



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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The **Annual Spring Memorial Service** will be observed on **Sunday, March 13, 2016** at **10:00 a.m.** 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.

Mindfulness

By *Yasuhiro Yano*
Head Minister

The expression of “mindfulness” seems to have been spreading in the community at large, not only in the religious communities. It is said the expression is originated by the Buddhist community. My understanding of the expression is to develop awareness or alertness of the elements exists around us from moment to moment.

Actually, the spirituality of mindfulness has been deeply ingrained in the everyday Japanese way of living. You might have used the expression of “*arigato gozaimasu*,” “*omedetou gozaimasu*,” “*mottainai*,” “*itadakimasu*,” “*okagesamade*,” “*osewani narimasu*” and the list may keep on going. These expressions have been used by any common people, not just deeply religious people. When we use those expressions, we are consciously or subconsciously aware of indebtedness to others and any other identifiable or unidentifiable elements that help actualize the circumstances when we naturally pour out those expressions. We have been aware of elements that help us in one way or another.

When we say, “*okagesamade*” for the good health we enjoy, we are expressing our gratefulness to some greater power or elements that help us to keep enjoying our good health. If we can enjoy perpetual good health through our own endeavors alone. We can pay attention to our health, eat natural organic foods in the most nutritional manner. Although we can go about and be thoroughly health-oriented and be aware of our body and mind, as being done by millions people worldwide...nobody is certain that they can continue to enjoy good health. We can witness many episodes of the uncertainty of our good health we may take for granted. There can be invisible, unidentifiable elements that help and sustain our good health. This religiously-oriented mindfulness is one of the ingrained elements of the broad Japanese culture we may not be much aware of. We enjoy Japanese TV programs in Hawaii every

day. In any day of the program, there can be one or two episodes in which people enjoy meals. Every such occasion of food partaking, they always, include guests to show the gesture of clasping their hands together and say “*Itadakimasu*.” And the regular English caption of “*Itadakimasu*” is “Let’s eat.” But the expression of “*Itadakimasu*” is a religiously-oriented expression. In accordance with the Konkokyo religious practice, we extend this thought of partaking foods in appreciation of the blessed nature of foods being nurtured and brought to be served at the dining table through countless elements of blessing, such as the work of nature, hard work of farmers, distributions systems and the people who cook it. The Japanese culture itself may understand that every grain of rice can have the potential of producing thousands of grains. The simple act of eating can be expressed by a word, “*taberu*” but we use the expression, “*itadakimasu*,” which holds the context of partaking food with the heart of gratitude. There are many other religiously mindful expressions in the everyday Japanese expressions. “*Mottainai*” or try to consume given gifts with the heart of appreciation and gratefulness and try not to waste any portion of the item, can also be one of those expressions of mindfulness used.

In the Konkokyo faith community, the Founder Konko Daijin related to Jiroshiro Kataoka, “Those who practice faith should always pray with *miki* in their hearts. Then Kami will make any request come true.” Those who practice faith should not forget this. *Miki* means the three *ki* which are *arigataki* (gratefulness), *osoreo-ki* (awe), and *mottainai-ki* (reverence). If those who practice faith forget these three things, they will be able to receive divine blessings” (III Jinkyukyogoroku135).

The 4th Konko-Sama, the late Rev. Kagamitaro Konko used to express the thought of “*Sewani naru sebeteni rei wo yuu kokoro Heiwa umidasu Kokoroto ihan*” or to have the heart of wanting to express appreciation for any and all elements of blessings we enjoy is the heart that can contribute to promote peace. If we try to apply the expression of mindfulness in the expressed thought of the Konko-Sama, we can easily understand the message. Actually I have been introducing his identical extended thought in my prayer shared at the annual interfaith prayer meeting for all those years.

While I was at the Konko Church of Amagi for my spiritual training before I came to Hawaii, the Rev. Fumio Yasutake always reminded the student minister to exercise the heart of “*Kokoro kubarī*” or trying to exercise extended mindfulness in identifying blessed elements and respond accordingly in the daily living at the church. The *shugyo* practice at the church is a sort of exercising this spirit of “*Kokoro kurabi*” in such a meticulous manner that help us to remind the elements of divine blessings in the very living condition of the day to day living. The Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake, the founding minister of the church showed such an extreme mindfulness in using anything at all. He used only a limited supply of water for bathing, used the wash-cloth in such a manner that the towel can last the most. He even tried to use portions of used papers for different purposes and maximized the given life of that paper which was supposed to be thrown away.

At one occasion, while he was riding a train, and was eating lunch. Accidentally some grains of rice fell down onto the floor. He picked up that rice and placed it on the window sill of the train. When the train crossed a river, he flicked the rice onto the river. The person accompanying him asked why he did that. He responded that the food that touched the floor is unsanitary for human consumption, but that can be fed to the fish in the river. It may sound weird, but that was the extent of his mindfulness for the blessed nature of rice. It was his way of trying to fulfill the divine intention in his daily living.

I have lived in Hawaii serving as resident minister of Konko Mission of Wahiawa for 39 years and come to appreciate the very spiritual training I received at the Amagi Church during the span of approximately three years. I had an invaluable opportunity to witness the faith life exhibited by the late Rev. Fumio Yasutake. It is his spiritual mentoring that so many young and elderly student ministers have been educated in accordance with the Konkokyo faith tradition. When I reached the age of the minister I can finally appreciate the remarks that were made by the minister as priceless spiritual guidance and reminders during my ministerial career here in Hawaii. And I feel convinced in the power of mindfulness in pursuit of practicing faith.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

People exist because of Kami, and Kami exists because of people. Therefore, you should pray to Kami about everything, including sickness and problems, whether it is an emergency or not. Practicing faith is to have a heart like Kami in your everyday life. Praying to Kami by putting your hands together is not the only way to practice faith. A single heart means one heart. So be sure you do not go astray by having a double heart. Depending only on Tenchi Kane No Kami is having a single heart. You should be single-hearted and receive divine blessings fully. (III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 1981, 2)

Konko Daijin said, "Everybody asks me to come to their homes, but since I cannot be absent from Kami's Hiromae, I do not go. However, I have never failed to help save a person who asked me for help with a single heart." (Jinkyukyogoroku 55)

Bulletin Board

Monthly Services for February 2016

- 1 Tue -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 6 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
- 13 Sun -Annual Spring Memorial Service (10 am)
- 20 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-Honolulu Church Spring Memorial Service (10 am)
- 27 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-KMH Women's Gathering at Honolulu Church
(10 am-1 pm) Service at HNL will begin at 9 am.

April 2016

- 1 Fri -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 13 Wed -Wahiawa Church Spring Grand Ceremony (6:30 pm)

Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace

The regular meeting will be held on Monday, March 7, 2016 at Gedatsu Church of Hawaii at 1:30 p.m.

Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Long-Term Care Facility at Wahiawa General Hospital will be made on Friday, March 11, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

Church Garage Sale

Garage Sale will be held on Saturday, March 19, 2016 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. All proceeds will go toward the church educational fund and help with the Summer Ohana Camp that will be held on June 18 and 19 (Sat & Sun), 2016 at Camp Erdman, Mokuleia.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

March

Sandy Abe	3/4/2014
Richard Fujio Tamabayashi	3/7/1999
Matsuyo Arikawa	3/8/1995
Thomas Toshito Yamamoto	3/16/1991
Mitsuko Suwa	3/21/2012
Yoshikazu Hirota	2014

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 143, 144 and 145)

No. 143: Practice faith and accumulate virtue. Prudence is most important for those who have received virtue from Kami. Even when you are always prudent, you will lose that virtue if you have a complaining heart at the time of your death. For those who have practiced faith and received virtue, everyday prudence is important. Modesty at the time of death, as well is exceptionally important. At the time of death, be sure not to lose your virtue. (I Yoshimoto Kichihyoe 1-4, 5 Kyoten page 403-404)

Prudence is most important

The Rev. Kichihyoe Yoshimoto, also lived in Onomichi. He was initiated to make a visit to see the Rev. Shigeemon Saito at Konko Church of Kasaoka because of his father's illness in 1866. Later on he was introduced to the Konko Church of Matsunaga founded by the Rev. Iwazo Asai. The Rev. Yoshimoto learned to practice faith under the guidance of the Rev. Asai. In 1869, he started to get engaged in the work of Toritsugi-Mediation, in accordance with the "Konko Daijin Jinbutsushi, page 95."

The quoted message is the only one he kept in writing. That message could mean something significant for him. He was given

a divine title of “Konshi.” The quoted passage is an excerpt from a much extensive messages from the Founder. At the beginning, a reference was made for the adaptation of a new calendar system in Japan, and reforms of political systems, and abolition of official titles given to samurai lords. In corresponding to the social and political changes, the tradition of granting divine titles was also abolished in the Konkokyo religious tradition. In regard to those changes, the Founder stated, “However, this shouldn’t disappoint you. Since Kami says he will use us as He always has. Continue practicing faith without feeling disappointed.”

The Founder encouraged the believers to practice faith and accumulate virtue. Prudence is most important for those who have received virtue from Kami-Sama. He even elaborated, “Even when you are always prudent, you will lose that virtue if you have a complaining heart at the time of your death. A complaining heart complains about one’s family and relatives not coming to visit one’s deathbed. It is a heart that calls out in want to see and meet with family and relatives. Therefore, those who have practiced faith and received virtue must be prudent in their everyday lives.” The passing of the Founder being accompanied only by his wife, Tose and the second eldest daughter Kura, was peaceful and quiet.

Chapter 4: PRACTICING FAITH

Section 1: Ways to Practice Faith

A. Going to Worship

No. 144: Do not hesitate to go worshipping when it rains or the wind blows. Enduring these hardships is a training to receive virtue. (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 68-1 Kyoten page 791)

Accumulation of virtue through practice of faith (training) In the Konkokyo faith tradition, the believers are not imposed of any special practices as the Founder stated, “The religious training of this faith does not involve traditional physical austerities. Doing your everyday work is religious training” (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 39). Another important religious training for believers is to go worshipping or making visit to church regularly. If believers prioritize their own personal matters and take light of the meaning of regular church visit, their practice faith is limited only in a virtual world in their heads alone and have little valid meaning in dealing with serious matters arise unexpectedly.

The believers are to get blessed with accumulating their own “toku” virtue through their own practice of faith, including church visit, without their own knowledge.

In Japan, we have an expression of “karada de oboeru” which implies the state of saturation or over-learning through extensive continued practices. Practicing faith becomes part of one’s daily living. Endurance in practicing faith helps a believer to live a better life and learn to live a way of life in happiness.

The Founder stated, “Do not hesitate to go worshipping.” But going to worship has required a lot of preparations in the past and present. The pilgrims have to deal with all sorts of weather conditions and make arrangements for their own personal lives.

One of the most trusted disciples of the Founder, the Rev. Jirosiro Kataoka, who was addressed by the Founder as “Saizaki Konko Daijin” related, “I have visited Konko Daijin every month since 1868. However, never once in those twelve years was it easy to make the journey” (III Jinkyukyogoroku 67-1).

Like the Rev. Jirosiro Kataoka, many of the believers had the same burdens of making a pilgrimage to see the Founder in the past when they had little access to the ease of transportation and other conveniences in their pilgrimage. Because of their dedications in their pursuit of faith, we are enabled to enjoy blessed lives through our engagement in the practice of faith in one way or another.

No. 145: You should not consider it a sacrifice of your time and effort to come to the hiromae. Kami will immediately compensate you for it. (III Jinkyukyogoroku 29 Kyoten page 818)

Resources for making a pilgrimage

The Founder stated, “You should not consider it a sacrifice of your time and effort to come to the hiromae.” But in reality, the believers have to make some sacrifices in their pilgrimage. They have to prepare for their trips, and make arrangements for taking days off from work and so forth. The same is true in the past and present. The believers in the past might make a greater sacrifice in their visitation to see the Founder compared to us in today’s convenient world. But we spend much for bus, trains and other means of transportation in making a trip. Making a pilgrimage requires a lot of sacrifices in any way. But the Founder insisted, “You should not consider it a sacrifice of your time and effort to come to the hiromae.” What could be the reason for that statement? The answer is simply stated, “Kami will immediately compensate you for it.” But not all of us are convinced with the statement.

The Founder himself practiced monthly visitations to the shrines and temples in the village for three days. He made extensive preparations for his three-day visits to the village shrines and temples. The statement is based upon his own experiences. There would be no way we can suspect the valid nature of the message.

In my understanding, we sometimes witness instances of the believers who prioritize their own personal matters and don’t try to make every effort in fulfilling their usual church visits. They can save time and other resources that would be spent for a visit to church. Contrary to their assumption that they would have saved time and other resources for the skipped church visit, they would end up in spending extra times and make unexpected expenses in dealing with occurrences they have to deal with. They could make major mistakes that also consume much time and resources. These are commonly observed developments in life.

On the other hand, it seems that those believers who constantly uphold their habit of making visit to church as part of their faith life, they would spend much time, take some time off from their daily work. But all the resources spend for their church visits would be investments in enriching their faith life and there could be positive consequences that could be worth more than the spending. This could be the meaning of “Kami will immediately compensate you for it.”