (household Shinto altar) at the home of the Founder, and led by Tose's younger brother, Jiro Furukawa, they began to pray. Jiro had the qualification of a *sen-datsu*, a

guide in the practice of *Shugendo*, the ancient mountain religion of Japan. Even in the next room, separated by just a sliding door, the Founder could hear their prayer. He focused his mind on the gods and the Buddha, while feeling grateful for the emotions of everyone. Through Jiro, who held a *gohei* (a Shinto purification wand), a divine revelation was received that he was being irreverent to Hoyo-bi-shin and Konjin, both of which are deities in charge of directions, concerning the construction and relocation of his home. The Founder had built and relocated his home several years prior in accordance with the cardinal directions, but according to Kami, he had been disrespectful. Upon hearing this revelation, Yaozo, Tose's father, retorted sternly, "He has not been disrespectful in regards to this house. This was built facing the cardinal directions!"

It is understandable. He had witnessed how meticulously the Founder had researched and followed the proper directions and dates when constructing and moving the house. However, Kami questioned him, "If that is the case, is it fine for the head of the household to die, even if this house were to perish, having been built in the proper direction?" Yaozo had no reply.

The exchange was heard by the Founder in the neighboring room. Upon hearing Yaozo's response, he wondered what his father-in-law might be thinking and was trembling with fear of being disrespectful. At the same time, upon hearing the initial divine mes-

sage, he felt a shock and thought, "Was that construction really disrespectful...?"

At that moment, suddenly being able to speak, the Founder expressed his true feelings to Kami from under his futon.

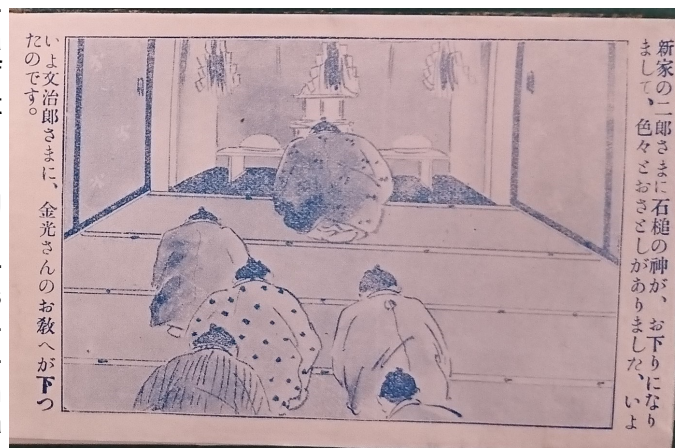
"What my father-in-law just said, he said without knowing anything. When we built the new house, we were told not to build it that way, but we insisted and had the expert check the direction and date. However, we turned a small house into a larger one, so I don't know which direction we were disrespectful towards, being an ordinary person. I don't think just checking the direction was enough. I apologize for any disrespect and will do better in the future."

Afterwards, the teachings continued through Jiro and the words spoken were directed towards the Founder. "Bunji, the year of the dog, you are good. Even if you have to crawl out, come out to this room. You have been attentive. When you visited the local

shrine on New Year's Day, you offered your prayer, 'I am 42 years old this year and in my unlucky year. I humbly ask for protection.' The gods, including the local deities, have all gathered here. Originally, you would have fallen ill with a fever, but because a fever would not save you, Kami miraculously replaced it with a throat condition. With the virtue of faith, Kami helped you.

The Founder, as instructed by Kami, exerted all his strength, and crawled out of the room where everyone was. Kami's message continued through Jiro, "When you visited Kibitsu Shrine, you had two "odouji" and had to return home with great care. That was a sign of sickness. If you did not have faith, it would have been a year of disaster. By May 1st, I will bestow upon you divine grace. Offer a hundred volumes of the *Shingyo* Sutra to the gods, including Konjin, tonight. Your wife should wear different clothes for seven days to offer incense, candles, and five grains to the Ishizuchi Shrine. The Nittenshi (Sun Goddess) will pass over the top of your head, every day at noon, dog year. Kami makes sure you, dog year, will eat well and keep good health for the rest of your life."

After finishing the message, the Shinto wand Jiro used for the prayer ritual descended to the tray. Then, the rice and soybeans offered on the tray were attracted to the wand as if by magic, and the wand slowly lifted by itself with rice and soybeans. "Take these and cook them for him, the year of the dog." came another message from Kami. As instructed, the rice and soybeans fell off the wand and scattered



onto the tray.

Why Do Things Like This Happen? Connecting with People and Surprising Even Kami

The people gathered, including the Founder, were watching in amazement at the strange sight that was unfolding before them. Especially for the Founder, the fact that the divine message was delivered, along with its contents, became an unforgettable experience.

Until now, even though he had been praying to gods earnestly, there was no way to know or hear about the gods' thoughts or feelings. However, on this night, for the first time, Kami's thoughts were conveyed in words and human irreverence was pointed out. Then, when the Founder acknowledged his rudeness and expressed his sincere apologies saying, "I am just an ordinary person and do not understand fully", Kami recognized his attitude and said, "You are good, thorough."

Not only that, but the gods have been listening to and answering the prayers for protection from misfortune made during visits to shrines and temples from the New Year, and even when struck by a fever, the fever was replaced with a throat ailment. Although it seemed that there was no way to thank the gods for the "near-death experience," during the two "odouji" at Kibitsu Shrine, the gods let him know that they were already working to help. Furthermore, it was revealed that not only had the gods, including Konjin, the deity of Ishizuchi, and the local tutelary deity, gathered

there, but they also gave specific instructions on how to show gratitude.

In later years, the Founder reflected on this experience in the "Konko Daijin Oboegaki," the Memoir of Konko Daijin. He wrote a large circle on the page where it said "the various gods, including the local deity, were all gathered here," and then wrote "I became overwhelmed with sorrow as I wrote this."

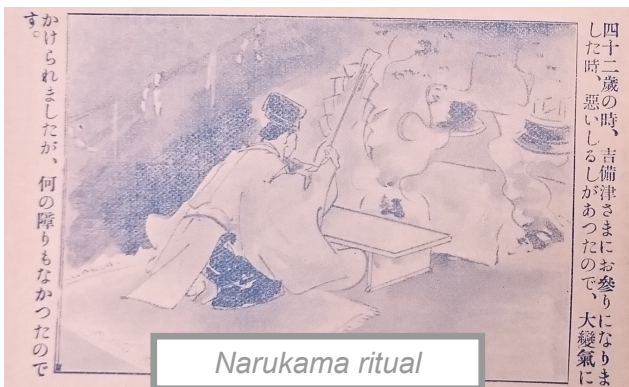
In response, Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama said, "Konko Daijin, these deep emotions are not only your own. If I, Tenchi

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 to see how people have been able to be saved and how Kami has been able to be realized. Continue with your writing."

As mentioned earlier, no matter how much the Founder prayed, he could not hear the voice of the gods or understand their thoughts. This is something that applies to all human beings. Even Kami could not make humans aware of Kami's efforts to save them.

The words "How could this be possible? People are saved, and Kami is saved too..." convey the joy of both Kami and the Founder finally understanding each other, and the surprise of a world being born that even Kami could not have anticipated.

After the "Great Suffering at 42 years old," the Founder began to expand not only his faith, but also his life, including his family.



Narukama ritual

The Story of Us Starting to Walk

Rev. Koichi Konko, Konko Mission of Honolulu

This year marks the 140th anniversary of the passing of our Founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin, on October 10, 1883. The headquarters and each Konko church will hold the Ikigami Konko Daijin 140th Anniversary Grand Service this autumn. The headquarters will hold it on October 1st at 10:00 a.m., on the 8th at 1:30 p.m., and on the 10th at 1:30 p.m. The Konko Missions in Hawaii is planning to attend the service on the 8th as a group.

While many Konko churches hold services to celebrate the birthday of Konko Daijin, the Konkokyo headquarters does not



Rev. Koichi Konko

hold any services for his birthday, although there are celebration activities at the headquarters. This is because Ikigami Konko Daijin believed that he was not the only one, but that everyone would be able to become like him. This is different from the founders of other religions, as most of them are considered to be one of a kind.

Ikigami Konko Daijin said that all people are beloved children of Tenchi Kane No Kami, and thus, we all have the potential to become like him, the best role model of the Konko faith. He was not a special person, savior, or founder from birth. He never called himself the

Founder in his lifetime but he said he was an ordinary person. He became Ikigami Konko Daijin through his practice of faith in his life. Kami-Sama said that his passing was the eternal dignity of Konko Daijin's divine virtue. Therefore, Konkokyo holds a service for his memorial anniversary rather than his birthday anniversary, although September 29 has been designated as the Founder's birthday anniversary day.

All of us have the potential to become like Ikigami Konko Daijin, who pleased Kami-Sama through his life.

We as Konkokyo Ohana believe that the life and teachings of Ikigami Konko Daijin can help people facing difficulties. We should strive to live as beloved children of Kami-Sama and share this way of life with those around us. As we practice Konko Faith, we will find that major difficulties become minor ones and minor problems are cleared away.

The Sixth Konko-Sama taught us, "Based on the gratitude for everything we have received, I believe that our way of life as Konkokyo believers should be to appreciate the favors we have received, repay them, and practice our faith by receiving and acknowledging the blessings we have received." As

Konkokyo Ohana, we should have appreciation, passion, and confidence in helping others, expressing our feelings of awe and happiness in our everyday lives. We aim to share our faith experiences, the founder's life, and teachings with those around us.

To start, let's pray and ask Kami-Sama to help us be the ones who can make Kami-Sama happy through sharing our faith experiences, the founder's life, and teachings. We need not worry about the consequences, as we leave them to Kami-Sama.

It's exciting to share the Konko Faith with those who are not aware of the Divine Parent who wants to help people, and we should begin this year with appreciation, passion, and confidence, and with a sense of excitement.

Lastly, I want to share a teaching from Konko-Sama. When asked what would happen to the faith after he was gone, he answered, "You need not worry. Only my physical form will be gone. Having a physical body makes it difficult for me to see people's suffering in the world. When my body is gone, I can go to where I am requested and save people."

Konko-Sama, we thank you for your support of each one of us.

Thank you Sugako-Sensei

Rev. Koichi Konko, Konko Mission of Honolulu

Rev. Sugako Yoshino passed away on October 3, 2022, at age of 89.

It was a sudden phone call from her ICU doctor on October 1, 2022 while we were preparing for our Autumn Grand Service on the next day, October 2, 2022. He said, "Sugako will pass away today." I was shocked. I expected some day soon but not today. "I cannot visit her today. I need to prepare for the service tomorrow." Fortunately, Revs. Reiko Yano and Edna Matsuka from the Konko Mission of Wahiawa were able to go to the Queen's Medical Center West where Rev. Sugako was hospitalized. Only 2 people per day could visit each patient because of COVID-19 restrictions. Her caregiver already visited her on that day; so only Rev. Edna could see her in person. However, she used her video chat app. on her smart phone so Rev. Reiko was able to join their conversation. They reported to me that Rev. Sugako was awake and they recited the Tenchi Kakitsuke together. They told her Honolulu church will hold their Autumn Grand Service the



The late Rev. Sugako Yoshino

next day.

I felt at ease.

Our Autumn Grand Service went well. We finished cleaning up before 4:00 p.m. My wife, son and I visited Rev. Sugako. She was sleeping but she opened her eyes as my wife called her. We were able to talk with her. I reported that everything went well for our Grand Service. She talked about a Japanese Sushi company that was on the Japanese news because their executives were arrested a couple days before.

The next day at 12:50 p.m., the nurse informed me, "She passed away," over the phone. "When?" I was a little confused because she was fine, and we enjoyed chatting yesterday. "Just now." 3 minutes

later her doctor called me to officially announce her passing.

"They say that death has no aversion to time, but according to Konko Daijin, it does," said our Founder. Rev. Sugako was supposed to die on October 1, but Kami-Sama extended her life for 2 days. Thus Rev. Sugako could pray for us and the Grand Ser-



2023 KONKO MISSIONS IN HAWAII CALENDAR

MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES

General Meeting

02/11 (Sat) 13:30 – 16:00

Board of Trustees Meetings

01/14 (Sat) 10:30 – 15:00

05/13 (Sat) 10:30 – 15:00

08/05 (Sat) 10:30 – 15:00

12/02 (Sat) 10:30 – 15:00

Ohana Program

Picnic at Haleiwa

07/01 (Sat) 10:00 – 14:00

Faith Enrichment Program

Zoom Hawaii Gathering

09/02 (Sat) 13:30 – 15:00

Honbu Pilgrimage

140th Anniversary of Konko Daijin's passing Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Service

10/08 (Tue) 13:30 (Japan time)

Kauai Gathering

TBD

Head Ministers' Meeting

12/09 (Sat) 10:30 – 15:00

Ministers' Gatherings(Tentative)

03/25 (Sat) 14:00 – 16:00

04/15 (Sat) 14:00 – 16:00

Rev. Yamane (Yobuko)

05/20 (Sat) 14:00 – 16:00

Rev. Shintaro Hara (Isahaya)

07/15 (Sat) 14:00 – 16:00

Rev. Shigeyuki Iwasaki (Konkokyo Research Institute)

Missionary Women's Group Meeting

03/08 (Wed) Waipahu

07/22 (Sat) Zoom KMH/KCNA Joint Mtg

Community Activities

05/29 (Mon) 8:00 Memorial Day

10/22 (Sun) 16:00 HCRP Peace Prayer

Rotary Hanashikai

03/05 (Sun) 10:30 Wahiawa

08/06 (Sun) 10:30 Wailuku

Yatsunami Gathering

11/18 (Sat) 15:00

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Konko Mission Women's Group

TBD

Wahiawa Mission Family Camp

TBD

SERVICES & GRAND CEREMONIES

Spring Memorial Services

03/12 (Sun) 10:00 Honolulu

03/19 (Sun) 10:00 Waipahu

Wahiawa

Wailuku

Tenchi Kane No Kami Grand Ceremonies

04/02 (Sun) 11:00 Honolulu

04/09 (Sun) 11:00 Waipahu

04/13 (Thu) 18:00 Wahiawa

05/07 (Sun) 11:00 Wailuku

Autumn Memorial Services

09/17 (Sun) 10:00 Honolulu

Waipahu

Wailuku

09/24 (Sun) 10:00 Wahiawa

Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremonies

10/01 (Sun) 11:00 Honolulu

10/13 (Fri) 18:00 Wahiawa

10/15 (Sun) 11:00 Waipahu

11/05 (Sun) 11:00 Wailuku

Anniversary / Memorial

06/18 (Sun) 10:30

Wailuku 60th Year Anniversary

06/17 (Sat) 10:00

Rev. Masahiko Yoshino 10th Year

08/27 (Sun) 10:00

Rev. Masayuki Kodama 50th Year

10/01 (Sun) 11:00

Rev. Sugako Yoshino 1 Year

TBD

Rev. Katsuo Yasutake 15th Year

2023 Calendar

January

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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August

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September

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October

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November

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December

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Tri-Colored Mochi

Here's a recipe that I hold dear to my heart. Recipe credit goes to my 2nd grade enrichment class teacher, Mr. Matsunaga. One of the first times I made this recipe was to take to my grandfather in Japan on my first trip there. He loved it and ever since then I make this for special people in my life. I've since passed this recipe down to my nephews and niece and I hope they continue the tradition of making it for their loved ones.

There are easier ways of making chichidango, but in my humble opinion, I think this recipe tastes the best.

Ingredients:

- 1- 16oz. box of mochiko
- 2- cups sugar
- 1- tsp baking powder
- 1- 13.9oz can coconut milk
- 2- cups water
- 1- tsp vanilla extract
- Green food coloring
- Red food coloring
- Katakuriko (potato starch)
- Butter or margarine to grease 9x13 cake pan
- Foil to cover pan



1. Preheat the oven to 350-degrees. Grease a 9x13 cake pan and set aside.
2. Combine all dry ingredients (mochiko, sugar, baking powder) in large mixing bowl. Mix well.
3. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients. Mix until well combined.
4. Remove 2 cups of the mixture to a small bowl. Add 12 drops of green food coloring and mix until well combined.
5. Pour green mixture into greased 9x13 pan and spread evenly in bottom of pan. Cover with foil and bake for 15 minutes.
6. While first layer is baking, remove 2 more cups of mixture into clean small bowl. Add 12 drops of red food coloring and combine well. Set aside.
7. Remove pan from oven and uncover. (Be careful of the steam when uncovering!)
8. Take remaining white mixture and pour over green layer. Spread evenly and cover pan with foil. Place back into oven to bake for 20 minutes.
9. Remove pan from oven and uncover.
10. Pour red mixture over white layer. Spread evenly and cover pan with foil. Place back into oven for another 30 minutes.
11. After your mochi is done baking, remove foil and let pan cool completely.
12. Cut into desired pieces and enjoy!

****TIP:** I find it easier to remove the entire piece of mochi from the pan and then cut on a cutting board. Use katakuriko to keep pieces from sticking together and a clean dry knife.

vice with her physical form.continued on page 7
The extra 2 days were very precious for us.

We had never heard any complaint from her in spite of her physical challenges, especially, during the last 5 years of her life. She gradually lost her mobility and depended on a stomach fistula. She was our role model as we read our Founder's teaching,

"Even when you are always prudent, you will lose that virtue if you have a complaining heart at the time of your death."

Sugako sensei, thank you very much for your goyo for 26 years in Japan and 41 years for the Konko Mission of Honolulu and the Konkokyo community in Hawaii. Please continue to protect us,

KMH Minister's Gathering on ZOOM with Rev. Yukari Tabe of Konko Church of Nagatofunaki

Rev. Edna Matsuoka, Konko Mission of Wahiawa

The ministers of the Konko Missions in Hawaii were very fortunate to have to opportunity to listen to faith testimonials of the Rev. Yukari Tabe of the Konko Church of Nagatofunaki in the afternoon of Saturday, May 21, 2022. She

shared her story of initiation and ministry into the Konko faith. I have met Yukari Sensei a couple of times when I visited the Konko Church of Amagi in Fukuoka, Japan. She was still an active trainee there at that time with her family. She was a soft-spoken and petite young sensei. I wouldn't have had a clue of the kinds of hardships and pain she has gone through, had she not shared with us that day.

She was born as the youngest daughter of 4 girls in Okayama Prefecture, Japan. Growing up she was abused by her alcoholic father who was also diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome. But despite the continued abuse, she tried very hard to keep her head up high. Her will to keep a positive attitude came from her grandmother, who was an ardent believer and practitioner of the Tenrikyo faith. She was taught, "Under any circumstances, be joyful and act in full spirit."

Yukari Sensei's first encounter with the Konko faith began with her husband Rev. Michiyoshi Tabe at the age of 19, whom she later married. Her familiarities with the Tenrikyo faith, made her feel comfortable talking with Tabe Sensei who was a Konko be-

liever because she realized that the teachings were very similar. Yukari Sensei had been taught by her grandmother that "It is ok to believe and rely on any Kami-Sama with the heart of sincerity and single-heartedness. A wavering

heart is meaningless."

Yukari Sensei talked about the various hardships and tragedies that would occur to her and her family, such as the suicides of her favorite cousin and her sister who was a year older than her. To top off the sadness, she was not able to be there at her beloved grandmother's bedside when she passed away. Her older sister was also suffering from depression and was very sensitive to comments. Her father's Asperger's Syndrome exacerbated her depression because of the things he would say to her. No longer able to live through so much pain, Yukari Sensei's sister decided to end her life.

With the many episodes of sadness, tragedies and hardship, Yukari Sensei reached a point where she felt her brain short-circuited and fell into deep depression. In the state of depression, she was not able to feel any more emotions. She couldn't even cry. But one day she was asked to be a guest speaker for the Konkokyo Young Ministers Association in the midst of her depression. She was even thinking of how to carry out her suicide. She was in a mental fog. But that is when she realized that even her diagnosis of depression was a gift from Ka-



mi-Sama and her training at the Konko Church of Amagi resulted in divine favor. She realized how important it was for her to be able to appreciate the blessings she has received till this moment in time, rather than to worry whether or not she can be blessed from Kami-Sama.

Another thing she realized was that her father was also suffering and in spiritual pain. She only came to understand this through her own suffering. So she was able to forgive her father for the past. Through the prayers of many people and divine favor, she received a very special blessing and was able to share her story with the ministers of the Konkokyo Young Ministers Association. Yukari Sensei also gladly ac-

cepted to be the guest speaker for the ministers in Hawaii.

Through thick and thin, the blessings of this BIG Kami-Sama have always been there for us. It is up to us to realize and express the blessings in our every day life and give thanks for them. Yukari Sensei mentioned that this is what it means to be human.

Thank you, Yukari Sensei for sharing with us your inspiring faith story. We pray for your continuous blessings and faith enhancement.

***Editor's apologies for this article's late appearance in the Malamalama.*

Kami's Message Through the Pandemic

Rev. Akinobu Yasutake, Konko Mission of Waipahu

This was the sermon given by Rev. Akinobu Yasutake, head minister of the Konko Mission of Waipahu, on the occasion of the Konko Mission of Wahiawa's Spring Grand Service on April 13, 2022.

Good evening, everyone. I feel grateful that we could gather here to hold the Spring Grand Service for Tenchi Kane no Kami, Principal Parent of the Universe. When the COVID-19 pandemic started in early 2020, I never imagined that the issue would continue this long. I remember the first Waipahu Spring Daisai after the pandemic had started was held only by my family, and members worshipped from home. I think Wahiawa was similar as a gathering was prohibited at that time. But gradually we have been regaining a normal lifestyle, and today I feel grateful that we could hold this Spring Wahiawa Daisai almost in the same way as before the pandemic. Thank you for attending and helping during this difficult time.

Although we are getting back our pre-pandemic lifestyles little by little, COVID-19 is still ongoing. On top of this, there are many environmental, political, and social issues due to human's selfish desires and ignorance of Kami's heart. There has also been unusual weather here and there, like extremely hot, cold, dry or wet weather, due to global warming, and it has been causing drought and wildfire, heavy rain and flooding and huge hurricanes and tornadoes in various areas on Earth. Why do these kinds of disasters keep occurring? Is this some kind of divine punishment? One of Konko Daijin's teaching says, "When people continually experience misfortunes, they often come to worship saying, 'This must be some kind of curse. This must be a punishment.'"



Rev. Akinobu Yasutake

But what reason would Kami have for punishing His beloved children? Kami is trying to say that you should be careful." (Ill Jinkyu Kyogoroku 2-1, 2)

So, what kind of message is Kami giving us through this pandemic? One thing we realized is that we have been taking ordinary life for granted, and have not appreciated it enough. I also feel that Kami is trying to say, "People, Slow Down." I think human beings have been too rushed pursuing too much economic gain with mass production and mass spending. We are trying to be materially wealthier than necessary. Since the industrial revolution, human beings have been experiencing rapid civilization and economic growth. At the same time, humans

have been causing a lot of environmental issues. The population has doubled, and the economy has quadrupled in size compared to 50 years ago. At the same time, a fifth of the Amazon rain forest has been cut down, and global warming has been destroying glaciers and coral reefs which are home to many living creatures. As a result, 30% of living creatures on Earth have disappeared or are in danger of extinction. Scientists say about one million species will be extinct sooner or later. Konko Daijin warned us in a teaching, "Though they say the world is becoming civilized, it is not. It is collapsing. Hence, Konko has come forth to save the world." (I Ichimura Mitsugoro 1-17)

Dr. Markus Gabriel, a German philosopher who

became a university professor when he was only 29, has similar opinions. In an interview, he responded to the question, "Can human beings go back to the world before the pandemic?" by saying, "No, we should not go back to the pre-pandemic world because it was not a good one. Economic growth was way too fast, causing too much competition and issues with the environment. The global COVID-19 pandemic started in 2020 as a last call from Nature telling us 'Don't continue like this.'" He thinks destruction of the environment and poverty happen because the global economy has pursued only economic profit. After the pandemic, he thinks we need to reinstate the economy with what he calls "Ethical Capitalism," where instead of just gaining wealth, we should think of wealth as a possibility to do good for others and an opportunity to share.

He says the goal of firms and countries should be redistribution of wealth in universal ethical value; a slower but happier economy with different ways of making money combining different kinds of philosophy. He believes that ethics and economy are not contrary to each other, and firms can still generate profit while doing activities for environmental protection and charity. Another economist also said, "Investors used to look mainly at a company's financial reports to make investment decisions. But it will change after this pandemic. Investors will focus more on whether a company is actively promoting environmental protection, human rights, and charity for underprivileged countries and people."

Konkokyo has been stating similar concepts. We appreciate blessings from nature and try to keep compassionate hearts while doing good, emphasized by Aiyo Kakeyo or mutual respect and mutual reliance with Kami, nature and other people. We don't totally deny material and financial gains; however, we emphasize more the importance of spiritual gain called Toku. Toku is divine virtue, credit or trust from Kami, or some senseis call it spiritual assets. Several years ago, when I visited Kokura church with other Hawaii members, Rev. Katsura told us, "You may think you possess property like land and houses, but those belong to Kami. Nothing belongs to you. But there is one thing people are allowed to possess. It's Toku, divine virtue. Toku can be taken with you even after you die and passed down to future generations."

I tend to think my house is mine because I paid the mortgage, and my car belongs to me because I paid for it and I have a certificate of ownership. What do you mean by "nothing belongs to me?" Legally and economically speaking, it may be so, but are legal and economic systems absolute and permanent? What if the United States changes its system to communism and everything is confiscated by the government? It's very unlikely, but not impossible. My mother's side of the family used to be a big landowner of farming fields. My grandfather was a farmer, but he never physically did farming. It was all done by tenant farmers. However, after World War II, the agricultural land reform act took place. As a result, much of my grandfather's land had to be transferred to tenant farmers almost for free. If ownership of land is absolute and permanent, my grandfather's family would still own those lands.

Toku or spiritual assets on the other hand, cannot be taken away from anyone. It is absolute and permanent. Another good thing about Toku is that it is tax free. No matter how much you gain Toku, there is no income tax or sales tax. Also, Toku can be passed down to future generations, but there is no inheritance tax. The IRS or Department of Taxation cannot trace your spiritual assets as a taxable income.

So how can we earn this tax-free spiritual asset of Toku? The founder taught us, "It can be received by anyone who practices faith. The virtue of Kami is unlimited." (II Matsumoto Tashichi 1) So, if we practice faith, we can receive Toku. But what is practicing faith? I think going to church, receiving Toritsugi and offering prayers is one of the most important parts of practicing faith. However, there is another teaching like this: "Without thinking of social position, without arguing, without holding conceit for being educated, and with pure sincerity, Kami's door will be open to you to receive divine virtue." (I Sato Norio 4-4)

So, practicing faith is not just about coming to church and offering prayers, but in our daily life we have to try to be sincere, appreciative and prudent. Let us practice faith with sincere, appreciative and prudent hearts so that we can gain and accumulate the spiritual assets of Toku, which is much more valuable than economic gain.

2023 Tenchi Kane Kami Grand Service Reminders

Konko Mission of Honolulu
Konko Mission of Waipahu
Konko Mission of Wahiawa
Konko Mission of Wailuku

April 2 @11:00 AM
April 9 @11:00 AM
April 13 @ 6:00 PM
May 7 @ 11:00AM

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To:

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).

“Malamalama” is now available through e-mail!

For our devoted readers who would like to receive the “Malamalama” electronically, please let us know at kmhcenter@konkomissionshawaii.org

For our readers who would still prefer a hard (paper) copy, please do not hesitate and let us know.

Thank you!

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We welcome any and all article contributions! If you have an interesting story of faith, inspiration or have any ideas or suggestions for material you'd like to see in future issues of the Malamalama, we're all ears! Please contact us at kmhcenter@konkomissionshawaii.org.