



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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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: Thursday, April 13, 2017

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Konko Mission of Wahiawa

Sermon: Rev. Dr. Todd Zenji Takahashi
Naorai fellowship lunch will follow. Let's receive the divine arrangements of being able to worship on this very important day.

The following is a modified speech script made for the annual Spring Memorial Service at Konko Mission of Honolulu on Sunday, March 19, 2017

Divine sustenance

By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister of Konko Mission of Wahiawa

Thank you for your presence in commemorating the annual Spring Memorial Service at Konko Mission of Honolulu. I received a request from Koichi Sensei to share some of my thoughts for this occasion.

Whenever I attend the memorial service and listen to the names of the people who have ever been connected to this church and departed. The number of the "Kyoto" or believers who have converted to the Konkokyo way of life is also amazing. The departed believers served as the solid foundation of this church. They provide the function of the roots of the Konko Mission of Honolulu. They have served for the continued operation of the church in the last 88 years and continue to provide support and guidance for this church in one way or another. And they would respond to the thoughts and prayers we have forwarded to them through today's service and daily remembrance of them in our personal ways.

In the last two years, I have responded to attend memorial services and funeral services of my parents, a brother and some important people who have influenced me a great deal. Some people may wonder why I have to go all the way to Japan to attend these services of people who have departed. I want to say "Thank you" to them. And I feel grateful that I could have been able to respond to each occasion in the past.

The founding minister of Konko Church of Geibi in Hiroshima and one of the eminent Konko ministers, the Rev. Norio Sato

composed Japanese verses that may show his essential elements of his engagement in the practice of faith.

The first one is : 神まつる心に神は居ますなり まつれ我が身を神の宮と。 This can be translated into English as follows: Kami resides in your heart in corresponding to your extended thoughts and prayers toward Kami; revere your own physical body as Kami's shrine.

The other one is: 親思ふ心に親は居ますなり 守れ我が身を親と思ひて。 This can be translated into English: Your parents live in your hearts in corresponding to your extended thoughts and prayers; take good care of your physical body as your own parents.

These are signature messages of the Rev. Norio Sato. Most of the churches related to Konko Church of Geibi display these messages at the altar area.

Several years ago, I happened to learn to appreciate the deeper meanings of those messages. These messages show the ultimate stage of spirituality we can live as Konko believers.

Through today's memorial service, I believe each of us has extended our deep loving thoughts and prayers for the Mitama Spirits of our family members, ancestors, ministers and friends.

As I have spent four decades in Hawaii, I have noticed there could be some difference in the concept of "Oya" or parents between Japan and English oriented society in Hawaii.

Can parents evolve to be such parents who gain respect from their children? If the parents would not be trusted and respected by their children, the message given by the Rev. Norio Sato would be useless. It is a reality that some children wish to become independent from their dominating parents. And some parents also want to get rid of their children and loathe the burdens of child rearing.

Some parents may not be aware that the way children behave is just the mirror images of their own attitudes toward their beloved children. Before children perceive of their parents in respective and loving manners, there shall be parents who extend their caring and love to their beloved ones. Could we be such parents that are demonstrated in the message of the Rev. Norio Sato? "親思ふ心に親は居ますなり 守れ我が身を親と思ひて" Your parents live in your hearts in corresponding to your extended thoughts and prayers; take good care of your physical body as your own parents.

The quoted message always reminds of the four line message of the Divine Reminder in Japanese. The message reads:

生神金光大神
天地金乃神一心に願
おかげは和實心にあり
今月今日でたのめい

The official translation of the message is as follows:

Pray sincerely, with all your heart. Be one with Kami.
Kami's blessings begin within Hearts grateful and caring,
in harmony and joy. Look to Kami always, now and forever.
On this very day, pray.

When I look at and recite the message, I feel like the second line tells me that Tenchi Kane No Kami extends thoughts and prayers upon us, just like our respective and caring parents. When we try to understand the nature of Tenchi Kane No Kami, we can understand the valid meaning of my personal interpretation of the second line.

The Founder Konko Daijin received a Divine Message on October 10, 1873. The message reads, "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. Tenchi Kane No Kami has sent Ikigami Konko Daijin to the people to give blessings and teachings and to have them prosper forever. Kami is Kami because of people, and people are people because of Kami. Both continue to uphold each other."

We can identify prevailing universal elements of blessings that sustain any living creature between Heaven and Earth. We can identify the Divine Love extended to all people. The message, "Kami is Kami because of people, and people are people because of Kami. Both continue to uphold each other" is the ultimate expression of the Divine Love we have enjoyed unknowingly.

Tenchi Kane No Kami has been trying to awaken us to the extended Divine Love in such a manner, "Our Divine Parent of the Universe reminded us, "No one is aware of the blessings of Heaven and Earth which enable people to live. Kami shall have people become aware of the blessings of Heaven and Earth by having Konko Daijin be born throughout the world where the sun shines, in every country, without exception" (Oshirasegoto Oboecho 22-2,3).

As we recall the names of our departed family members, ancestors, friends and minister, we can also remind ourselves that we are born, live and die within Heaven and Earth that have sustained the perpetual existence of humanity from the time unknown to this day. Personally, I recall names of the local ministers who have dedicated to the operation of the Konko faith community in Hawaii, such as the Rev. Masayuki and Kikue Kodama, all other departed ministers, the ministers who have influenced me much in the past, my parents, siblings and some church members. Recalling their names and extending my thoughts of gratitude for their contributions, guidance and support for all those years. I recall all those people and I feel very grateful.

I also want to share another message with you in corresponding to the public speech of Mrs. Fusami Kudo from Kumamoto scheduled for April 22 and 23 at Konko Mission of Honolulu.

From two to three days ago, the Radio Station KZOO started to make public announcements of the function.

It has been the wish of the Rev. Masato Kawahatsu (Head minister of the Konkokyo Propagation Hall in South San Francisco), who has actualized the invitation of the speaker to San Francisco and Gardena for her presentations. Through his connection to Konko Mission of Waipahu, he also solicited the program for Hawaii. And we have responded to hold the program.

Mrs. Kudo is not a Konko believer and has not identified her engagement in any particular religious practices. She believes in the ultimate work of "Something Great" which could be her interpretation of Kami-Sama. Personally, I feel grateful that we can have such an opportunity to invite Mrs. Fusami Kudo to Hawaii.

In January of 2016, I attended the 10th Year Memorial Service for my father held at Konko Church of Kawanoishi, my native church in Ehime. At that occasion, one of my elder brothers, the Rev. Seijiro Inagaki gave me a copy of the church newsletter published by the Konko Church of Osaki, the Rev. Motoo Tanaka. At that instance, I just took a look at the publication and didn't pay much attention. After returning from Japan, I read the article written by the Rev. Motoo Tanaka. Actually he was being hospitalized for cancer treatment while he encountered the book authored by Mrs. Fusami Kudo. In corresponding to his circumstance to deal with his cancer, he was deeply moved by the message in the book. The book of the title is "遺伝子スイッチオンの奇跡、ありがとうを10万回唱えたらガンが消えました。"

The Rev. Tanaka's message was powerful. I responded to translate the article into English and published in our church bulletin in February of 2016. Mrs. Kudo does not identify herself as a Konko believer, but demonstrated vital elements the Konko believers would have achieved at the ultimate stage of spirituality. I also read the book written by Mrs. Kudo and learned her message in the book.

Although the title reads, "遺伝子スイッチオンの奇跡、ありがとうを10万回唱えたらガンが消えました" may sounds like because she recited thank you to DNA, the basic components of every living creatures, including human beings, her cancer that threatened her to kill in one month, has miraculously banished and regained good health. She is not emphasizing the act of saying thousands of thanks. But her act of saying thanks is based on her understanding that her own life existence is a miracle.

Dr. Kazuo Murakami prompted Mrs. Kudo to take a drastic action of saying thanks in the most devastating circumstance. Dr. Murakami stated, "You were born as a precious life because of the love of your father and mother. Your father and mother each has 23 chromosomes that you could have been born with. You are one solitary, irreplaceable person because you are one in 70 trillion possibilities. This is a miracle." In my understanding, Mrs. Kudo reached to the ultimate spirituality as a beloved child of Something Great. She used the expression of "生かされて生きている" or we are enabled to sustain our lives in blessedness of Something Great.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

Although Kami cannot be seen, you are constantly walking within and through the midst of Kami. Even while fertilizing a field or walking along a path, you are in Tenchi Kane No Kami's hiromae. The whole world is Tenchi Kane No Kami's hiromae. (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 6)

Bulletin Board

Monthly Services for April 2017

- 1 Sat -Monthly Service, Tenchi Kane No Kami
(7:30 pm)
2 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
9 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-Honolulu Church Spring Grand Ceremony (11am)
13 Thr -Wahiawa Church Spring Grand Ceremony (6:30 pm)
16 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-Waipahu Church Spring Grand Ceremony (11 am)
22 Sat -Mrs. Fusami Kudo's Presentation at Honolulu Church
(1:30 pm to 4:30 pm) KMH Sponsored
23 Sun -Mrs. Fusami Kudo's Presentation day 2 Interview and
Q & A session (9:30 am to 11:30 am) KMH Sponsored
-No Sunday Service
30 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)

May 2017

- 1 Mon -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami
(7:30 pm)
7 Sun -Wailuku Church Spring Grand Ceremony (11 am)

Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace

The regular monthly meeting will be held on Monday, April 17, 2017 at Gedatsu Church at 1:30 p.m.

Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility will be made on Friday, April 21, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.

Garage Sale

Thank you very much for your help and support for the annual garage sale for the Ohana Camp held on Saturday, March 18. The net proceeds of \$432.16 were deposited to the Konko Mission of Wahiawa Educational Fund account.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

April

Gilbert Toshio Iwasa	4/9/1999
Zenji Takahashi	4/12/1966
Frances Shigeno Takahashi	4/13/2009
Yoshiro Kamitono	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 following 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 Matsutarō Kōsaka contributed the insightful articles. The translation is provided by Yasuhiro Yano. (Reference pages 305, 306 and 307)

No. 305: Take care of the elderly. People are not born before because they wished it. All are born through the blessings of Kami. The earlier a person is born, the longer he has worked for society. Respect the elderly. (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 80-1 Kyoten page 793)

Take care of the elderly.

The quoted message is an excerpt from the original message the Founder gave to Sadajiro Yamamoto. “You, young man, should know that respecting the elderly is the same as respecting Kami-Sama. People aren't born before others because they had wished for it. As everyone knows, the earlier a person was born, the longer he has served the country and his family. Because of this principle, the elderly is respected. Even young people can gain respect if they contribute more than usual. On the other hand, those who are already respected can gradually lose their stature and people's respect if they do unreasonable and thoughtless deeds. These things are common knowledge, but those practicing faith should be even more aware of them” (I Yamamoto Sadajiro 34).

Sadajiro Yamamoto was young when he received the message. The message could be appreciated by the young people. Occasionally, we witness that young people ignore the presence of the elderly people in a commuter train in such a manner that they occupy the seats reserved for the elder and the handicapped, called “Silver seat.” They show little hesitation for their rude acts, while the elderly people show some confusion in such a situation. We should be more caring for the elderly people.

The Founder clearly stated, “Respecting the elderly is the same as respecting Kami-Sama.” We are born before others through wondrous work of Kami-Sama. To respect the elderly people is the same as respecting Kami-Sama. The Founder showed us how we should respect the elderly people in such a reasonable manner.

The Founder also stated, “The earlier a person was born, the longer he/she has served the country and his/her family. Because of this principle, the elderly is respected.” The message forwarded in such a rational manner might have deeply affected young Sadajiro Yamamoto.

In Japan, we have been observing the annual “Respect the Elderly Day.” It is a worthy national observance. The Konko believers should learn to respect the elder people based on the

principle of the Konko faith tradition and try to be of service to the society.

No. 306: Be strong and practice faith. You need not worry about how old you are. Faith is the only thing that any person—even if one who is old—can do as well as any other person. If you keep practicing faith, you will gain virtue year after year, and you will be favored by Kami and will be treated with great care by the young people. (III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 84-3 Kyoten page 840-841)

Faith is the only thing that any person can do.

An elderly person returned to see the Rev. Jirosiro Kataoka after a long pause of his engagement in the practice of faith. He complained about his advanced age that prevented him to make a visit to church and the limited activities he could do for others. The quoted message was given to the visitor by the Rev. Jirosiro Kataoka.

The Rev. Kataoka encouraged him by saying, “Be strong and practice faith. You need not worry about how old you are.”

When we get older, we experience a sort of depression in acknowledging many negative elements such as limited physical capacities and sedated life styles. Usual encouragement in formalities would be of help for them. But the message, “Faith is the only thing that any person can do” might have deeply moved the visitor.

There was an elderly woman named Mrs. Moto Sawada who departed at the age of 93. She served as “Shinto-sodai” an officially designated lay leader of the church. She always held a warm smiling facial expression and exhibited something pure and respectable in her demeanors.

She used to make a visit to church by train alone. I sometimes advised her that she should stay and practice faith at home because she could get involved in an accident. Even when she became frail because of her advanced age, as she woke up in the morning, she tried to spend over one hour to get dressed by herself without any help from the family members. She proceeded before the house altar and engaged in her daily prayer.

Another believer in our faith community, Mr. Sawada operated a wholesale drape shop. During WWII, he had to deal with restrictions imposed by the authorities. He also lost his children one after another. His life would not be full of happiness, but tried to live in perseverance and lived as a devoted Konko believer throughout his life. When he encountered people who complained about their lives, he always encouraged them by saying, “Do not worry. Kami-Sama will take good care of you.” He was loved by many people.

No. 307: People shouldn't retire regardless of their age. Kami created people to work within the Universe. Thus, one should keep working as long as one can move his or her arms and legs. (I Kondo Fujimori 30 Kyoten page283)

No retirement regardless of age

Last year, I enjoyed reading a book titled, “Kairooroku” 戒老録 or “Self-Discipline in Advanced Age” authored by Ayako Sono. I felt like I also should be prepared for my own stage of advanced age.

I always feel impressed in witnessing that many elderly Konko believers have been actively getting engaged in activities in the faith community. I could attribute their lively and positive attitudes to the virtuous work of their own engagement of practicing faith. In hoping to share their impressive lives as Konko believers to others, the Konkokyo Tokyo Pen Club compiled a book titled, “老いの愉しみ” or “Enjoyment in advanced age.”

In Japan, the life after retirement is a social issue. But those Konko believers seem to continue to enjoy their life and try to work as long as they can function in acknowledgement of their given life being wholly sustained by the work of Kami-Sama. They don't seem to mind to get retired, instead, they seem to enjoy life in their advanced stage in life.

Mrs. Haru Shinohara, used to attend the Konko Church of Nihonbashi. She was a Living National Treasure of “Icchuubushi” a shamisen oriented classic Japanese musical art. At her advanced age, when she climbed up a few steps at the entrance to worship hall, she experienced a short of breath. She jokingly said, “I will live till I die.” She devoted in training young artists very strictly. She lived till the age of 92.

There was a believer named Mr. Shinsaku Yanagi in our faith community. He always put on dark colored glasses. He was very quiet. The way he got engaged in his prayer was very impressive. He kept saying, “Arigatogozaimasu” throughout of his engagement in prayer toward Kami-Sama. Even when he got older, he volunteered to clean up the nearby playgrounds regularly. He lived till the age of 96.

The Rev. Tokusaburo Hata, the founding minister of Konko Church of Tokyo died of esophageal cancer. Twenty days before his departure, he composed a Japanese verse titled, “自戒” or self-discipline. The message was, “天地の御心を心とし、始終活動して息む時なく、而も常恒不変なるもの、是之を誠と言ふか” that could be roughly translated into English as follows: In reverberating to the heart of Heaven and Earth, I shall never take a rest and kept myself busy in perpetuation eternally. This way of life could be called ultimate true sincerity. This message could be what we aim in perpetuity, not just the self-discipline of the Rev. Tokusaburo Hata.