



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

Konko Mission of Wahiawa, 207 Muliwai Ave., Wahiawa, HI 96786 Phone & Fax: (808) 621-6667 Cell: (808) 294-6331
E-mail: konko-wahiawa@hotmail.com Rev. Yasuhiro Yano Vol. XXIV, No. 4 April 1, 2012

You are cordially invited to attend the
Spring Grand Ceremony
For Tenchi Kane no Kami-Sama
天地金乃神様 御大祭

Date: Friday, April 13, 2012

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Konko Mission of Wahiawa

Sermon: Rev. Hisayo Yasutake
(Wailuku Church Head minister)

Kibimai: Rev. Edna Yano (Wahiawa)

Naorai fellowship dinner will follow. Let's receive the divine arrangements of being able to worship on this very important day.

Blessings acknowledged through the spiritual eyes

By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister

Throughout my 35 years of missionary work at this local church in Wahiawa, I have constantly tried to share the thought of extending thanks and appreciation for any and all the blessings that help sustain our lives. And these days I have been passionate about the attitude of trying to see, think and believe in a faith-based perspective. The only viable measure of my success as a missionary of the Konko faith is to see the growth of the congregation in that respect. Presence of believers who appreciate the messages of the Founder, Konko Daijin can be my viable evaluation of my ministry.

Since arriving at this local church in Wahiawa, my wife and I have tried to extend appreciation for whatever we have been blessed with. I still vividly remember the first day both my wife and I have been accompanied by the Revs. Kikue Kodama of Honolulu Church, Shoichi Okuno the then-Chief Administrator of Konko Missions in Hawaii and Kiyotaka Yasutake of Konko Mission of Wailuku and several members of the Konko Mission of Honolulu in the morning of September 28, 1977. Several Wahiawa Church members also were present to greet us.

The moment I was introduced into the worship hall, I noticed the lights at the sanctuary area were not on. I turned on the lights in the room and extended my prayers of thanks before the altars.

While I was preparing for the missionary work at the Amagi Church, I once tried to find out the circumstance of the place I was destined to go. But I abandoned that thought and convinced myself that I will accept whatever situation awaits us at Wahiawa Church. The Rev. Shoichi Okuno tried to convince me that I should be prepared to start off missionary work with the spirit of going for broke. He used the expression of "Hashi ichizen kara" or you may have only a pair of chopsticks as you start off your missionary work. He understood the harsh realities of life as a missionary in the given situation of the church, where the founding minister had passed five years ago prior to our arrival.

As I stepped into the church premises, I understood everything we needed had already been given. I thought we have been given more than we might deserve for starting off our missionary work. This was the initial extension of thanks for our missionary work. There was a physical building for the church functions and for our residential use. We didn't feel inconvenienced at all. The only concern was the financial situation of the church. Although times have been trying, it never dawned upon us to complain of the given situation. In looking back at some of those days, I feel grateful that both my wife and I have been enabled to survive in the given situation till this day.

Sometime after we started our missionary work, the Rev. Shoichi Okuno extended his concerns about our financial situation indirectly because he might have been inquired about the matter by the late Rev. Fumio Yasutake of Amagi Church. For the first several months, I tried to send monthly monetary offerings to Honolulu Church, the parent church of our church, and the Amagi Church where both my wife and I have been trained, as well as Gohonbu Headquarters Church and the Konko Church of Kawanoishi, which is my native church in Ehime. But the financial situation was so dire that we could no longer afford to make monthly monetary offerings to the Honolulu Church and Amagi Church. For several months, I sent just letters informing the Rev. Yasutake about the situation of our missionary work in the form of Toritsugi-Mediation. Since there was no monetary offering from us, the Rev. Fumio Yasutake might become concerned about the situation at our church, thus prompting the Rev. Okuno about the matter. The Rev. Okuno didn't mention about the monetary offering to the Amagi Church point blankly, but I knew he was implying about that matter. In

responding to the situation, I have tried to enclose a small monetary offering to Amagi Church monthly, along with a letter to the minister for Toritsugi-Mediation in writing. It is a blessing I have been enabled to make monthly Toritsugi-Mediation in writing in this manner for all these years without any pauses.

Soon after starting our missionary work, there was a situation in which the only offerings we could make were “Omiki” or sacred rice wine and “Arai-yone” or rice purified by water and a pumpkin which was harvested from the church yard. At that time, I have developed a thought even in such a condition, it was a fact that we could observe the monthly service anyway and decided to give thanks to Kami for the blessing of being able to observe the regular church services by making a pilgrimage to our parent church at Honolulu after every monthly service. This tradition has also continued to till this day without pauses.

When I extend my thought for the act of extending thanks for the blessings enjoyed, I always remember an episode quoted by the Rev. Norio Sato. “Whenever there was an offering from a believer, the Founder wouldn’t say who offered it. In the fall of 1878, I saw an offering of three sacks of rice. I asked who the donor was. The Founder only said, ‘They were offered by a person from the west of here. Since he had thought his rice harvest would be less than usual due to insects, he prayed to Kami-Sama. He, of course, ended up with a bigger harvest than usual, and came to offer the extra rice.’ Konko-Sama never mentioned who or how old the donor was. The Founder once imparted, “Giving offerings won’t result in divine blessings.” In the following year, he discoursed, ‘A believer who heard this teaching came and told me, ‘I practiced faith and prayed thinking that if I reaped a surplus harvest, I would offer all of it. But since my harvest was less than usual, I cannot offer anything this year’” (I Sato Norio 18).

As Konko believers what blessings do you identify in the episode? Whether there was a surplus of harvest or less than usual harvest, the fact is there would be no harvest at all without the blessings from Kami-Sama. In accordance with the Konko faith tradition, the concept of “Ohatsuho” or the appreciation for the first harvest derives from the thought that any amount of yield, regardless of amount, is possible only through the work of Kami. This is just an example of thinking in faith.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

Konko-Sama imparted, “All living things are given divine blessings. Never forget this grace. Among humans, there isn’t even one in a thousand that receives true divine blessings.” (I Ichimura Mitsugoro 1-27)

Though they live between Heaven and Earth, people are unaware of Kami’s blessings. Shrines, temples, and homes stand on Kami’s land. Unaware of this, people only examine the Days and Directions and commit irreverence to Kami and encounter hardships due to their accumulated offenses. They are to practice faith and receive divine blessings. (Konko Daijin Oboegaki 21-21).

Bulletin Board

Grand Service Schedule

Sun, April 8 Honolulu Church at 11 a.m.
Fri, April 13 Wahiawa Church at 6:30 p.m.
Sun, April 15 Waipahu Church at 11 a.m.
Sun, May 13 Hilo Church at 11 a.m.
Sun, June 17 Wailuku Church, 50th Anniversary Celebration at 11 a.m.

Volunteer at Wahiawa General Hospital

We will make a monthly visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility on Friday, April 20 at 10:00 a.m. by means of offering entertainment for the people cared for in the facility. The program is in Japanese.

H.C.R.P.

The Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace will hold its regular monthly meeting on Monday, April 2 at the Rissho Koseikai Church at 1:30 p.m.

Fundraising for the 2nd Ohana Camp

We will make a fundraising for the Second Ohana Camp scheduled for June 23 and 24 at the Camp Erdman. Zippy’s Chill tickets will be available from April to May. For the details about the Ohana Camp, please refer to the Children’s Newsletter.

Women’s Club Meeting

4/27 Friday, 9:00 a.m. We will make bouquets of origami tulips to sell at the Mini Bazaar.



In Memory of the late Mrs. Mitsuko Suwa

By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister

Mrs. Mitsuko Suwa departed from her physical body on March 21, 2012. She was 90 years old. She stayed with us ever since both my wife and I have started our missionary work after succeeding the founding minister, the late Rev. Haruko Takahashi at the Konko Mission of Wahiawa in 1977. She was there to greet us as we arrived at the church premises with her mother, the Mrs. Tama Noguchi. Mrs. Suwa was one of the most amazing people in the faith community. She was always there for many church functions, such as regular weekly church services and responded to attend any meetings as long as she could make it. She continued to show up for the regular services regardless of any circumstantial turbulences in the faith community and in the family. It was an expression of her dedication and prayers. We appreciated her extended deep prayers for the family members and the people in the faith community.

Last year, she enjoyed attending the 1st Summer Ohana Camp coordinated by the Wahiawa Church at Camp Erdman along with her family members, including her great-grand children. She was looking forward to attending the 2nd Ohana Camp scheduled for this June. She strongly responded to forward her prayers to fulfill the needs of the church from time to time. Along with her husband, she also joined in attending the pilgrimage to the Headquarters Church in commemoration of the Centennial Memorial Service for the Founder in 1983. She read ay Konkokyo reading material available, such as the Konkokyo Kyoten Scriptures in English, the church newsletters and any other English-oriented publications meticulously from corner to corner. In those years, she attended services regularly with her extended family of four generations and enjoyed witnessing her great grandchildren reading the Kyoten Scriptures during the services. She also influenced many people to keep engaged in the faith community in one way or another.

When I recall the name of the late Mrs. Mitsuko Suwa, I remember a teaching, “Divine virtue will be with you even after death and passed down to future generations. It can be received by anyone who practices faith. Divine virtue is never exhausted” (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 2).

Honoring the Mitama Spirits for April

Gilbert Toshio Iwasa	4/9/1999
Zenji Takahashi	4/12/1966
Yoshiro Kamitomo	4/16/2000
Kiku Takahashi	4/26/1967
Robert Mendoz	4/27/2006
Shinichi Furushima	4/30/1996

If you wish to have a name added to the church Mitama listing or removed, please contact Rev. Yasuhiro Yano.

Insight into the teachings in “Tenchi wa Kataru” or “Voice of the Universe”

The followings are excerpts of series of an English translation of “Tenchi wa Kataru—Kanwa-shu” or “Compilation of Insight into the teachings in the Voice of the Universe” which contains 400 selected teachings from the original “Konkokyo Kyoten” or the “Konkokyo Scriptures.” Three authors, namely, the Revs. Mikio Seto, Yasushi Hata and Matsutaro Kōsaka contributed the insightful articles. The translation is provided by Yasuhiro Yano. (Reference pages 8, 9 and 10)

No. 8

If Tenchi Kane no Kami enters a shrine, the world will become dark. Kami’s shrine is the Universe. (II Kondo Fujimori 15, Kyoten pages 534-535)

This teaching shows the omnipresent nature of Tenchi Kane no Kami in reference to a shrine.

The Founder gave this message in response to a forwarded remark made by the Rev. Fujimori Kondo who experienced an initial surprise in witnessing the simple and small shrine installed at the worship hall when he made the first visit to see Konko-Sama in Otani.

“If Tenchi Kane no Kami enters a shrine, the world will become dark.” In general, the people perceived that deities are enshrined in man-made shrines. But the Founder’s statement denied that notion held by anybody else. The statement, “The world will become dark” reminds us of an ancient Shinto myth about “Amano Iwayato which refers a rock cave where Amaterasu, deity of the Sun, had hid.” The Founder firmly stated that Tenchi Kane no Kami was not a small-scaled deity who could be confined to a small shrine fixture.

The Founder solemnly stated, “Kami’s shrine is the Universe” as if to fulfill our curious inclinations such as to where Tenchi Kane no Kami resides.

The scale of the statement is so big. We simply feel overwhelmed in amazement that the entire Universe is the shrine for Tenchi Kane no Kami!” At the same time, we feel convinced that the Founder had a vision of Tenchi Kane no Kami in such a grandeur scale.

Tenchi Kane no Kami’s shrine being the Universe can be omnipresent. The statement forwarded by the Founder might leave a lasting impression about the great nature of Tenchi Kane no Kami, contrary to the initial impression he developed in witnessing the poorly presented shrine.

No. 9

Tenchi Kane no Kami's body is Tenchi, the Universe. Kami does not dwell in a shrine. Kami dwells in a truly sincere heart and you will be able to receive blessings. (II Fukushima Gihe'e 10, Kyoten page 672)

In the same manner as has been stated in the previous page, the Founder stated that Tenchi Kane no Kami is not a little deity who could be housed in a man-made shrine. The statement reveals two elements about the nature of Tenchi Kane no Kami. First, Tenchi Kane no Kami is such a great deity that all things that take place in Heaven and Earth is the manifestations of Tenchi Kane no Kami's work. Second, Tenchi Kane no Kami's presence cannot be confined to a designated place only. These perceptions about the nature of Tenchi Kane no Kami are quite different from the ones held by the general public.

Then there is also the statement at the end of the passage, "Kami dwells in a truly sincere heart." The Founder seemed to have made a puzzling statement, namely, while he stated the omnipresent nature of Tenchi Kane no Kami. He also stated that Tenchi Kane no Kami dwells in a truly sincere heart. In my concluding opinion, both statements are true. The "Shinzen Haishi" prayer reads, "Without regard for day or night, whether we are near or far, the Way of Mediation teaches us to pray with total trust."

We can extend our prayers at any place, but the most vital element in communication with Tenchi Kane no Kami is the expression of an absolutely sincere heart. We have to demonstrate a truly wholehearted expression of sincerity toward Tenchi Kane no Kami without a trace of self-centered thoughts.

The communication with Tenchi Kane no Kami can be likened to the reception of vast ranges of electronic waves rampantly flooding the air space. The entire universe is filled with the work of Tenchi Kane no Kami. A believer who extends his or her true sincere heart toward Kami yields the work of Kami in the form of blessings.

No. 10

A believer from Osaka came to worship and said, "Osaka is a big city. It has four wards and two counties." Konko-Sama replied, "Osaka is big. But to Kami, it is no bigger than a poppy seed." (II Kondo Fujimori 6-2, Kyoten page 533-4)

The Founder forwarded this message about the great nature of Tenchi Kane no Kami during a question and answer session between a believer named Kinugawa, who owned his own noodle shop in Osaka, and accompanied the Rev. Fujimori Kondo.

Mr. Kinugawa might have experienced an initial surprise at the sparsely populated countryside village and the simple and shabby looking interior of the worship hall where Konko-Sama served, in comparison to the vibrant environment in Osaka where row after row of houses expanded widely and there was

a busy trafficking of people in town. The Rev. Fujimori also had experienced the same initial surprise about the condition of the worship hall. He even mistakenly identified the Founder as a guide or a servant.

Because of Mr. Kinugawa's negatively inclined first impressions about the village condition, he countered to Konko-Sama how large and modern Osaka is. Konko-Sama responded, "Osaka is big. But to Kami, it is no bigger than a poppy seed."

The expression of Osaka being big is merely a reflection of human-oriented vision. But the expression, "It is no bigger than a poppy seed" represents Kami's perspective. To practice faith means how we can jump through the gap exists between the human-oriented visions to a Kami-oriented vision. Practicing faith empowers the believer to be able to leap the space which cannot be filled with common knowledge or rational.

It can be irrational that Osaka can be viewed as small as a poppy seed through our physical eyes. But there can be a way we can visualize Osaka in such a comparable size as a poppy seed if we develop the same vision attained by the Founder who was able to identify the infinity of Tenchi Kane no Kami as well as to identify the limited nature of human existence. Although the statement sounds humorous, the Founder was seriously trying to let the believer be awakened to the wondrous and vast world.