



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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20th Anniversary Celebration of the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace



(Pictures courtesy of Mrs. Masago Asai)

By Yasuhiro Yano

The Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace held the 20th Anniversary Celebration Peace Prayer at the Konko Mission of Honolulu on Sunday, October 28, 2012. The Rev. Koichi Konko was serving at the Toritsugi-Mediation Desk. The 20th Anniversary Celebration and the HCRP banners complimented the altar. The Peace Pole was offered in front of the Kami Altar. Beautiful floral offerings adorned the sanctuary and over 150 peace cups were placed at the edge of the stage for all to see. The “Kibimai Sacred Dance” was offered by the Rev. Edna Kazuko Yano of the Konko Mission of Wahiawa when the program began at 4:00 p.m.



Following the formalities of the welcome address and congratulatory messages, eighteen different religious and spiritual entities offered prayers for peace. I represented the Konko faith since I have gotten involved in the organization for two decades since the initiation. In all, approximately 85 to 90 people showed up to attend the

meeting. The atmosphere of the worship hall was unlike anything I ever felt before. It was peaceful and very welcoming.

Following the beautiful hula performance by Mrs. Masago Asai and music presentation by Ms. Lucie Lynch, Sister Joan Chatfield made a keynote speech presentation on the theme of “Peace-Appreciation of Mutual Interdependence in the Universe.” Following the formal ceremonial program at the worship hall, the congregation moved to the second floor to enjoy a delicious dinner buffet and lively a conversation.



The Rev. Michio Miyake of Konko Church of Tokiwadai in Tokyo coordinated with the help of the Rev. Katsuo Yasutake and other religious leaders to hold the initial meeting for the formation of this interfaith community at the Konko Mission of Honolulu on November 25, 1991. He tried to promote interfaith dialogues among many religious entities in Hawaii. The first formal organizational meeting was held at Chaminade University of Honolulu on May 27, 1992. WCRP Hawaii Chapter was the first adopted organizational name because we have been affiliated with WCRP or World Conference of Religions for Peace. In 2012, we registered the name to the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace as a non-profit corporation in the state of Hawaii.

Two thoughts impressed me as I attended this celebration which displayed the unique nature of the HCRP. One of the thoughts was about a remark made by Sister Joan Chatfield. She introduced a conversation with the Rev. Koreaki Yano, who served as president of the organization from the initiation for many years before he moved to Los Angeles several years ago. The Rev. Koreaki Yano stated the HCRP was a unique interfaith community that cannot be found anywhere else in the United States. The speaker pointed out the unique nature of the interfaith community distinctively marked with the spirit of Aloha could partly be attributed to the isolated geographic location of Hawaii. She extended her thoughts and prayers that Hawaii will

evolve to become the capital for interfaith dialogue and cooperation.

The other thought is expressed by the Rev. Tatsunori Kamiya who initiated the Cup-full of Peace Project. When he held a peace cup painting session at a homeless shelter, one of the participants asked him which cup got 1st place. In responding to that question, the Rev. Kamiya responded that they are all 1st place cups. Every cup deserved to be given the recognition as the first place cup because each cup was different and unique. While I was watching the three rows of beautifully painted peace cups at the edge of sanctuary. I felt that the cups placed at there represented religious and spiritual entities.

As a unique interfaith community, I pray that the HCRP will continue to evolve to become the pivot of expanding interfaith dialogue and cooperation for world peace.

The following is a copy of the congratulatory message forwarded to the HCRP by the Rev. Michio Miyake of the Konkokyo Tokiwadai in Tokyo in responding to the formal invitation to the 20th Anniversary Peace Prayer Celebration. Due to his health concerns, he could not attend the function in person. I would like to introduce his message for your reference how the HCRP has been initiated.

October 28, 2012

The Rev. Michio Miyake
*The Konkokyo Tokiwadai
Tokiwadai 1-28-14, Itabashi-ku
Tokyo, Japan*

Congratulatory Message

I would like to extend my sincere message of congratulations for the commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace.

I feel honored and humbled for the formal letter of invitation to the commemorative meeting of HCRP scheduled for October, which I received through the Rev. Yasuhiro Yano. I feel deep regret that my physical limitations in my advanced age of 80 and the extended concerns of my family members and friends have prevented me from making the trip to attend the function. I will extend my prayer for a successful and meaningful meeting from Tokyo.

I have been given opportunities to be involved in promoting international "Interfaith Dialogue" from 1969. My initial step for the endeavor was attending the General Meeting of IARF held in Boston. I was awakened to the vital nature of "Interfaith Dialogue" with the people who have different religious faiths and traditions in the world as I met the many people who have similar thoughts. I extended my leg of journey to European countries for this

endeavor, and I was granted the personal audience with the Pope, Holy Father John Paul VI. Meeting with the Pope catapulted me to become seriously engaged in the promotion of "Interfaith Dialogue."

The following year, I served as a staff member of the 1st WCRP Conference held in Kyoto and eventually served as the Secretary General. I have also extended my involvement with IARF and WCC. Traditionally, the WCC excluded non-Christian religious organizations. I was invited to attend the 7th Conference of WCC held in Canberra, Australia, as an official participant in representation of non-Christian religious faiths. I also responded to a formal letter of invitation to attend the Millennium Observance of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Konkokyo is one of the minor religious establishments in Japan, but I have a conviction that the messages extended to the world are universal. The Konkokyo theology shows us that we shall never belittle or look down upon any religion, but instead we should extend our respect even to the roadside "Jizo" statues when passing by. We may reject and alienate others in reflection of the heart of self-centeredness, which shall not be the integral part of true religions. I extend my prayer for the expansion of interfaith culture, mutual respect, acknowledgement and cooperation of all religions and spiritualities.

In 20 years time, I feel overwhelmed with the heart of happiness and gratefulness in witnessing that the seed I initiated in planting in the soil of Hawaii has achieved this level of growth into today's Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace. I would like to extend my true congratulations for today's auspicious observance of the interfaith Peace Prayer in commemorating the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace.

Sincerely Yours,

The Rev. Michio Miyake,
The Konkokyo Tokiwadai

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

H.C.R.P.

An "Appreciation" luncheon will take place at the Church of Perfect Liberty on Monday, November 5 from noon, to celebrate a successful 20th Anniversary Peace Prayer.

Volunteer Activity at Wahiawa General Hospital

The monthly volunteer activity at the same facility will be held on Friday, November 9 at 10:00 a.m. Your participation to the program will be very much appreciated.

KMH Faith Enrichment Meeting

Dr. and Mrs. John Tamashiro of Konko Mission of Waipahu will be sharing their thoughts for the pilgrimage and faith study tour at the Headquarters Church at Konko Town they joined lately. The meeting will be at the Konko Mission of Honolulu on Sat. 11/17/12 from 2-4 p.m.

Grand Services

Sun 11/11-Hilo Church at 11:00 a.m.

Sun 11/18-Wailuku Church at 11:00 a.m. 20th Memorial Service for the late Rev. Kiyotaka Yasutake will also be observed concurrently.

Wahiawa Church Mini-Bazaar

The church mini-bazaar held on Saturday, November 3, 2012 was a great success with favorable weather conditions and a lot of local community people's response and the tireless hard working church members.

Honoring Mitama Spirits

November

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|------------------------|------------|
| Rev. Kikue Kodama | 11/28/1997 |
| Kazuyoshi Kidani | 10/5/ 2006 |
| David Suyeki Oka | 11/8/2006 |
| Rev. Takashi Inagaki | 11/9/2004 |
| Ronald Minoru Miyatake | 11/14/2000 |
| Chieno Hirota | 11/17/2009 |
| Toshihiko Hosaka | 11/20/2008 |
| Crandal Ancog | 11/21/2008 |
| Cicilia Asako Soma | 11/24/2003 |

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 Kōsaka contributed the insightful articles. The translation is provided by Yasuhiro Yano. (Reference pages 25, 26 and 27)

No. 25

Many kinds of plants grow in the mountains and many kinds of fish swim in the rivers and in the sea. Fishermen catch the fish, and merchants buy and sell them. People buy their favorite foods and eat them to strengthen their bodies. Kami looks after us so we can be well enough to work for the sake of the world. If you think empirically about all the things in the world, you will realize how blessed you are. We can look forward every year to eating different seasonal foods. We buy foods that are in season and eat them to nurture our bodies. The changing of the season is beyond human control. *(1 Yamamoto Sadajiro 5-1. 2, 3 Kyoten page 364)*

Blessed nature of foods we consume

This message is also shared by the Rev. Sadajiro Yamamoto.

When he went to see Konko-Sama, even before he extended his greeting, Konko-Sama started to talk, "People should know what makes it possible for them to be born, and what makes it possible for them to keep living." While receiving the message, the Rev. Yamamoto was deeply moved. The primary message the Founder tried to convey to the Rev. Yamamoto at that stage was focused on the blessings of Heaven and Earth. Many other messages the Rev. Yamamoto received from the Founder were also focused on this subject.

The quoted message also refers to that primary subject. The Founder might have intended to give a clue to identify the meaning of human existence in relation to the consumption of foods.

In mountains and fields, various living things flourish seasonally; in the rivers and oceans, there also live many creatures. Many different foods from those resources are brought to the dining table for consumption. Only human beings consume a vast range of food items. No other animal consumes as many varied foods as us. Only we have the privilege of access to such abundant food resources of our likes.

We understand that we eat other living things to sustain our lives. All living things we consume as foods have once sustained their own lives through the work of Heaven and Earth. All the food items such as rice, barley, vegetables, fruits, fish, meat and so forth have been yielded through the work of Heaven and Earth. In other words, through the consumption of all those foods, we take into the blessings of Heaven and Earth into our bodies.

It would be important for us to be mindful about the meaning of consuming any foods we enjoy, strengthening our bodies and contributing to the society through our work in reference to the blessings we enjoy from Heaven and Earth.

No. 26

Though you say that water is bad, don't think so. Think of water as medicine. Then you won't have a stomach illness. Don't say that water is the cause of your stomach illness. Without water, you cannot live even for a day. Don't they say that a single ear of rice needs a liter of water to grow? Be aware of the benefits of water. (II Katsura Matsuhei 1-6 Kyoten pg. 481~3)

Appreciation of blessed water

This message was given to the Rev. Matsuhei Katsura upon his initial visitation to see the Founder through the form of "Goshinden" or spontaneous divine revelation through the mouth of the Founder. "Gosaiden" represents a form of divine revelation in such a manner that Kami spontaneously respond to the extended prayer through the mouth of the Founder. While "Gorikai" refers that the Founder responded to the extended messages of an individual at the Toritsugi-Mediation Desk.

The Katsura family members suffered from an inherited abdominal cancer from generation to generation. The Rev. Matsuhei Katsura made the first visit to see Konko-Sama in the spring of 1883. While he was sitting at a corner of the worship hall, Konko-Sama greeted him by saying, "To the person from Suo Province, I'm glad to see that you have come to worship from afar" (II Katsura Matsuhei 1). He was deeply impressed by Konko-Sama's spiritual power to see through his heart. In corresponding to the situation, there was the quoted divine revelation through the mouth of the Founder.

Kami pointed out the phrase, "water is bad" a perception held by the Rev. Katsura, because whenever he consumed water he experienced persistent stomach discomfort. Kami also referred to the generational stomach ailment. The Rev. Katsura became overwhelmed by the all-knowing power of Kami. "Think of water as medicine. Then you won't have a stomach illness. Be aware of the benefits of water." These words deeply penetrated into the heart of the Rev. Katsura.

Water represents true blessing of Heaven and Earth. If there is no water on earth, along with any vital life-sustaining elements, such as the air, the sunlight and life-sustainable environment, there would be no life on Earth. If we take the regular water we use for granted, it may affect the stomach negatively. On the contrary, if we try to consume water as blessed divine water provided by Heaven and Earth, it could affect to our health positively.

The divine message the Rev. Katsura received at his initial encounter with the Founder became the foundation of his entire faith life thereafter and drove him to be the pioneer missionary who helped spread the Konko faith in Kyushu. We can see the vital meaning of developing better understanding about the blessings of Heaven and Earth through the faith life demonstrated by the Rev. Katsura.

No. 27

Kami takes away the body's poisons everyday through urine and excrement. (I Ichimura Mitsugoro 1-30 Kyoten, pg. 208)

Discharge of bodily wastes

We can sustain our lives through two of the vital physical functions of taking in needed nutrients and discharging the bodily wastes. Both functions of intake of foods and discharge of bodily wastes take place in blessedness.

It would be more appropriate to introduce about the functions of discharging bodily wastes through a medical reference. The following is a quotation from "Shin-Shaku, Karada Jiten" or "A Dictionary of New Understanding of the Body."

Stools are a mixture of the remains of the foods which were not digested and absorbed. The old cells of the intestinal lining, elements of the digestive tract; digestive fluids; mucosal fluid; and intestinal microorganisms from the digestive organs also comprise the mixture of stool. One of the vital functions of the liver is purification of toxic elements: the ammonia isolated from amino acid is converted to urea in the liver; the urea is moved to the kidney through blood vessels and transforms into an element of urine; also various acids, phenol and other toxic substances produced in the intestines are detoxified in the liver.

The liver functions to stabilize the bodily fluids at a standard level by discharging unnecessary elements. If the liver functions slow down, unfavorable substances in the body become accumulated, and those toxic elements begin to circulate through the blood vessels. If no action is taken for the adverse state, the person will fall into a coma and die.

In this manner, the toxic substances in the body are discharged from the body in the form of urine and excrement. It is surprising to find out that the Founder understood all this through his deeply insightful observation and intuition. It perfectly matches today's medical theories. The impressive insightful observation displayed by the Founder can be more deeply appreciated. The Founder identified Kami's work not only in the life-sustaining external environment, but also in the internal bodily functions, such as discharging bodily wastes—which would normally be a topic that people avoided.