



## Appreciation for blessings received (*Konnichi made no onrei*)



By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano  
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Due to the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Mochi pounding program held on Sunday, December 31, 2018, we have observed the End of the Year Service on Sunday, December 23, 2018. And the New Year's Day Service was observed on January 1, 2019. The Mochi pounding can be a form of our celebration for the blessings we have enjoyed in closing the year and welcoming the New Year. We can participate in this function in good health, good relations, stable family life, support of the church members, friends and community people who respond to the mochi sale and the good weather condition. They all can be the manifestation of the blessings we have enjoyed through the practice of faith. Some neighbors might complain about the congestion of the traffic because so many people respond for this event. It is overwhelming to witnessing the diversity of people who come. We are grateful we have been able to continue the tradition for the last 27 years without any interruptions. I remember just one year at the beginning phase, we had to pound mochi in the basement room because of the storm. And several years ago, one of the fire burners with two tiers of steamed rice collapsed. One layer of rice was completely unusable. As a contingent response to the situation, we bought another bag of rice and soaked them in hot water for several hours before pounding.

When this time of the year draws near, I think to myself, "Konnichimade no onrei" or extending thanks for any and all blessings we have enjoyed thus far. The implications of "Konnichimade no onrei" could be different from person to person. For some people, it could mean the time span from the birth of humanity into the world. For some people, it could refer to just a day or some days. In general, it could mean the time span between last year and the New Year. It is not just a random act of extending our thanks for fortunate encounters or the blessings received from time to time. Personally, "Konnichimade no onrei" to me means the initiation of my missionary work at Wahiawa from September of 1977. I still remember when both my wife and I were introduced into the church hall, I noticed the ceiling lights in the sanctuary were off. I turned on the light and proceeded into the sanctuary area to extend my first prayer at the altar. Our first impression about life at the church was that everything we needed to get engaged in our missionary work was well prepared. We didn't ask for anything else at the initial stage. From that time on, I have tried to give thanks for the blessings received every day in reminding myself about the concept of "Konnichimade no onrei." If I had ever complained and failed to give thanks even for one day, it would nullify the accumulated practice of "Konnichimade no onrei." Of course, we were just a newly married couple who left the Konko Church of Amagi on the next day of our wedding; we have encountered many ups and downs but never complained about our life. At one occasion, we had just a bottle of "omiki" Japanese rice wine and a pumpkin harvested from the yard linking to the next door neighbor.

I have tried to jot down the names of the people who have ever been introduced to this church in one way or another. Even if some of them have not respond to show up at the church for several years or longer, I still continue to write their names in the daily prayer notebook. The first message I add to each and every believer's name is the message of "Konnichi made no onrei" or extending thanks for the continued enjoyment of the blessings each of us have received. It includes our good health, good relations and good financial standing. Our life become stressful if even one of the three elements I have mentioned is not fulfilled. If we have enjoyed good health, let's try to extend thanks for our good health. If we have enjoyed good human relationships, let's try to extend our thanks for



the relationships. If we have been much blessed financially, or even if we may encounter some stressful situations, as long as we have been enabled to continue our normal life, let's try to extend our thanks. These are the due prayers of thanks to Tenchi Kane No Kami, Our Divine Parent as Konko believers.

The Founder Konko Daijin imparted, "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).

Early in the morning on October 14 (November 24), Kami-Sama imparted, "Those who have faith should not worry about the unexpected. There will be unexpected illnesses not only in summer, but also in winter. No one is aware of the blessings of Heaven and Earth which enable people to live. Kami shall have people become aware of the blessings of Heaven and Earth by having Konko Daijin be born throughout the world where the sun shines, in every country, without exception" (Oshirasegoto Oboecho 26-22). I want to witness the actualization of the message in this hard to manage world.

The year 2019 will mark the 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Establishment of the Konkokyo Religious Faith initiated upon the revelation of the Divine Message to Konko Daijin and His Family on October 21, 1859 (lunar calendar). There will be a special ceremonial service will be held on November 15, 2019 in commemoration of the historic moment for the Konkokyo Religious Organization at the Headquarters Church in Konko Town, Japan. A group of pilgrims from Hawaii will attend the anniversary ceremony as well as related functions scheduled around the anniversary. I highly encourage you to make a once in a lifetime pilgrimage to the Headquarters Church. The experience will help you to deepen your faith in the Konkokyo faith tradition as a whole.

Whenever I think about the Headquarters Church at Konko Town, I always remember an episode that took place while the 4<sup>th</sup> Konko-Sama, the late Rev. Kagamitaro Konko was

serving at the Toritsugi-Mediation Desk. I would like to share the story just for your reference.

A very poor elderly woman who lived day to day with a meager income saved travel funds in hope of making a pilgrimage to see Konko-Sama at the Headquarters Church at Konko Town. One day she saved up enough money to make a pilgrimage. Upon her arrival to see Konko-Sama, Konko-Sama spoke even before she uttered a word by saying, "Kami-Sama has accepted all of your spending for your pilgrimage today. You had purchased a pair of new shoes and new clothes. You also paid for your travel expenses. You also dined at the Tsuchiya restaurant. Kami-Sama has accepted all of your spending as your extended offerings."

I learned this episode soon after both my wife and I started serving at the local church in Wahiawa. What I appreciate the most is the profound meaning of acceptance of what we have forwarded to Kami in appreciation of the blessings received.

The 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Konko Mission of Wahiawa will be observed on Sunday, March 15, 2020. Please keep this day in mind and extend your prayer for a successful anniversary celebration.

## 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 January, 2019

- 1 Tue-New Year's Day Service (9 am)  
6 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)  
13 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)  
20 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (10 am)  
-The Annual General Meeting following the service.  
-New Year's party (till 3:00 p.m.)  
Please bring a minimum \$3 grab- bag  
27 Sun -KMH Women's Gathering at Honolulu Church  
(9 am-11 am) \*No Sunday Service at Wahiawa

## February 2019

- 1 Fri -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)  
3 Sun- Sunday Service (9 am)

## General Meeting

The annual church members meeting will be held on Sunday, January 20, 2019 at around 10:00 a.m. after the regular monthly memorial service to be held at 9:00 a.m. Following the meeting, we will hold the New Year's Party till 3:00 p.m. Please bring your grab-bag item of a minimal value of \$3.00 for the games. Potluck lunch will be served.

## Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility will be made on Friday, January 11, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

## Meetings

KMH Community Engagement and Outreach Committee Meeting will be held at Konko Mission of Honolulu on Thursday, January 17 at 5:30 p.m.

2020 Joint KMH-KCNA Committee meeting will be held at Honolulu Church on Friday, January 25, 2019 at 5:00 p.m.

KMH Board of Trustees Meeting on Saturday, January 26 @ 10:30 a.m. at Honolulu Church.

HCRP Meeting will be held at the Gedatsu Church on Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup> from 1:30 pm.

## Honoring the Mitama Spirits

### January

Owari Kaneshige	1/2/1989
Clarence Olsen	1/3/2013
Paul Akita	1/13/2008
Tama Noguchi	1/17/1985
Alesandro Caraballo	1/17/1985
Mitsuru Miyamoto	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 365, 366 and 367)*

**No. 365: Save one person and you will be a kami to that person. Save ten people and you will become a kami to all ten.** (II Shirakami Shin'ichiro, Kyoten page 588)

### Save one person and you will be a kami to that person.

We have reached the page of 365 out of 400 pages of this book. If we read one page of message a day, we would have spent one whole year to reach this page.

The message given to the Rev. Shin'ichiro Shirakami by the Founder, “Save one person and you will be a kami to that person” sounds so dynamic that the element of solemnity of saving others and a broader perspective of the actualization of kami fused into one.

The message can be interpreted in two manners. One is if a believer saves an individual, that savior would be acknowledged as a kami. The other is that the person who was saved by another individual would perceive the savior as a kami. The first interpretation would be more appropriate in understanding the message.

In the previous page, it was mentioned that there is an inseparable relationship between saving others and becoming a kami. The quoted message shows this inseparable nature of saving others and becoming a kami in more simplified manner. To emphasize that aspect, in the original Japanese message, an adverb “sunawachi” was used. Original Japanese expression “sunawachi” implies “promptly” or “as it is.” If the message is interpreted in accordance with the second meaning of “as it is,” the meaning of the message become more clearer as has been shown in the quoted English translation.

The concept of “becoming a kami” may sound absurd or awesome. But saving others has nothing to do with these feelings. The Founder perceived there is inseparable nature between saving others and becoming a kami. It would be all right for us to pursue to become a kami through our practice of faith.

**No. 366: Practice faith within your own home. Receive blessings from Kami and save others.** (II Kunieda Sangoro 13 Kyoten page 491)

**Practice faith and get blessed first.**

The message was one of the most impressive teachings I found in the newly published Konkokyo Kyoten Scriptures that was issued in commemoration of the centennial memorial of the Founder Konko Daijin. In those days, my primary attention was focused on my inner thought in pursuit of the faith. The message sounded so awakening to me at that instance.

The Founder stated, “Practice faith within your home.” What you have practiced at home should be actualized through getting blessed from Kami and save others in your given circumstances.

The message sounded like a reminder for me about our perception of getting engaged in the practice of faith. In general, we believe that the primary focus of our engagement in the practice of faith is to get fulfilled for the well being of ourselves and our family members. And that should be the reason for our practice of faith. We perceive that only those special believers would be able to save others. It would be making the cause for the end, and could be a big mistake. It could be likened that primary purpose of going to school is to learn. But some people perceive that their primary goal is to go to school. I learned that what I had perceived was somewhat awkward.

In this respect, if a believer enjoys the fulfillment of getting blessed, they should not just get indulged in getting blessed. But they should acknowledge the blessings received as coming from Kami to show examples for others to get blessed through the practice of faith and save others.

It would be appropriate to think that getting engaged in the practice of faith for the sake of saving others; the blessings received could be granted for the intent of saving others; even our own existence and the salvation of the family could mean to save others.

**No. 367: Konko Daijin speaks about the unlimited divine blessings he receives from Kami. Passing on Konko Daijin’s words without changing their meaning and helping others to practice true faith is to show appreciation to Kami. This will make you a kami. You should not consider yourself above Kami, even if you become one.** (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 61-1, 2, 3 Kyoten page789)

**Spread the faith and become a kami.**

Spreading the messages of the Founder correctly is also the way to become a kami.

As has been discussed in the page 82, “Konko Daijin tells how he received blessings from Tenchi Kane No Kami” (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 20-1), the subject of this page is the same, “Konko Daijin speaks about the unlimited divine blessings he received from Kami.”The source of divine blessings the Founder Konko Daijin shared existed within Tenchi Kane No Kami. It could be perceived that Kami spoke through the Founder as a means of communication to convey divine messages.

If a believer passes on the messages of the Founder without changing their meanings and helping others to practice faith is to show appreciation to Kami. In a sense, it could be an actualization of divine intent. Kami would be fulfilled. It could be the best way to give thanks to Kami for the blessings received.

As has been discussed in the previous page of 366, the messages we will pass on to others could be perceived as a blessed message from Kami. The believers should not hold the blessed message to themselves alone in comfort. But they should try to get blessed through the actualization of the messages for themselves and try to share their blessed episodes to others who also would get blessed. The divine messages would perpetuate in influencing others one after another.

In this manner, it is a must for the believers to appreciate the divine messages without any doubts. But it would be equally vital that they would try to pass on the messages without changing their meanings and helping others to practice true faith. It could be of no help just to deliver those messages to others without conviction.

Only believers who practice true faith in actualization of the messages would be able to pass on the messages without changing their meanings and helping others to practice true faith. The message given to Kobayashi Saisaburo, “People should broaden the way of faith. Kami will grant blessings” (Kyoten II Kobayashi Saizaburo 13) also referred to the same subject.

