



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: Saturday, April 13, 2019

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Konko Mission of Wahiawa

Sermon: Rev. Edna Matsuoka

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

Okage samade

By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister of Konko Mission of Wahiawa

The Founder Konko-Sama stated, "Shinjin shite Okage wo ukeyo" or receive blessings by practicing faith. When I have been extending my thoughts and have done some research, I found out that in some instances "Practicing faith" was interchangeably used with the expression of "Ogamu" or by praying to Kami. Both "Shinjin" and "Okage" are key terms in the Konko faith tradition. As for Shinjin, there are 763 references and as for "Okage", there are 730 references in the Kyoten Gorikai.

Nowadays, I feel one of the best references to "shinjin" can be expressed in the daily greetings of "Okage-samade" that can generally be translated into English as "Thanks to You", "Thanks to Something Great" or "Because of You."

In the Konko faith tradition, we interpret the expression of "Okage," meaning "kage" or shadow, "the visible shadow of invisible Divine presence and work." When we place an object against a light source, such as the sunlight, a shadow is to be cast on the ground. It may sound strange to perceive a shadow created by an invisible Kami. But through the spiritual perception, we can understand that any visible element in life could be the shadows of invisible elements of Kami.

A simple expression of "Okage-Samade" reminds us the unlimited inter-connected elements in the world sustain our life in one way or another. We simply cannot identify each element that sustain our lives, but can perceive something great is at work to sustain our lives. If we are in good health, we simply say "Okage-samade, I am enjoying a good health." This mindfulness of something great can be relevant to "practicing faith."

The 4th Konko-Sama, the late Rev. Kagamitaro Konko used the expression, "世話になる" pronounced "sewani naru" can mean "Okage-samade" or thanks to you.

If we try to say "Okage-samade" at any moment in our lives, such as awakening in the morning, using the bathroom, eating a meal, driving our cars, reporting to work, being able to see, hear smell and move our hands and foot freely—in a sense we are practicing faith.

When we say, "okage samade" for the good health we enjoy, we are expressing our gratefulness to some greater power or elements that help us to keep enjoying our good health. People have all kinds of ways to try to live healthy, such as paying attention to our health, eating natural, organic foods and taking supplements. They practice health-oriented body and mind exercises. Billions of dollars are spend in this manner, but nobody can guarantee good health. We are uncertain of our good health we may take for granted. There can be invisible, unidentifiable elements that help and sustain our good health. Actually, this religiously-oriented mindfulness is one of the ingrained elements of the broad Japanese culture we may not be much aware of. We enjoy Japanese TV programs in Hawaii every day. In any day of the program, there can be one or two episodes in which people enjoy meals. Every such occasion of food partaking, they may include foreign guests show the gesture of pressing their hands together and saying "Itadakimasu." And the regular English caption of "Itadakimasu" is "Let's eat." But the expression of "Itadakimasu" is a religiously-oriented expression.

In accordance with the Konkokyo faith practice, we extend this thought of partaking foods in appreciation of the blessed nature of foods being nurtured and brought to be served at the dining table through countless elements of blessing, such as the work of nature, hard work of farmers, distributions systems and the people who cook it. Basically majority of the Japanese may understand that every grain of rice can have the potential of producing tens of thousands of grains. The act of eating can be expressed by the word "taberu," but we use the expression of "itadakimasu" which holds the context of partaking of food with the heart of appreciation and gratefulness. There are many other religiously mindful expressions in everyday Japanese

vocabulary. “Mottainai” or trying to consume given gifts with the heart of appreciation and gratefulness and try not to waste any portion of the item can also be one of those expressions of mindfulness.

In the Konkokyo faith community, the Founder Konko Daijin related to Jiroshiro Kataoka, ““Those who practice faith should always pray with *miki* in their hearts. Then Kami will make any request come true.’ Those who practice faith should not forget this. *Miki* means the three ki which are *arigataki* (gratefulness), *osoreo-ki* (awe), and *mottaina-ki* (reverence). If those who practice faith forget these three things, they will not be able to receive divine blessings” (III Jinkyukyogoroku135).

The 4th Konko-Sama, the late Rev. Kagamitaro Konko used to express the thought of “Sewani naru subeteni rei wo yuu kokoro Heiwa umidasu Kokoroto iwan” or to have the heart of wanting to express appreciation for any and all elements of blessings we enjoy is the heart that can contribute to promote peace. If we try to apply the expression of mindfulness in the expressed thought of Konko-Sama, we can easily understand the message. Actually I have been introducing his extended thought in my prayer shared at the annual interfaith prayer meeting.

While I was at the Konko Church of Amagi for my spiritual training before I came to Hawaii, the Rev. Fumio Yasutake always reminded the student minister to exercise the heart of “Kokoro kubari” or trying to exercise extended mindfulness in identifying blessed elements and responding accordingly in the daily living at the church. The shugyo practice at the church is a sort of exercising this spirit of “Kokoro kurabi” in such a meticulous manner that help us to remind the elements of divine blessings in the very living condition of day to day living.

The Rev. Matsutaro Yasuake, the founding minister of the Amagi church showed such an extreme mindfulness in using anything at all. He used only a limited amount of water for bathing, used the wash-cloth in such a manner that the towel can last the longest. He even tried to use a portion of used papers for different purposes and maximized the given life of that paper which was supposed to be thrown away. At one occasion, while he was riding a train, and was eating lunch, he accidentally dropped some grains of rice onto the floor. He picked up the rice and placed it temporarily on the window sill of the train. When the train crossed a river, he flicked the rice into the river. The person accompanying him asked why he did that. He responded that food that falls to the floor is unsanitary for consumption, but it can be fed to the fish in the river. It may sound strange in today’s world, but that was the extent of his mindfulness for the blessed nature of rice. He tried to fulfill the divine intention in such a seemingly minor element in daily living.

I have lived in Hawaii serving as resident minister of Konko Mission of Wahiawa for 42 years and come to appreciate the spiritual training I received at the Amagi Church during the span of approximately three years. I had an invaluable opportunity to witness the faith life exhibited by the late Rev. Fumio Yasutake. It is his spiritual mentoring that so many young and old student ministers have been educated in

accordance with the Konkokyo faith tradition. When I reached the age of the minister I feel like appreciating all remarks made by the minister as precious spiritual guidance and reminders during my ministerial career here in Hawaii. And I feel convinced the power of mindfulness in getting engaged in the practice of faith.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

Everyone around the world is a child of Tenchi Kane No Kami. The world is full of Tenchi Kane No Kami’s blessings. Not having these blessings is like not having any air. So without divine blessings, people cannot live, not even for a minute. (II Sato Mitsujiro 14-3)

“Konko” means “golden light shines.” The “kon” comes from the “Kane No Kami.” The “ko” comes from “hikari” meaning sunlight. Sunlight provides the world with light. Therefore it means that the entire world is being blessed by Tenchi Kane No Kami’s light shining throughout the world. (II Konko Hagio 21)

Some people have decided to serve the Faith by conveying truthful teachings. If there were such people in each town and village, this Faith would spread easily. (I Kondo Fujimori 80)

Those who are able to live due to Tenchi Kane No Kami’s blessings are in between two mirrors. Kami sees all good and bad things that are reflected in the mirrors. You must practice faith and have a sincere heart. (Yamamoto Sadajiro 3)

Bulletin Board

Monthly Services for April, 2019

- 1 Mon -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin (7:30 pm)
- 6 Sat -Church Clean up for the Grand Service (8 am)
- 7 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-Honolulu Church Spring Grand Service (11am)
- 13 Sat -Wahiawa Church Spring Grand Service (6:30 pm)**
- 14 Sun -Waipahu Church Spring Grand Service (11 am)
- 21 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)
- 28 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

May 2019

- 1 Wed -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)

Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility will be made on Friday, April19, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

HCRP Meeting

The Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace will hold the regular meeting on Monday, April 22, 2019 at Palolo Hongwanji Temple at 1:30 p.m.

KMH Meetings

The KMH Community Engagement and Outreach Committee Meeting will be held on Thursday at Konko Mission of Honolulu on Thursday, April 25 at 6:00 p.m.

Joint KMH-KCNA Committee meeting will be held at Konko Mission of Honolulu on Friday, April 19, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.

Spring Grand Services

5/5 Sun -Konko Mission of Wailuku (11am)

5/12 Sun -Konko Mission of Hilo (11am)

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
Richard Yoji Noguchi	4/28/2016
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 374, 375 and 376)

No. 374

When people speak ill of you, you think that because you practice faith, you must endure it. Therefore you endure. However, this is not enough. You must also give prayers for them to reform their hearts. (II Kataoka Jiroshiro 3-2 Kyoten page 479)

Pray even those who speak ill of you.

There is a preceding passage before the quoted message that goes, "Before practicing faith, I was honest, but I had a short and violent temper. When people did wrong, I would immediately retaliate. I believe this is to be proper." Some people like Jiroshiro, who were honest and clean-handed, are likely to have a quick temper.

The Founder identified a typical personality of Jiroshiro and gave him an appropriate message that deeply penetrated into the heart of Jiroshiro.

The Founder who was adopted to a family in different village also experienced harsh treatments from the village people who treated him as an outsider. Some village people treated him lightly by calling him as "the manure-carrying Konjin." Despite the unfavorable treatment he received from the village people, the Founder responded to the situation to be patient and suppressed his anger. But he also learned that suppressing his anger alone would not improve the situation and tried to pray that those people who spoke ill of him would reform their hearts.

Because of his own learned experience in dealing with those people who spoke ill of him, he learned to appreciate the power of prayer even for those people. The Founder shared his thoughts to Jiroshiro in empathy.

Every teaching of the Founder was based on his own deep personal experiences. He just tried to share his own experiences of getting blessed to others for their own sake. The Founder had never tried to outsmart other people through his eloquent talks.

Even today, we have been constantly encountering situations in which our hearts and minds get hurt because of negative and inconsiderate thoughts and deeds directed to us at our working places, in the communities we belong and in our own families. Even when we would encounter such thoughtless people, we should learn to extend our thoughts and prayers for them to reform their hearts in reflection of the quoted message.

No. 375

Even if someone hits you, do not strike back. Don't cause suffering. Be thankful if your heart becomes good and pray even for those who pass by. When you are able, help others. (II Onishi Hide 8-1, 2 Kyoten page 461)

Have a good heart.

Hide Onishi was born at Otani village in 1864. She used to make a visit to see the Founder even while she was quite young. In the same manner we introduce about the practice of faith, the Founder tried to guide Hide in pursuit of the faith. The knowledge she gained through the Founder established a solid religious foundation for Hide, who enjoyed a long life of 91 years old as a Konko believer.

Hide Onishi contributed twenty-two teachings of the Founder in the Konkokyo Kyoten Scriptures. The messages she related were easy to follow. The Founder seemed to emphasize the spiritual element of "keeping a good heart." Interestingly, the Founder seemed to refer to Kami few times and tried to teach her about the nature of Kami indirectly.

If we were slapped by another person, we would reflectively try to hit back at them. But the Founder stated, "Even if someone hits you, do not strike back. Don't cause suffering. Be thankful if your heart becomes good and pray even for those who pass by. When you are able, help others."

At another occasion, Konko-Sama advised Hide, "Don't keep a bad heart day after day. If someone speaks ill of you, don't bear

a grudge against him." Hide responded, "But if someone comes to me with a bad heart, I will also develop a bad heart." The Founder stated, "Still, you must not have such a heart. Always keep a good heart" (II Onishi Hide 9). Hide might understand the nature of having a good heart would be the heart of Kami. The Founder didn't impose young Hide to practice faith, but try to teach her to keep a good heart. The episode showed the deep thoughtfulness of the Founder.

No. 376

When those practicing faith are hit on the head, they should think, "My head doesn't hurt, but how about your hand?" And if they are urinated upon the head, they should think warm rain is falling. (I Kondo Fujimori 6 Kyoten page 289) The manner how the Founder responded

In reference to the Bible of Christianity, Matthew 5:39 reads, "But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the cheek, turn to them the other cheek." The author was interested in this statement and felt like there seems to be a universal spirituality of practicing no violence in any other religious faiths.

The Founder stated, "When those practicing faith are hit on the head, they should think, 'My head doesn't hurt, but how about your hand?' And if they are urinated upon the head, they should think warm rain is falling." His statement seemed to be a bit extreme, but showed a deeper nature of the Konko faith. The Founder's messages were not compositions he created, but reflections of his own personal experiences.

The Founder would never try to impose his thoughts on others, but tried to share his thoughts based on his own personal experiences in pursuit of faith.

The village people rumored about the Founder, "the manure-carrying farmer of Otani." They rumored that Konko Daijin committed burglaries in collusion with his followers." He might have vexing experiences.

But the Founder responded to such people calmly and tried to extend prayers to Kami for their salvation. He had no thought of retaliation at all. The Founder stated, "It is a reflection of Kami's power when people criticize or speak ill about Kami. It is impossible to keep someone who does not understand this faith from criticizing it. People cannot predict the future. Even if people may say things that soil your face, do not be angry. Kami will wash your face" (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 96). When Fujimori Kondo initiated his missionary work at Nanba in Osaka, the authorities tried to impose suppressions for his religious activities. He was held at jail for several occasions. The message from the Founder might give him the power to persevere under those trying circumstances.