



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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2016 HCRP Interfaith Peace Prayer

By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister

I feel grateful to be a part of the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace for the last 25 years. The Rev. Michio Miyake of Konko Church of Tokiwadai in Tokyo initiated the birth of the interfaith community in Hawaii when he made a visit to Hawaii for the 50th Anniversary since the bombing of the Pearl Harbor in 1991. He performed the ceremonial services of “Owabi” both on board the USS Arizona Memorial and the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl. In coordination with the local religious leaders, he had contributed in forming the interfaith community that was initially called WCRP Hawaii Chapter because of some affiliation to the organization in New York. The name of the organization changed to the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace after the 9/11 terrorist attacks of the twin towers in New York. The first annual Interfaith Prayer for Peace was held at the State Diamondhead Crater Park on October 3, 1993.

We celebrated the 23rd annual Prayer for Peace at Gedatsu Church on October 23, 2016. Seventeen representatives from various faith-based and peace-oriented entities extended their prayers for peace. In representing the Konko faith community in Hawaii, the Rev. Dr. Todd Zenji Takahashi presented an impressive prayer for peace.

Personally, at every annual meeting, I have tried to share almost the same message of prayer for peace by quoting a teaching of the Founder, Konko Daijin, who inspired us by saying, “Those who practice faith should feel grateful even after sitting and resting on a tree stump” (II Unknown 23), or in Japanese, (木の切り株に腰を下ろして休んでも立つ時には、礼を言う心をわすれなよ). The tree stump may represent all elements we may tend to take for granted in our journey in life.

This message reminds me of one of the fundamental elements for peace. That is, a simple act of extending thanks and appreciation for all elements in life that help, support, benefit and bless us. It reflects the nature of our existence in this blessed world. A simple act of extending thanks even for the brief moment of comfort we enjoy from sitting on a tree stump in the mountain trail can be the act of acknowledging universal sustenance we all enjoy from Kami, God, Buddha, or any higher power we may refer to.

This year, we have chosen the theme for the gathering, “We see all people as one. May all be happy, healthy, free and safe at home.” ~The Issue of Homelessness in Hawaii~. Five years ago, in 2011, we had the same topic for homelessness in Hawaii. We took the same topic for this year in corresponding to the surged concerns for the issue in the community in Hawaii.

In February of this year, when we tried to figure out how we could contribute to this issue and was brain-storming at the monthly board meeting, we came up with the thought, “We see all people as one. May all be happy, healthy, free and safe at home.” Actually a visitor from the Mainland composed the thought while she was listening to our brain-storming session.

Personally, I thought what a powerful thought that can be universally actualized, not just the homeless issues, but many other issues we see in today’s society. And I see some people have actualized in their endeavors of working with the homeless issue and other issues.

In actualization of the thought, we initiated the annual interfaith community cleanup program at Kakaako Waterfront Park on September 10, 2016. The land we step on, the land on which many houses, temples and shrines stand, the land that provides every element for our sustenance of life represents the vital foundation for all living things, including human beings. When we can say thanks to a stump of a tree for the brief moment of comfort, we could give broader appreciation and gratitude for elements of blessings we enjoy and may take for granted. Approximately forty people joined this initial interfaith community cleanup program.

The message, “We see all people as one. May all be happy, healthy, free and safe at home” persistently showed up in mind since January of this year. And the word “One” in the sentence has kept me pondering its meaning. I searched for the meaning of “one.” The meaning may vary from person to person. “One” could mean “one” of the entire Ohana of the humanity living on the surface of the blessed Earth; “One” could be the “one” who has been sustained by the elements of blessings provided by Heaven and Earth; “One” could be the “one” being loved by Kami, God, Buddha and any other supreme deity or deities. What is sure is that no one can exist if they are ever separated from the Earth, which represents our eternal “Home” for all people and all living things on this planet. In my understanding as a Konko believer, I have

interpreted “One” as the beloved child of Tenchi Kane No Kami, Our Divine Parent of the Universe. The whole present message could be understood as the heart of the Divine, the heart of the Earth that sustains all life.

I believe I have found the meanings of “One” in “We see all people as one” through the presentations of two guest speakers, Mrs. Aulani Tavares and Ms. Holly Holowach as well as prayers being extended by 17 people from various faith-based and peace-oriented organizations and the whole congregation who joined the program.

I could identify people who have demonstrated the spirituality of “We see all people as one. May all be happy, healthy, free and safe at home.”

A person who witnessed children with their mother at a roadside on his way back from his day’s work could not help but to do something for the homeless family. He became so overwhelmed in search of finding ways to help the children in that miserable state. He asked the audience how we could respond to the circumstance. He made personal donations to help ease the suffering of the people. His presentation reminded me of the teaching of the Founder given to Jiroshiro Kataoka. “One cold day, I met a pitiful old man on my way to the Hiromae. I felt so sorry for him that I gave him the clothes I was wearing. When I arrived at the Hiromae, Konko Daijin said, ‘Jiroshiro, you received a splendid blessing today. When you met an unfortunate person, you felt pity for him and helped him wholeheartedly, putting your needs aside. The heart that feels pity is the heart of Kami. You are able to receive divine blessings through that heart of Kami. That is faith.’ Those who have received divine blessings understand their gratitude to Kami. Therefore, they should help unfortunate people with a heart of Kami” (III Jinkyukyogoroku 168).

This year’s Peace Prayer was something extraordinary. I have enjoyed lasting positive feelings from this year’s peace prayer, even after so many days after the event took place.

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. Tenchi Kane no Kami has sent Ikigami Konko Daijin to provide blessings and teachings so that mankind may prosper. Kami is Kami because of man, and man is man because of Kami. Both are fulfilled through this mutual relationship (Konko Kyoso Gorikai No. 3 in Kyoten Gorikai III).

Although Kami cannot be seen, you are constantly walking within and through the midst of Kami. Even while fertilizing a field or walking along a path, you are in Tenchi Kane No Kami’s hiromae. The whole world is Tenchi Kane No Kami’s hiromae. (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 6)

Bulletin Board

Monthly Services for November 2016

- 1 Tue -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 5 Sat -Mini BAZAAR (10 am-2 pm)
- 6 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-Wailuku Church Grand Service (11am)
- 13 Sun -Monthly Service for Founder (9 am)
- 20 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)
- 27 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-19th Memorial Service for the late Rev. Kikue Kodama at Honolulu Church (9 am)

December 2016

- 1 Thr -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)

Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace

The HCRP “Appreciation Luncheon” following the annual Interfaith Peace Prayer will be held on Monday, November 14, 2016 at the Palolo Kwannon Temple at 11:30 a.m.

Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility will be made on Friday, November 18, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

KMH Board of Trustees Meeting

The regular KMH Board of Trustees Meeting will be held on Saturday, November 26, 2016 from 10:30 a.m. at Konko Mission of Honolulu

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
Yoshitoshi Uyehara	11/25/2000
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 290, 291 and 292)

No. 290: Food is made and provided by Tenchi Kane No Kami to sustain one’s life. (III Shinkun 1-13 Kyoten page 773)

Food is the vital element of sustenance provide by Tenchi Kane No Kami

The original Japanese message reads, “食物はみな、人の生命のために天地の神の造り与えたまうものぞ。” The official English translation of the message is, “Food is made and provided by Tenchi Kane No Kami to sustain one’s life.” But the literal English translation can be as follows: “Tenchi Kane No Kami provides all foods for the sustenance of people’s lives.” If we follow the original context in the Japanese message, “all foods” refer to any foods we consume. The sources of any foods represent Kami’s blessings. The materials for instant noodles and canned foods are possible through the work of Heaven and Earth. Even when we consume a cup of instant noodles we can appreciate the work of Heaven and Earth for the sustenance of our own lives.

For the production of produce, the farmers work hard, one of the Konko ministers tried to compare the contribution of a farmer and the work of Heaven and Earth for rice crops. The story goes back to the age when they said that for the production of rice crops from the rice paddy of approximately 1,000 square meters, from the seedlings of rice plant to harvesting, it took the man-power of 20-people. If each farmer worked 10 hours a day, the total hours of work would be 200 hours of manpower. 200 hours equals 12,000 minutes.

It is said that in the rice paddy of 1,000 square meters, approximately 12,000 stalks of rice would grow. In a sense, for the growth of one stalk of rice in the paddy, a farmer would spend one minute of care to each stalk of rice.

While the work of Heaven and Earth would never stop regardless of day and night and equally distributed to each stalk of rice plant. It takes approximately 150 days for the rice to get ripen for harvesting. 150 days is converted to 3,600 hours. That hour is equal to 216,000 minutes.

In a sense, for a stalk of rice plant, a farmer contributed one minute of care, while Heaven and Earth spent 126,000 minutes. The minister tried to emphasize the fundamental great work of Heaven and Earth compared to the contributions of farmers for the production of rice.

No. 291: Never forget to have a grateful heart whenever you drink or eat. (III Shinkun 2-15 Kyoten page 775)

The heart of gratitude

Similar to the message we discussed in the previous page, this message is also one of the familiar teachings as we may regularly recite the message for our daily consumption of foods as Konko believers. The Japanese society today has changed so much that people have become so greedy in fulfillment of appetite for so-called “gourmet meals.” People in general express their complaints about the foods they consume. I am afraid that even Konko believers have been influenced by the general social trends and behave in the same manner as non Konko believers by complaining and displaying terrible eating manners.

In the past when we endured severe food shortage, we really appreciated even a bowl of rice soup in gratitude. But nowadays, we just take it for granted that we can get whatever foods we want.

We seem to have entered into a society in which we can hardly keep the heart of expressing gratitude in consumption of foods. Reciting grace before meals in formality does not necessarily mean that we show our sincere gratitude for the foods we enjoy. Konko believers have to reflect on our own if we truly live up in practicing what we recite in consuming foods.

At some churches, they recite additional message in regard to food consumption, “Overeating and overdrinking are the cause for becoming unable to eat or drink” (III Shinkun 2-13). “And food becomes medicine or poison depending on your heart” (III Shinkun 2-14). They could have their own reasons for the additional reminders for themselves.

While I have witnessed some women who always carry food containers that can be used to bring back some of the leftovers when they dine out, it is their way of mindfulness for consuming foods. Whenever we recite those teachings, we should be mindful that the founder would be asking us if we keep the heart in line with the expressed teachings.

No. 292: There is nothing more irreverent than to waste food. It takes a long time to prepare the food before it can be eaten. Nevertheless, people waste or throw away food. That means they are wasting Kami’s blessings and people’s hard work. (III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 100-1, 2 Kyoten page 847)

Wasting food

When I travel to many places, occasionally I encounter such depressing occasions that people waste food and have bad manners. When we stay at a traditional Japanese inn, we may be surprised by the overwhelming numbers of dishes being served at the table.

I sometimes wonder about the current wasteful food consumption culture in Japan and throughout the developed countries. In Japan, it is perceived that if more than enough food is not served for guests to eat, the servers are afraid they would be labeled as stingy people. The Japanese inns have developed a culture to attract as many customers by the number of dishes they can serve to the customers.

We all witness that especially in many contact sports, we see the winning team being showered with bucket loads of beer or Gatorade. They boast how many gallons of beer are wasted in that manner. This social trend is quite disturbing. As for school lunches, it is said that more than 30 to 40 percent of school lunches go directly to the disposal every day.

These social changes may affect the way food is consumed in each household in disruptive manners.

Nowadays, instant foods are readily available in great numbers. Even in Japan, western-style cereal foods are becoming popular. These foods are easy to prepare for consumption. But we should be mindful not to waste any foods at all. Any foods being served at the table take a long path to arrive at the table.

Whatever foods we may eat and drink, we should readily extend our heart of gratitude for the foods in appreciation of the work of Heaven and Earth and a long chain of people's hands that help bring the food to table.

I learned that at a school, some teachers bring a jar of salt to the class during the lunch time. When they witness a student who leaves some rice on the plate, she will make a rice-ball from the leftover rice. The student usually enjoys eating it. In this manner, any conscientious efforts in reducing wasteful consumption could be helpful.



More HCRP Peace Prayer Photos (By Mr. Michael Takashita):

