



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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Thank you Yoshino Sensei

The following is a speech script delivered at the 10th Day Memorial Service for the late Rev. Masahiko Yoshino officiated by the Rev. Yasuhiro Yano at the Konko Mission of Honolulu on Sunday, May 19, 2013 .

*By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister of Konko Mission of Wahiawa*

As you may know the Rev. Masahiko Yoshino, head minister of Konko Mission of Honolulu passed away on Thursday, May 9, 2013. He was 82 years old. On Monday, May 13, the Michiyoshi Yasutake from Amagi Church came to conduct the “Shuusai” or so-called “Senrei Sai” at the Hosoi Mortuary, and the following day, on May 14, the funeral service at the Honolulu Church. And 10 days has already passed since his passing. We have observed the 10th Day Memorial Service for the late Rev. Masahiko Yoshino today. I am not sure I should have responded to officiate today’s memorial service. But I thought it might be the request of Yoshino-Sensei to conduct today’s memorial service through Sugako-Sensei. I feel honored and humbled indeed to have received this opportunity.

The last time when I met Yoshino Sensei was at the Kuakini Hospital around the time of the Grand Service of the Honolulu Church in April. I thought this meeting could be the last time I would ever see him because of his deteriorating condition. But he survived about a month longer since then. He used to say he would live up to over 103 years old like his mother did. It could be the time for him to depart from his physical form and transform into a spiritual being as Mitama no Kami.

There are many episodes I would like to share with you about Yoshino Sensei, but I would like to share with you some of the episodes that show his inner most spirituality he acquired throughout his religious life as a Konko minister.

Ever since I have been admitted to the Konko Church of Amagi for my religious training some 38 years ago, he was the most senior student minister or Shugyosei, who helped the late Rev. Fumio Yasutake to guide and educate the young student ministers to advance their religious endeavors. He witnessed hundreds of young and old Shugyosei come and go for their spiritual training during his 32 years of service at the Amagi Church. It could have been a totally unexpected twist of turn in his life that he had to give up his established prestigious position as the most trusted minister at the Amagi Church and followed the instruction of the head minister of Amagi Church to move to Hawaii to take care of the Honolulu Church, where the Rev.

Kikue Kodama alone could hardly manage the operation of the church in 1981. He became agonized in his decision making for his move to Honolulu; despite the fact he lived in such a manner as to accept any instruction from the Oyasensei as a divine instruction. But anyway he came to Hawaii with Sugako-Sensei in October of 1981. In 1994, the Rev. Fumio Yasutake, the second Head Minister of the Amagi Church was stricken with a terminal stage of lung cancer and he was pronounced he would live only 500 days at the most by the doctor. At that time the church observed the 90th Anniversary Celebration of the church. Under the circumstance, I felt determined that I should bring all my family members to meet him in person for that auspicious occasion. But we had limited financial resources. It would be impossible for us to make a trip. So I made a request to get a loan from the Amagi Church which has a special loan program for the student ministers who once underwent religious training at the church. At that time, the Rev. Yoshino expressed his encouragement and support for the expressed thought of making a visit to see the minister with all of my family members. I simply felt I should let our children to see this great minister in person and be included in the prayer of the minister. I wanted them to get exposed to the so-called “honmon” or a genuine religious person I identified in the Rev. Fumio Yasutake. They say the only way a person can develop the knowledge to identify fake from authentic is to get exposed to the real thing and know the elements of genuine items, such as Japanese swords. Ordinary people may find little meaning in that endeavor of seeing a person for such intent. My wife was hesitating to make a pilgrimage in such a manner, but I thought this could be the last occasion we would ever see him in good health, I wanted my children to get exposed to this minister for their own sake. Yoshino sensei related that there would be no such person who would ever make a visit to see him in such a way as we did.

In 1995, the following year of the anniversary celebration, I sent both David and Rodney to stay at the Amagi Church for about three months during the summer vacation to let them get exposed to Oyasensei, the Rev. Fumio Yasutake as a trial and for their exposure to this great religious figure we have admired. David was a senior and Rodney was a sophomore at Leilehua High School. At that occasion, we somehow had just enough money to send them to Amagi.

The next year, in 1996, after the passing of the Rev. Fumio Yasutake in December of 1995, David responded to our prayer and went to the Amagi Church upon his graduation from high school and spent three years in religious training. We could manage to send him off. But all of the expenses while he stayed in Japan were provided by the Amagi church, including some stipends. While David was in Amagi, Rodney graduated from high school and he also agreed to go to the Amagi Church for training. But that time, we were very short of cash. I asked the Rev. Yoshino for some financial help for the airfare. He was the only person we could ever ask for such a request. He showed a great deal of support for sending our sons to the Amagi Church. We simply responded to the expressed thought of the Rev.

Fumio Yasutake. While I was in Amagi, he used to say that we should help our children to become Konko ministers and encouraged us to send our children to the Amagi Church for religious training. Both David and Rodney returned from the Amagi Church after three years of training in Japan. In exchange, our daughter Edna went to the church for training after graduation for two years. This time we could manage to send her to Japan. It took six years for three of our children to complete their training at the Amagi Church. During the six year cycle, I sent them my weekly English speech scripts I made via Fax machine.

Yoshino Sensei acquired the most treasured element as a Konko minister, the solid trust from the Rev. Fumio Yasutake, his dearest Oyasensei, the spiritual mentor through his unconditional receptiveness of the messages and instructions rendered by this great spiritual figure throughout his life at the Amagi Church. The Rev. Fumio Yasutake used to express his solid confidence in Yoshino Sensei in such manners, "*Masahiko nara Daijyoubu, Masahiko Tanomuzo*" or "I have solid trust in Masahiko and trust you would fulfill my thoughts and prayers" quoted in the Main Saishi Payer read during the funeral service by the Rev. Michiyoshi Yasutake. I still vividly remember that the Rev. Fumio Yasutake used to remind the student ministers, "The trusting relationship you cultivate with me at this church does not merely mean a personal relationship between you and me alone. But the relationship can be relevantly applied in your trusting relationship between you and Kami-Sama. You will appreciate my message when you go out of this place and engage in your own missionary work." Yoshino Sensei lived up to fulfill the way of living in the prayers of his mentor, the Oyasensei demonstrated himself.

I know Yoshino Sensei might have wondered what his primary mission here in Hawaii during his 32 years of ministerial services were, but he could have been the indispensable contributor for the emergence of many of the young local-oriented ministers in Hawaii. He had the outstanding knowledge of how he could provide opportunities for the young people to get advanced in their faith life. He may not fully understand my message in English but may appreciate the message of acknowledgement for his indispensable role in the emergence of the local young ministers here in Hawaii. The Rev. Fumio Yasutake sent Yoshino Sensei out all the way to Hawaii for this mission of establishing young ministers who are the foundations for the promising Konkokyo faith community in Hawaii. Yoshino Sensei was at the prime age of 50 as a Konko minister and evolved as the most trusted and loved minister in the faith community in Amagi. I believe he had fulfilled his Oyasensei's expressed confidence, as the Oyasensei always said, "*Masahiko nara Daijyoubu, Masahiko Tanomuzo*" or "I have a solid trust in Masahiko and trust you would fulfill my thoughts and prayers."

It is amazing that some 34 young people from Japan and from the local community lived in the Honolulu Church and received an influence by Yoshino-Sensei. He had the vision to identify the true nature of each and every individual who he took care of both in Japan and Hawaii. David, my son described him as the kindest person he had ever encountered in his extended eulogy at the funeral service. That is Yoshino Sensei. That is the reason

why he could help people throughout of his entire missionary work.

Yoshino Sensei, your legacy for helping people, especially the young ministers to emerge in Hawaii will be perpetuated and may witness their active contributions for the growth of the Konkokyo faith community in Hawaii.

Yoshino Sensei, Arigato gozaimasu.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

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).

Bulletin Board

Monthly Services

6/1 Sat For Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama at 7:30 p.m.

6/9 Sun For the Founder at 9:00 a.m.

6/17 Sun For Mitama Spirits at 9:00 a.m.

Church Garage Sale

For the fun-raising function for the 3rd Summer Ohana Camp, we will hold a garage sale on Saturday, June 8, 2013 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

HCRP Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the interfaith community will be held at the Gedatsu Church, June 17 at 1:30 p.m.

Volunteer Activity at Wahiawa General Hospital

The monthly volunteer activity at the same facility will be held on Friday, June 14 at 10:00 a.m. Your participation to the program will be very much appreciated.

KMH Ministers' Faith Enrichment Meeting

The Rev. Alfred Tsuyuki of Konko Church of Los Angeles will be making a presentation for the local ministers on Saturday, June 15, 2013 at the Konko Mission of Honolulu from 1:30 p.m. through 3:00 p.m.

3rd Summer Ohana Camp

We will be holding Wahiawa Church sponsored 3rd Summer Ohana Camp on June 22 and 23 at Camp HR Erdman in Mokuleia from 10:00 a.m. The theme for this year's meeting is "ABC of Konko Faith: Appreciation for blessed foods." We appreciate your participation, support and contributions for this educational program. No Sunday Service on June 23. For detailed accounts of the program, please refer to the Children's Newsletter.

Honoring Mitama Spirits

June

Florence Tamabayashi	6/6/1998
Harry Ching	6/19/2007
Matsu Suzuki	6/2008



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 Matsutaro Kōsaka contributed the insightful articles. The translation is provided by Yasuhiro Yano. (Reference pages 46, 47 and 48)

No. 46

Since there has not been anyone, who has taught about prenatal development, people are very confused. What blessings are humans created from? At first, a person dwells in the mother's womb. But before that, when the mother conceives, Kami bestows a soul. As for this soul, a doctor is unable to open up the womb and show the child's soul. Being given an invisible soul by an unseen kami is a wondrous thing. The child's body develops through the mother who eats her favorite foods. This increases blood production to produce another body. After about ten months, when there is childbirth, it will be know if it is a boy or a girl. During pregnancy, the child develops through the grace of Kami. (I Yamamoto Sadajiro 21-1, 2, 3, Kyoten page 372-3)

Kami bestows a soul.

The Founder tried to show the nature of human existence as beloved children of Kami in reference to the human conception and birth.

The first half of the message is focused on "wake-mitama" or a given divine soul, which was also discussed in the previous page. The statement, "When the mother conceives, Kami bestows a soul" is strongly emphasized. The word "mitama" can almost relevantly be understood same as "tamashii" or "reikon". In general, those expressions imply that the soul dwells in one's body and take control of the heart and mind. The most unique aspect of the word used by the Founder is that Kami bestowed His own heart to each individual. In this respect, "wake-mitama" or "Kami-gokoro" which represent the inborn pure heart, the heart of wanting to help others.

The latter half of the quoted message is focused primarily on the nature of the physical body bestowed by Kami.

We sustain our lives by consuming animals, plants and other living organisms nurtured and grown between Heaven and Earth. All those living organisms in the ocean and land sustain their lives through the workings of Heaven and Earth. We consume all those lives sustained by Heaven and Earth. In other words, we sustain our lives by consuming the blessings provided through the workings of Heaven and Earth, the life elements of Heaven and Earth.

Even the womb in conceived woman develops in a blessed parental body sustained by Heaven and Earth, the child to be born is also born into existence through the blessings of Heaven and Earth.

In this manner, Kami bestows "mitama" spirit to us and help lead the work of our heart and sustains our physical bodies through the work of Heaven and Earth. In a sense, both the heart and our physical body represent a gift from Kami. If we fail to appreciate and exercise both our hearts and bodies in line with the intended divine will, we will be wasting the blessings received.

No. 47

A married couple is the joining of two strangers. With mutual amity, they can live a full life without anxiety. Even after a quarrel, by sincere conciliation and reflection, the reasons shall become clear. The couple can understand and reflect upon these matters by themselves due to the soul, given to them by Kami, that governs their bodies. (I Yamamoto Sadajiro 19, Kyoten page 371)

The work of the soul given to us by Kami

Through a reference to the relationship of a married couple, the Founder tried to show the meaning of "wake-mitama" or a given divine soul.

The opening statement, “A married couple is the joining of two strangers” is so extraordinary. This statement reflects the Founder’s deeply objective perspective of elements in life. In general, we get used to such an expression, “A married couple is not joining of strangers.” This generally accepted notion about the nature of marriage may contribute to some marital conflicts in such manners as, we may take for granted the married relationship; we may expect more services be given to each other; we may try to take control of each other to one’s own advantages, and we may not enjoy a fulfilling relationship as a married couple. On the other hand, if we try to develop a fulfilling marital relationship in accordance with the expressed notion of the Founder, “A married couple is the joining of two strangers” we can readily appreciate any casual thoughts and gestures extended to each other with the heart of gratitude.

The Founder showed how a married couple would be able to deal with an episode of conflict. A married couple knows each other very well and can readily identify the root cause of the conflict and can predict how each other would respond in such a situation. But both have their own egos. They may be quite aware of how they should end the conflict, but they hesitate to yield to each other. If they acknowledge the trouble was caused by their shortcomings, they try to outmaneuver each other in justifying their own standings. And they try to find fault and defeat each other.

Even while engaged in a conflicting situation, deep in their heart, they become aware of the elements that contributed to the situation more or less. After the episode of conflict settles down and they reconcile their normal relationship, they would develop a heart of reflection, and think to themselves, “I was wrong for causing the conflict; I should have tried to listen to my partner with much receptiveness; I should be more tolerating for some elements that bothered me and try to live with mutual amity.” Those reflective thoughts represent just the opposite of the state of mind when they get engaged in conflict. For some reason, people develop an after-conflict reflective heart. The Founder objectively identified the work of “wake-mitama” or a given divine soul for the reconciliation of mutual amity between married couples who once engaged in a conflict. “Wake-mitama” or a given divine soul can be understood as the work of the heart that helps develop mutual salvation.

No. 48

Kami and humanity are the same. Regardless of how much you pray to Kami, if you disagree with the heart of others, you will disagree with the heart of Kami. And if the heart of Kami disagrees with you, the hearts of others will disagree with you. (I Ichimura Mitsugoro 2-8, Kyoten page 223)

Fulfilling both the heart of Kami and the heart of others

An ideal believer who fulfills both the heart of Kami and the hearts of others is depicted in the message.

Among many Konko believers, there are some believers who show such an extended devotion for matters related to

Kami, but show some shortcomings as responsible individuals and show lack of considerations for others. Often times, those believers have their own conceited belief that they are dedicated Konko believers. On the other hand, there are some believers who put their personal matters first and place less attention to matters pertaining to Kami. They cannot fully appreciate the true nature of getting engaged in the practice of faith.

The Founder showed that an ideal Konko believer shall be an individual who fulfills both the heart of Kami and the hearts of others. A full-fledged Konko believer shall not fail to fulfill the heart of Kami and the hearts of others as well. If a believer fails to fulfill the hearts of others, he may not fulfill the heart of Kami either, and vice versa.

The Founder’s statement derived from the religious perspective of human existence in accordance with the Konkokyo religious faith that goes, “Man exists because of Kami and Kami exists because of man.” But the same statement can be derived based on the teaching pertaining to “wake-mitama” or the given divine soul discussed in the previous page #45.

The statement, “agree with the hearts of others,” does not mean one should try to agree with the hearts of others unconditionally, but means try to be in line with the true way of living as a responsible individual. “To agree with the hearts of others” implies to agree with “wake-mitama” or the given divine soul which resides in the core of each individual. In corresponding to the happy state of “wake-mitama” within our hearts, Kami, who provided the “wake-mitama” to each individual, also enjoys the state of happiness. Accordingly, we can fully appreciate the truthfulness of the statement, “If the heart of Kami agrees with you, the hearts of others will agree with you.”

One element that should be emphasized in the quoted message is that each individual has been bestowed a “wake-mitama” from Kami, or an extension of Kami’s soul at birth, contrary to a generally held perception that we transform into the status of “wake-mitama” in corresponding to our departure from this world. The primary purpose of practicing faith is to help the growth and evolution of the inherently shared soul given to each of us from Kami to the fullest potential throughout of life.