



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

Celebrating 90 Years of Toku

Sermon given by Rev. Kiyoji Konko on the occasion of the 90th Anniversary of the Konko Mission of Honolulu

Aloha and thank you very much for the kind introduction.

Yesterday, we held the Hōtokusai (*service to honor the ministers and members who have passed*) here and today on this glorious day we are celebrating the 90th Anniversary of the Konkō Mission of Honolulu.

When I think about how long missionary work has occurred here in Honolulu, I am in awe: over 90 years of helping and saving people.

When I think about how the late Reverends Masayuki and Kikue Kodama left the safety of Japan for a country where the customs and language are different, I am in awe. When I think about how Reverends Kodama, Reverends Yoshino, and Reverends Konkō pray every day at these altars, I am most grateful. For over 90 years, the flame of faith here at the Konkō Mission of Honolulu has continued to share Konkō Daijin's teachings with the people of Hawai'i and save people through Toritsugi.

So, from the bottom of my heart, I offer a warm and heartfelt congratulations and appreciation first to the founding ministers of Honolulu Mission, the late Reverends Masayuki and Kikue Kodama; the spirits of the founding members, past head ministers and associate ministers, as well as believers. And finally, congratulations and mahalo to all of you for maintaining the flame of faith for over 90-years here in Hawai'i.

Omedetō gozaimasu.

I have a question. How many of you came to my presentation yesterday? Please raise your hands if you came to the Hotokusai.

Ok, great! Let's review very quickly the two things we learned from yesterday about the Four Pillars of Faith (四つの柱) and the Three Sources (三つの泉).



Rev. Kiyoji Konko

Let us start with the Four Pillars of Faith. What are they? The Four Pillars are (1) daily prayer, (2) Toritsugi, (3) goyō (giving your time and energy to supporting the church), and (4) gratitude.

Next, let us review the Three Sources of *Toku*. What are they? The Three Sources are (a) Headquarters, (b) your local church, and (c) where you are.

I believe that the Four Pillars of Faith and the Three Sources are

important for all of us to receive *toku*. But there is a very important question: What is *toku*? In the *Jinkyūkyōgoroku*, there is a teaching that says:

No one can see the wind when it blows. Yet everyone knows the existence of the wind. Everybody can tell of the wind's existence by seeing the clouds in the sky move, and from the noise of the grass and trees moving. People will recognize the existence of Kami, when those who practice faith receive divine blessings.

(III Jinkyūkyōgoroku 94)

What does this mean? First I believe it is saying that *toku* or virtue is something that although cannot be seen physically, it manifests itself in various forms. Second, I believe it is also saying that *toku* is a necessity in our daily lives like air, water, earth, plants, clothes, and so forth.

Please allow me share with you a very recent story about my son, Fumio.

As you many of you know, I went to San Diego about two weeks ago with my family to attend the KCNA Conference. Before coming to the United States, we sought Toritsugi (*mediation*) everyday so that all matters concerning this trip would go smoothly. We were all looking forward to this trip especially my son Fumio. Fumio was studying English very hard so he could communicate with the other youth.

However, something happened.

As you may know, all foreigners must fill out what is known as the ESTA or the Electronic System for Travel Authorization before entering the United States. I filled out everyone's forms and then I realized I made a huge error on Fumio's form. The error was on question six of the ESTA. Question six says: Are you currently seeking employment in the United States or were you previously employed in the United States without prior permission from the U.S. government? My son, Fumio, is only 15 years old and a freshman. And I, his father, made a grave error and checked "Yes". I was mortified.

Fumio was truly looking forward to this trip to America and when we told him what happened, yes, he was shocked and disappointed, but he did not blame me, his father. Noriko-Sama, my beloved wife, and I continued to seek Toritsugi about the trip and this matter. We did everything we could to rectify the situation, but to no avail.

I later learned at the KCNA Conference that my darling and beautiful wife, Noriko-Sama, was very upset at me in the beginning, but chose not to show her anger. Instead, Noriko-Sama turned her heart to Kami-sama. Don't you think my wife is amazing? I do too! That's why I married her!

To continue with the story, I felt very guilty and bad that we would not be able to travel together as a family because of my error. However, interestingly, throughout this period, my son did not complain at all. Fumio also sought Toritsugi about this matter. But how was it that my son, who is only 15 years old, could find compassion in his heart for his father? The average teenager would have thrown a fit, yelled, and screamed at their parent, blamed them, and called them stupid. But how was my son able to save me?

It is my belief that due to his faith and the *toku* he has received, he was able to not blame me and accept the situation. The *toku* that he has received obviously comes from his grandparents—the present 5th Konkō Sama and his wife, Yaeko Sama, the preceding Konkō Samas, as well as others who are related to him and have prayed for him. Konkō Daijin taught us that the one thing that can be handed down to our descendants and taken into the afterlife is *toku*. I believe that it is this same *toku* that enabled my son to be a better person than me and save my heart.

However, how can we receive *toku*? I believe that one way is through the Three Sources. Let me repeat what the Three Sources of *Toku* are: The first is Headquarters; the second is our local churches; and the third is where we are.

Now, when I say *how* to receive *toku*, please do not misunderstand: I am not saying that

receiving *toku* is a methodology or a process. There is **no** methodology **nor** process to receiving *toku*, there is only faith AND believing in Kami-sama. Let me repeat myself again, there is only faith AND believing in Kami-sama. On your handouts, do you see the quote in purple? Let us read that together: **"There is no methodology nor process to receiving *toku*, there is only faith AND a believing in Kami Sama."**

When you offer water or pray at your home altars.... when you pray in your car.... when you pray at your workplace.... Your heart has made a connection not only with your local church, but also with the Sacred Grounds of Headquarters. You receive *toku* when your heart is open in prayer. You receive *toku* when you are in constant communication with Kami-sama. Thus, the deeper and more intimate your relationship with Kami-sama and the more that you do not forget Kami-sama in your daily faith life, you accumulate *toku*. Konkō Daijin taught us that it is the *ujiko* (beloved children of Kami-sama) that ends a relationship with Kami, Kami does not end the relationship with the *ujiko*.

When you visit your local church to pray and receive Toritsugi, you are receiving *toku*. Your church is the second source of *toku*. I learned that some of you travel from far places as well as close places to attend the Honolulu Church. Kami-sama and your head minister are very grateful that you have taken that extra step in your faith to create a closer relationship with Kami-sama by actually coming to church.

There is a believer who lives in California. She lives far away from a church and has never visited Konkōkyō Headquarters because she does not have the financial means to do so. However, she said that every time she visits church she feels like she is going to the Sacred Grounds of Gohombu and receiving Toritsugi from Konkō Sama.

Reverend Hakushi Takahashi past head minister of the Konkō Church of Kōtō (Okayama Prefecture) said, "It is good when one receives Toritsugi, regardless if the content is good or bad. It is not good when one does not receive Toritsugi, regardless if the content is good or bad." What does this mean?

The okekai (sacred mediation place) is where the human-centered world or *Nin-yo* (人代) and the kami-centered world or *Kami-yo* (神代) meet. It is where we, as human beings with all our faults, are allowed to meet Parent Kami. Kami-sama loves you. By revealing your soul at the Okkekai—which means you are being honest, vulnerable, and raw—you are facing your Spiritual Parent through the minister. You are developing a closer relationship with Kami-sama. And through the minister, he or she can help you create a deeper connection with Kami-sama. The deeper your connection, the more *toku* we are allowed to receive.

There are many of you who visit the Sacred Grounds of Konkōkyō Headquarters. This is the original source of *toku*. I cannot imagine how expensive it

must be for you to travel from Hawai'i all the way to Gohombu. But I know you do it with such excitement and sincerity. To visit the Holy Grounds of Headquarters, you can bask in the overflow of *toku*. However, when you do make the pilgrimage to Gohombu, is your heart truly ready and developed to receive the *toku*?

Let me talk a little bit more about my son, Fumio. Fumio is very fortunate because we live in Gohombu. He can receive the *toku* of the original source every day. Because Fumio can receive Toritsugi at Gohombu and I believe my wife's faith is an influence on him, he was able to accept the situation of not coming to the United States, and looked at the situation from a positive perspective. Fumio received much *okage* (blessings) because of this incident.

First, our trip to San Diego took us from Okayama Airport to Incheon Airport in Korea, to Los Angeles airport, then to San Diego. Through a wonderful turn of events, although Fumio could not join us in America, he was welcomed by the staff of the Konkōkyō Center in Korea. He was allowed to stay in Seoul, South Korea for five days. The ministers at our center in Korea took very good care of him. We are very grateful to Reverend Suenaga, Mr. and Mrs. Amano, and Mr. Satō for watching over him, taking him around, giving him interesting experiences, and feeding him. When Fumio learned that he would be staying in Korea, on his own, he began to study simple phrases in Korean!

Instead of blaming me, his father, I witnessed my young son's faith in action. As a parent witnessing this, it brings tears to my eyes, because his faith has grown to the point he saw this incident as *okage*. His faith saved me. I was able to see *toku* manifest in my son!

However, you must be asking, "Sensei, I have heard there are all different kinds of *toku*? Is that true?" Well, yes, I believe there are various kinds of *toku* besides that which gushes forth from Headquarters, our local churches, and our hearts. Because I believe there are many types of *toku*, I would like to focus on four in particular.

One type of *toku* is called *Nin-toku* (人徳) or Human Virtue. This type of virtue is when others find trust in you. What is important is that if you are not trusted by others, then how can Kami trust you? How can others trust us?

How do we live a life where we can receive *toku*? The answer to that question is by living the teachings. We must live in a manner that is *Jitsui Teinei*—sincere and conscientious. Also, when we treat others with aloha and respect and do not look down on them, we begin to receive *Nin-toku* or Human Virtue.

By the way, do all of you know what *Jitsui Teinei* is? It is my understanding that the late Reverends Masayuki and Kikue Kodama emphasized this a great

deal. It is not easy to explain especially in English. Two weeks ago, Todd Sensei (San Diego Church) spoke about *Jitsui Teinei* in his presentation at the KCNA conference. He listed three very important things:

1. *Jitsui Teinei* is a diligence in what we do in our everyday lives, but we know that it is not enough;
2. When doing something with *Jitsui Teinei*, we are constantly looking for ways to improve; and
3. *Jitsui Teinei* is a sense of *humility* that what we did was maybe not enough and we can do better to show our appreciation to Kami-sama, society, our workplace, schools, family, neighbors, etc.

So, *Jitsui Teinei* is very important in our daily lives. As we live our lives with *Jitsui Teinei*, people watch you and are attracted to you. This is the power of *Nin-toku* or human virtue. When people begin to trust you, Kami-sama starts to trust you as well.

The next type of *toku* is *Butsu-toku* (物徳) or the Virtue of Things. It is ok to have things. It is ok to live in abundance. At the Konkō Church of Abeno (Ōsaka), as part of their faith, they believe in what is called the Five Requests. I was told that you did an activity in December based on the Five Requests in preparation for your 90th Anniversary. One of the requests is to live in abundance. However, to live in abundance is also to be appreciative for the things we have. The glasses that help us to see: Have you ever told it thank you? How about the clothes that you wear? When you put on your clothes to do you say, "Thank you, shirt. Thank you, underwear. Thank you, shorts. Thank you, slippers."? In the Boy Scouts, there is a saying: "Even a single leaf has life in it."

Everyone, do you give thanks for the things you have and use on a daily basis? Let me ask you another question, have you ever given any thought to how your stomach feels on a daily basis? In all seriousness, have you ever thought about how your stomach feels daily? When we look at food, say ice cream... we see an object that is cold and we know it will taste delicious. When we look at meat, fish, vegetables, etc., we know what it will look like and taste like, however our stomach does not. Our stomach accepts everything that goes down. It does not make a judgement to reject it based on its likes or dislikes. It can't. Have you ever said thank you to your stomach for that important function? Can you image if your stomach said, "Oh I don't like ice cream, so I'm going to send it back up"? Wow that would be a big problem!

We must give sincere appreciation to all things in our lives: food, clothes, car, light, etc. When the Fourth Konkō Sama, the Late Reverend Kagamitarō Konkō, was sitting at the Okekai and there was no one waiting to receive Toritsugi, people said they

saw him take off his glasses and give thanks to it. He would pick up a brush and say thank you to it. He would pick up and say thank you to everything he saw and used. And then when he was finished, he would repeat the process again. With that kind of faith, with that kind of appreciation to things, you will call abundance to you. Abundance will be attracted to you. You will live in abundance through the Virtue of Things.

The third kind of toku is the Virtue of Food.

This is very important as food is how we are able to live. Food is a form of Kami's grace and blessings in our lives. I was told that the late Reverends Masayuki and Kikue Kodama were very strict about not wasting food. And that many of you live a life where you do not waste food.

How many of you, when you go to a restaurant, take home left overs? Please raise your hand. How many of just leave the left overs? How many of you eat every last grain of rice from your plate? If you can imagine just how much work went into creating food?

One grain of rice requires gallons of water, the light of the sun, nutrients from the soil, and it requires a farmer to harvest it. All so that you can have delicious rice on your plates. The food on your plate, whether it be meats, fruits, vegetables, ice cream, juice, milk, etc comes from a source of life. Apples come from the apple tree. Bacon comes from a pig. Orange juice comes from an orange that came from a tree. A life was taken so that we could

live. That life was taken so that we could enjoy a meal. Wasting food means that you wasted a precious life.... You have wasted *toku*.... That is an irreverence or *goburei*.

Finally, the last type of toku is Shintoku (神徳) or the Virtue of Kami. This virtue is one that you receive from Kami. It is important for us to receive and accumulate this virtue from Kami. However, this is all dependent on our faiths. When we think of *Shintoku*, we tend to think of it with the characters for *kami* (神 - diety/god) and *toku* (徳 - virtue) thus the Virtue of Kami (神徳).

However, I like to think of it with the character for New (新しい) and Virtue (新徳). Meaning that our lives are renewed daily through the virtue we receive from Kami. And also, I like to think of *Shintoku* with the characters for Advance (進む) and Virtue (進徳), meaning that we move forward in faith with positivity and grace with the virtue we receive from Kami. However, we must be the kind of *ujiko*—beloved child of Kami—that Kami wishes to spoil and shower with this kind of virtue. This is all dependent on our faith and relationship with Kami: Remember that receiving *toku* is not a process nor methodology.

So, let me review, I spoke about four of the many types of virtues. The four virtues I spoke about are: (1) Virtue of Human, (2) Virtue of Things, (3) Virtue of Food, and (4) Virtue of Kami.

.....to be continued in the next issue



Rev. Todd Takahashi performing the Hohei Gyoji

Rev. Michiyoshi Yasutake, Head Minister of Amagi Church, giving the main saishi prayer



Rev. Yomisu Oya (Sacramento), Rev. Alfred Tsuyuki (L.A.), Rev. Sugako Yoshino (Honolulu), assisted by Rev. Seiko Konko (Honolulu), offering tamagushi



Mr. Scott Kilousky, 90th Anniversary Chairperson



Mahalo to all the entertainers from Hawaii and Japan!



Waipahu Church Autumn Godaisai Sermon “Having a Joyful and Grateful Heart”

By Rev. Edna Matsuoka, Associate Minister, Konko Mission of Wahiawa

Good morning everyone, thank you for making it out to the Autumn Grand Ceremony of the Konko Mission of Waipahu. Thank you Rev. Tetsuro Yasutake for your request to have me here this morning. He had reserved me from April this year.

Today I want to talk a little bit about the 160th Anniversary and the great effort it took for Konkokyo to reach 160 years of age. I will also talk about the importance of a grateful and happy heart, as well as an insightful encounter with another patient I had the pleasure taking care of.

As you all may know, Konkokyo will be celebrating its 160th Birthday on November 15th next month. For this faith to have made it this far, people have been practicing one simple message, one special teaching. It's the Tenchi Kakitsuke or the Divine Reminder. About 60 people from the Konko Churches of North America will go. And if I'm not mistaken, 20 people from Hawaii will be attending this wondrous milestone of Konkokyo. There is still time, so let's go!

As you may have watched The Divine Favor Depends Upon Our Own Heart or Okage wa Wagakoko-ro Ni Ari. The first disciples of Konko Daijin have worked so hard to spread the true way of faith. They even got arrested several times because the government outlawed their beliefs. Takahashi Tomie sensei got locked up in a cage like a chicken because the government would not allow these practices.

For Konkokyo to be accepted as a government recognized entity, so much hardship ensued. According to the comic section in the September 1st edition of the Konko Shinbun Newspaper, back when an elementary school teacher's salary was 8 yen per month, they were able to collect 10,000 yen to make Konkokyo into an official religion. So in today's value, on average, people make about \$3-4,000 a month. So the 10,000 yen back then is equivalent to approximately 3-4 million dollars in today's money value. Many people donated for this cause and the money gathered in no time because the believers wanted official government recognition as an independent religion. But if I talk into this too much, it would become the talk about Konkokyo Independence. Next year is the 120th Anniversary of Konkokyo Independence.



Rev. Edna Matsuoka

Today I am talking about the birth of Konkokyo which happened when the Founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin received a divine revelation from Tenchi Kane No Kami-sama to stop farming and instead help Kami-sama help people that have suffering and problems.

If Konko Daijin got that revelation to stop farming but said, “Heck no! There’s no way I’m going to be able to support my livelihood and family” this Konkokyo would have never been born. Likewise, I would not be born, and this and all the other churches would not have existed. So I really owe my life to the Founder saying “Yes, I will stop farming.”

Konkokyo is a faith that began and spread through people being saved. Happy people didn’t come to see Konko Daijin. You saw the Konko Daijin movie right? People came because they were in distress. And through word of mouth, people came from near and far to seek his prayers and guidance. And they were saved. Konkokyo was spread by many people who became happy through learning the way of the Universe. If you know any unhappy people in your lives, bring them to the church and have them receive blessings.

I owe my life to Konko Daijin. So I made whatever effort to be able to take off from work to fly over to Japan to say “Thank You Konko Daijin.” My husband Clayton also will be taking off 5 days from work to go with me.

Now with this trip that is fast approaching, I wasn’t sure I would be able to get off for 7 days because a co-worker is already scheduled on vacation for that stretch. And I had requested my scheduled beforehand so that I am scheduled to work on the first couple of days of the week, and then arrange my schedule so I am off from the 13th to the 19th. However, when the November schedule came out, I saw that my request was not granted. And instead I was scheduled to work on the 14th and 15th, the days of the International Gathering and 160th Anniversary of Konkokyo at the Headquarters. The two very days I wanted to be off!

Finding people to switch is pretty difficult for two days. Thankfully one of my co-workers was willing to switch my 14th for the 12th. I was very grateful. But I still had the 15th. However, on the night that the

schedule came out, which was Friday, September 28th, I saw a vivid dream. Now, if you know me, my dreams are in full color and in high definition. My dreams are so clear; I even remember the taste of things I ate in my dreams. Anyways, in that dream, I hear a man's voice saying to me that a confrontation will take place in the Yano family in Shikoku when you visit them, and I do not want you and your husband Clayton to witness this. And then I said to the voice, "Ah! That's why you don't want me to go to Japan!" And he said "*Sounanjya* (exactly)" with a smile.

I was half bummed when I saw that dream because in my heart I really want to go to the celebration. So I challenged Kami-sama. I told Kami-sama that I will wait exactly a week for a sign. If no one can work for me for that 15th of November, it's a no go. I asked every evening shift nurse we have on our floor, even the call-in nurses. They all said they were unable to work for me that day, or that they were already working that day.

However, a great *okage* blessing came about. A coworker who had already requested the 15th off from a while ago for her own personal reasons, texted me the following Wednesday and asked if I was able to find someone to work my 15th yet. Reluctantly, I said, "No." Then she texted back saying, "If you want, I can work that day for you." I texted her back, "I saw on the main floor schedule that you had requested that day off already from a while ago. That day must have been an important day for you. You do not have to do that for me." But then she said, "I don't mind. I can chill with my boyfriend another day." So I took her offer as a sign from Kami-sama and accepted her offer to work for me. I was ecstatic! The schedule swap request went through and I was officially granted my days off to go to Japan. In just 5 days, Kami-sama gave me a thumbs up. And on the 6th day, we bought our plane tickets! So really, I received a great *okage* in less than a week.

Now, who knows what's going to happen in the days leading up. I want to just continue to thank every moment that moves forward. It's like the headlights on a car. In pitch darkness, a car's headlights can only see up to 150-200 ft ahead. If it's on high beam, it can illuminate roughly 250-300 ft ahead. You can't see what's 500 feet ahead. But being able to see the first 200 feet with the headlights on will lead you to the next 200 feet and so on so forth. And eventually you will get to your destination safely, whether it was just a 2-mile drive or a 200-mile drive.

Our faith is like our headlights. Look forward to the future with positive expectations. Maintain it well. Check to see if one of the lights are not out. Or worse, both of your lights. Driving your car in pitch darkness is very dangerous. Likewise, living life with no faith is like being in the dark. Let your faith guide you safely to your destination. Faith will make your

life so much more manageable. Faith gives a sense of direction too. And wherever you go and whatever situation you encounter, faith has a way to help everyone.

Recently, I had a patient whom I had to infuse chemotherapy. She was newly diagnosed with leukemia and she had never gotten chemotherapy in her life so she was very anxious. I asked her, "Do you know what is more effective for cancer than chemotherapy and radiation?" And she immediately replied, "It's your heart right? *Kokoro desho?*" And I said, "Absolutely." At first she really didn't want to have the chemo infusion. But when I brought the bag to hang, I wanted to verify her thoughts and asked if she was ready. And she said, "I will just believe that this chemotherapy will help me." And then I was able pray in my heart that this will all go well and move forward with infusing the chemotherapy. Thankfully she tolerated it well.

A positive happy attitude, a heart that looks forward to the future and a heart of gratitude is key in receiving divine favor.

Who here says *itadakimasu* before they eat? Let me see some hands. Ok, now, who here says, *Arigato Gozaimasu* after all the food gets digested and it ends up in the toilet? Who says thank you to the toilet? People gratefully put their hands together and say, "*Ahh, Itadakimasu*" before eating. Yet, they say, "*Kusai*, stinky, dirty, gross" to the by-product of their feast. In Konkokyo, we say, "*Arigato Gozaimasu*" for both situations.

We humans need a daily intake of solid, liquid and gas to be able to live. And we humans also have to output solid, liquid and gas on a daily basis to be normal and healthy. If you cannot eat, drink or breathe, you end up in the hospital. And if you can't poop, pee and fart, you will also end up in the hospital.

When my patients pee in the plastic urinal, I say it's liquid gold. When I have to dig out rock hard poop from a severely constipated patient, I say, I was able to dig out golden nuggets. They laugh, but it's true. When your body doesn't function like it's supposed to, no amount of money or gold can buy back health. Medical technology and the skilled hands of healthcare workers can only go so far in helping to treat people. The healing process can only be left up to Kami-sama and a positive attitude.

I mean, you can still be sick, but you can still be happy and grateful. Not all the cancer patients I have had are depressed and feeling sorry for themselves. Some are very grateful for all the blessings they were able to enjoy up to this point in life. I had one patient who said that her cancer was a blessing because she was able to take this time for herself to appreciate the many things in life which she never really paid attention to.

I had another patient one day who had rectal can-

cer. He said I consider myself a really lucky guy. I am blessed in so many ways. He explained the symptoms he was having before he knew he had rectal cancer. He said that "Some days I'd be really constipated. Some days, I had no control over my bowels." And he said, "You know, the rectum is much like a bag. When all the poop moves down, it just sits there and collects till it's full enough to expel. I had no control. It was very embarrassing at times. It'd just come out without warning. And young people like you would never understand how important the rectum is for you until something goes wrong with it, and you end up with a fake butthole on the side of your abdomen like me." I told the man that I do say thank you to my body parts and organs, but I have never specifically mentioned the rectum. Because I just figured it was part of the large intestines anyways. I told him that I say thank you to my organs before they begin to fail. That way at least they know that they were appreciated. And then he said, "Oh, maybe I should start doing that too."

The Rev. Masato Yoshino of the Konko Church of Hirao, near Hakata station mentioned in his sermon that people who say thank you to the toilet every time they use it will never have bowel issues.

So the next time you go to the bathroom, clasp your hands together and say thank you to your normal bodily functions and to the bathroom. Having a place to eliminate our wastes is a really grateful thing we often take for granted.

You can easily tell when my mom is in a bathroom stall because you can hear her clap 2 times and saying *arigato gozaimasu*.

When the 2nd Oya sensei of Amagi Church, the Rev. Fumio Yasutake used to pray in the hall during the daily prayers, sometimes he'd let out a loud fart during the silent prayer. If I were there, I probably wouldn't be able to contain my laughter. But according to my mom, he would say, "*Arigato Gozaimasu*."

Be thankful for the workings of your entire body. Be thankful for everything. If you feel negative, remember the things in life that brought you joy. Remember the times you received okage and change your thought to positive. Be happy or at least make an effort to be. And also try to be kind and mellow.

A young lava rock is spiny and sharp. Put that in the ocean and the waves will make the sharp edges round. Through faith practice, our sharp, pokey edges will smooth out. I still need a lot of smoothing out.

Take for example my patience. I have problems with patience, especially with my mom. She tends to run late. So at first my words are kind and smooth like a round river rock. Then it starts to grow sharp pointy spines. My words become harsher with every reminder to hurry up. First it's "*Oreiko Daimyōjin Sama, hayaku shiyou yo* (Oh holy highness, Reiko-Sama, let's hurry now)." Then that becomes, "*Okaasan hayakushite* (Mother can you hurry?)"

Then it becomes, "*Oka! Hayoshite! Grrr!* (Ma! Hurry up! Grr!)" And as you can see, I'm going backwards. My spiny attitude is supposed to become mellow, but instead, my round heart grows spines. Do you have that experience too?" I still need practice to hold a *Marui Kokoro* (Round Heart).

What was the last thing that really made you laugh recently? Laughing more often is good for the body. It releases happy chemicals which helps the body to heal and stay healthy. I sometimes watch comedy on Netflix and that makes me laugh. Talking with my family makes me happy as well. Sometimes I do tickle war with my husband. We laugh so hard it makes us cry and our stomachs hurt. It's great! You too should try it.

Having a jovial heart and laughing a lot is good for the body. And to prove it, Dr. Kazuo Murakami, a renowned geneticist in Japan discovered that laughter is a proven way to lower our blood sugar levels. By the way, this is the same geneticist that Mrs. Fusami Kudo was talking about. The lady who had complete remission from terminal cancer.

Itsudemo arigatai kokoro (an always grateful heart) is what will make you receive more divine blessings. One day I was talking to a lady who had a demented mother in law. She had to take care of her till her dying days. She said it's sad when you live too long. You have to be taken care of by someone constantly. But then I said, "Well, you don't want to die young either, right?" She said, "That is true." So, either way, humans are very *wagamama* (self-centered). People young and old, healthy and physically challenged, all live between heaven and earth and receive blessings on a daily basis. We are *osewani natteru* (taken care of) by the great workings of the Universe, Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama. Yet we still complain. Kami-Sama is to be pitied. We have to realize this and give our deep appreciation for everything. There isn't a moment in our lives when we do not receive divine blessings. That is Konkokyo. As Konko Daijin said, "No one came into this world wanting to be born. We were born though the blessings of Kami-Sama." Thus we also must be thankful for death, because one becomes a Kami. Konko Daijin said that faith is pointless unless this much is understood.

When people are born, everyone says, "Congratulations! What a joy!" And all throughout life, for every milestone, people celebrate the individual. But when a person dies, they say, "Oh, I'm so sorry for your loss," and take it as a misfortune. Whether we are living or dead, we are constantly under the care of the Universe. "*Ikitemo, shinitemo, Ten to Chi wa Wagasumika*."

I want you to know again that Konkokyo is a faith that came about through the spread of happiness and people being saved.

The Tenchi Kakitsuke Divine Reminder, states that divine blessings are realized within our hearts. Hearts joyful and caring, in harmony and joy. Let's find meaning to be happy in our daily lives. I hope you are all able to appreciate the 160th Birthday of

Konkokyo, and the wonderful teachings of Konkokyo that make so much sense. Let's pass on the flame of this faith to people through our joyful heart, words and actions.

Be Kind to Others

Summary of *Ohanashi* by Mr. Dennis Fukushima, Konko Mission of Honolulu

Mr. Dennis Fukushima is the son of the late Mrs. Patsy Fukushima, a long time member of the Konko Mission of Honolulu, who passed away at the age of 101. During a Sunday service at Honolulu Church, he referenced an article in the Honolulu Star Advertiser ('Kindness can be good for your health,' October 22, 2019) that talked about the positive influence acts of kindness had on not only the people receiving the kindness, but also the people doing the acts of kindness. According to the article, performing acts of kindness had positive effects on reducing stress levels, increasing happiness, and easing inflammation, thus leading to better physical and emotional health, and possibly a longer life.

Dennis emphasized the importance of being kind to others, a value his late mother instilled in him as a

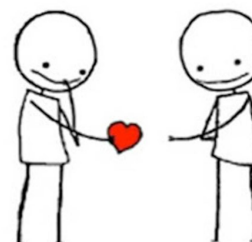


child. Being that Patsy lived a long and prosperous life, I find myself paying close attention to this claim. The late Mrs. Fukushima volunteered at the Salvation Army for many years, giving selflessly of her time to help others less fortunate. Dennis continues her legacy of volunteerism with the Salvation Army. Dennis also gives his time freely to the Honolulu Church and helps to maintain and repair the facilities at the church.

When you give selflessly of your time to help others, you make Kami-sama happy, thus bringing happiness to yourself. So there seems to be no reason to not spread kindness everywhere you go! The more you do, the better it is for you and everyone around you!

No act of kindness,
no matter how small,
is ever wasted.

- Aesop



Pay it forward

Konko Missions in Hawaii

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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.