



## 40<sup>th</sup> Memorial Service for the Late Rev. Haruko Takahashi

The Konko Mission of Wahiawa will be observing the 40<sup>th</sup> Memorial Service for the founding minister, the late Rev. Haruko Takahashi on Sunday, December 16 at 10:00 a.m. Please join to attend this important service in person and on time to extend our deep appreciation for the dedicated services that have made it possible for this Konkokyo faith community in Wahiawa to operate for the last 72 years. Our presence at the service is the greatest gesture sincere appreciation for all she did for us.

The Rev. Todd Zenji Takahashi will make a speech presentation in memory of his aunty. Ke'ala Takahashi and Austin Takahashi will also perform Japanese dance dedicated to the Rev. Haruko Takahashi.

Naorai luncheon will follow the service.

*The following is an English translation of an article titled "Byōshitsu ga wagakokoro no sekai ni" which roughly means the presence of a Konko believer in a hospital affected the other patients who shared the same room for treatment, found in the Konko Shinbun or the official Konkokyo monthly publication issued on November 18, 2012. The episode is based on a true story experienced by a Konko believer. The names in the story were changed in consideration of the privacy.*

## Miraculous work of "Wagakokoro" or the heart of peace and joy

One day, a Konko minister, aged 66, made a call to the publication office and requested, "I was discharged from a cancer treatment facility lately. I would like to share a blessed episode I experienced while I was hospitalized. Will you help me to publish the story for others to read?"

Soon after the call, we received a hand-written script which was titled, "Okage wa wagakokoro ni ari" or blessings can be realized through the exercise of the heart of "Wagakokoro" or the heart of peace and joy. The message showed a vivid example of blessings received through the exercise of the heart of "Wagakokoro."

I was hospitalized at the University affiliated cancer treatment facility for two months. Five days after I was admitted to the hospital, another patient named Yoshio, aged 77 and I were moved to another room. In the room there already was another patient who was sitting on his bed in a depressed manner.

In responding to our forwarded greeting, he introduced himself as Torakichi, aged 83. He began to talk about himself. Ten days ago, the doctor diagnosed that he was stricken with an aggressive type of lung cancer and told him he would live just one year at the most. After confessing his helpless situation, he stated, "I have no hope to live and no dream to have for the future." He bent his head down in depression.

In corresponding to the circumstance, Yoshio-san rolled up his shirt and exposed his torso. His body was full of deep scars left after five episode of major surgeries for cancer developed at the esophagus, stomach, lungs, livers and large intestines. Torayoshi-san who witnessed the scars on Yoshio-san felt deeply moved and raised his head high and extended a thought to himself, "I have only one cancer." He might have regained some ray of hope for his survival. I also was deeply impressed by the development in the room. I have witnessed that Yoshio-san, who survived from the five bouts of major cancer operations actually affected Torayoshi-san to feel better. I thought the meeting of the two might be divinely arranged for the salvation of Torayoshi-san.

Later on, another patient who was at the terminal stage of cancer moved into the same room. I gave them a pair of "okage-bashi" or blessed chopsticks with the Konko crest imprinted on each stick. I also gave them a small booklet that contained the main teachings of the Konkokyo faith. I also gave them a slip of paper which is printed with the Konkokyo messages pertaining to the nature of the blessed foods. Those teachings are, "All foods are provided by Tenchi Kane No Kami to sustain our lives; Be thankful for whatever foods we may eat or drink; Pray for good health. For good health is the foundation of all things."

Torayoshi-san held the chopsticks in deep gratitude and shed tears of joy in appreciation of the teachings in the booklet. He used to behave in such a troubled manner that

whenever he was served with unsatisfying meals, he flipped over the serving tray and threw away the foods served. The two other occupants of the room also responded to show their appreciation for the foods served and savored meals peacefully. They all extended me thanks for the gifts I forwarded. The atmosphere in the room changed positively, and they all engaged in a lively and comfortable conversation.

One day, the mother of my daughter-in-law, came to see me at the hospital. She once took care of her father who also suffered from cancer. Upon her arrival at the door to the room, she hesitatingly peeked into the room with some anxiety, but once she stepped into the room, she was surprised at the welcoming and comfortable air of the room in which all the occupants were enjoying each other's company.

The following day, she emailed me a message that stated, "All of you in the room gave me some spiritual power. I enjoyed meeting you very much. I felt the two hour travel back home was so short." I shared the message with my roommates. I felt happy in witnessing both the visitors and the patients also gained some elevation of spirit.

Soon after that, Torakichi-san was discharged from the hospital to spend the limited precious time in private comfort. Initially, he was defeated by the extended hopeless diagnosis received from the doctor. He lost his hope to live. Upon his departure from the hospital, he shared his dream, "I will enjoy golfing. I will make a formal round of 18 holes." His drastic spiritual change amazed us all and we bid farewell to each other.

The four occupants of the hospital room enjoyed their comfortable accompaniment with each other. I was convinced that even under such depressing circumstance as hospitalization for the treatment of cancer, I could live positively and happily in appreciation of blessedness through the exercise of the heart of "wagakokoro" or the heart of peace and joy.

### **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).

## **Bulletin Board**



### **Church Mini Bazaar**

The church mini bazaar was held on Saturday, November 3, 2012. Many customers came from near and far. We had beautiful weather and a truly blessed day. Thank you very much for the tireless volunteers who came from a couple days ago to prepare for the bazaar in means of setting up and making Tsukemono pickles. Thank you also to the many people who donated goods to sell at the bazaar. It was a great success.

### **H.C.R.P.**

The next regular meeting will be held on Monday, January 7, 2013 at 1:30 p.m. at the Church of Perfect Liberty.

### **Volunteer Activity at Wahiwa General Hospital**

The monthly volunteer activity at the same facility will be held on Friday, December 28 at 10:00 a.m. Your participation to the program will be very much appreciated.

### **KMH Young Minister's Workshop**

Two-day KMH organized minister's workshop will be held at Hilo Hattie on December 8 & 9, 2012. The Rev. Dr. Jonipher Kwong who is an ordained minister with the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Metropolitan Community Churches will be the keynote speaker for the program. The theme of the program is "Resurrecting the Church: Renaissance of Tradition and/or Renewal."

### **40<sup>th</sup> Memorial Service for Late Rev. Haruko Takahashi**

Sunday, December 16 from 10:00 a.m. Please see front page reminder for details.

### **End of the Year Services**

The End of the Year Service will be held on Sunday, December 23 at 9:00 a.m.

### **Annual Mochi Pounding**

The annual Mochi Pounding will be held on Sunday, December 30, 2012. The first 300 pounds of mochi order will be accepted by December 26. The pounding will start from around 8:00 a.m. and will continue all the way up to

3:30 p.m. Volunteer helpers will be given a packet of mochi and lunch will be served. Please join to enjoy this unique Japanese tradition of making mochi with *usu* mortar and wooden mallet.



**New Year's Day Service** will be held on Tuesday, January 1, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. Traditional New Year's Day food will be served. Please come as a family to celebrate the New Year by attending the very first service.

## Honoring Mitama Spirits

### December

Mrs. Hilda Kazuno Yamamoto	12/14/2007
Mrs. Lillian Tanigawa	12/16/2010
Mrs. Shizuko Takayama	12/21/2006
Rev. Fumio Yasutake	12/23/1995
Rev. Haruko Takahashi	12/24/1972



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

Mr. David (6<sup>th</sup>) & Mrs. Mildred Oka's (8<sup>th</sup>) Memorial service was held on November 6, 2012.

Mrs. Chieno Hirota's 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Memorial service was held on November 17, 2012.

## 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 28, 29 and 30)*

### No. 28

**Kami thinks only of saving people, nothing else. Therefore, Kami will never let you have an experience which has no meaning. You should continue to practice your faith. Your experiences will result in divine blessings.**

*(III Jinkyū Kyōgoroku 12 Kyōten pages 812-813)*

### Kami thinks only of saving people.

The message provides us a clear and convincing statement that the ultimate divine will is in the salvation of humanity. When we meet and interact with others, we naturally develop impressions of them in such manners as, she looks pretty; that person looks highly respected in the society; he looks a bit advanced in age and so forth. Our view of people varies vastly depending on personal preferences and other factors. But Kami's ultimate concern is always focused on the beloved children in distress and tries to find ways to save them.

The human-oriented standards of values, such as economic success, social status, external physical beauty, academic achievement, age preferences and other elements do not comply with the divine standard of value. The most vital element in divine standard of value is measured by how well a person enjoys fulfilling life. Likewise, as Konko believers, we also need to place much emphasis on reflection of our own fulfilling life and how much we have contributed in helping others.

Kami affirmed that as long as we get engaged in the practice of faith, we are to get blessed accordingly, and there shall be no experiences that have no meanings in life. Kami can be likened to a boat voyaging the ocean, and the believers can be the passengers on the divine boat that sails to reach the destination of a fulfilling life. As long as we are on board the divine vessel, regardless of the many possible encounters, the vessel shall reach the destination that brings forth a fulfilling life to the passengers..

A person may complain that many encounters in life were of no meaning at all and end up in death in suffering. Another person may enjoy a blessed episode for his plea of help once and fail to continue to get blessed in life thereafter. Those who practice faith can learn to appreciate the working of Kami that a hardship in life contributes in getting blessed in future; and the blessings received also become the foundation for furthering a blessed life in the future. The Konko believers truly appreciate those blessed elements we can enjoy through our engagement in the practice of faith.

### No. 29

**A few people living in this world have evil hearts, but most feel sorry and want to do something when they see someone pitiful or hear of someone who is troubled. This is the heart of Kami. It is real compassion.** *(III Jinkyū Kyōgoroku 5 Kyōten page 811)*

## The heart of “kawaii” (1)

The ultimate divine will for the salvation and wellbeing of humanity expressed in the previous page 28 can relevantly expressed in the word “kawaii” stated in this and the following page 30. A simple expression of “kawaii” shows the exact nature of the ultimate divine will for humanity.

In accordance with a dictionary, the term “kawaii” is defined in two ways. First, it means adorable and lovely. Second, it means pitiable and pitiful. The first definition of “kawaii” refers to an emotional response of a viewer who admires the beauty of objects, such as flowers, dolls, babies and other things that bring some comfort and joy. On the other hand, the second definition of “kawaii” implies an emotional response of a viewer who becomes overwhelmed with the sense of empathy in witnessing someone in a pitiable circumstance. Both definitions share the same element that prompts the viewer to take some action for the encounter.

Kami’s heart primarily represents the second definition of showing empathy with the heart of pity, rather than the first definition.

Humans experience all sorts of emotional responses, from the coldest heart of demons, to the saintly heart of deep empathy and compassion. The demonic heart represents the self-centered heart of seeking only fulfillment of one’s wants and desires. While the heart of “*kawaiso*” or deeply empathetic heart, represents the heart of pursuing a mutually fulfilling state of salvation with others.

A person with the heart of self-centeredness may experience infinite dissatisfaction and feeling of vanity no matter how much they have enjoyed fulfilling their own wants and desires. On the other hand, we seem to be instinctively pre-programmed with the heart of feeling sorry for someone of wanting to help a person in a pitiable circumstance.

In my understanding, Kami is at work in bringing out both of the scenarios stated above.

### No. 30

**I told Konko-Sama, “They were catching sparrows by using a crow for inducement. I thought this was a cruel thing to do.”  
Konko-Sama replied, “A heart that feels compassion is a Kami.”**

*(II Kondo Fujimori 17 Kyoten page 535)*

## The heart of “kawaii” (2)

Similar to the statement in the previous page 29, this teaching also shows the heart of Kami, who loves all people in the world.

The Rev. Fujimori Kondo related an episode he encountered at a locality called Akashi in Hyogo Prefecture on his way to see Konko-Sama. He felt so sorry for scores of sparrows being entrapped in a small mesh bird trap net called “*kasumi-ami*.” Konko-Sama promptly picked up part of the forwarded message by the Rev. Kondo and used it to address his message back to him by stating, “A heart that feels compassion is a kami.” The message forwarded by the Rev. Kondo could be regarded just as a common story-telling. But Konko-Sama had an excellent sense of wit to take advantage of such an opportunity to educate the believers for a better understanding of the practice of faith.

There can be several possible interpretations of the message given by Konko-Sama. First, the heart of “kawaii” represents the heart of Kami; second, the heart of “kawaii” is a reflection of the inherently held heart of Kami that exists within oneself; third, the fact of experiencing the surge of the heart of “kawaii” is a proof of divine work within oneself; fourth, a believer who experiences the presence of the heart of Kami within means that person has evolved as a kami.

The original Japanese statement by Konko-Sama had an additional sentence which was not translated into the English version of the text. That additional sentence reads, “*Sore ga kami de aru*” or “That means Kami.” This repetitive statement can be interpreted in two ways. First, the statement emphasized the significance of the previous statement; second, Konko-Sama might mean, “It’s hard to believe, but that is what Kami is all about.”

In this manner, the message can be interpreted in many ways. But the heart of “kawaii” can be the dominating element of the heart of Tenchi Kane No Kami; and we are given that heart of Kami within ourselves inherently. The theory is proven in many teachings found in the Konkokyo Kyoten Scriptures. The way we revere and believe in Tenchi Kane No Kami by calling out the holy name in such a respectable manner as, “*Oya-Gami-Sama*” or Divine Parent; and the perception of “We are beloved children of Kami”; and the concept that we are each given a “*wake-mitama*” or given soul from Tenchi Kane No Kami, are all possible because of the heart of “kawaii” extended to us by Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama, Our Divine Parent of the Universe.

2013 will be  
the year of the  
SNAKE!!

