



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. 7, July 1, 2015

5th Ohana Camp

By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister

The 5th Summer Ohana Camp at Camp Erdman initiated by the Konko Mission of Wahiawa was carried out successfully on the last Saturday, and Sunday, June 20 and 21 with much enrichment, fun and no troubles.

I feel grateful that we have been enabled to continue this annual educational outreach program for the past five years thanks Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama, the church members and sheer determination and prayers for activating an educational program. The programs we have held so far can be counted as an outreach program because many participants are not familiar with the Konkokyo faith tradition. However, the primary purpose of the program is providing an opportunity to learn some basic elements of the Konkokyo faith tradition for the people who have interests in the faith. So far, I have witnessed that those who enjoyed the annual program have also absorbed some vital elements of the Konko faith tradition.

I have placed the camp program booklet for the past five years on my prayer desk. And from time to time, I look at the booklet in finding out what we have done. I have kept writing the names of those participants from the first meeting in the prayer notebook called "Gokinen-cho." Some of them continue to attend the annual functions and have responded to many church functions. Some of them respond to some church functions from time to time. Whether they would continue to get engaged in the church functions or not, I continue to pray for their well being.

What I have been witnessing in the last five years is that people have shown interest in our program and the usual number of participants is around 16 to 17, a very good size of people for this program. Some of the participants are totally new to the Konkokyo tradition. This year, more than half of the participants are Edna's friends and their family members. They really enjoyed the program and expressed their interest in helping with next year's program. They have responded to the program in a positive manner.

At the first meeting held in 2011, the guest speaker was the Rev. Dr. Todd Zenji Takahashi of Konko Mission of Honolulu. He has been our designated speaker for the annual Ohana Camp thereafter. We learned about "ABC" of Konko faith tradition, such as, prayers, Goshinmai (sacred rice), Tamagushi (offering of a sacred ever-green twig in prayer), Goshinsui (sacred water), Goshinpan (offering of cooked rice in appreciation of blessed nature of rice) and so forth."

The theme for the second Ohana Camp held in 2012 was, "Toritsugi-Mediation." The theme for the third meeting held in 2013 was "Blessed Food." The theme for the fourth gathering held in 2014 was, "Blessed Water." And the fifth Ohana Camp was focused on "Blessed Earth." So far, we learned to be appreciative for the foods that sustain our lives. We have learned to be grateful for the water that sustains all life. And this year, we have learned that the earth is a divine motherly body that nurtures all living things, including human beings. Those who were new to the Konko faith tradition learned the blessed nature of food, water, and the earth. Extending our mindfulness for those everyday elements we may have taken for granted and showing acknowledgment and gratitude to the provider, Tenchi Kane No Kami is the fundamental elements we should learn to develop as beloved children who are allowed to live in the midst of all these blessings.

This year's theme for the program was "Blessed Earth." The Rev. Todd Takahashi, main speaker made such an impressive presentation about the theme. The participants could relate themselves to the theme in personal ways.

When I think of the theme, "Blessed Earth" I always remember the legendary episode of the Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake, the founding minister of Konko Church of Amagi. At the initial visit to see the Rev. Matsuhei Katsura of Konko Church of Kokura in Fukuoka, the Rev. Yasutake experienced a totally surprising spiritual awakening in responding to the story shared by the Rev. Katsura.

He experienced a spiritual jolting when he learned about the grateful and infinite virtuous work of the earth he had never been aware of in the past. Instead of showing gratitude for the blessed nature of the earth, he regarded the ground as something dirty and filthy. He felt ground-shaking astonishment for what he had done for the blessed earth. He became awakened to his own irreverence toward the earth in the past. When he was young, he engaged in irreverent acts toward the blessed earth, such as spitting on the ground, urinating on the ground and so forth. At that instance of knowing his own bad deeds toward the earth, he actually encountered Kami, the Divine Parent at that initial encounter with the Rev. Matsuhei Katsura. He experienced a spiritual jolt—in Japanese they say, "*Ashimoto kara tori ga tatsu*" a situation in which he experienced instant spiritual awakening. That's how astounded he was by the nature of that teaching. It is said that the Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake kept reminding himself of the spiritual awakening he experienced and tried to share his thoughts with others throughout his life.

1928, the founding minister of Konko Mission of Wahiawa, the Rev. Haruko Takahashi developed an overwhelming sense of gratefulness for the blessings she enjoyed. The Rev. Haruko Takahashi shared her thought of being awakened to the blessed nature of the earth in "Futabanotsudoi" (A publication issued in commemoration

of graduation from the Konkokyo Kokyusho Seminary, 1934)

That evening, she took me to attend the Konko Mission of Honolulu. I believe it could be a deep divine arrangement for me. On that particular evening, the monthly service was in progress, and the minister was delivering a sermon. While I was listening to him, I felt understood that I had committed grave irreverence against Kami without my knowledge in the past. I felt overwhelmed with the feeling of extending my apologies for the wrongs I had committed unknowingly. The following day, I attended church and listened to the minister. My initial response to the messages I received from the minister was that I shed my tears in awe for the great divine work of the earth which I had not been aware of at all till that moment in life. At that moment, I felt a ray of sunlight penetrate my eyes. From that day on, my visual condition became improved miraculously. I was overwhelmed with the feeling of joy, happiness and gratefulness for the apparent blessing and shed tears.

In one week, my vision returned to normal. I was liberated from the visual irregularities. I wrote this matter to my parents. They didn't pay much attention to my statement. At one time, I had an opportunity to travel (to the Big Island) and returned home. The moment they witnessed me, they exploded their feeling of happiness and shed tears in gratefulness. I shared many blessed episodes of the Konko faith involvement with the family members. The family members all understood the grateful nature of the faith and have tried to pursue the faith altogether. Through great blessings I have enjoyed, I am overwhelmed with the feeling of thankfulness and gratefulness that I have enrolled at the Konkokyo Kokyusho Seminary in this manner through deep divine arrangement.

In this manner, the everyday common elements, such as food, water, the earth have vital meanings in the practice of Konko faith. We hope to explore those elements in pursuit of the faith through our annual Ohana Camp as long as we can continue them.

Personally, I have a great wish for our 10th Ohana Camp. To send even one individual to Amagi Church to experience the Japanese culture and the faith that they have to share.



Konko-Sama Says . . .

“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 evidence 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 July 2015

- 1 Wed -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 5 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-Mrs. Wanda Tamashiro of Waipahu Church will make a presentation for her endeavor of creating a Konko faith community women's club
- 12 Sun -Monthly Service, Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
- 19 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
- 26 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service &
-Back-to-School Service (9 am)

August 2015

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

Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace

The next monthly meeting will be held on Monday, July 27, 2015 at the Gedatsu Church at 1:30 p.m.

Monthly Volunteer Activity

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

KMH Ministers' Gathering

The Rev. Junichi Watanabe of Konko Church of Habikino will make a presentation for the local minister on Friday, July 31, 2015 at the Konko Mission of Honolulu.

Kakaako Ehimemaru Memorial Clean up

The Ehime Kenjinkai members will conduct a regular clean up of the Kak'aako Ehimemaru Memorial on Saturday, July 25 at 9:00 a.m.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

July

Shimeno Iwasa	7/1/1966
Randy Yamamoto	7/5/2014
Yasuo Hayashida	7/5/1998
Masao Yoshihara	7/12/2002
Rev. Yoshie Yoshino	7/21/2005
Miyamoto Asa Iratsume	7/23/1933
May Shimaō	7/30/2004

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 119, 120 and 121)

No. 119

Practicing faith is the same as learning. It progresses step by step. You cannot become a teacher immediately.

(III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 62-2 Kyoten page 789)

You cannot become a teacher instantly.

Through the message, “Practicing faith is the same as learning” the Founder seemed to have encouraged us that we need uninterrupted effort in making advancement of our faith in Kami.

But the following line states, “You cannot become a teacher immediately” can be interpreted in two different meanings. The quoted message derived from the original message in

“Jinkyukyogoroku” that reads, “Konko Daijin said, ‘Practicing faith is the same as learning. It progresses step-by-step. No one can become a teacher immediately.’ Some people pretend to have the ability to heal people through their own prayers. They use Kami for self-promotion, which disgraces kami. They not only make mistakes themselves, they also cause others to make mistakes, misleading people. Even though they are called ‘ministers,’ they are not special people. After all, they are merely children of Kami” (III Jinkyukyogoroku 45).

In this manner, the Founder warned people that we should not become conceited.

The other way to interpret the message is based on the teaching, the Founder gave, “An old proverb tells us, ‘Let others do as well as yourself, but excel more than others.’ Therefore, when you practice faith in Kami, you should fully receive divine blessings for yourself first. Then, you should help others. Instead of letting followers practice traditional religious disciplines like all-night vigils, let them receive divine blessings while sleeping peacefully. Practicing faith is the same as learning done by elementary school students. It progresses step by step. You cannot become a teacher immediately.’ Konko Daijin practiced faith so that others would not suffer, and as a result everyone is now able to receive divine blessings, even in their sleep. This is why we should not forget his efforts. If you receive divine blessings, you should help others receive divine blessings. This will fulfill Kami’s wishes” (III Jinkyukyogoroku 39). When we get engaged in the practice of faith, we should be mindful of the contributions made by the Founder who underwent rigorous spiritual trainings for the sake of the beloved children of Kami. It could be the Founder’s prayer that those who get engaged in the practice of faith also try to help others in the same manner as the Founder did.

No. 120

Practicing patience for a thousand days is necessary to achieve any goal. If you continue to practice faith for a thousand days, you will become more appreciative. However, it is also the time when some people begin to lose their faith. Faith is not true unless you become more thankful year after year. (III Jinkyukyogoroku 156 Kyoten page 870)

A thousand days of “Shugyo” practice

The Founder stated, “Practicing faith for thousand days.” A thousand days is approximately three years. The Founder warned us that when we get engaged in the practice of faith for three years as a basic phase without interruption, we would be able to become more appreciative, also would begin to lose our faith. When we get acquainted with basic elements of practicing faith, we are likely to take things for granted and lose our attentiveness.

The Rev. Tokusaburo Hata, the founding minister of Konko Church of Tokyo, was born at Fushimi in Kyoto, and served as a Toritsugi-Mediator at the place. When he expressed his determination to get engaged in his missionary work in Tokyo, the local church congregation responded to try to keep him in

Kyoto. The Rev. Hata persuaded the congregation by saying, “I will go to Tokyo to study for three years.” Then the believers asked him, “What if you would not be able to come back to Kyoto after three years?” The Rev. Hata responded, “If I would not be able to fulfill my endeavor in three years, I would extend to stay another three years. They say that they would try to fulfill their endeavors in the first three years, then in the second three year term and another three years.” They really missed the departure of their minister from their church.

The Rev. Hata might work hard to fulfill his endeavor in Tokyo for three years. Mr. Nagasane Motoda became initiated in the practice of faith soon after the Rev. Hata began his missionary work in Tokyo. Mr. Motoda once served as imperial tutor to the Emperor Meiji. Three year later, he passed away at the age of 74. He might have lived up to his given life span. The Rev. Hata related the matter to Konko-Shijin-Sama (second spiritual head of the Konko Religion). In responding to the extended thought, Konko-Shijin-Sama made a short remark, “これもこれか” (koremo koreka).

The Rev. Hata interpreted the expressed remark in a negative manner that Konko-Shijin-Sama regretted the endeavor of the Rev. Hata in Tokyo. Then the Rev. Hata developed a conviction that someday he wants to hear words of commendation from Konko-Shijin-Sama who would say, “You have achieved this much of accomplishment.” He expresses his conviction to others and devoted in his missionary work so hard. He contributed in building branch churches in North-east regions and North America. Rev. Hata composed a Japanese verse, “ふしごとこのびるかあはれ若竹の力をおのがこころともがな” that can be roughly translated into English, “I should keep my heart strong in the same manner as a young bamboo tree achieves powerful growth at each joint.”

No. 121

In practicing faith, the older you get, the more virtuous you become. If you practice faith, your gratitude will increase with each passing year. (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 55 Kyoten page 788)

The older you get, the more virtuous you become.

The quoted message is a partial excerpt from the original message given to Mitsugoro Ichimura. The message reads, “While you are young, you are asked to do work which pays wages. But when you get older, you won’t be asked to do such work. In practicing faith, the older you get, the more virtuous you become” (I Ichimura Mitsugoro 2-67). In today’s society, the issues pertaining to the life after retirement are quite serious. The Founder related, “In practicing faith, the older you get, the more virtuous you become.” The message sounds like an encouragement for us. We want to pursue the faith in such a manner as the Founder stated, “If you practice faith, your gratitude will increase with each passing year” (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 55).

At the Konko Church of Tokyo, there was a dedicated believer, named Mr. Akiyuki Suzuki, who served as “Shinto-soudai” or a

lay believer representative of the church congregation. He enjoyed his long life till the age of 99. When he was young, he served as an instructor at the school for merchant marines and became a captain of a merchant ship and sailed across the oceans. After that, he got engaged in operating businesses one after another. His endeavor for life never stopped growing. Even if he encountered some difficulties in his business, he always kept a smile on his face and never complained.

In his later years, he published a memoir in which he expressed his deep gratitude for being able to serve Kami-Sama in many ways. He always renewed his thoughts of gratitude throughout his life.

He had the air of confidence in pursuit of the faith, and was admired not only by his own family members, but also many other people at large.

On his death-bed, a sheet of paper titled, “自戒” or “Self-reflection” was placed. The message reads, “1) I cannot do anything at all with my own power alone at this condition. I shall never forget my indebtedness to my family members who have helped me. 1) But there can be one thing I can do for others. I am enabled to extend my prayers for others and I shall never give up doing what I can still do.”

Congratulations to the Rev. Yasuhiro Yano (Head Minister of the Konko Mission of Wahiawa) for being selected for the United Japanese Society of Hawaii’s Outstanding Achievement Award for significant contributions to the Ehime Kenjin-kai. This year coincides with his 40th year of ministerial ordainment and service to Konkokyo. We are very proud of you!

-Edna Yano

