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The Founder's Grave Site

Let us celebrate the Grand Service for the 130th Anniversary for Founder's Passing. For those of us who are following "the Way of Kami and People" that the Founder opened, it is important to thank him from bottom of our hearts, and to transform our appreciation into specific actions.

During some recent discussions, one minister called the Founder "the first person." When I heard those words, I wondered, "first of what?" I realized then that I would find answers to my questions in the Founder's Faith.

My first thought was "Founder was the first person who met Tenchi Kane No Kami." The Founder experienced many hardships, but he believed in Kami and kept turning to Kami. Because of his attitude, the name of Tenchi Kane No Kami was revealed.

Similarly, just as the Founder introduced the meeting and association with Kami, we too are able to meet and associate with Kami today.

The Founder was also the first person to have received and practiced Mediation. Although the Founder was already able to communicate with Kami through various revelations, he always chanted "Ikigami Konko Daijin Sama" to receive Mediation when he prayed to Kami. This means of receiving Mediation has been consistent since his first meeting with Kami.

Next, I realized that the theme of Kami and the Faith Movement – i.e., "Let Us Live a Mutually Fulfilled Life with Kami (*Kami-hito aiyo kakeyo no seikatsu undo*)" – is what the Founder embodied.

I already mentioned the first line of the Faith Movement "Let us seek and receive Kami's Words through Media-

tion." The second line "Let us awaken to Kami's blessings & Unconditional Love" reflects the Founder as the first person to become aware of Kami's blessings. In midst of harsh suffering or of joy, he was aware of the existence of Kami who prays for, protects, and guides us with unconditional love.

Founder Konko Daijin: The First person to Have Met Tenchi Kane No Kami

By Reverend Michiyo Iwasaki, Director of KIC
(He has been assuming the Director on September 1.)



In the third line that states, "Let us live a joyful life of appreciation," the Founder was the first person to live a joyful life of appreciation. Prior to that, who has ever felt gratitude about sitting and resting on a tree stump and said thanks for this?

The forth line of "Let us pray for, help and guide one another, with a compassionate heart of Kami" reflects the Founder as the first person to pray for, help and guide people with the compassionate heart of Kami. There were others who did similar things before, but the Founder was the first to show the compassionate heart of Kami. The Founder was taught by Kami that all human are born with heart of Kami. He was aware of and knowledgeable of Kami's heart. He prayed for, helped and guided others under the guidance of Kami's heart.

The fifth line is "Let us truly live the Way of Kami & all people – in Mutual Fulfillment."

We believe the Founder's Faith and the Founder himself truly opened the way to Kami's relationship with all people in mutual fulfillment for the first time.

As we consider Kami's opening of a way of Faith, we can ask ourselves "What kind of 'first' have we looked for, and what kind of 'first' will we practice in Founder's Faith?"



Kami's Unconditional Love

By Reverend Margarida Gomes da Silva,
Head Minister of Konko Church of Ron Donia, Brasil



I previously attended the Catholic Church and thought of myself as a religious person. However, my heart was full of fear and at the same time, I felt confined.

I was introduced to the Konko Faith about twenty years ago. Since that time, I have learned more and more about the Founder and found how close I have come to Kami. As I review the teachings found in the "Voice of the Universe" every day and try to practice them, I have become increasingly aware of the love expressed by Tenchi Kane No Kami and the Founder. Thus, I realize much better now the wonderful working of Kami and although I still

have varied experiences, I know in my heart each experience is tied to the love of Kami.

I was never exposed to the idea that "the Universe is Kami" until I encountered the Konko Faith. Since becoming a minister, I now have the opportunity to give sermons and when doing so, I make an effort to emphasize three virtues of Tenchi Kane No Kami. The first virtue is Kami's affection that surrounds us like the unconditional benefits of Heaven. The second is the unconditional tolerance Kami provides similar to how the Earth provides all we need to sustain ourselves. The third virtue of Kami is the never ending work which Kami

performs like the Sun and the Moon.

It is easy to read the teachings of the Founder, but it is difficult to practice them because I need so much encouragement and patience. However, as I try to practice the teachings, I become more able to develop my faith.

Today, I feel blessed to express how grateful I am for Tenchi Kane No Kami and the Founder who revealed the Way of the Konko Faith. I would also like to give thanks to the ministers in Brazil who patiently taught me the Founder's way of life and to my family and neighbors who offered me opportunities to practice my faith. I wholeheartedly thank you all very much for everything.



Gratitude in the Konko Faith

By Ms. Diane Kawamoto,
Konko Mission of Honolulu, Hawaii



This is my appreciation to the Konko Faith. Mediation (*Toritsugi*) was something I needed for a long time and there was something about the Konko Church that made me feel comfortable in seeking mediation. When I first walked into the Church, somehow I felt sincerity and compassion. From that moment, I felt Kami entering my heart. I truly believe everyone needs Mediation some time in life. With this kind of support, along with the Konko Faith, we can help each other put things into perspective and solve solutions from within.

I looked up divine virtue because it is difficult to achieve and put into practice. I think divine virtue is the power

or ability given by Kami which enables us to help others. To accumulate divine virtue we must have sincere faith in Kami and be trusted by Kami.

However, we cannot depend only on divine virtue. We must develop our own human virtue. Human virtue is developed within our hearts throughout our life time as we grow and experience the changes in society. To have the qualities of human virtues is to achieve a life of a true sincere heart and treating others fairly with respect and compassion as well as to being well-liked and respected as a person.

I truly believe now that because of Mediation, the bond of interdependence can be strengthened through the Konko

Faith. I am forever grateful to Ikigami Konko Daijin for his bravery and realization of Kami thus, enabling him to touch people's lives and share the Konko Faith around the world.

With the help and guidance of Reverend Koichi I was taught to have Kami in my heart and pray single heartedly every day. With all the human sufferings in life, I find my spiritual practice to be very comforting. I now know what true blessings are. Thank you Reverend Koichi and the Konko Church for helping me strengthening my relationship with Kami and for being sincere and compassionate in all you do and say.



2013 London Gathering

Reported by Reverend Lisa Uzunoe,
Konko Church of Portland, USA



(edited from full 6 page report)

On April 15 this year, to my delight I received an email from the Konkokyo International Center (KIC) asking if I could help with their annual faith gathering in London from June 4-10 with Reverend Yukie Morimoto, Deputy Director of KIC. I've never been to Europe before, and after receiving Mediation, as work and home schedule allowed it I was able to reply "yes."

We had a total of four scheduled events: a "mama's party" for the mothers to get together and talk specifically about families and children, a faith workshop presentation and discussion, a prayer service and social hour, and a requested prayer service at a believer's house.

On the 6, we had a wonderful mama's gathering, where the everyday Sunday school items we use, the kid's prayer book, Sunday school pledge, family teachings, etc, were so well received and needed.

In the morning of the 8, we had a faith workshop presentation. My main message for the workshop was the teaching,

"When practicing faith, there are more blessings which cannot be seen than those which can be seen. The blessings you unknowingly receive number more than the blessings you knowingly receive. If you think about it, you will come to realize the many divine blessings you have received. If you can do this, you are a true believer." (Voice of the Universe #130)

Then emphasized how important



Workshop



"mama's party"

Mediation is to becoming able to achieve the above teaching. And even though there are no churches or Mediators in the UK, how KIC's Mediators are there for them, and soon KCNA's website Mediator request link, skype, and other media—truly through technology, Mediation is available anytime, anywhere. Also through sharing my own experiences, hoped to establish a connection for them with Konko-Sama, as he doesn't need technology to Mediate! At the end, wished to empower them by sharing stories of the KCNA pioneers.

In the afternoon, Reverend Morimoto and I officiated the prayer service with sermon.

On the 9, prayer service at a believer's house was held and after the service we all enjoyed a wonderful lunch.

It truly opened my heart when I saw their faith, how deeply appreciative

they were to be able to hold and attend a service, to have the opportunity to be able to come together and talk (as many of them live very far apart), and how they had incorporated faith into their lives and were receiving blessings directly through Konko Daijin's teachings. One lady said she had always wanted to expose her kids to the faith and see people praying together just as she had done when she went to church. Another lady commented that although she recited the prayers at home, it was much more spiritually inspiring to say the prayers together as a group.

Lately, I've been pushing away "world propagation" as I felt that was a bigger organization's job, and our local churches should be concentrating on helping our local communities. I have been working hard at doing so, however I feel Kami is showing me (showing all of us) that we can do both at the same time—that we need to do both at the same time, to keep our hearts truly open and in fulfilling Kami's greater wish.

Thank you to the Konkokyo International Center for the daily goyo you do, to my Head Minister for allowing me this goyo, to Konko-Sama for your prayers and guidance, and to everyone for all of your prayers and support. Most of all, my deepest appreciation to the wonderful believers I met in London, for each one of you have taught and inspired me in so many more ways than you know. I truly appreciate the experience which has broadened and opened my heart, and I pray, the hearts of many others in turn.

“Young Believers’ Gathering” Held in Korea

A “Young Believers’ Gathering” was held on July 21 in the worship hall at Konkokyo of Korea. The participants first offered prayers together, then Reverend Kazumasa Tsukamoto, a former Director of the Konkokyo Seoul Activity Center, gave a sermon about *sacred rice, saiso-cleaning, and gratefulness for our lives and our own bodies*.

Afterwards, they held a friendly discussion where they exchanged ideas on how Konkokyo should approach younger Koreans in the future. A variety of opinions came out, such as “It is a great pleasure that we have the



opportunity for young believers to meet together in this kind of activity. However, the overall program seemed a little too formal. It would be more enjoyable if we had some indoor games, food and drink, and some songs to sing. If the

atmosphere of the meeting was lighter, we would feel free to bring more of our friends”. “It would be more interesting if young ministers and believers from Japan participate in the gathering and have some programs where we can have a Japan-Korea cultural exchange”.

Reverend Kinya Suenaga, the Director of the Konkokyo Seoul Activity Center and host of the gathering, said “This is the first time I’ve hosted a young believers’ gathering. I would like to continue hosting this kind of event so that young believers can have the opportunity to cultivate themselves.”



KIC Welcomes New Deputy Director

Reverend Shinkichi Kawai was appointed the new Deputy Director of KIC on September 1, 2013. He described his aspirations, “I would like to work at KIC always honoring Konko-Sama’s words: I am not doing this because I can. I am just being allowed the training to do this nearly impossible responsibility.”

Tohoku Dream Camp Held

Reported by the Reverend Masato Tanaka

Konkokyo of Tohoku District held their Second Annual Tohoku Dream Camp from July 26 - 28 at the Kinugawa Furusato Nature Camp in Oshu, Iwate Prefecture. The theme for the camp was Sincerity, Gratitude, and Consideration.

The Konkokyo Tokyo Metropolitan Supporting Organization for Volunteers of Disaster and the Konkokyo Fogel Association worked together to invite children in affected area. There were 112 participants, including 51 children ranging from small babies to Junior High students and 61 staff members. I was the leader of the Nest Brigade, a group of children from third to sixth grade.

It rained heavily on the first and second days; however, the children enjoyed the campsite very much and deepened their friendship with friends and leaders. When

we tried to catch fish in a pool, even the quiet children became excited and jumped in the water, shouting to their friends to catch the fish.



Fish catching



Middle of the back row is Rev. Tanaka

Those fish were salted, grilled, and served as part of dinner for everyone. The leader of the camp later played the role of a deity of the stars during camp-fire time and said, “I will make tomorrow a fine day”. I was a bit anxious at first when he said this, but thanks to the divine blessing, it really was a fine day and I think it was a great opportunity for the children to experience Kami.

Staff members told the children about the importance of facing hardships with a smile. We will experience many hardships in our lives; they can make us stronger and we can overcome them if we have a smile in our heart. My wish is for all of us to grow together this way.



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