



## Happy New Year 2022!!



By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano  
Head Minister

The first surprise both my wife and I have experienced in welcoming the New Year's 45 years ago was the tradition of the fireworks in the entire state of Hawaii. The sounds of the explosive fireworks and the smoke filling the air was incredible for the Japanese people who traditionally make their first visitations to the temples and shrines in gratitude and expectations as the New Year started. Japanese people usually flock to the shrines and temples to extend their prayers in hoping for a happy and prosperous year. They welcomed the arrival of the new year quite differently from the people in Hawaii and any other countries. It has been believed that the sounds of the fireworks and the smoke chase away the evils that could disrupt our lives. I came to practice this tradition with my family. When our children were young, they really enjoyed the fireworks. In the early morning on New Year's Day, my children would wake up and scavenge the neighborhood for any un-popped fireworks or duds that seemed unusual and cool to and they would excitedly show them to us. They would also purchase fireworks for their own enjoyment when New Year's was getting near. In consideration of the health and hazardous elements of the fireworks, the tradition has been banned, unless you get a permit. However, people have been finding ways to obtain their aerial fireworks that light up the night sky. We have been able to continue to enjoy the panoramic fireworks displays by our neighborhood.

The Founder Konko Daijin expressed a unique thought about New Year's Day. He said, "For faith, daily renewal is most important. Live each day with the same happy heart you have on New Year's Day. When the sun sets, think that it is the last day of the year. When the sun rises, think that it is New Year's Day. If you are happy every day, there will be no discord in the family" (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 35).

I pray each one of you a Happy and Worthy year in 2022.

## The Konkokyo Non-violence Peace Net-Japan

This organization live-streamed the 20th Konkokyo Peace Prayer for the Gathering on December 17, 2021.

**Home page:** <https://konko-nonwar-peace.jimdosite.com>

*In Japan there is a Konkokyo community group named "Konkokyo Hisen Heiwanetto" (Konko Non-violence and Peace Activity Network). The autonomous group has been promoting peace through the religious belief of the Konko Religious Organization that denies violence and fighting. One of the activities is an annual observance of the "World Peace Prayer based on the practice of the Konko faith." In the past the program has been observed on the day of "Fukyou Kōrōsha Hōtokusai Service" (The annual service in honor of those dedicated for the promotion of the Konko Faith) at Headquarters Church at Konko Town in Okayama. The function was held at the "Shutokuden Hall" and some 150 people attended. But in 2020 year and 2021, in dealing with the effects of COVID-19, the meeting was a live streaming on YouTube. The year 2021 marked the 20th anniversary of the peace gathering." I was given the opportunity to be a guest on the program. The following is an English translation of my original Japanese speech script.*

## **Konko Mission Peace Activity in Hawaii**

*By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano*

I am Yasuhiro Yano. I have been the residential Head Minister of Konko Mission of Wahiawa which is located on the Island of Oahu, Hawaii for 45 years since 1977.

I accepted a request from the Rev. Shinji Yamada recently to share my personal experiences of my interfaith peace activity involvements in Hawaii. This year marks the 80th year since the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese Imperial Navy in 1941 and 20<sup>th</sup> year anniversary since the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York on 9/11/2011.

My very first exposure to an interfaith peace activity dates back some 50 years ago. I used to go to the Konko Church of Tokiwadai in Tokyo when I lived in Tokyo. I met the Rev. Michio Miyake, the former Head Minister of Konko Church of Tokiwadai. He was deeply involved in his peace activity with the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP). He met with the Pope and traveled around the globe for his mission. I also met the Rev. Toshio Miyake, the father of the Rev. Michio Miyake. He was also traveling around the world as one of the head ambassadors of the WCRP, which had its headquarters in New York. He sometimes visited the Konko Church of Tokiwadai. I had the privilege of listening to his zealous speeches as one of the leaders who advocated the importance of interfaith communication. I have never met Konko ministers who had been directly involved in interfaith peace activities like

these two exceptional ministers. The church believers also sincerely supported their activities. I still remember the spiritual awaking in witnessing these ministers being involved in peace activities.

I was trained as a Konko minister at the Konko Church of Amagi in Fukuoka for three years. I got married to my wife, Reiko at the church I trained at and departed for our missionary work in Hawaii. We arrived in Hawaii on September of 1977. For the time being, I had only been involved in my missionary work at the designated church, and had no thoughts about interfaith peace activities at all. At the time of the 50th Anniversary of the Pearl Harbor Attack in 1991, the Rev. Michio Miyake and his entourage of several believers from Tokyo made a visit to Hawaii. The purpose of his visitation was to hold a memorial service at Pearl Harbor and at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl. He used the expression for the memorial service as "Owabi no Saiten" or the Memorial Service held in deep apologies for those people who lost their lives. I assisted him for the services. He gave me an opportunity to get involved in my interfaith peace activity for the first time since I came to Hawaii some 14 years later.

He coordinated with his friends and various people involved in WCRP in Hawaii, such as Risshokoseikai, Gedatsu Church, Church of Perfect Liberty, Buddhist sects, Christian churches and so forth. In 1992, the WCRP Hawaii Chapter was established.

One of the main activities of the organization has been the annual interfaith prayer. The first Peace Prayer organized by WCRP Hawaii Chapter was held in the Diamond Head Crater Park. About 50 people from different religious faiths and peace oriented organizations joined the service. In the center of the circle, we erected a hand-made peace pole inscribed with many languages. Each representative of the organizations extended their thoughts and prayers. The annual peace prayer was held alternatively at the beach side and the mountain side.

Right after the terrorist attack in New York on September 11, 2001, WCRP coordinated to hold an emergency gathering which was called with the theme "Rejecting Terror, Promoting Peace with Justice" at the main office in New York. Three members from Hawaii attended the meeting. One of the main parts of the program was to visit the site of where the twin towers once stood. I still vividly remember the remains of the destruction and the smell that follows after buildings were burned.

In 2002, after the terror attacks in New York, we changed the organizational name from WCRP Hawaii Chapter to a more locally oriented Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace (HCRP).

In 2003, affiliated organizations of WCRP known as the USCRP (The United States Conference of Religions for Peace) organized an interfaith symposium at the Central Union Church in Honolulu. The theme of the symposium was "Economic Disparity Among Us."

Konko Mission of Honolulu served as a venue for the peace prayers held in 2018 and 2019. Every peace prayer was attended with approximately 60 to 70 people. Every year we have chosen appropriate themes. Each representative extended their prayers along with music and dances. This inter-faith

movement has been quite unique because of the exhibited harmony and messages for peace among different religious traditions.

From 2020, the activities of HCRP has been halted due to the restrictive circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic. The HCRP has been in operation for over 25 years till today. I could be one of the remaining founding members of the organization. Through my engagement into the inter-faith activities, I have many opportunities to encounter many people, different religious faiths, various peace-oriented organizations with different perspectives of peace and religious faiths. I was able to appreciate the great diversity for peace, deities, and people. One of the things I learned through my engagement in the inter-faith activity has been the conviction that we have to accept the differences as they exhibit in their lives. I live as believer of the Konko Faith. As such, my interaction with others and the relationships I have developed with individuals and organizations have been very meaningful to me. It would be meaningless to try to convert people into changing what they believe in. I believe it is important to appreciate the diversity of people and beliefs.

I have been convinced that the message given by the fourth Konko-Sama, the late Rev. Kagamitaro Konko is the best way to interact with the interfaith community. He advocated the message "Live as a Konko believer." A Konko believer performs day to day duties at a church and engage in activities faithfully. That in turn contributes in promoting peace at home, in the nation and in the world. That spirit was clearly stated in the Japanese verse that reads, "世話になる すべてに礼を言う心 平和生み出す心と言はん" or "The heart that gives thanks for anything and everything is the heart that promotes peace." Whenever I extend my prayer for peace, I always quote this message in my prayer. I also quote the teaching of the Founder, "Those who practice faith should feel gratitude even after sitting and resting on a tree stump in the mountains" (II Unknown 23).

The Pearl Harbor attack by Japan spread unprecedented global effects. More than 120,000 Japanese-oriented people, including some American citizens of Japanese ancestry were incarcerated at many internment camps in the United States right after the attack. It was inconceivable for many Japanese oriented people who would have to grow to contribute to the American society. The attack on Pearl Harbor was such an unimaginable encounter.

In the Konko Faith community in Hawaii, on the day of the attack, December 7, 1941, the Rev. Masayuki Kodama of the Konko Mission of Honolulu, the Rev. Yoshifusa Nishida of the Konko Mission Hilo, the Rev. Santaro Sonoda of the Konko Mission of Waipahu were approached by the FBI and sent to the internment camps on the Mainland. One week later, the Rev. Haruko Takahashi of the Konko Mission of Wahiawa was

arrested and held at the internment camp in Sand Island and later transferred to the Honouliuli Camp.

The operation of Japanese oriented places of worship were prohibited immediately. The use of the Japanese language was also suppressed. Japanese language schools were all closed

down under the Martial Law. The prolonged effects of these prohibitions have affected the operations of Japanese oriented activities till this day in one way or another.

Despite the imposed hardships upon the Japanese oriented communities in Hawaii and the Continental United States, it is a fact that we were able to perpetuate the operations of the Konko faith in the United States of America in the last 95 years. I am grateful to be able to contribute in the continuation of the Konko Mission of Wahiawa. I am also grateful for the continuation of the faith in Hawaii and the Konko Churches of North America for all these years. It is "Okagesama de" (The Grace of Kami) for the existence of the Japanese oriented communities and the contributions of those who have sacrificed their lives for the future generations and the permissive systems of the government, economy and the society in the United States of America.

Thank you for your cooperation.

## Founder, Konko-Sama Said . . .

Speak ill of no religion. Everyone is a child of Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama. Having different religions is the same as having children in different occupations. A parent may have a carpenter, a plasterer, a gambler, and a merchant as his children. People may belong to different religions such as Tendai and Hokke, but they are all children of Tenchi No Kami-Sama. We all have our personal preferences. For example, some people like soba noodles, while others prefer udon noodles. Do not criticize people's preferences. For example, some people like soba noodles, while others prefer udon noodles. Do not criticize peoples' preferences. Everyone around the world is a child of Tenchi No Kami-Sama. The world is a full of Tenchi No Kami-Sama's blessings. Not having these blessings is like not having air to breathe. So without divine blessings, people cannot live, not even for a minute. (II Sato Mitsujiro 14)

## Bulletin Board

### Church Services for January 2022

1 Sat -New Year's Day Service (9 am)  
2 Sun -No Sunday Service  
9 Sun -Monthly Svc for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)  
16 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)  
23 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (10 am)  
30 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

## 30th Annual Mochi Pounding

Despite the threat of COVID-19 and the severe weather warnings, we could hold the 30th annual mochi pounding on December 30, 2021. We pounded 130 pounds of rice but many people enjoyed the mochi produced in the traditional *usu* mortar and *kine* wooden mallets. Thank you all the people who have helped and supported this event.

## Congratulations

Nicholas Furusho, the first son of Mr. and Mrs. Randy Furusho graduated with a BAS Degree in Computer Science at University of Hawaii West Oahu in December 2021.

## February 2022

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

## General Meeting and New Year's Party

We will hold the annual general meeting and New Year's party on Sunday, January 23, 2022 after the monthly memorial service that will be held at 10 am.

## The Church Doors are Open

We welcome you to make a visit to our church and church services. But please continue to wear your face mask for Covid-19 precautionary measures. You also can make an appointment for your personal visit to church anytime of the day. All services will also be recorded via Facebook Live and uploaded on YouTube as well.

## Konko Missions in Hawaii

•The Community Engagement and Outreach Committee initiated the bi-monthly KMH Kyoten study group via Zoom. The main reference book will be "Voice of the Universe." Please join the study session and deepen your understanding about the messages of the Founder.

-January 5 (Wed at 5 pm)

-January 19 (Wed at 5 pm)

•Community Engagement and Outreach Committee meeting will be held on Friday, January 14, 2021 at 2-3pm (ZOOM)

•Board Meeting on Saturday, January 22 at Honolulu Church or Zoom (10:30 am-3:00 pm)

## 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 Miyamoto	1/20/2007
Tsuneko Takahashi	1/24/1997
Chikiko Hayashida	1/24/1940
Marc Perrone, Jr. (MJ)	1/27/2010
Karen Matsuoka	1/29/2012



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

## The Life of the Founder

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.

No. 13, Page 39, 40

### (5) Renovation of the residential house Obstacles of the Days and Directions

Bunji was informed of a sale of the main house of Takejiro Aoki who lived at the neighboring village on December 30 of the same year (1849). The housing used for the seven family members was limited. Bunji quickly responded to make a deal of purchasing the offered housing sale. But the tradition of the Days and Directions was one of the biggest obstacles that prevented a smooth transaction. Bunji responded to seek a consultation about the matter with Village Head, Shiemon Ono who was the child of Mitsuemmon Ono and succeeded the position of Village Head. Shiemon was well versed in the analysis of the Days and Directions like his father. Shiemon approved the housing project. Bunji instantly responded to make the deal of purchasing the house. But the following year, on January 4, 1850, Shiemon visited Mitsuemmon Ono at his Grand Village Head Office located at Ido. At that time, Shiemon related him about the matter of the Bunji's housing project. Mitsuemmon responded to the situation and analyzed the Days and Directions. He related to his son, "This year is the Year of Dog. Bunji also was born in the year of the Dog. He must not undertake construction." Shiemon could hardly comprehend the details of the result. Mitsuemmon's analysis of the Days and Directions was beyond Shiemon's comprehension. Mitsuemmon stated there was a major obstacle to proceed in the project. Since Bunji responded to purchase the house without any consultations of the Days and Directions, he was confused when he was informed of the obstacle. Bunji asked Mitsuemmon to find a way to proceed with the project at any cost. Mitsuemmon responded to Bunji's earnest request and made another extensive research of the matter. He concluded that there was a way to avoid the curse of the Konjin deity such as Hyobi Konjin and explained in details. Bunji was advised to build a small shed and move to the temporary housing and move to the newly renovated house after completion. To accommodate the plan, Bunji had to endure some prolonged period of time of inconvenience at the temporary housing. Bunji decided to move into the temporary housing with Makiemon who was to inherit the household after Bunji. There could be a loop hole even in such a restrictive tradition of the Days and Directions. One of the popular ways to avoid such a long time of inconvenience was to spend a few days at in a

temporary house and move out of the house and move to another place later on. But Bunji was different from ordinary people in this respect. Since Bunji once insisted to ask Mitsuemmon to re-examine the Days and Directions for his own personal reasons, he was convinced to follow the instructions of the consultation faithfully which complies with the heart of the Konjin deity and as a responsible individual.

### Death of Makiemon, the second son

Bunji and Makiemon moved into the temporary housing in March. About two months later, on May 10, the second son, Makiemon got sick. His condition deteriorated day after day. In the past, Bunji experienced deep sorrows in dealing with the passing of two of his children. Bunji quickly responded to seek medical help and asked the doctor to treat his sick son and did whatever he could do to take care of him. On May 12, the doctor said there would be no worry at all. But on that evening, he developed a sudden high fever and suffered a great deal. The following day, the doctor pronounced, "This time, your son's condition is acute." That was just the opposite of the prognosis the day before. Everyone panicked. The relatives, the faith-oriented community people responded to make an extreme prayer of "Hadaka-mairi" or a visitation to temples and shrines in nakedness. But their extended prayers ended up in vain. On March 13, Makiemon, who was to inherit the household after Bunji passed away at the age of nine. Bunji pondered, "Did my housing project offend Konjin? Should I have given up on the project? Was my son a sacrifice for the housing project?" Bunji couldn't ask anybody, and nobody could respond to him. But once he proceeded with the housing project, he was determined to proceed as planned.

### 2021 Mochitsuki Pictures

