



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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The **Annual Spring Memorial Service** will be observed on Sunday, March 25, 2012 at 10:00 am. Through the service, we will extend our sincere appreciation for the contributions, support and guidance of the deceased ministers, family members and our ancestors for our blessed lives we now enjoy. Please join us in commemorating this vital function of the Konko faith in person and on time. A fellowship lunch will follow the service.

“Gratitude for Divine Blessings”

February 5, 2012

By Dr. Leon Webber (Anchorage, Alaska)



“Tenchi Kane No Kami does not discriminate between Kamis and Buddhas. Kami protects Shintoists, as well as Buddhists. Shinto and Buddhism are both within Tenchi. Don’t be so narrow as to discriminate against other religions or by following one religion obsessively. Have a broad mind. You must think broadly about the world” (*GII Ichimura Mitsugoro 17-1, 2*).

May my words reflect the kindness and heartfelt inclusion we have always experienced in the Konko Wahiawa Mission. May any words or phrases mistakenly uttered be seen in the spirit of gratitude and love they were intended. May these words and this story bring us together, not apart. May they inspire love, not hatred. May they encourage peace, not war.

And may they reflect our deep gratitude for Kami’s gifts and Divine Blessings.

Dear Friends,

For me, this story of traveling to a foreign country, Japan, and overcoming anxiety and social awkwardness. It is a story about being greeted, welcomed with warmth, love, generosity, kindness, laughter...of remembering and honoring family and ancestors...of more laughter...a story of special attention to every detail. It is a profound discovery, reminder of family, multi-generations kept together by their strong faith.

And it is a story about our granddaughter, Britney. Of our bringing Cinderella to Konko a passport to children’s hearts, and to some, if not most, adults.

This morning, my story is about our formal dinner with Konko Sama. It is about melting unnecessary worry and insecurity. There was not much discussion about religious ideas/faith/teachings. A delicious formal meal with usual attention to mindful eating.

After the meal, Yoshi excused himself..he soon returned to our dining room rolling a small table. He stood behind it and began doing several magic tricks which created much laughter and applause.

After Yoshi’s magic, more magic followed. I am not sure of the sequence, order. Second son, Kiyoji, sang a rock song. Romance. Britney was invited to dance (Cinderella). Oh they wanted her to dance. It was against Disney policy for their performers to dance their character parts. She stood up, invited Yoshi (clearly a non-dancer) to hold her hand while she danced around him. He pretended to swoon, which created much fun and laughter for us all. They bowed to each other at the end.

Linda and I sang a song of peace we wrote many years ago. “I pray for peace” and then Linda sang the “Rose”.

To our great surprise, Konko Sama rose, walked to the front, stood upright, folded his hands in front of himself, and began singing “Edelweiss.” Beautiful. And of course, a standing ovation.

During the songfest, second son, Kiyoji, must have called his wife and told her Cinderella...not Leon and Linda Webber...was at the formal dinner. Soon, Kiyoji’s wife, and three children rushed into the dining room. The children shyly surrounded ‘Cinderella’.

When the three children saw Cinderella's warm, beautiful smile and open arms, they couldn't get close enough. Sitting on her lap, they drew, asked questions and soon...they wanted to see their father, Kiyoji, dance with Cinderella. This was wonderful to see, since Kiyoji is no stranger to dancing. The children swooned and smiled as they saw their father take Cinderella's outstretched hand and make delicate circles around her prince, their father. The children's smiles continued long after the Prince and Cinderella bowed to each other. The evening flowed from there, until leftovers were collected in small boxes. The children merged everyone into our awareness of interconnectedness.

"Time is passing by us on the feet of little children" –Kenaitze Indian Tribe.

This morning I am reminded again of our many experiences of gratitude. Gratitude Linda and I could make a journey to Japan to see our granddaughter Britney. To travel to Kamakura and Nikko. To see her perform at Disneyland as Cinderella and The Wicked Queen. To be grateful to travel with her to a special place called Konko. To meet again an olde friend, Yoshi. To renew our friendship.

Linda and I are grateful for your kind thoughts and prayers that our journey to Konko be blessed. Grateful for the Rev. Yasuhiro, Reiko and Edna Yano's extra prayers, blessings and friendship. The Wahiawa Konko Mission, its members and friends are often in our thoughts and prayers.

Our customs and ways are sometimes so different. And while it is often awkward and embarrassing for me, I am grateful to each of you for your kindness, understanding, acceptance and welcoming of Linda and myself each year we come to the North Shore for our retreat together.

You, the members of the Konko Mission, ground us in renewing our life together as a couple (yes, even at 70 and 65!).

Linda especially works hard during the year seeing so many people who have suffered trauma. She comes to the North Shore much more exhausted than I.

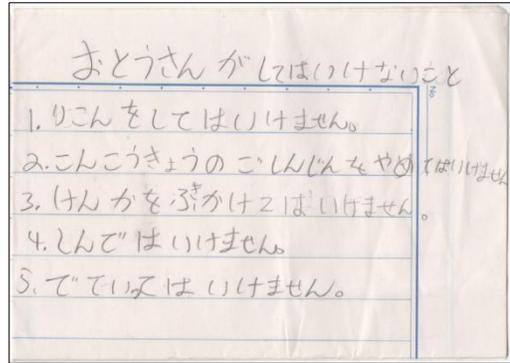
And I am especially grateful to her and happy she finds such rest here. A spiritual home away from home.

In addition to the blessings of being with Linda when we traveled to Japan. I have learned it is especially good to travel to Konko with Cinderella.

Arigato Gozaimasu for asking us to share with you this morning.

Peace and Love,
Leon Webber

Edna's Prayer for Peace



By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister

My wife Reiko worked as a registered nurse for several years at a hospital in Fukuoka, Japan a few years before we got married and came to Hawaii for missionary work in Hawaii. Her father who currently lives in Japan responded to the changes in the Kousei Nenkin or Employee Pension laws and tried to apply for her benefits. He sent her a formal application form to be filled out and submitted with accompanying documents. One document requires a proof of residence that she has been at the current residential place in the last 35 years. At first, she thought it would be easy to prove such a common element, but it was not easy to find an official document. While she was trying to look here and there in search of birth certificates of our children, she incidentally found a little old memo written by our daughter, Edna. She wrote the note in Japanese. It looks like she jotted down those notes for me since it was written, "Otoosan-e" or "To my dad". Although Edna does not recall writing such a note, she was sure the handwriting was around the age of 7 or 8. She entitled it "Otousanga shitewa ikenaikoto" or a "Things that Dad is not allowed to do". The list goes as follows:

おとうさんがしてはいけないこと :

*りこんをしてはいけません。

(Do not get divorced.)

*こんこうきょうのごしんじんをやめてはいけません。(Do not give up the Konko faith)

*けんかをふきかけてはいけません。(Do not start fights or arguments)

*しんではいけません。(Do not die)

*でていってはいけません。(Do not leave us)

Both my wife and I burst into laughter as soon as we found and read the note. It was a pleasant surprise.

I have no idea under what situation Edna jot down the message. But I understand this is her intuitive way of securing and interpreting a stable and happy life.

Suppose one of the rules on the list was not fulfilled; her peaceful life would be threatened. If I got divorced, she

would experience a torturous insecurity and a collapse of a happy family life. If I were to give up my engagement in the practice of the Konko faith and missionary work, she would feel spiritually orphaned. If I was argumentative and mean, the whole family will experience depression. If I died, she would be devastated. If I left the family, she would feel an immense amount of insecurity. At her young age, she knew that violating any one of those elements on her list would bring about insurmountable grief and depression to her. She knew that the best way to preserve a stable and happy life is if I fulfilled the rules imposed on me. That is why I titled this writing as "Edna's Prayer for Peace." For a child, "peace" means the peace in the family. Without peace in the family, there would be no peace in the world.

It would be extraordinary that I have been able to fulfill Edna's Prayer for Peace for all these years. I realize how blessed both my wife and I have been for being blessed with this wondrous daughter.

When I extended my thought for "Edna's Prayer for Peace," I found some amusing thoughts that can be universally appreciated. As you may know, Edna has tried to accommodate almost any request I have forwarded, such as editing my English writings and so forth. At the same time, it is also a fact I have listened to her requests as long as it was possible. It can be a mutually trusting and respecting relationship between father and daughter. I have little recollection of any of my three children causing me much stress as they grew up. Many parents say their children rebel and cause trouble when they reach a certain age. But in blessedness, we have little episodes of such encounters.

Sometimes I have shared with the church congregation about my relationships with my parents. In looking back at my life, my parents accommodated almost any requests I asked of them. And in return, I responded to their innermost wish they would have held as blessed Konko believers. The Rev. Hidejiro Hosaka of Konko Church of Kawanoishi used to talk to my parents, "Yano-san, in my prayer, I am expecting that one or two of your children 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 security. He might have never imagined that two of his children would ever evolve to get into 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 gratitude, joy and happiness of having two of his children become Konkokyo ministers.

The fourth Konko-Sama, the late Rev. Kagamitaro Konko used to quote an interesting episode. When father and his son

enjoy playing catch, father usually demands his son to aim the ball better. But Konko-Sama suggested, instead of demanding his son to throw the ball better, father can respond to the thrown ball by being a good catcher. The same thing can apply to any other family relationships we may take for granted.

A teaching of the Founder states, "If you hit your own head instead of your child's, there will be immediate divine blessings" (I Shimamura Hachitaro 22) is a reminder there can be an alternative way to deal with your relationship with others in the family and in general.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

When I speak, all of you listen well to what I have to say. Be sure, however, that upon your return home you do not become the type of religious person who scolds and worries their family. There are people who give good lectures but end up with only the lectures. Those who live their faith should first understand what they have heard and practice it themselves before telling others about it. If you are a minister who merely preaches, no one, including your family members, will listen to what you say, which brings disgrace upon Kami (III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 24-1,2).

Women are like the fields of the world. Fields must be fertilized in order to produce precious crops. The seeds may be good, but they won't grow well if the field is unproductive. For a woman, pregnancy is an important time. The child will be affected by the mother's good or bad heart. A pregnant woman will want to eat a lot and have cravings for unusual foods. But if she eats in secrecy, she won't have a good child. The child will develop a deceitful heart. The family should be aware of this (II Nanba Ko 7-1, 2, 3, 4).

Bulletin Board

Regular Church Services for March 2012

- 1 Thur -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane no Kami,
7:30 pm
- 4 Sun -Sunday Service at 9 am
- 11 Sun -Monthly Service for Founder at 9 am

18 Sun -Sunday Service at 9 am
-Honolulu Church Spring Memorial Service
at 10 am
25 Sun - Spring Memorial Service at 10 am, Naorai
lunch will follow.

Volunteer at Wahiawa General Hospital

We will make a monthly visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility on Friday, March 9 at 10:00 a.m. by means of offering entertainment for the people cared for in the facility. The program is in Japanese.

H.C.R.P.

The Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace will hold its regular monthly meeting on Monday, March 5 at the Church of Perfect Liberty at 1:30 p.m.

Garage Sale for Ohana Camp 2012.

Saturday, March 17 from 9 am- 2 pm. No food will be sold. But plenty of goods!

Spring Grand Service for Tenchi Kane no Kami

The annual Grand Service for Tenchi Kane no Kami, Our Divine Parent will be observed on Friday, April 13 at 6:30 p.m.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits for March

Richard Fujio Tamabayashi	3/7/1999
Matsuyo Arikawa	3/8/1995
Thomas Toshito Yamamoto	3/16/1991

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 followings 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 Kosaka contributed the insightful articles. The translation is provided by Yasuhiro Yano. (Reference pages 5, 6 and 7)

No. 5 Tenchi Kane no Kami is the parent Kami of all people. Why would Kami let His precious children suffer? When you have your own children, you will understand this well (II Fukushima Gihee 8-1, Kyoten page 670).

Tenchi Kane no Kami is the parent Kami of all people.

When the Rev. Gihee Fukushima went to see Konko-Sama and shared his uneasiness for his encounter with the “Yakudoshi” believed to be unlucky year for a certain age of people, Konko-Sama gave him this message in return. At first Konko-Sama firmly stated that Tenchi Kane no Kami is the parent Kami of all people, and then reassured him by stating that why Kami, who represents the Divine Parent, would let His beloved children suffer if difficulties. When he looked at his own child who suffered from difficulties, he will appreciate how Kami would respond to such an encounter.

For the first time ever, one of the most important words that represent the perception of the deity worshipped in the Konko religion, “Oyagami” or the Divine Parent was introduced. As for the use of “Oya” or parent in “Oya-gami” was shown in the previous article No. 4, but in this statement, “Oya” primarily represents parental love for children or the loving thought of “Kawaii.”

Parents have an inborn inclination to extend their thoughts and prayers for their offspring to enjoy happy and fulfilling lives. As they witness the joy of their children, they respond to express their joy and happiness more than their children. On the contrary, when the child encounters a problem, they try to show their loving care in distress; they even try to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the child in grave circumstances.

A parent I knew once shared with me an interesting story. He stated, “Soon after my child was born, she cried during the whole night. I didn’t want to cause any distress to the rest of my family members because of the crying baby. I held her in my arms for four straight nights without any sleep. For some reason, I wasn’t overcome by the sense of difficulty or experienced extreme fatigue.” The parental love for her child was so strong that she felt fulfillment in sacrificing herself for the sake of her dear child.

The heart of the Divine Parent to His beloved children can be the same love of expression being experienced by parents. This distinctive thought can be expressed in a single world, “Kawaii” or deep love for caring. To believe in Tenchi Kane no Kami means to believe that Kami is the parent of all humanity. That also means to believe in the absolute love of Tenchi Kane no Kami.

No. 6 *You should be aware that Kami protects you in the same way as you love your child (III Shinkun 2-30, Kyoten page 777).*

Learn to appreciate deep divine love through your own experience as a parent.

This message is similar to the previously discussed teaching of No. 5, that is, learn to appreciate the nature of Kami-Sama through your own experience as a parent. As has been stated previously, the core essential element of Kami is the heart of “*kawaii*” or deep love for His beloved children, the humanity. The most paralleling heart to the heart of Kami can be the heart of parents who can experience the heart of “*kawaii*” or deep loving for their offspring. This heart of “*kawaii*” can be the most important element in understanding the nature of Kami.

I know a Konko minister who lost his son who became an ordained Konko minister and was to take over the responsibility of the church in the future. He shared his thoughts with me, “Through the passing of my dear son, did I realize that I had little appreciation for the heart of Kami despite the fact I thought I had some understanding of the matter.”

Only when he lost his son did he realize his own deep love for his son. The deep sorrow and disconsolation he experienced could parallel with the heart of Kami who also experienced deep sorrow and disconsolation in witnessing suffering of His beloved children in distress. He might have been overwhelmed with a deep sense of apologies that how Kami had extended his concerned thoughts and love for him while he was totally unaware of Kami’s heart.

I always remember and appreciate his shared message. While he was encountering the most excruciating death of his own son, he continued to pursue to practice faith with solid determination. He also demonstrated the heart of Kami who extended deep love for His beloved children.

I understand there can be many people who love their children, but there may be only a few who can appreciate their extended love and parallel the divine love. To be able to appreciate divine love, our spiritual eyes needs to be opened.

No. 7 *Although Kami cannot be seen, you are constantly walking within and through the midst of Kami, working in the fields or walking along a path, the whole world is Tenchi Kane no Kami’s Hiromae (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 6, Kyoten page 779).*

The whole world is Tenchi Kane no Kami’s Hiromae.

The three consecutive teachings to be discussed from this page show the omnipresent nature of Kami. This first teaching pertains to our everyday living.

From ancient times, the people of Japan have traditionally separated the religiously-oriented world from the secular world in their living. There have been separations from the sacred places from the mundane places; holy days and mundane days; sacred jobs and mundane jobs. “*Seinaru*” or “sacred” implies the presence of deities, or pertaining or connected with deities, while “*zoku*” or mundane or secular implies anything that is not sacred.

Under the social norm of that age, the statement, “The whole world is Tenchi Kane no Kami’s Hiromae” was totally against the social norm that caused a unprecedented surprise to the ordinary people who were so accustomed to the traditional separation of things sacred from mundane in their daily living.

Konko believers have gotten used to this quoted teaching and seem to have taken that concept for granted. But the statement was so radical and revolutionary that it has impacted not only the religious communities in those days, but also even in today’s world.

“Hiromae” represents a place where Kami resides or the sanctuary. Accordingly, the statement implies that whenever we are in the world; whether we are doing farming in the fields or we are walking on the streets, we are within the realm of “Hiromae.” If the word “*sei-naru*” or “sacred” previously discussed is applied, it can be said that any places in the world and any aspects of our daily livings are sacred.

One of the distinctive features of the Konkoko faith tradition is that the believers can try to regard any aspects of our daily living to be the places for practicing faith. We can try to pursue to live in conscious awareness of Kami’s presence at all times. As Konko believers, we can acknowledge the presence and accompaniment of Kami whenever and wherever we are.
(To be continued.)