



The 2015 HCRP Peace Prayer

By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister

The Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace organized the 2015 Annual Interfaith Peace Prayer with co-sponsorship of the Interfaith Alliance Hawaii at the Gedatsu Church of Hawaii on Sunday, October 25, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. From the Konkokyo faith community, 13 people, including six people from Wahiawa Church, four people from Waipahu Church and, the guest speaker, the Rev. Todd Takahashi with a visiting minister from Japan came. The total number of people showed up would be around 70 people from 17 various faith-based communities and spiritual groups and individuals.

Personally, I have been involved in the interfaith organization from the very inception stage which was initiated by the Rev. Michio Miyake of Konko Church of Tokiwadai in Tokyo. In 1991, the Rev. Michio Miyake made a visit to Hawaii in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack by the Japanese Imperial Navy that broke out the war between Japan and the United States on December 7, 1941. His visit was to offer a prayer of apology for the tragic consequences of the attacks. He conducted a service intended to extend apologies for the victimized people both at the Pearl Harbor Arizona Memorial and at the National Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl. I was honored to assist him for the services.

The initial meeting for the formation of the interfaith community was held at the Konko Mission of Honolulu in 1991. And the first meeting of the WCRP Hawaii Chapter was held in 1992 at Chaminade University of Honolulu. And the first organized Interfaith Peace Prayer was held at the State Diamond Head Crater Park on October 3, 1993. Some 50 people from approximately 10 faith-bathed and spiritual-oriented groups showed up for the gathering. Personally, I feel amazed that I could have gotten involved in the interfaith community for so long and be able to witness the evolution of the annual Interfaith Peace Prayer in the last 23 years.

This year, the board members asked the Rev. Dr. Todd Zenji Takahashi for the main speech at the Peace Prayer. One of the board members became impressed by the dedication service for the Honouliuli National Monument that took place on March 31, 2015 at the location where the Honouliuli Internment Camp was built for the wartime enemy aliens and enemy affiliated people. His impromptuous delivery at Honouliuli of his speech which referred to his own aunty, the Rev. Haruko Takahashi, the founding minister of Konko Mission of Wahiawa, impressed the attending dignitaries, including the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewell. I was truly overwhelmed that we could witness a speaker from the local Konkokyo community making a

presentation at the Peace Prayer. The Rev. Takahashi's presentation was direct and expressed how he has dealt with many difficult encounters in exercise of his faith in the Konko religion. I have never witnessed such a heart-moving presentation before. My daughter, Edna also made an amazing introduction of the speaker and offered a prayer with the rite of Oonusa purification. I enjoyed a lasting favorable impression of this year's Peace Prayer for days which I have never experienced before.

The following is an excerpt of my greeting for the opening of the Peace Prayer.

Good evening. Thank you for your presence for the observance of the 2015 Interfaith Peace Prayer coordinated by the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace and co-sponsored by the Interfaith Alliance of Hawaii.

This year marks the 70th Anniversary of the ending of WWII. The theme for this year's Peace Prayer is "One Heart-One Mind-In Gratitude." The board members have come up with this theme as a wish for all of us to have a unified heart and mind in gratitude for the pursuit of world peace. The interpretation of the theme is up to each of us. It could be possible that we are all assembled here today with one heart and mind in pursuit of peace. It could also be possible that each representing faith and spiritual community develops their own interpretation of one heart and mind, while grasping the heart of their respective supreme deities and spiritual beings.

In the past, we have listened to topics of avoiding all types of violence. Even the clapping of hands may disturb the air. So they practiced clapping hands without actually putting the hands together—creating a soundless applause.

But in my religious practice, we clap hands together, and create the sounds that opens up a channel of communication with Tenchi Kane No Kami or Our Divine Parent. This can be quite Japanese-oriented. I made my own interpretation of the tradition. One hand, either left or right, represents the divine heart, the other hand represents our own heart. As the two hearts meet together in harmony, it creates a solemn sound that represents the actualization of blessings for both, our deity and us. It is not the sound of disturbing the air or violence.

The primary mission of HCRP is to promote interfaith dialogue. We have listened and shared various thoughts and prayers extended by so many representatives of religious and spiritual traditions in the last 22 years since the annual meeting was initiated in 1993. We find differences and something in common. We get connected in sharing the common elements we can find in others and keep on expanding the relationships for actualization of peace.

Thank you.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

After my physical form disappears, I, Konko Daijin will go wherever I am asked. (III Naiden 13-14)

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 November 2015

- 1 Sun -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (9 am)
- 8 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
-Hilo Church Autumn Grand Service (11 am)
- 15 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
- 22 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)
- 29 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

December 2015

- 1 Tue -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 6 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace

“Thank you” potluck luncheon in appreciation of the coordinated work of the people who joined the 2015 annual Peace Prayer will be held at the Palolo Kwannon Temple on Monday, November 23, 2015 at 11:30 a.m. in conjunction with the “Farewell Party” for the Rev. Seiji Hironaka of Rissho Kosei-kai Hawaii Church, who will be departing from Japan for a new assigned duty at the end of November.

JCCH Tour Program for Honouliuli National Monument

By Yasuhiro Yano

In commemoration of the 70th Anniversary since the ending of WWII, members of the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace joined a tour group consisted of ministers of several other religious sects, the Consul General of Honolulu. We also invited the ministers from Konko Mission of Waipahu, to the Honouliuli National Monument tour coordinated by the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii on Friday, October 2, 2015.

When we arrived at the JCCH at 8:15 a.m. a mini-van arrived. Approximately 20 people were ushered into the car. Soon after we settled in our seats, each passenger was given a name tag which was a replica of name tags actually used in the Internment Camps in the Mainland. The group was divided into two groups.

It seemed the whole tour could be a re-creation of the transportation of the internees sent to the internment camp. The mini-van, staff members in black t-shirts, the name tags, clergies, government officers, leaders of the Japanese community, passing through many gates to reach the destination, they all seemed to be the basic elements of what happened to the people held at the internment camp.

Personally, the founder of our church, Konko Mission of Wahiawa, the Rev. Haruko Takahashi was relocated from the Sand Island Relocation Camp to the Honouliuli camp in 1943 and released in 1944. I took over the operation of the church some 38 years ago, five years after her passing. This year marks 75th year of the church history

I really enjoyed and want to extend my thanks for the detailed and interesting narrations made by two guides. I felt like I could picture how they spend their lives in the restricted environment. Could it be the Japanese spirituality that they tried to find peace and harmony in that harsh environment? Many drawing depicting the life at the camp, creative artistic items, compositions of Japanese songs and verses and so forth represents exercise of mindfulness in finding elements that enriched their lives in the given circumstance.

I felt like finding the very core spirituality of Japanese and dedication in preserving and perpetuating the Japanese traditions values in you, your staff members, and volunteer people who made the tour very much meaningful.

27 Sun -Sun

My wife, Reiko became really moved by the whole tour, especially, the narrations and singing of “Yuuyake koyake” and other songs. My daughter, Edna was honored to take part in the dedication ceremony of the monument held on March 31, 2015.



Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Long-Term Care Facility at Wahiawa General Hospital will be made on Friday, November 20, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.

KMH Board Meeting

The regular KMH Board Meeting will be held on Saturday, November 28 at the Konko Mission of Honolulu from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Kaka'ako Ehimemaru Memorial Clean up

The Ehime Kenjinkai members will conduct regular care for the Mikan trees and clean up of the Ehimemaru Memorial at Kaka'ako on Saturday, November 28 at 9:00 a.m.

Rev. Edna K Yano invited to Wahiawa Hongwanji Temple

The Rev. Edna Kazuko Yano will be making a presentation in request of the board of Wahiawa Hongwanji Temple on Sunday, November 15 at 9:00 a.m. She will be speaking on the title of "Gratitude and how it can affect our health in a positive way" in exercise of her faith-based nursing.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

November

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
Cecilia Asako Soma	11/24/2003
Tei Yoshiiwa	11/24/1973
Rev. Kikue Kodama	11/28/1997

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 131, 131 and 133)

No. 131

Everyone asks for divine blessings, but do they understand what true blessings are? Divine blessings are not limited to just having one's wishes granted. For some people, death is a divine blessing. Others are saved from death through divine blessings. Since everything in this world is governed by Kami, there nothing else but to depend on Kami. Even though it may seem like an inconvenience at the time, of you continue to practice faith without going against Kami's will, you will realize later the blessings you have received. Faith is pointless unless this much is understood. (III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 35-1, 2 Kyoten page 820)

True blessings

Sometimes we witness a child crying out loud uncontrollably to get attention of the parent in demand of what he wants to get fulfilled of his wish, such as craving for sweets. The parent hesitates to give him additional sweets in consideration of his health. It may look harsh for the child, but it could be the parent who becomes overwhelmed with the sense of pity for the child in rage.

Our Divine Parent of the universe watches over each and every one of us with deep love and compassion as precious beloved children. But we become doubtful of the divine nature of Kami while we do not enjoy fulfillment of our extended personal wishes; discredit Kami for unfulfilling consequences of the extended prayers; complain to Kami to grant much fulfilling results for extended prayers. We could have behaved in such a manner while we declare we get engaged in practice of faith.

To keep a sold trust in Kami at all times is the ultimate state of mind held by a true believer.

In Japan, people have a general notion that those strong willed people would not get engaged in practice of faith, while only those weak willed people would get engaged in practice of faith. But the truth is just the opposite. Those weak willed people would never be able to develop their conviction in their belief in Kami. They become scared of surrendering themselves in care of divine work.

The following statements made by the Founder's sounded so serious for the believers: "Even though it may seem like an inconvenience at the time, if you continue to practice faith without going against Kami's will, you will realize later the blessings you have received. Faith is pointless unless this much is understood."

A minister, who became deeply moved by the expressed message, attempted to live in actualization of the teaching. Through the course of his spiritual training, he realized that "now" is the time to show full appreciation and gratefulness of the blessings received. He understood that it could be too lenient to show appreciation and gratefulness for the blessings later on. As the minister stated, "now" is the time for the believers to devote in practice of faith from moment to moment.

No. 132

People talk about great blessings, but blessings are merely the shadows cast by sincerity of each person. Therefore, if you show great sincerity towards Kami you can receive great blessings. You cannot receive great divine blessings with a little sincerity. The shadow cast by sincerity will follow the shape of sincerity. (III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 21, Kyoten page 816)

The shadow cast by sincerity will follow the shape of sincerity.

When we encounter a situation in which we do not enjoy receiving of blessings for our extended prayers, we are likely to develop some doubts against Kami and try to place blames on others. But those seemingly frustrating times are the best opportune times we

should totally devote ourselves in getting closer to Kami and understanding deeper elements of Kami's heart. Then we are likely to enjoy much broader blessings.

“Okage” is shown in Chinese characters, “影” or “陰” both imply shadow in the form of blessings naturally created when we direct our sincere hearts toward Kami.

When a thin needle is placed against a light source, only a thin shadow of the needle is created; when a heavy piece of log is placed against a light source, a corresponding larger shadow will be casted. It would be irrational that we expect a greater blessing while we direct little sincere heart toward Kami.

The founding minister of Konko Church of Shizuoka, the Rev. Heijiro Iwasaki, encountered difficulties in his missionary work at the initial stage. He wrote a letter to his spiritual mentor, the Rev. Masajiro Sugita of Konko Church of Shimabara and asked help for the difficult situation. The Rev. Sugita responded to sent him a post card. The message in the post card read, “祈れどもしるしなきこそしるしなれ祈る心にまことなきゆゑ” that implies, “You get what you deserve since you show little sincere heart in your prayer.” The Rev. Iwasaki got infuriated by the rude message given to him by his mentor at first. But he learned to appreciate the true intent of the mentor and changed his way of getting engaged in his missionary work in line with the expressed thought. He got blessed in his missionary work thereafter” (Sugita Masajiro no Shinjin page 86).

The Rev. Matsuhei Katsura, the founding minister of Konko Church of Kokura also received a divine message, “大海には、鯨が棲む。竹の筒には、ぼうふらがわく” that implies that “In the vast ocean, whales swim, while a spoiled water kept in a bamboo hole only helps the growth of mosquitoes” (Wagashi wo Shinobite, page 287). In corresponding to the given message, he tried to get engaged in his pursuit of faith in actualization of the message with a broader heart and greater endeavors.

Let us try to direct our greater sincere hearts towards Kami and get blessed accordingly.

No. 133

Divine blessings are like the water in a washtub. If you push the tub away, the water will come towards you. And if you pull it towards you, the water will go the other way. (I Shimamura Hachitaro 21, Kyoten page 330)

Push the tub away, the water will come towards you.

The message sounds nothing in particular. But what would be his intent the Founder wished to convey through the message?

In general, when we hear a good reputation of a special place, be it a religious phenomena, we are likely to get attracted to make a visit to witness. Our only concern could be fulfillment of our personal concerns and interests. Shouldn't we take time to examine how we get engaged in pursuit of faith? We could also be consumed in search of fulfillment of personal wishes and wants.

After WWII, the Japanese people held at the war prison in Russia were released. It would be natural that their family members and related people wished that their beloved ones would be first to return home to Japan.

Mrs. Yoshino Kajiwara, a believer at Konko Church of Hita was one of those people. She made a daily visit to church by traveling a mountain trail of 8 kilometers on foot. Upon arrival at the church hall, she placed her son's portrait picture on the tatami mat floor and extended intense prayer for the return of her son. In responding to her earnest prayer, the founding minister of the church, the Rev. Yasuji Horio related a message to her, “Some 300,000 Japanese prisoners of war have been held in Russia. It would be against the will of Kami that you pray only for your own son that he would be the first to get back to Japan. Each and every one of them is a beloved child of Our Divine Parent. Among the 300,000 people held in Russia, there could be some people who are desperate to get back to Japan in witnessing a departure of loved ones in the family. There could be families in desperate need of the help kept in Russia. Let those people be given priority for their return home. As for your son, as long as he would be healthy, be patient that he could be the last person who would leave Russia.”

Mrs. Yoshino Kajiwara followed the instruction and extended her prayers for her son and everyone else held in Russia. In 1949, her son returned home safely.

Her son's name is Minoru Kajiwara, who has been serving as Head Minister of Konko Church of Kisogawa.

Pictures from HCRP Peace Prayer

