



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

Konko Mission of Wahiawa, 207 Muliwai Avenue, Wahiawa, HI. 96786. Phone/Fax: (808) 621-6667, Cell: (808) 294-6331
E-mail: konko-wahiawa@hotmail.com. Also, find us on Facebook. Head minister: Rev. Yasuhiro Yano. Vol. XXVII, No. 1, January 1, 2015

In Celebration of the New Year



*By Yasuhiro Yano,
Head Minister*

Happy New Year! How wonderful it is to be able to be here and extend our thanks to Kami-Sama, Our Divine Parent for all the blessings we have enjoyed thus far and enabled to continue to live our blessed lives as we enter into the year 2015.

Thank you for your extra support, hard labor and contribution of your time and resources for the 23rd New Year's Mochi Pounding we held on Tuesday, December 30th. It was just awesome to witness so many people, especially young people responding to enjoy the mochi pounding tradition. A friend asked where did all those people come from? I replied that a handful of church members came, but their friends and our children's friends and Japanese school related people and other community members came to help with the mochi pounding. Ehime Kenjin kai members also showed up and enjoyed the function.

In Japan, at a time of jubilation, such as today's New Year's Day, they have celebrated the occasion by quoting an old verse that represents a blessed life in happiness. The Founder Konko Daijin also quoted the verse and related a message to Jiroshiro Kataoka.

“Congratulations! Congratulations! Oh, young pine. Grow you will with branches ever spreading and pine needles so lush.” People recite this song on happy occasions. However, it is through the efforts of the growing trunk that the branches grow and the pine needles become thicker. Furthermore, it is through the efforts of the invisible roots spreading underneath the ground that the trunk gets bigger. If the roots at the base of the tree die, the stout trunk, the growing branches and thick needles will also die. If you have faith that spreads widely in everyday life like the roots of a tree, you will not fall down

even in desperate situations. You will prosper, like a tree with full branches and thick needles, through receiving divine blessings. This is a joyous thing. (III Jinkyukyogoroku 49)

The original English translation found in the Kyoten Scriptures stated, “However, it is through the efforts of the growing trunk that the branches grow and the pine needles become thicker. Furthermore, it is through the efforts of the invisible roots spreading underneath the ground that the trunk gets bigger.” But in my understanding, the intent of the Japanese message implies that the reason why the leaves and branches thrive is due to the growing main trunk of the tree. In the same manner, the reason why the trunk of the tree grows can be attributable to the roots spreading in the ground that sustains the growth of the trunk. There exists an inseparable mutual interdependent relationship of those elements as one living tree.

The message is so concrete, not a reference of abstraction. For example, I have been enabled to live and serve at this faith community in Wahiawa in the last 37 years with my wife and children. I can be just a leaf and a branch, which has been supported by the main trunk and the roots, which can be my parents, my ancestors, the founding ministers in Hawaii, the supreme spiritual heads in generations and all the way to Konko-Sama, the Founder and all the other elements. But more to it than those things, I have been wholly sustained by the great sustenance of the Divine Parent. To become aware of all those contributing elements in life is the meaning of our engagement in the practice of the Konko faith.

The more I live longer, and learn about the teachings of Konkokyo, I feel overwhelmed with the truthfulness and valid nature of the messages in today's world. Each and every message is not an abstract presentation of an idea, but derived from the loving and caring heart of the Divine Parent for the sake of the sound lives of the beloved children. We can be branches and leaves and Kami-Sama, Our Divine Parent can be the foundational roots. Both the children and the parents shall enjoy good and thriving relationships.

Have you noticed the meaning of the calligraphic writing on the wall? The message reads, “神人共栄.” The message was given to the Rev. Haruko Takahashi, the founding minister of this church, by the Rev. Kametaro Nakayama, who lost his two hands and one leg by a train accident when he was young. He wrote the calligraphy by putting a brush to his mouth. The message means both Kami and the children of Kami enjoy mutual upbringing and prosperity.

I would like to quote a message the Founder Konko Daijin stated in concluding my statement. “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."

This message is a divine assurance for the believers. Follow the message and we shall enjoy the blessed lives as has been stated.



Konko-Sama Says . . .

Konko-Sama said, "People are endowed with the spirit of Tenchi No Kami-Sama. Nittenshi-Sama blesses our bodies with muscles and bones. Gattenshi-Sama blesses our mouths with moisture, enabling us to speak. However, few have a heart that Tenchi No Kami-Sama can accept.

Those whose hearts can be accepted by Tenchi No Kami-Sama will be blessed with good health, wealth, and wisdom for three generations, resulting in a strong family lineage. This is having your heart accepted by Tenchi No Kami-Sama. Unfortunately, people are unaware of this. Thus Kami-Sama feels pity for them.

Having great wealth requires the wisdom that must go with it. Those whose hearts are not accepted by Tenchi No Kami-Sama may have the wealth, but not the wisdom. Thus, they will inevitably meet adversity.

Others who have the wealth as well as the wisdom, will get sick even if they do not want to. They won't be able to go out and work in the village.

Those who have wisdom and good health, will lose their wealth. If they don't lose their wealth, their main successors will die, leaving not inheritors.

And since those with wisdom and a good family lineage don't have money, they won't be asked to fill responsible positions.

These are all examples of hearts which are not accepted by Tenchi No Kami-Sama. Since these people are not aware of Tenchi No Kami's blessings, they are always lacking one thing or another.

If you practice faith, understand Kami's blessings and live a peaceful and stable life, you will have descendants, gain wealth, and be rest assured. Look forward to the future. First you will receive divine blessings from year to year, then from decade to decade, and finally from generation to generation.

Even if a fruit tree blossoms, we don't know if it will bear fruit or not. If it does bear fruit, the fruit will gradually get bigger.

Similarly, with time, the divine blessings you receive will get bigger.

Kami-Sama exists throughout Tenchi, even in mountains, valleys, and river bottoms. So practice faith." (II Sato Mitsujiro 13)

Bulletin Board

Monthly Services for January 2015

1 Thur -New Year's Day Service (9 am)
4 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
11 Sun -Monthly Service for Founder (9 am)
18 Sun - Sunday Service (9 am)
25 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (10 am)
-Wahiawa Church General Meeting

February 2015

1 Sun -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (9 am)

23rd Annual New Year's Mochi Pounding

Being blessed in all aspects of the function, we could have successfully and safely conducted the annual 23rd New Year's Mochi Pounding. The weather forecast assured that there would be no rain at all on that day, December 30. But soon after we finished pounding the 38th batch of mochi, the weather condition suddenly changed and the heavy rain started to pour down. Three days later, the weather was like a typhoon with strong winds and heavy rain falls. Countless people showed up to help make mochi. It was just phenomenal that so many young and aged people connected each other in many ways could respond to enjoy the whole process of making mochi in the traditional manner.

It is just pounding and making mochi. But without the basic element of trust among the participants, this tradition will not function at all. The tradition really reflects one of the good aspects of Japanese cultural tradition which values the element of trust.

Mochi Pounding for the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii

We will demonstrate mochi pounding in request of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce for their annual meeting at the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii on Friday, January 9, 2015 from 5:00 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. Only one batch of mochi will be pounded prior to their formal opening of the meeting.

General Meeting & New Year's Party

We will hold the annual church members meeting on Sunday at 10:00 a.m. on January 26, 2015 after the monthly memorial service. The New Year's Party will follow the general meeting.

KMH Board of Trustees Meeting

The KMH Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Saturday, January 17 from 10:30 a.m. at the Konko Mission of Honolulu. The Rev. Yasuhiro Yano and Mr. Randy

Furusho will attend the meeting in representing the Konko Mission of Wahiawa.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

January

Owari Kaneshige	1/2/1989
Clarence Olsen	1/3/2013
Paul Akita	1/13/2008
Alesandro Caraballo	1/17/1985
Tama Noguchi	1/17/1985
Mitsuru Miyamonot	1/20/2007
Tsuneko Takahashi	1/24/1997
Chikiko Hayashida	1/24/1940
Marc Perrone, Jr. (MJ)	1/27/2010

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 102, 103 and 104)

No. 102

I will give you a faith with an endless string of goals. Be single-hearted, then receive divine blessings. The more blessings you receive, the more benefits and protection you will gain. After receiving divine blessings, you must not forget the grace of Kami. (I Ichimura Mitsugoro 1-28-1 Kyoten page 207)

A faith with an endless string of goals

In general, many people get initiated into the practice of faith in search of concrete solutions for their own personal matters, such as those who get sick want to get healed of their illness; those who have to deal with difficult financial encounters wish to get blessed from the burdens. Once they get used in the practice of faith to some extent, they may feel how they can get advanced in their faith in Kami. Some believers may wish to get much stronger spiritual power that they want to get sure divine revelations for their extended prayers. In this manner, the believers are prompted to get their faith advanced in corresponding to their devotion to the faith.

Those wishes and prayers held by devoted believers can be likened to archers who endeavor to get advanced in their skill. The archers who hold strong enthusiasm to get higher scores in target practice can keep their single-heartedness. The same can be said in the practice of faith.

But the Founder shared his thought of “a faith with an endless string of goals” with Mitsugoro Ichimura. What could be the reason for the extended thought?

Those believers who set their own personalized goals in their engagement in the practice of faith should be fulfilled. But their attention would be focused only on their own personalized goals and may fail to appreciate some other important elements in their practice of faith. They could limit the perspectives for the practice of faith based on their own personal preferences. Some of those believers who attained their goals in their practice of faith would feel overcome with the sense of self-conceit. And those believers who could not enjoy the fulfillment of attaining their goals may get frustrated and cease to get engaged in the practice of faith.

They should try to fulfill not just personalized goals, but try to have much greater and broader prayers and try to get advanced in their engagement in the practice of faith. Those believers who practice their faith in such a manner will learn to appreciate deeper grateful nature of Kami and become overwhelmed with the sense of deep indebtedness in appreciation.

The Founder, who reached to his closing phase in life, could have shared his thought of “a faith with endless string of goals” with Mitsugoro Ichimura, in contemplation of his life-long work of Toritsugi-Divine Mediation in awe. The message can be an essential element of the religious faith held by the Founder.

No. 103

Practice faith on your own, won't bring divine blessings. But practicing faith with the support of Kami will. (I Shimamura Hachitaro 39 Kyoten page 332)

“Sasete itadaku kokoro” or mindfulness of blessed elements in appreciation for doing anything at all

When I (the Rev. Yasushi Hata) was cleaning the room of the Rev. Yasuji Horio at the Konko Church of Hita in Oita Prefecture, I happened to find a Japanese “sensu” hand-held folding fan placed beside the desk on the floor. The folding fan was used as a writing material. The fan was partially unfolded. My attention was drawn to the message written on the surface of the fan. The Rev. Horio copied teachings of the Founder in his own calligraphic writing. The message on one side read, “わが身がわが自由にならぬものぞ。障子一重がままならぬ人の身ぞ” which is translated into English as “You cannot control your life as you wish” (III Shinkun II-42). On the other side, the message read, “疑いを離れて広き真の大道を開き見よ。わが身は神徳の中に生かされてあり” which is translated into English as follow, “Practice the true way of faith and eliminate doubt. You are allowed to live in the midst of divine virtue” (III Shinkun I-2). In witnessing the writings, I felt deeply impressed that I felt like I could peek into the secret perspectives held by the minister for human existence through his practice of faith.

In today's world, we are inclined to appreciate only materialistic achievements and possessions, such as acquired academic

credentials and deep financial resources. But the truth is that there is nothing we can do through our individual-oriented powers alone. Everything is possible only through the work of Heaven and Earth, the abundant human oriented helpful resources we have built through our human interaction, and helpful elements we get from countless number of people. The foundation of the Konko faith is to learn to appreciate these elements of blessing.

Therefore it would be inappropriate for the believers to say that they practice faith on their own and for their self-oriented fulfillment. If they get engaged in the practice of faith in such a manner, they would never learn to appreciate grateful nature of Kami. Once they learn to appreciate that their lives have been sustained through the work of Kami, they are to be able to appreciate the grateful elements they enjoy knowingly and unknowingly from the ministers, family members and other people. When they reach to this stage of spirituality of being able to appreciate all those helpful elements for them, they are to appreciate the great nature of Kami and are to enjoy blessed lives accordingly.

We can enjoy true happiness. The believers have responsibilities to spread the message to the people in this modern society.

No. 104

Those who believe in Kami are allowed to enjoy themselves in everything they do. Serving at the Hiromae is a pleasure. Merchandising and farming are also pleasures. Everyone between heaven and Earth is delightfully and gratefully receiving pleasures. (II Kondo Fujimori 22 Kyoten page 537-538)

When I (the Rev. Yasushi Hata) was a college student, I had an opportunity to get some spiritual influence from the Rev. Seiichi Yukawa, the founding minister of Konko Church of Ginza in Tokyo. The minister showed there were four basic stages of advancement in the practice of faith.

At the initial stage, the believers get engaged in the practice of faith based on their mind set of “*suru*” or self-centered manner to get engaged in pursuit of faith. It is the stage, “I” is emphasized the most.

At the second stage, the believers get engaged in their practice of faith in exercise of the heart of “*sasete itadaku*” or being mindful that they can get engaged in pursuit of faith through the help of supportive elements that make them possible to get engaged in the practice of faith.

At the third stage, the believers would experience some difficult encounters in which the only choice they would have would be to get resolved the difficulties through their inescapable engagement in the practice of faith. It could be a sort of Kami imposed hardship they have to deal with through the exercise of their own faith in Kami. In Japanese, it could be put into such an expression of “*shinjin saserareru*” or Kami imposes them to practice faith.

At the fourth state, the believers who have experienced struggles in dealing with problems imposed by Kami would learn to appreciate the enjoyment of getting engaged in the practice of faith. The believers who reached this stage can fully appreciate Kami’s work and help in their lives. They would extend their full appreciation for the day spent in work places and services to Kami at the end of the day. They can be fully mindful of the existence of Kami who watches them with love, even while they have to struggle with difficult circumstances. At this stage, the thought of “I am the most important” would cease to exist.

At this stage, they would be able to accept any encounters in acknowledgment that things take place in the loving domain of Kami. They feel like they are enjoying their lives as if they are delightfully and gratefully receiving pleasures.

The Japanese expression of *asobu* or “遊ぶ” found in the quoted message is generally used in such a manner that they get indulged in fulfilment of personal pleasures. But in the quoted message, the expression of “asobu” implies that the believers would be set free from self-centeredness and live with perfect composure.

Although Japan may have enjoyed great economic achievement, the people seem to be driven to keep up with the advancement of the country by some forces. It would be preferable that they would regain the sense of “asobu” in their lives.

Pictures from the New Year’s Day Service

