



Spring Grand Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami

On Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

The Grand Service is one of the major ceremonial services of the Konko faith community. Through the service, we seek to acknowledge and extend our sincere gratitude for the work of Our Principle Parent of the Universe that provide the universal blessings of sustenance for all living things. Please join the service in person or through Facebook Live due to the threat of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

"Ohatsuho" A Unique Nature of Offering

*By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister*

The Konko faith is a very unique spiritual practice. What is different from other religious establishments is the way that offerings are handled. The Founder Konko Daijin established this tradition. When you enter the Konko Church, or even when you make a pilgrimage to Gohonbu Headquarters Church at Konko Town in Okayama, Japan, you will not find donation placards or donation certificates of the names of the believers who made donations to the church and offerings to Kami-Sama in the premises of the church properties at all.

When you make a visit to some larger established religious institutions, such as temples and shrines that have attracted many visitors, you can find the displayed names of the people who made a huge amount of donations and offerings. This is a way of acknowledgment of the people who expressed their gratitude for the blessings they have enjoyed through their engagement in their practice of faith. They responded in such a manner to show their sincere gratitude for the blessings received

and the institutions respond in acknowledging the peoples extended thoughts and prayers by displaying their sincerity. It could be based on Japanese traditions.

When I made a visit to one of the biggest temples in Japan, I noticed rows and rows of one-foot square rock panels on the side wall of the hill in the premise. I learned that each one of them was inscribed with the name of the donors who made a donation of more than \$10,000. It was just amazing how people could make such a large amount of donations and how many of them there were. We would never see this in a Konko Church establishment.

This way of acknowledging of people's generous donations can be seen throughout many institutions, like business and healthcare facilities as well. When you make a visit to a huge medical institution, you may find the same pattern of acknowledgment in display. In corresponding to the amount of donations forwarded, they are categorized, such as Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze supporters. This is a normally practiced tradition of acknowledging the people who have expressed their support for the institutions.

But the Founder Konko Daijin firmly rejected this social norm based on his conviction in pursuit of faith. To Yoshihara Ryoza, the Founder stated, "I came to make a small donation. Other shrines put up donation placards, but you don't do that here?" Konko-Sama explained, 'If there are donation placards, people will think that they too must donate three or five yen. This will stain their faith in Kami-Sama. That's why I don't put them up, regardless of how large the donation is.' 'Don't you keep a record or notes of donations?' I asked. 'No, I don't. These donations to Kami-Sama are the same as the offerings put in the offertory box. If one cannot practice faith without offering money, then the poor will have to

die. If a beggar comes to me without anything to offer Kami, I will give him some Goshinmai, answered Konko-Sama" (II Yoshihara Ryozo 1-2, 3).

Here is another episode about the nature of offerings to be forwarded to Kami-Sama. Gihe'e Fukushima related, "A person from Bizen was also worshipping at the same time. He offered a folded envelope and requested toritsugi mediation. Without touching the envelope, Konko-Sama directed, 'Take this home,' and went before the altar to give prayers. Soon, his face turned red and he said, 'What do you think offerings to Kami are? Kami does not take offerings with disregard. He returns ten thousand times as much. You must not give offerings to Kami thinking that it is wasteful.' Then he turned around and said, 'Gihee, don't you agree? Man is man because of kami, and kami is kami because of man.' He returned to his mediation desk and continued with the story he was telling" (II Fukushima Gihe'e 16).

Another episode will also show the nature of offerings we forward to Kami-Sama. "I asked, 'Konko-Sama, why do you offer incense to Kami?' He then replied, 'People say that one candle offered by the poor is the same as a thousand offered by the rich. There are some people who cannot offer even one candle. Kami will accept anything, whether it be a candle or incense. If a whole stick of incense cannot be offered, half of it will do. Kami will accept it like a whole candle. If even incense cannot be offered, offer a spark by striking the flint. Kami will accept it like a candle. There are people who can receive blessings even from the ashes of incense.' I was deeply moved upon learning that is wrong to think that those with sincerity need not make any kind of offering. I felt grateful that Kami received offerings in the same way no matter how rich or poor people are. There is nothing more benevolent than this" (III Naiden 2-2, 3).

Just a few days ago, I happened to pick up the 80th Anniversary Celebration booklet of Konko Mission of Hilo (Published in 2009). The booklet was titled, "今月今日一心に真". In the booklet, I encountered an

expressed conviction of the late Reverend Yoshifusa Nishida, the founding minister of Konko Mission of Hilo. I would like to introduce his conviction in his missionary work. Coincidentally, this year marked the 40th Memorial Year of the late Rev. Yoshifusa Nishida. He stated, "When I initiated my missionary work at Konko Mission of Hilo, I have tried to uphold the spirituality of Konko religious tradition established by the Founder Konko Daijin. That the operation of the church should not be dependent on the income collected from the believers through monetary solicitations. The only financial resource for the operation of the Konko Mission of Hilo has been free-will monetary offerings alone forwarded by the first and second generation Americans of Japanese ancestry. I have never solicited monetary donations from the believers, ever. Even when we had encountered episodes of financial difficulties, such as unpaid dues for loans, we have never brought this to the attention of the followers that came. In this manner, we have successfully been able to manage the operation of the church through divine economy. Kami-Sama provides just enough for us to survive. I have a conviction that I will uphold this spirituality now and forever."

We have adopted a definition of offering referred to as "ohatsuho" or offerings of appreciation as follows and printed a message on the surface of offering envelope:

The idea is to give back to Kami/God from the top, not from what is left over. And the idea is to give out of gratitude not obligation. And the idea also is to comprehend that all that we have is a gift from Kami/God in the first place, so that what we give back is an acknowledgement of our giftedness.

This message was shared to our daughter, Edna sensei by the Rev. Thomas Chittick (Pastor of University Lutheran Church and retired Chaplain at Harvard University). He is a good friend of the Revs. Drs. Leon and Linda Webbers who had come to visit Hawaii annually on their retreats.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

Few have a heart that Kami can accept. Those whose hearts can be accepted by Kami will be blessed with good health, wealth, and wisdom for three generations, resulting in a strong family lineage. Those whose hearts are not accepted by Kami may have wealth as well as wisdom, but will get sick. Those who have wisdom and good health will lose their wealth. If they do not lose their wealth, their beloved children will die, leaving no heirs. Since these people are not aware of Kami's blessings, they are always lacking one thing or another. If you practice faith and understand Kami's blessings, you will live a peaceful and stable life. You will have descendants and gain wealth. You will receive divine blessings from year to year, and then from generation to generation. (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 78-1, 2, 3)

- Community Engagement and Outreach Committee meeting will be held on Friday, April 23, 2021 (Zoom at 5 pm).

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	4/28/2017
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.



Bulletin Board

Church Services for April 2021

(Please join us in person. Also services will be streamed via Facebook Live if you are unable to attend in person)

- 1 Thur -Monthly Svc for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 3 Sat -Church clean-up for Grand Service (8 am)
- 4 Sun -Sunday Service
-Honolulu Church Spring Grand Ceremony (11am)
- 11 Sun -No Sunday Service at Wahiawa
-Waipahu Church Spring Grand Service (10:30 am)
-1-year Memorial Service for the late Rev. Mitsuko Yasutake (after).
- 13 Tue -Wahiawa Church Grand Service (6:30 pm)**
Take home bento (Please RSVP by 4/11)
- 18 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
- 25 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)

May 2021

- 1 Sat -Monthly Svc for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 2 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

The Church Door is Open

We welcome you to make a visit to our church and church services. Please wear your face mask for Covid-19 precautionary measures. You also can make an appointment for your personal visit to church anytime of the days.

KMH

- KMH Zoom conference 2021 skype mtg. (5 pm) will be held on Friday, April 16, 2021.
- KMH Zoom Minister's Gathering (2-4 pm)
Guest speaker: Rev. Masayuki Inoue. Topic: LGBT

金光教祖の生涯 瀬戸三喜雄
金光教学研究所 紀要別冊 教学叢書 2

The following is an English translation of a book titled, "Konko Kyoso no Shougai" or "The Life of the Founder Konko Daijin" authored by the Rev. Mikio Seto, and was published by Konkokyo Theological Research Center. The publication was made in 1980. There are many biographies about the life of the Founder Konko Daijin. I would like to introduce this article for your reference in your pursuit of faith. An English Translation was provided by Rev. Yasuhiro Yano.

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His personality and the way of life

The personal character of the adoptive mother was a bit strict. Her strict nature could have contributed to keep the household and the village community life in good order. The adoptive father was advanced in his age and could hardly be dependable. Consequently, his wife, twenty years younger than her husband responded to manage the family life.

The birth-mother was quite aware of the strict personality of the adoptive mother and extended her utmost care in dealing with her. Whenever her son returned home and sent him back to the Kawate household, she always let her son to carry some gifts to his adoptive parents. She discreetly followed her son all the way till witnessing his return home.

Her son was also considerate to his parents. Whenever he had an opportunity to return to see his birth-parents, he always put on pair of new straw sandals he made. When he left the house, he

found out used straw sandals and put them on while leaving the new sandals for the parents discreetly. It was a reflection of his deep loving thoughts for his parent to ease some burdens from the aged father who had to make sandals for himself.

He always consciously exercised his deep considerations to ease any burdens of other family members in his day to day living.

It could be natural for a child to show kind considerations to his parents in general. But he exercised his kind considerations to all other people in the village. They witnessed that when he grew up as an adult, he responded to fix any broken portion of the road in the village by himself discreetly. When he traded the rice he harvested with some buyers in the village, he tried to give them the premium rice regardless of the price and enjoyed in witnessing the happiness of those people who appreciated his extended good will and good quality of rice. In this manner, he naturally showed his pure kind heart that was not based on moral obligations.

From time to time, we might experience to respond to some encounters in our daily livings with the heart of simplicity and compassion. But this person exhibited natural simplicity in extending his kind heart to others. His daily living seemed to have been dictated by this distinctive character of simplicity. Some people might have been concerned if he could be able to function in the village community. There could be some vulnerability that some ill-natured people would take advantage of his naive character and could be degraded in the community.

(3) Life in his youth age

Basic learning opportunity

When the founder reached the age of 13, he was given an opportunity to learn basics of reading, writing and using the abacus from the Village Head, Mitsuemmon Ono for two years. The adoptive father, who regretted lack of education that restricted his life, provided his adoptive son to get educated in some academic basics for his future wellbeing.

According to some historical references, a so-called "Terakoya" educational hangout area was introduced in Otani Village eight years after the founder started learning from the Village Head. The village people might have appreciated the importance of educating young people for the well being of Otani Village. The reason why this person had an opportunity to get educated under the guidance of Mitsuemmon Ono could be attributed to the adoptive father, who had a closer relationship with him and gained a trusting relationship with the Village Head. In those days, only some privileged young people could have been given such an educational opportunity in the village.

The deep caring considerations of his adoptive father provided an invaluable contribution for the formation of the founder's

spiritual foundations. The span of merely two years of leaning from Mitsuemmon Ono helped him to gain the invaluable life skills to self-educate thereafter. It could be attributed to this basic learning that this person could articulate in writing down his own autobiography later in his life.

His expressed thought in "Oboegaki" or "Memoirs" as follows, "My adoptive father had me learn how to read, write and use the abacus under Mitsuemmon Ono, the Village Headman residing in Tsu of Otani Village. I studied for two years, from 1826 to 1827, when I was thirteen and fourteen years old" (Oboegaki 1-6-1). This unique tone of writing expressed clearly showed his deep respect and sense of gratitude for both his adoptive father and Mitsuemmon Ono.

The Founder acquired more than what could be expected through learning, but more to it than that he got a great deal of influence from the personality of Mitsuemmon Ono.