



# KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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## Mindfulness in gratitude



By Yasuhiro Yano  
Head Minister

The Rev. Edna Yano made a presentation at the Wahiawa Hongwanji Mission in request of their board on Sunday, November 15, 2015. She spoke on the title of “Gratitude and how it can affect our health in a positive way” in exercise of her Konkokyo faith based nursing. Edna has been sending out church newsletters to many people, including Buddhist temple friends and other interfaith religious community people. One of the articles she posted in the past newsletters caught the attention of the people in the Buddhist community and she received the opportunity of sharing her thoughts.

I have never imagined that any Konko ministers would make a speech presentation before the congregation of other religious faiths. I have been aware that the Hongwanji Mission has been trying to provide the congregation the opportunities to get enriched in their faith life through their exposure to valuable thoughts and ideas from other religious backgrounds. We don’t commonly do this in Konkokyo, but just last year, we had the Rev. Blayne Higa, a Buddhist minister of the Moili’ili Hongwanji make a presentation during our annual Itsukushimino Inori Peace Prayer Service at Wahiawa Church. The Rev. Todd Zenji Takahashi of Konko Mission of Honolulu made a presentation at the Interfaith Peace Prayer coordinated by the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace, held on Sunday, October 25, 2015. I feel like something new and unique has been emerging from the local Konkokyo faith community in Hawaii through those phenomena.

The concept the Rev. Edna has been trying to advance is based on her own practice of the Konko faith. The very foundation of her concept of communication with bodily parts may come from her understanding of extending thanks for any elements that help us to live in any forms. The fundamental message may be summed up in one Konkokyo message, “Those who practice faith should feel grateful even after sitting and resting on a tree stump” (II Unknown 23, or in Japanese, (木の切り株に腰を下ろして休んでも立つ時には、礼を言う心をわすれなよ)。

The fourth Konko-Sama, the Rev. Kagamitaro Konko gave us a message when both my wife and I met him before we departed to Hawaii some 38 years ago. He said *Inochi no shinn no hataraki*, or the core vital element of life and explained about the meaning by quoting many episodes. A tree, any tree or vegetation we can find in the yard have roots, stem and branches and leaves. The tree is sustained by the work of the roots that take up moisture and any other food from the ground and send them up to every tip of the tree. The leaves also create food through the work of photosynthesis and send the food down to the roots. If the functions stop, the tree will wilt and die sooner or later. We also have the same vital function as a human being. What can be likened to the roots and the leaves of a tree is the exchanging of the heart of gratefulness, joy and happiness. When a baby is born, we may exchange greetings of celebration by saying “omedetou gozaimasu” or congratulations, and “arigatou gozaimasu” or thank you. When a baby turns one year old, we celebrate the birthday. When a child enrolls in school, we also exchange greetings of celebration. When a child graduates from school, people also exchange greetings. When a person gets a job, we extend our congratulations. When a person gets married, we celebrate the marriage and the cycle keeps going. We may be doing these things from time to time without consciously being aware of the vital nature of all those exchanging of congratulatory remarks and celebrating the occasion. If we cease to get engaged in those functions, the person's life may become troubled.

For any of those occasions of celebration and appreciation, we have to know the moment is achieved through billions of unidentifiable contributing elements in life, not just one's own efforts and fortune. In Japan, they say “Okagesamade” or “it’s all possible because of the help and support of visible and invisible elements.” Exchanging greetings of congratulations and thanks reassures and reconfirms the contributions and sustenance of all those elements we may not be aware of.

Konko-Sama demonstrated how to integrate the concept of “Those who practice faith should feel grateful even after sitting and resting on a tree stump” (II Unknown 23, or in Japanese, (木の切り株に腰を下ろして休んでも立つ時には、礼を言う心をわすれなよ) in his faith life. The 4<sup>th</sup> Konko-Sama used to say that he always tried to extend his thanks for the glasses he put on, for the pen he wrote with, for the sheet of paper he used, for the desk and chair he used. He used the expression of “*sewani naru*” which implies the condition of being depended on, being indebted or being blessed.

Konko-Sama also showed us a simple formula to see if we have been in line with the heart of Kami and walking the right path for happiness and prosperity. The formula is to see if we have the heart of thanks and appreciation at any moment and for any elements in our daily life. The message is very strong. You have to find out the powerfulness of the message on your own through the practice of the message. This is the meaning of “*shinjin suru* or *sasete itadaki*” or to practice faith or in today’s popular expression of “Mindfulness” in the Konko way.

## Konko-Sama Says . . .

People exist because of Kami, and Kami exists because of people. Therefore, you should pray to Kami about everything, including sickness and problems, whether it is an emergency or not. Practicing faith is to have a heart like Kami in your everyday life. Praying to Kami by putting your hands together is not the only way to practice faith. A single heart means one heart. So be sure you do not go astray by having a double heart. Depending only on Tenchi Kane No Kami is having single heart. You should be single-hearted and receive divine blessings fully. (III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 1981, 2)

Konko Daijin said, "Everybody asks me to come to their homes, but since I cannot be absent from Kami's Hiromae, I do not go. However, I have never failed to help save a person who asked me for help with a single heart."  
(Jinkyukyogoroku 55)

## Bulletin Board

### Monthly Services for December 2015

- 1 Tue -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 6 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
- 13 Sun -43<sup>rd</sup> Memorial Service for Late Rev. Haruko Takahashi (10 am)
- 20 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
- 23 Wed -20<sup>th</sup> Memorial Service for Late Rev. Fumio Yasutake Of Konko Church of Amagi, Fukuoka
- 27 Sun -End of the Year Service (9 am)
- 30 Wed -Mochi pounding (8 am to 4 pm)

### January 2016

- 1 Fri -New Year's Day Service (9 am)
- 3 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

### Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace

The regular meeting will be held on Monday, January 25, 2016 at Gedatsu Church of Hawaii at 1:30 pm.

### Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Long-Term Care Facility at Wahiawa General Hospital will be made on Friday, December 11, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.

### Kaka'ako Ehimemaru Memorial

The Ehime Kenjinkai members will conduct regular care for the Mikan trees at Kaka'ako on Saturday, December 26 at 9:00 a.m.

### JCCH Mochi Pounding program

The Konko Mission of Wahiawa will make a demonstration of traditional mochi pounding with *usu* mortar and wooden mallet on Saturday, December 12, 2015. The first batch of mochi will start

at 9:00 a.m., the second session will be done at 10:00 a.m. and the third session will be done at 11:00 a.m. If you are interested in helping the mochi pounding, please contact the Rev. Yasuhiro Yano at 621-6667.

### 43<sup>rd</sup> Memorial Service for the Late Rev. Haruko Takahashi

The annual 43<sup>rd</sup> Memorial Service for the founding minister of Konko Mission of Wahiawa, the Rev. Haruko Takahashi, will be observed on Sunday, December 13, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. She departed on December 24, 1972. Please join the service in time and in person and show our gratitude for the dedication and contribution of the founding minister who has helped the continued operation of the church in the last 75 years.

### 20<sup>th</sup> Memorial Service for the Late Rev. Fumio Yasutake

The Rev. Yasuhiro Yano will be attending the 20<sup>th</sup> Memorial Service for the Late Rev. Fumio Yasutake to be observed at the Konko Church of Amagi, Fukuoka on Wednesday, December 23, 2015. The Konko Church of Amagi is the grand-parent church of Konko Mission of Wahiawa. The Revs. Yasuhiro Yano and Reiko Yano received religious training under the spiritual guidance of the late Rev. Fumio Yasutake. The Revs. David Yano, Rodney Yano and Edna Yano also received religious training at the church. Mr. Chad Pangorang also spent three months at the church for religious life exposures.

### The Annual Mochi Pounding

We will hold the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual mochi pounding event on Wednesday, December 30, 2015. Preparation for the event, such as 325 pounds of sweet mochi washing and setting up the mochi-making elements will be made on Tuesday, December 29 from 8:00 a.m. On December 30, the pounding of mochi will start around 8:00 a.m. and continue through around 3:30 p.m. with half an hour lunch time. We need your help for this labor intense traditional mochi making using specially crafted stainless steel *usu* mortar and wooden mallets. The signature curry and rice will be served for lunch. Preparation for *anko* filling for mochi preparation will be done on Tuesday, December 29 from 1:00 p.m.

## Honoring the Mitama Spirits

### December

Hilda Kazuno Yamamoto	12/14/2007
Fumitake Yoshiwa	12/15/2012
Lillian Tanigawa	12/16/2010
Isamu Iwasa	12/17/1943
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.*



## 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 134, 135 and 136)*

### No. 134

**They say that death has no aversion to time, but according to Konko Daijin, it does. Doctors judge how long a patient can live according to the seriousness of the illness. If the doctor says that it is hopeless and gives up, the patient will die. But even for such patients, if they are saved by Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama’s blessings, death will have an aversion to time. (II Sato Mitsujiro 30-1, 2 Kyoten page 582-583)**

#### Death has no aversion to time.

The quoted message reminds me of the passing of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Konko-Sama, the late Rev. Setsutane Konko.

The time was 1963. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Konko-Sama, aged 87, experienced gradual deterioration of his physical strength. The daily time span he could serve at the Toritsugi-Mediation Desk became shorter and shorter as the day went by. Several days before his departure, he served at the Toritsugi-Mediation Desk for about 15 minutes a day and retreated to his residence for resting. Eventually, he was confined to his residential house for resting. Every day, his physical condition was announced to the people in the faith community. The entire congregation responded to the dire circumstance by extending their earnest prayer for him.

The observance of the annual Grand Service of Tenchi Kane No Kami was just around the corner in April. They became very much anxious about the evolving circumstance. The eldest son of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Konko-Sama, the Rev. Kagamitaro Konko responded to the situation to serve as Chief Officiating Minister for the Grand Service to be held in four consecutive days in place of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Konko-Sama. The believers who attended the grand service were so moved by the solemn service in attendance of the succeeding Spiritual Head of the Konkokyo Religious Organization, the Rev. Kagamitaro Konko who served as the 4<sup>th</sup> Konko-Sama thereafter. While the second and third days of the observance of the grand service were conducted without any problems, the physical condition of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Konko-Sama steadily deteriorated.

The forth day observance of the service was conducted on April 13. After the ceremonial service, the Rev. Masao Takahashi, the then Chief Administrative Office of the Konkokyo Religious Organization presented a sermon on the second floor hall of the northern part of the Grand Service Hall. I was listening to the speech. After the conclusion of the speech, another minister proceeded to conduct a closing prayer. At that very instance, breaking the silence, the phone rang loudly. No one was ready to pick up the phone. The Rev. Takahashi, raced to pick up the phone and answered. As he talked over the phone, he naturally

bent his upper body in show of solemnity. The moment I witnessed the posture, I could understand the passing of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Konko-Sama reflectively. I talked to myself, “Konko-Sama has just departed.”

My hunch was right. In corresponding to the closure of the entire program for the annual Grand Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami, and the conclusion of the main speaker, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Konko-Sama, who served for 70-year long as Principal Toritsugi-Mediator departed peacefully.

### No. 135

**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 Kyoten page 793)**

#### Enjoyment of wealth, wisdom and good health for three generations

Tenchi Kane No Kami, Our Divine Parent of the Universe has extended His love to all beloved children to get blessed in happiness. According to the quoted statement, the fulfillment of divine love is evidently shown in the enjoyment of continued wealth, wisdom and good health for three generations, from the parents to the child and to grandchild.

In real life, we find it quite hard to enjoy the fulfillment of the said three elements, namely, wealth, wisdom and good health for three generations. Some people enjoy fulfillment of two elements, but can hardly be able to get the last element. Some people enjoy wealth. But because of the family wealth, there could be some children who would become irresponsible spender of wealth and end up in destructive life styles. In this manner, it could be quite hard to enjoy the fulfillment of wealth, wisdom and good health for three generations.

Tenchi Kane No Kami, Our Divine Parent of the Universe reminded us, “Since these people are not aware of Kami’s blessings, they are always lacking one thing or another.” Those people blessed financially are likely to indulge in self-conceit that they gained their wealth through their own talents and power. They do not appreciate the fundamental contributions of blessings received from Our Divine Parent of the Universe. Those people with higher academic credentials do not fear the great powerful nature of Our Divine Parent of the Universe and become arrogant.

Those people who enjoy good health and experienced no physical disorders for a long period of time would credit their own maintenance of good health and fail to extend their prayers in appreciation of the higher power for their continued enjoyment of good health.

Those elements stated above would contribute in failure of fulfillment of wealth, wisdom and good health. The Founder reminded us, “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.”

It would be vital for us to keep the heart of reverence and humility that can identify the work of Kami in our faith life.

### **No. 136**

**“Oh young pine! You are the symbol of happiness. You will grow, spreading your branches with lush pine needles.” Konko Daijin teaches the way for the prosperity of your descendants and family. (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 100 Kyoten page 798)**

#### **The way for the prosperity of your descendants and family**

The Founder, at the age of 17, joined a group of village young people for a pilgrimage to Ise Shrine. They traveled on foot for a long journey. Upon their arrival and worship at the Ise Shrine, they settled down at an inn for rest and enjoyment of sightseeing. Even today, if I would stroll along the streets around the town, I would be able to picture how the Founder spent the night with the fellow village people. The pilgrims enjoyed singing the quoted song called “Ise Ondo” that goes, “Oh young pine! You are the symbol of happiness. You will grow, spreading your branches with lush pine needles.” The popular song lyric reflects the common people’s wishes and prayers for their lives.

The Founder might also be influenced by the song. The Rev. Fujimori Kondo related, “Joyous young pine branches grow full of thick pine needles,” Konko-Sama repeated many times a day. (II Kondo Fujimori 58). In this manner, the Founder frequently quoted the song for references.

In general, songs are designed to activate our emotions, to be able to be remembered the lyric easily for better communication of messages. When we sing a song in enjoyment, we would be influenced by the intended message of the song.

But it would not be that easy to achieve “the prosperity of our descendants and family” unlike to enjoy the song.

The Founder didn’t say, “I will let you enjoy prosperity of your descendants and family” nor “I shall grant you the blessings of prosperity of your descendants and family.” The tone of the statement, “Konko Daijin teaches the way for the prosperity of your descendants and the family” reflects his solid conviction that believers would be able to enjoy the fulfillment of the message. It is vital for us believers to follow his message faithfully.

To Fujimori Kondo, the Founder stated, “Believe wholeheartedly. Practice faith and receive divine blessings, then you will prosper. As in the Ise folk song: Oh, young pine! You are the symbol of happiness. You will forever grow up, spreading your branches with lush pine needles. Receive this kind of blessings” (II Kondo Fujimori 58).