



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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80th Anniversary Celebration



By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister of Konko Mission of Wahiawa

We are going to hold the 80th Anniversary Celebration of the Konko Mission of Wahiawa on Sunday, March 15, 2020. In blessedness, we have re-roofed, placed a beautiful carpet in the worship hall, finished 90 percent of the painting of the church building and our attendees have been confirmed. Our anniversary publication is in the making, and is to be printed in a week or so. We will still need to clear the basement hall and set up the worship hall and etc.

In order for an event this big to take place safely, we have to be in good health, in a healthy and harmonious human relationship. We must also pray for favorable weather conditions.

Community and social order is also important. People who have extended their intent to join our celebration must also be blessed in their personal lives with good relationships, good health and living comfortably financially. We are expecting some 150 guests, including visitors from Japan, San Francisco, neighbor islands, our neighbor churches, some communities we have gotten involved and the local church. The novel coronavirus seems to be imposing some limitations to the movement of people in some areas of the world, including, China, Korea, Japan and some other countries. If the flights are cancelled, there would be no way for our guess from Japan to join. All is possible only in blessedness.

The 80th Anniversary of our church in Wahiawa is a continuation of blessed days for the last 80 years. The Rev. Haruko Takahashi, the Founding minister of the church initiated her missionary work in 1940 in Wahiawa. During the wake of WWII on December 7, 1941, the Rev. Haruko Takahashi was taken into custody on December 14, 1941 as one of the Japanese-oriented community leaders and was held at Sand Island and Honouliuli internment camps until July 7, 1944. She resumed her missionary work at the current location 207 Muliwai Avenue in Wahiawa in 1948. I assume even while she was held at the internment camp, she steadfastly believed in Tenchi Kane No Kami due to her unwavering conviction for her missionary work that was terminated temporarily due to the unavoidable consequences of war. In a sense, the Rev. Takahashi tried to perpetuate her missionary work even while

she was in detention. If she had given up on reopening the church, the history of the church would have also ended on the day that war broke out.

She departed on December 24, 1972 at the age of 62, after serving the Konkokyo faith community in Wahiawa for 32 years.

For five years after the passing of the Rev. Haruko Takahashi, the church was kept with the help of the Rev. Hiromichi Ishii who was originally from Konko Church of Ookuma in Fukuoka, and was stationed as one of the administrative staff members of the Konko Missions in Hawaii. He took care of the church for about three years. After he returned to Japan, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Tadashi Takahashi, elder brother of the Rev. Haruko Takahashi and Ms. Francis Takahashi took care of the church for about one year and a half. But it could be the devoted core church members who continued to attend church that helped the church in the state of activation. If there were no such devoted believers, it would have been impossible to perpetuate the operation of the church till this day.

A while ago, when I was under spiritual training at Konko Church of Amagi in 1974, Oyasensei, the late Rev. Fumio Yasutake summoned me to his office and asked, "There is a church in Hawaii that needs a resident minister. Do you want to go there?" Without any hesitation, I just replied, "Yes." The Rev. Shoichi Okuno was in charge of administrative work of Konko Missions in Hawaii. He preferred the minister to come with a wife for the operation of the church. When I found my wife-to-be, Reiko—Oyasensei remarked, "Omae no toku ja naizo" or "Don't think that it's your own virtue." It could have been the virtuous power of Oyasensei and the Konko Church of Amagi that I was able to get married prior to starting in our missionary work.

Just a day after our wedding at Konko Church of Amagi, on September 25, 1977, we left the church for our missionary work. I stopped over in Konko Town to greet Konko-Sama (the late Rev. Kagamitaro Konko) for our missionary work. Konko-Sama gave me an extensive message. One of the messages he gave me was the concept of "Inochi no shin no hataraki" or core vital life sustaining functions of all living things." He said, "When a baby is born, we all exchange greetings of celebration by saying 'Omedeto' (congratulations) and 'arigato' (thank you)" among the people involved. The same function is found in any living things, such a tree in the yard. The roots of the tree take up nutrients and water and send them all the way up to the branches and leaves. At the same time, the leaves and branches make food through the work of photosynthesis. If the tree is cut above the roots, the upper portion will eventually die. The same thing would apply to our life. When a baby becomes one years old, we celebrate his/her healthy growth. When the child enters school, we also celebrate. When the child graduates from school, we celebrate their achievement. When the child gets a job, we congratulate. When the child gets married, we celebrate

the wedding. If we stop the exchange of congratulatory words, we will encounter hardships in life.

The 4th Konko Sama shared to us what he had done in his daily living in such a manner, "I give thanks to the glasses I wear and depend on, I give thanks to the pen I use, I give thanks to the sheet of paper on which I can write."

When I look back at my missionary work with my wife in the last 43 years, the message of "Inochi no shin no hataraki" became the core of our engagement in our missionary work. I have convinced the formula of "Inochi no shin no hataraki" can apply to any elements in pursuit of faith life as a Konko believer. On the first day when I arrived and entered into the sanctuary and extended my prayer of thanks for the given opportunity of serving for the faith community at Wahiawa, I have tried to say thank you for the day spent in gratitude. I am just an ordinary individual and have experienced many ups and downs in life. But I always come back to settle to the concept of "Inochi no shin no hataraki" and have tried to extend due appreciation and gratitude for many elements in life.

The 4th Konko Sama used the expression of "sewaninaru subeteni reiwo iu kokoro heiwa umidasu kokoro to iwan" or the heart of extending thanks for any and all those elements which can be an integral part of life, which will help contribute in keeping peace. Actualization of "Inochi no shin no hataraki" has been simply stated in that expression and the practice Konko-Sama himself had practiced in his own life.

I would like to extend my thanks to the Rev. Michio Miyake of Konko Church of Tokiwadai who gave me a message in celebration of our departure for our missionary work in Hawaii when we made a courtesy visit to greet the minister who has provided a momentous opportunity for me to get engaged in ministry of the Konkoko faith when I was in Tokyo. He jotted down a message on the cover of the wrapping of goshinmai sacred rice. The message reads, 「有り難きこの思召いつまでも忘れずに行け人助けの道」. I have interpreted this message in this manner, "Never fail to appreciate this wondrous divine mission granted to you for saving people" dated September 27, 1977. I have placed this Goshinmai sacred rice packet at the Toritsugi-Mediation Desk and have seen the message from the initial stage of our missionary work. Interestingly, the message has never faded away. The message has the same line of meaning of "Inochi no shin no hataraki" or core vital life sustaining function found in all living things" and "Konnichi made no orei" or extending thanks for any and all blessings I have enjoyed thus far. I have been deeply appreciative of the message as years pass by. Without the presence of my wife and her support and dedication for our missionary work, I would not have been enabled to share this thought with you today.

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. No one is aware of the blessings of Heaven and Earth which enables 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. (Oboecho 26-22-3)

The Founder Konko Daijin prayed Tenchi Kane No Kami, "When the people of the world pray to Ikigami Konko Daijin with a sincere and single-heart, please fulfill whatever request they have." (Gorikai II Unknown 7)

Bulletin Board

Church Services for March 2020

1 Sun -Monthly Service (9 am)

8 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

-KMH Rotary Hanashikai at Honolulu Church
(10:30 am)

15 Sun -80th Anniversary (10 am)

21 Sat -KMH Family Fishing Day at Hoomaluhia (10 am)

22 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

-Honolulu Church Spring Memorial Svc (10 am)

29 Sun -Spring Memorial Service (10 am)

April 2020

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

5 Sun -Honolulu Church Grand Service (11 am)

12 Sun -Waipahu Church Grand Service (11 am)

13 Mon-Wahiawa Church Grand Service (6:30 pm)

18 Sat -Wailuku Church Grand Service (11 am)

Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility will be made on Friday, March 20, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

KMH

- The KMH Community Engagement and Outreach Committee Meeting will be held at Konko Mission of Honolulu on Friday, March 27, 2020 at 6 p.m.
- KMH-KCNA Joint Conference Committee Meeting will be held on Friday, April 10, 2020 at 5 p.m. at Konko Mission of Honolulu.
- KMH Ohana program, family fishing day at Ho'omaluhia Lake Kaneohe (10 a.m.) Meet at Honolulu Church at 9:30 a.m.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

March

Sandy Abe	3/4/2014
Gregg Sadao Miyasaka	3/5/2019
Edith Lin Hai Noguchi	3/7/2016
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.

The following is an excerpt from the article found in Ametsuchi February issue, 2020 page 53. An English translation is provided by the Rev. Yasuhiro Yano

By Rev. Shikie Kouda, Konko Church of Ootsuru, Ooita Prefecture

Unexpected message from Konko-Sama

The first time I received an extended message from Konko-Sama when I was young and kept busy in taking care of my three children. My husband, who served as an instructor at Konkokyo Gakuin Seminary, became unable to teach at the institution because of some serious issues he had to deal with at the seminary. He was secluded in his own room and bedridden for about a month.

While I had to take care of my three children. My husband didn't come out of his room from the second floor. I had to cook and bring food to serve him. I became so frustrated and could no longer bear the situation. I carried my youngest son on my back, and held the hands of my eldest son and daughter and got out of the house and slammed the entrance door. Then I raced to see Konko-Sama at the Toritsugi-Mediation Desk and expressed my complaint to him by saying, "My husband refuses to go to work at the Gakuin Seminary." It was not the formal way of seeking Toritsugi-Mediation; rather a ranting to Konko-Sama about my husband's disturbing behavior. At the same time, I had a faint expectation that Konko-Sama would give me a sort of message that would help dissolve my frustration. I expected him to give some consolation for my suffering, such as: "You shouldn't have such negative thoughts toward your husband, but instead, try to keep a positive attitude and take care of your husband" or something to that extent. But Konko-Sama responded to me in such an abrupt manner without referring to my husband and said, "Do you cook rice?! Do you clean the rooms?! Do you wash your clothes?!" I was prompted to respond to his extended words in my mind, "How dare Konko-Sama ask me such rude questions. He should know how I had to deal with three of my children, while I kept busy in managing the household chores every single day." I was just looking at Konko-Sama in confusion. Konko-Sama continued to say, "When you cook rice, do you say thank you for any elements involved in your cooking?! Do you pray that your cooking will go smoothly without any disruptions?! When you use your rice cooker, do you say thank you for the rice cooker?! Do you extend your prayer for the good health of your family members through the food you prepare?! When you finish cooking rice, do you say thank you for the cooked rice without any troubles?!"

When you wash your clothes, do you say thank you to the laundry machine?! Do you say thank you for the water used for washing?! Do you say thank you for being able to use the machine and wash clothes?! Do you say thank you when your laundry is done?! When you use a dryer for clothes, do you say thank you for the dryer?! Do you say thank you to the machine when the machine finishes its task?! He continued to keep on talking in such a meticulous manner."

After a pause, Konko-Sama said, "I have been doing all those things I have shared with you every day. When I find myself awake in my bed in the morning, I say thank you for the fact that I awoke from my sleep. I give thanks for the life I have been given on that day. I give thanks for the clothes I wear. When I wash my face in the morning, I give thanks for the water I use. When I put my feet into the geta clogs at the entrance, I say thank you for the clogs. I give thanks for the passage on which I can walk to the Hiromae. When I arrive at the Hiromae, worship hall, I say thank you for the fact I could walk all the way from my resident to this place without any disruptions. I say thank you for my being able to fulfill my duties at this place. If I would ever forget to say thank you for any of those elements, I will try to fulfill in extending thank you later on when I became aware of the forgotten elements. You say you wish to actualize and practice this way of faith in your own life. But without practicing what I have shared with you, there shall be no way to fulfill your wish!" Konko-Sama firmly stated in that manner.

This was the first time I had ever received a message from Konko-Sama at the Toritsugi-Mediation Desk. But my initial response for the extended message didn't move me much at that stage. I had no idea how the message Konko-Sama gave me is related in the practice of Konko faith. I held such a rude thought against Konko-Sama, "Konko-Sama became Head of the Religious Organization just recently. Maybe he hasn't quite developed a full appreciation of the true essence of the Konko faith."

After returning home from visiting church, I wanted to follow what Konko-Sama shared with me as sort of a reluctant obligation to show respect to Konko-Sama. When I cook, I try to say thank you for the cooking utensils used and washing them. I was not that serious in saying thank you for those elements in life, but practiced saying thank you in reminding Konko-Sama. I could be just a nursery student who just followed the instructions given by a caretaker. But I kept reminding myself to say thank you for whatever I do in my daily living by saying.

The following day, my husband got out of his bed and greeted me in such a normal manner, "I am going to report to Gakuin Seminary from today." I was really surprised in witnessing a drastic sudden improvement of

my husband who had secluded himself in his own room and had been bedridden for one month. How could he ever get out of the bed and become so well that he expressed his full energy in trying to fulfill his duties at Gakuin Seminary. At that moment, I was prompted in my heart, "Yes. It is because of Konko-Sama's prayer that my husband got blessed."

In a pleasant surprise, I responded to visit church and went to see Konko-Sama right away with three of my children. I reported to Konko-Sama, "Konko-Sama, Thank you very much. My husband got well and will report to Gakuin Seminary." Konko-Sama responded to me by just saying, "Sore mii!" or "You see the blessing you received!" After the remark, he didn't say anything at all. I was just looking at Konko-Sama puzzled. I was just 31 or 32 years old at that time. I just couldn't comprehend the remark of "Sore mii!" A few months later, I related the episode of Konko-Sama to my husband. During the period ever since I got the message from Konko-Sama, I tried to practice saying thank you for elements in my day to day living. Till I received the message from Konko-Sama, I was so much in distress that I was easily angry at my children for minor misbehaviors, in such manners as scolding, "You did it again!? Keep quiet! Shut up!" In those frustrating conditions, my husband had to deal with a serious issue at Gakuin Seminary and secluded himself in his room.

Then I went to see Konko-Sama who gave me the message of saying thank you. As I have practiced saying thank you in following the message of Konko-Sama, I found changes in my mind. I learned to be more loving of my children and felt ashamed why I had scolded such lovable children. But when I failed to visit church and neglect to say thank you in my daily living, I became irritated. As I practiced saying thank you, I feel better and things started to go well in my daily living.

I shared those thoughts to my husband. He responded, "I can fully understand the consequences you have told." He said, "When you took your children with you and got out of the house by slamming the door, I felt like you would never come back again." He also revealed, "When I was in deep trouble while I could not report to my office, the irritating and disturbing words thrown out of your mouth felt like a sharp edge of a spear that penetrated deep into my wounded heart. Your words aggravated my condition even more. The only way I could respond was to escape into the bed in helplessness." But the morning you came back after slamming the door, I found something had changed. The sounds you make while cooking felt so comfortable. I remembered the sounds of cooking made by my mother at our church kitchen while I was young. The sounds of cooking made by my mother was so comforting and warm. When I listened to the soft comforting sounds you made while you were preparing meals, for some reason, I felt like I was liberated. My body and mind felt tranquil and I could take a deep breath. I felt like I had more than enough rest.

Suddenly I felt like getting out of my bed and prompted to report to my office at Gakuin Seminary from tomorrow." My husband's thoughts helped correct my ill-thoughts against him while he was bedridden. I made extra loud clinging and clanging noises while cooking and scolding my children so irritatingly so that my husband can also hear and understood my frustrations. But I realized that my disturbing behaviors aimed at him actually further aggravated his condition.

My husband expressed thoughts helped me to understand the true meaning of the remark "sore mii" forwarded by Konko-Sama. The fact that I have practiced saying thank you as Konko-Sama showed me contributed in bringing out the blessed development of my husband and the whole family. It was the actual saying of "thank you" for elements in life as Konko-Sama instructed that has contributed in bringing about this blessed situation—not my prayer for him to be able to report to work again through Toritsugi-Mediation and prayers to Konko-Sama about the matter. I realized that following and putting the words given by Konko-Sama into practice is what actualized the blessings to unfold.