



# KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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E-mail: [konkowahiawa207@yahoo.com](mailto:konkowahiawa207@yahoo.com). Also, find us on Facebook. Head minister: Rev. Yasuhiro Yano. Vol. XXX, No. 6, June 1, 2018



*"The idea is to give back to Kami/God from the top, not from what is left over, and the idea is to give out of gratitude not obligation. And the idea also is to comprehend that all that we have is a gift from Kami/God in the first place, so that what we give back is an acknowledgement of our giftedness."*

*-Rev. Tom Chittick*

## "Ohatsuho" Offering in Appreciation

The following is a speech script delivered by the Rev. Yasuhiro Yano, Head Minister of Konko Mission of Wahiawa at the Grand Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami held at Konko Mission of Wailuku on Sunday, May 6, 2018.

I feel grateful to have this opportunity to be able to share some of my thoughts about the practice of the Konko faith with you. Ever since the Rev. Hisayo Yasutake asked me to make a presentation for today's service, I have tried to identify what subject I should speak about at this occasion.

Thank you Rev. Roy Yasutake for your presentation at the Konko Mission of Waipahu for the Grand Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami held on Sunday, April 15. Roy-sensei's speech about goyo or osonae offerings was interesting. Especially, about the episode of the church member at Konko Mission of Hilo was impressive. The Rev. Makio Nagai occasionally shared the episode in the past. It was about a boy who could not afford to make monetary donations to the church, so he instead picked up a stone he found each day and offered it to Kami-Sama through the Toritsugi-Mediation of the Rev. Rev. Yoshifusa Nishida. Later he achieved great success in life.

This episode prompted me to share some of my thoughts about osonae or offerings in appreciation of the blessings we receive from Kami-Sama for you today.

The moment I heard about the story of the boy who went to the Hilo Church, I remembered an episode about an aged woman who made a visit to see Konko-Sama at Gohonbu Headquarters Church. If my memory is correct, the 4<sup>th</sup> Konko-Sama was serving at the Toritsugi-Mediation desk. The woman was so poor that she had to save money for her pilgrimage from her meagre earnings little by little. Upon her arrival at the Main Worship Hall at Gohonbu, she proceeded to see Konko-Sama who was serving at the Toritsugi-Mediation Desk. Before the woman extended her greetings, Konko-Sama kindly talked to her, "Kami-Sama has accepted all of your expenses for your pilgrimage today. You purchased a pair of new shoes and new clothes and paid for your transportation expenses for your pilgrimage. You also dined at the Tsuchiya restaurant. Kami-Sama has accepted all of the expenses you made to be here today as your extended offerings."

I learned this episode through a Konkokyo publication I received soon after both my wife and I started our missionary work in Wahiawa. I cannot comprehend how Konko-Sama could ever visualize whatever the woman prepared for her pilgrimage. Konko-Sama talked as if he was watching every movement of the woman from afar.

I can identify two vital elements that could be found in the story of the boy in Hilo and the woman who made a pilgrimage to Gohonbu. First, both of them managed to attend church on their own; Second their extended sincere hearts were accepted by Kami-Sama as offerings.

As for the meanings of offering, the Rev. Norio Sato stated in the Naiden 2, "I asked, 'Konko-Sama, why do you offer incense to Kami?' He then replied, 'People say that one candle offered by the poor is the same as a thousand offered by the rich. There are some people who cannot offer even one candle. Kami will accept anything by people who cannot offer even one candle. Kami will accept anything, whether it is a candle or incense. If a whole stick of incense cannot be offered, half of it will do. Kami will accept it like a whole candle. If even incense cannot be offered, offer a spark by striking the flint. Kami will accept it like a candle. There are people who can receive blessings even from the ashes of incense.' I was deeply moved upon learning that it is wrong to think that those with sincerity need not make any kind of offering. I felt grateful that Kami receives offerings in the same way no matter how rich or poor people are. There is nothing more benevolent than this" (III Naiden 2-2).

Have you ever thought about the meaning of your offerings being accepted by Kami-Sama? There can be no definitive answer to this question. But I can explain some clues to this matter. To Kondo Fujimori, the Founder related, "Kami takes the money you offer not without any returns. One seed becomes ten thousand, this is an old adage. Try and plant one rice seed into the earth, it will multiply into many seeds. Kami does not just take things; he always returns ten thousand times as much" (II Kondo Fujimori 24).

The Late Rev. Fumio Yasutake of Konko Church of Amagi used to express, "*Kami-Sama ni uketotte itadaku, mitomete itadaku, korehodo anshin na seikatsu wa nai*" or "The most secure and happiest way of life is to be recognized by Kami-Sama whatever we offer or do in services." I learned this while I was under spiritual training at the church over 41 years ago. The Konko religious tradition developed a distinctive culture about offerings. Simply speaking, the ministers do not extended his or her personal thanks for your offerings regardless of the amounts, items and services you offer to church. I am not sure about other religious traditions, but in Konkokyo, ministers do not say thank you for your offerings and services. The minister works as an agent between the people who attend church and Kami-Sama. If the minister extended his or her personal thanks for your offerings, it could mean the minister accepted your offerings that were supposed to go through to Kami-Sama. Actually, the Rev. Fumio Yasutake said that he occasionally felt like extending his thanks for the offerings and services forwarded by the church members, but could not do so when he thought about the nature of offerings. I am not sure how long this cultural tradition will last in the ever changing society we live in. It is Kami-Sama, Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama that responds to our extended sincerity in the form of offerings of money and other manners, such as doing services for the church.

At our church in Wahiawa, we have placed *ohatsuho* envelopes to be used by the believers. And on the lid of the box that holds the stack of envelopes, we placed a message about the meaning of offering of appreciation. The message reads, "The idea is to give back to Kami/God from the top, not from what is left over,

and the idea is to give out of gratitude not obligation. And the idea also is to comprehend that all that we have is a gift from Kami/God in the first place, so that what we give back is an acknowledgement of our giftedness.” This beautiful message was composed by a Christian minister who once served as a chaplain at Harvard University, Rev. Tom Chittick. The message shows the exact nature of “Ohatsuho” offering we practice in the Konko faith tradition.

As for Ohatsuho, I learned this term for the first time when I attended the Konko Church of Tokiwadai. Because of my connections to the church while I lived in Tokyo as a student, I got involved in many church functions for about two years. I also have gotten involved in the interfaith community through this blessing.

When I was at a transitional period after graduating from the English language school in Tokyo, for some reason, I once contemplated about spiritual training at the Konko Church of Tokiwadai where I was involved in the church. While at the church, I learned the expression of “Inochi no Ohatsuho” or an offering of ones’ life. We enjoyed a game of “Mioshie-fortune-telling for the year” in which a person picks up one half of a message. The message was “Inochi no ohatsuho.” At first, I thought I would get something good for the year. Later on the thought of “Inochi no Ohatsuho” evolved to be one of the major reasons why I got involved in ministry of the Konko faith. It could have been divine intervention that I was declined as a trainee at the church. Because of the rejection, I was prompted to make up my mind to get into the Konko Church of Amagi for my religious training which I had never imagined before. What I could associate with the Konko Church of Amagi was the strict nature of the religious training and the image of a small fish called “amagi” used for making special sushi in my locality in Ehime. Amagi Church is the parent church of the Konko Church of Kawanoishi.

My father used to tell us about the prayer extended by the Rev. Hidejiro Hosaka to my parents. He said, “Yano-san, in my prayer, I am expecting that one or two of your children to serve Kami-Sama directly since your family has enjoyed overwhelming blessings from Kami-Sama.” My father was always disturbed by the expressed wish of the minister. My father jokingly responded, “Sensei, you must be kidding. That idea alone is impossible.” My father was well aware of a Konko minister's life and its restrictive nature. Ministers have to undergo rigorous difficulties, spiritually and physically and have little financial liberty. He had never imagined that I would ever develop such an idea of entering Konkokyo ministry. To be truthful, I didn't have any inclination of becoming a Konko minister. I simply wanted to serve the faith community through my earned English skills. It was beyond my expectation that my parents would ever express such a positive response for my involvement in the ministry. My father was especially overwhelmed with the feeling of gratitude, joy and happiness of having two of his children become Konkokyo ministers.

At that instance, in responding to my extended thoughts of entering into the Konko Church of Amagi, the Rev. Hosaka extended his deep prayers and consideration for my fate of becoming involved in the ministry of the Konko faith. The Konko Church of Kawanoishi became a branch church of the Konko Church of Amagi because the father of Hosaka-Sensei took over the responsibility of the church as the third generation Head Minister. Usually, it would not be appropriate for me to bypass the Konko Church of Kawanoishi and go into ministerial training at Amagi (the parent church of Kawanoishi).

For about one month, Hosaka-Sensei regarded me as a trainee under his guidance before I was transferred to the Konko Church of Amagi. We have a vital tradition of Toritsugi-Mediation which represents the spiritual function of perpetual divine-mediation by Ikigami Konko Daijin, the eternal spiritual presence of the Founder Konko Daijin. In

regards to my transfer to the Konko Church of Amagi as a religious trainee, Hosaka-Sensei related to my parents that the only way I could ever survive the religious training was to dedicate myself to be an offering to Kami in appreciation of the blessings the Yano family enjoyed thus far.

The initial confirmation of the blessing the Yano family enjoyed through the involvement into the Konko faith was the birth of three children to Tosuke and his wife Kajiyō. He was convinced that the blessings he received were all attributable to the blessings of the Konko faith. My father used to tell us the message that his father wished for our family to follow. Grandfather Tosuke said to my father, Ichiro, “The Konko faith is a true religion. You are never to give up the Konkokyo faith tradition.” My father repeatedly told us this wish. I find myself telling this heirloom message to our children and our church members from time to time. When I look back at those days, I truly appreciate Hosaka-Sensei's prayers and consideration for me.

Soon after I entered the Amagi Church in 1974, while I was sweeping the church yard with a bamboo broom, an aged male church believer approached me and said to me, “Yesterday, as I also worshiped at the Konko Church of Kokura, Oyasensei told us that there was an offering of a ‘shinja’ or a believer to our church.” He continued to talk, “Through a humanistic approach, we have no way of telling what type of person Kami-Sama uses.” At that instance, I just felt that the Rev. Hosaka treated me as such. But as the years pass by, I feel overwhelmed with the feeling of gratefulness for the deep considerations and prayers extended to me by the late Rev. Toshihiko Hosaka. I also feel the same for the late Rev. Fumio Yasutake (past head minister of Amagi Church) who accepted me as an offering to Kami-Sama. Though I have served here at the Konko Mission of Wahiawa for the last 40 years, I have a conviction it could have been meant for me to come to Hawaii and serve at the local church in Wahiawa by divine guidance. I am not sure if I have fulfilled the concept of “Inochi no Ohatsuho.” I simply wish and pray that people in the community would learn to appreciate the wondrous world of the Konko faith in the same manner as I have enjoyed thus far.

Offerings are possible only because we believe in the deity we believe in. We are Konko believers. The founding minister of Konko Church of Amagi stated, “To practice faith is to believe in Tenchi Kane No Kami, Our Divine Parent of the Universe. To believe in Our Divine Parent is to believe in the teachings of the Founder. In return, to believe in the Teachings of the Founder is to believe in Our Divine Parent. And our belief shall be absolute.” The message was originally intended to the ministers under the spiritual guidance of the Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake of Konko Church of Amagi. And the English translation is quoted from the publication called, “Michi no shiori” issued in 1948.

After spending 40 years as a resident minister of Konko Mission of Wahiawa, my attention has been drawn to one specific message the Founder stated one year prior to his departure. On October 14, 1882, the Founder received a divine message, “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 26-22-3).

This church and all other local churches shall manifest the presence of Konko Daijin in responding to the message Our Divine Parent of the Universe gave to the Founder just one year prior to his departure.

Thank you very much for your attention.

## Konko-Sama Says . . .

Although people live between heaven and earth, they are unaware of Kami's blessings. Shrines, temples, and houses all stand on Kami's land. Without realizing this, people consult the Days and Directions and are disrespectful to Kami. They suffer hardships due to these offenses. Tenchi Kane no Kami has sent Ikigami Konko Daijin to provide blessings and teachings so that mankind may prosper. Kami is Kami because of man, and man is man because of Kami. Both are fulfilled through this mutual relationship (Konko Kyoso Gorikai No. 3 in Kyoten Gorikai III).

Although Kami cannot be seen, you are constantly walking within and through the midst of Kami. Even while fertilizing a field or walking along a path, you are in Tenchi Kane No Kami's hiromae. The whole world is Tenchi Kane No Kami's hiromae (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 6).

## Bulletin Board

### Monthly Services for June 2018

- 1 Fri -Monthly Svc for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 2 Sat -KMH Minister's gathering at HNL church (10:30 am)
- 3 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
- 10 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
- 17 Sun -Waipahu Church 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (10:30 am service)  
\*No church service at Wahiawa
- 24 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)

### July 2018

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

### Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace

The regular monthly meeting will be held on Monday, June 25, 2018 at Gedatsu Church at 1:30 p.m.

### Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility will be made on Friday, June 8, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

### 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Waipahu Church

The Konko Mission of Waipahu will be observing the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on Sunday, June 17 at Pearl Country Club. On Friday morning on June 15, a group of church members headed by the Rev. Michiyoshi Yasutake from Konko Church of Amagi will make a visit to our church. Let's greet them with the spirit of aloha. On Monday, June 18, some members from Amagi Church will join in a game of golf at Leilehua Golf Course coordinated by Nicholas Jun Furusho from 1:00 p.m. After the game, we will enjoy barbecue at church from around 6:00 p.m. All are welcome to join us for dinner. For details, please contact the Rev. Yasuhiro Yano at 621-6667 or [konkowahiawa207@yahoo.com](mailto:konkowahiawa207@yahoo.com).

### 8<sup>th</sup> Summer Ohana Camp

The 8<sup>th</sup> Summer Ohana Camp organized by Konko Mission of Wahiawa will be held on July 7 & 8 (Saturday & Sunday) at HR Camp Erdman, Mokuleia. This year's theme is

"Ancestors." The Rev. Dr. Todd Zenji Takahashi, associate minister of Konko Mission of Honolulu will make a presentation.

## Honoring the Mitama Spirits

### June

Nancie Chieno Oyama	6/3/2013
Clara Kimiko Hiromasa	6/10/2014
Florence Tamaribuchi	6/10/1997
Matsu Suzuki (興語)	6/2008
Edith Suzuyo Noguchi	6/14/2014
Harry Ching	6/19/2007



*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 344, 345 and 346)*

**No. 344: There are people who construct buildings and make marriage arrangements as they please without asking permission from Kami. Those people are scolded by Kami. They must pray to Tenchi No Kami.**

*(III Kyoso Gorikai 15-1 Kyoten page 766)*

### Pray to Tenchi Kane No Kami

"Kyoso Gorikai" was compiled by Shin'ichiro Shirakami II. He conducted interviews with Konko Shijin-Sama (the second Konko-Sama), the founding minister of Konko Church of Osaka, the Rev. Shin'ichiro Shirakami and other disciples who met the Founder and received those teachings for themselves. The messages collected were compiled as a list of teachings from the Founder. He submitted the list of teachings to Headquarters Church in 1894. Those ministers who were interested in the teachings made copies from the original material.

In accordance with the teachings of the Founder, there would be no bad days and bad directions between Heaven and Earth. But the message does not necessarily mean that we can totally disregard and ignore the prevailing social traditions of the Days and Directions and act carefree. Any religiously oriented person would not act in such a manner.

If we have true conviction that all days and all directions are good, we shall demonstrate our solid belief in such a manner. If we hold a wedding ceremony, we would extend our prayer in

appreciation, “We are going to hold our wedding ceremony. Thank you very much for this blessed day of wedding. Please bless this occasion to go smoothly without any irreverence against Kami.” In this manner, we should be more mindful of the blessings of Kami for such special occasions.

Even for the Directions, in accordance with our religious conviction that all directions are under Kami’s governance, and wherever we may go, it can be likened that we are moving through the paths being saturated with elements of Kami. Keeping this in mind, when we travel, we may extend a sincere prayer to Kami, “I will be heading to such and such direction. Please protect and guide me with a sound trip.”

The Founder stated, “The believers think it is all right to do such things because they practice faith in Kami. Those people are scolded by Kami. Doing things as they please is all right, but they should also make requests.” The message is a reminder that we should be mindful of the ubiquitous nature of the blessings of Kami.

At the ending, the message reads, “People ask specialists to check the Days and Directions when they plan to construct a new building. But these specialists check only the starting date. This is because they know nothing about what will happen to people in the future.” The message reminds us the great nature of Tenchi Kane No Kami.

**No. 345: In my way of faith, “Yakudoshi” 役年 in Konkokyo does not mean “unlucky” as people think. It is written with the character from the word “yaku” 役 in “yakunin” 役人 (Yakunin means government official, or a person who helps other people. Yaku may mean unlucky or help, depending on the Japanese kanji character). So “yakudoshi” is not an unlucky age, it is the age when you will help others. Think of your extra-unlucky age “taiyaku no toshi” as when you will be of extra help to others. Then practice faith with a heart full of joy, courage and strength. For plants, their buds sprout from the branch joints and grow thick and lush. But the joints are brittle and break easily. It is the same for people. Practice faith with patience and, then, “yakudoshi” will become the starting year of growth and prosperity. You will be blessed with prosperity with each passing year and generation.**

*(II Fukushima Gihe’e 9-1, 2 Kyoten page 671-672)*

*\*Traditional Yakudoshi is written 厄年 which means year of calamities.*

### “Yakudoshi” (役年)

A few years ago, while I was riding on a commuter train, my attention was drawn to an interesting display of an advertisement in the compartment. The message reads, “Those people born in such and such years are to encounter the critical ages of ‘yakudoshi’ (unlucky years). The number of people victimized by auto accidents was such and such. And some ten percent of the victims ignored the tradition of “yakubarai” (rituals of purging calamities associated to the unlucky ages).” The message sounded like a solicitation for getting “yakubarai” (rituals of purging calamities associated to the unlucky ages)”

through fear factors. It is such a dirty manipulation of peoples’ minds and cannot be tolerated.

Gihe’e Fukushima made the first visit to see the Founder at the age of 41 in 1871. He related his concern for the encountering of the year of “yakudoshi” the coming year. In responding to him, the Founder stated, “Tenchi No Kami-Sama is the parent kami of all people. Why would He let His precious children suffer? Think of yourself as a parent of your own children, and then try to understand. Relying on Kami-Sama regularly is the same as being friends with Kami-Sama. He will even listen to your unacceptable requests. He will turn major misfortunes into minor ones and sweep them away” (II Fukushima Gihe’e 8).

The following year, in dealing with the year of “yakudoshi” Gihe’e went to see the Founder again. The quoted message was given to him at that occasion.

At first, Gihe’e could not comprehend the message given to him by the Founder because of his strong adherence to the prevailing “yakudoshi” tradition. But through the way the Founder interpreted the meaning of “yakudoshi” that could be phonetically expressed in different meaning of “役年”, which could be translated to the year of getting recognition for his dedicated work. The Founder stated, “Think of your extra-unlucky age ‘taiyaku no toshi’ as when you will be of extra help to others.”

The Founder continued to say, “For plants, their buds sprout from the branch joints and grow thick and lush” and encouraged him to devote in pursuit of the faith.

The message given by the Founder is a sort of warning about our wrong perspectives of the modernization of human life. In contrast, the people began to show little respect to the fundamental life-sustaining work of Heaven and Earth.

Today, the turbulent globalized modernization of human life has caused the risks of ruining the entire earth. The threat is real and serious.

Soon after the ending of WWII, the renowned religious researcher, Dr. Hideo Kishimoto, stated, “The modernization of Japan in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was primarily the adaptation of the Western culture as well as the applications of scientific theories in human life. But the modernization of the nation for the next generation would be the adaptation of the Eastern cultures; the appreciation of human life through the perspectives of art; and the increased status of religion in the society. For the promotion of the increased Eastern religious influence, the religions born in Japan should play a pivotal role.”

The Konko believers should work hard to bring a great deal of influence to the society through our practice of faith in responding to the extended message from the Founder who stated, “Although they say the world is becoming civilized, it is not. It is collapsing. Because of this, Konko Daijin has come forth to save the world.”