



Interfaith Peace Prayer



*By Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister*

The 24th Annual Interfaith Peace Prayer organized by the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace (HCRP) and co-sponsored by The Interfaith Alliance of Hawaii (TIAH) was held on Sunday, October 22, 2017 at Gedatsu Church of Hawaii. The theme for this year's gathering was "Water is Life.—Expressing Gratitude to it in Daily Life." I have enjoyed this annual interfaith gathering with much expectation. I want to say thank you to the Rev. Tatsunori Kamiya of Gedatsu Church for accommodating this meeting. The weather was wonderful. The ducks in the yard were peacefully playing. The people were friendly. There were many dishes to enjoy, including vegetarian foods. And the entire program went smoothly. Each representative extended a prayer in their distinctive way. The unique musical instruments of native Australia played by Mr. John Dumas were impressive. The dedication of Hula, "My Sweet Pikake Lei" by Mrs. Masago and her daughter, Mika Asai was impressive. I also want to say thank you to those people who contributed monetary donations for the function, canned foods and other non-perishable food items for the people in need. The exhibition of Peace Cups also attracted attention of the attendees. From Wahiawa Konko Mission, we presented 20 cups. Some of them were painted by the students of Kaala Nippongo Gakuen.

In representing the Konko faith community, the Rev. Edna Matsuoka from Konko Mission of Wahiawa offered the prayer. She wore the formal ceremonial gown and swayed the "Oonusa Purification rite" for the audience, followed by the recitation of "Shintoku-sanji" along with Konko believers amongst the audience. She also extended her brief religious perspective about the nature of blessed water based on the Konko faith tradition in a very limited time allowed. Nine believers from Wahiawa and Honolulu churches attended the meeting.

Mr. Chris Cramer, Director of Maunaloa Fishing Heritage Center made a presentation about the historical perspective of the fish pond related to the native Hawaiians. In the past, elements of social changes, economic interests, political influences and others affected the nature of the fish pond. Through the fish pond preservation efforts, the once disappeared fish have returned to the fish pond with reopened fresh water wells. I could see an interdependent relationship among the elements that are at work in the pond. Human-centered decisions in the past have affected the fate of the pond so profoundly. I extended a personal prayer for the preservation of the precious pond.

For the first time, we have taken up the subject of water for the annual meeting. Water is such a vital and universal element we can share in all religious faiths. Prior to the presentation by the guest speaker, seventeen representatives from different organizations extended their thoughts and prayers. I enjoyed learning such diverse perspectives about the traditions and practices pertaining to water in their respective traditions.

Before we were born into this world, we lived in the "water" in the womb of our mothers. The moment we came into this world, constant flow of water has sustained our lives. We were bathed with the first bath to remove the elements attached to the body through the process of birth. The breast milk given to us can be a form of water with rich nutrition to offer protection and immunity. The first discharge of urine and excrements can be water filled with bodily wastes. "Water" in vast forms has sustained our lives. If the "water" stops to flow, it could be likened to the stopping of blood circulation in the body. That means we can no longer sustain our lives.

Last year in November, I was hospitalized to remove a gallstone and gallbladder for five days. During my hospitalization, I was infused with over 20 pounds of saline water through IV. I felt it was a kind of "water treatment." When I returned home, I found I lost over 15 pounds of water from my body in a few days. From that experience, I have leaned to say thanks to any form of water in presence. When I used the bathroom, I extend my thanks for the normal bodily functions of discharging bodily wastes. I say thanks for the water that flush out the toilet bowl. I say thanks for the water I wash my hands with. I say thanks for a glass of water I drink. When I enjoy bathing in a bathtub, I say thanks to the water and the body of water circulating throughout my body as blood. I have tried to respond in acknowledgement of the divine nature of water in any forms in my daily living. Because of the water in my mouth, I can breathe, enjoy eating and drinking and can speak. I can see because of the water on the surface of the eyeballs. I can smell because of the water film inside my noses. When it rains, I try to appreciate it as blessed rain that can be referred to as "oshimeri" among the Konko believers. Even when we witness heavy rain that could be hazardous to our lives, I still acknowledge the blessed nature of water. I have always stressed that blessed water shall remain blessed water no matter what happened.

The Founder Konko Daijin related to Kondo Fujimori, "Kondo-san, I see you have given broad teachings by telling people to cure

their illnesses using soil. Well let me give you another broad teaching from Kami. If soil or water can cure illnesses, it means people are walking on medicine. Sea water is salty, but salty or fresh, water is water” (I Kondo Fujimori 37).

“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).

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 ailments 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 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).

Matsuhei Katsura recalled, “In the spring of 1883, I went to the Hiromae for the elderly lady owner of a flower shop in Shinyashiki. Before leaving for the hiromae, I gave thanks. ‘Konko-Sama, thank you for letting me realize my long wish to meet you.’ I then went to the Hiromae, Konko-Sama glanced at me while kindly giving teachings to more than ten worshippers. Being my first time and not knowing what to do, I sat unobtrusively in the back and just stared at Konko-Sama. After he finished giving a teaching, he said, ‘To the person from Suo province, I’m glad to see that you have come to worship from afar.’

I was deeply impressed by Konko-Sama’s divine virtue. While I was in awe, Konko-Sama quietly went before the altar and clapped his hands in prayer. In a prompt revelation, ‘Though you think that water is bad, don’t think so. Think of water as medicine. Then you won’t have a stomach illness.’

He solemnly continued, ‘Don’t say that water is the cause of your stomach illness. Without water, you cannot live even for a day. What is the earth made from? It’s made from water. Don’t they say that single ear of rice needs a litter of water to grow? Be aware for the benefit of water.’

I felt so much gratitude that my body trembled while I bowed. When Konko-Sama returned to his Toritsugi-Mediation seat, he turned to me with smiling eyes and kindly told me, ‘Person from Suo, your doubts of being a phony kami has been dispelled.’ This is good. I was so much in awe, and felt so ashamed by Konko-Sama’s divine virtue, which could span across the nation, that I felt like crawling into a hole”(Gorikai II Katsura Matsuhei 1).

It can be my conviction that expressing our gratitude for the presence of water in any forms will drastically affects our personal lives, the family lives and the world we live.

At every Konko church, it is a daily tradition to place a jar of fresh water on the offertory table at the Kami altar in acknowledging the divine nature of water we use daily. This is also a reminder that we will use any water in the same manner as we treat the water placed at the Kami altar.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

No one is aware of the blessings of Heaven and Earth which enable 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 where the sun shines, in every country, without exception. (Oshirasegoto Obecho 26-22-2, 3)

Bulletin Board

Main Services for November 2017

- 1 Wed -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 5 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-Wailuku Church Autumn Grand Service & 25th Memorial Service for the Rev. Kiyotaka Yasutake (11 am)
- 12 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
- 19 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)
- 26 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
-20th Memorial Service for the Rev. Kikue Kodama at Honolulu Church (11 am)

December 2017

- 1 Fri -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 3 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
- 24 Sun -45th Memorial Service for the Rev. Haruko Takahashi

Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace

The next meeting will be held on Monday, January 8, 2018 at 1:30 p.m. at Gedatsu Church.

Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Long-Term Care Facility at Wahiawa General Hospital will be made on Friday, November 17, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.

KMH Calendar

- KMH board of trustees’ meeting will be held on Saturday, December 2 from 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Head Ministers’ meeting will be held on Monday, December 4, 2017 from 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

100th Year Anniversary of Konko Church of Kawanoishi

The Centennial Anniversary of Konko Church of Kawanoishi in Ehime will be observed on Sunday, November 12, 2017. The church is the native church of the Rev. Yasuhiro Yano whose family got initiated at the church by his grandfather. He will be attending the service.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

November

Katherine T Kawaguchi	11/7/2016
David Suyeki Oka	11/8/2006
Rev. Takashi Inagaki	11/9/2004
Ronald Minoru Miyatake	11/14/2000
Chieno Hirota	11/17/2009
Nobuko Yano	11/18/2016
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



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 323, 324 and 325)

No. 323

Pray for your good health. Strengthen your body. Good health is the basis of everything. (III Shinkun 2-16, 17 Kyoten page 775)

Good health is the basis of everything.

When I was serving at the Konkokyo Theological Institute at Headquarters Church at Konko Town, I experienced a great deal of stress in submitting the required annual research paper for publication. I always felt a sort of guilt for lack of concentration for the writing assignment as the deadline for the submission approached at the year end.

One of those days, the director of the institute, the late Rev. Chihiro Oobuchi (Second Head Minister of Konko Church of Nagasaki) encouraged me by saying in a gentle tone, “After all, what you need in writing a thesis is your physical strength.”

I was a bit surprised at the extended remark. The Rev. Oobuchi was well known in the circle of people in the institute for his strict discipline for writing work. I had a fear that he would blame me in such a manner, “The reason

you cannot write your assigned article is because of your neglect in everyday research work. What have you done in the past? You should change your mind set in your writing task.”

But the Rev. Oobuchi just gave me a kind word of encouragement, “What you need is your physical strength.” I interpreted his encouragement in this manner, “It is of little use whether you have achieved something great in the past or whether you have the abilities for your given task. Take good care of yourself and do your best.” I was deeply moved by his encouragement.

When I look back at those days, I understand that the Rev. Oobuchi was a great researcher who was always in search of the truth in the field of theology. But he was aware of his own physical limitation in continuing his research work. In reflection of his own experiences, he might have given me that kind encouragement.

The Rev. Oobuchi’s encouragement reminded me of the way how I got engaged in my research work without much consideration for my own physical conditions that could affected many people around me. Ever since, I have tried to be mindful of fulfilling a teaching pertaining to a good health, “Pray for good health. For good health is the foundation of all things.”

Praying alone would be of little use. I started jogging every morning. I also practiced “Jikyou-jutsu” that is a healthy exercise and “Kiko-jutsu.” I have enjoyed good health without getting sick for all those years. I have learned to appreciate the truth of “For good health is the foundation of all things.”

No. 324

Being cured is not the only thing to be grateful. Always being in good health is. (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 46 Kyoten page 786)

Being in good health

The quoted message is based on the original message given to Sugi Ogihara from the Founder. The message reads, “Sugi, being cured is not blessed. Having good health is” (I Ogihara Sugi 12).

Sugi regained her good health from the illness she suffered for two years. As she left her house for her pilgrimage in appreciation of the blessings received through Konko-Sama, she used a cane. But as she approached to the destination, she threw away the cane being overcome with extreme happiness and encountered the Founder. Sugi related, “I felt so thankful that I was speechless. I bowed my head down

toward the tatami mat in front of Konko-Sama and showed my deepest thanks without saying a word” (I Ogihara Sugi 6).

Because of her own experience, the message, “Being cured is not blessed. Having good health is” (I Ogihara Sugi 12) might have deeply embedded in her heart.

Ordinary people would hardly be able to appreciate the message, “Being cured is not blessed.” In general, people would naturally respond that being cured of an illness is being blessed. What if the illness would not be healed, what would be the dire consequences of prolonged illness? Being cured of an illness is the condition of being blessed for most of the people in general.

The Founder related to Sugi, “Hereafter, when people come to you in pain, give prayers for them while recalling your own suffering and the divine blessings you have received” (I Ogihara Sugi 6-6).

Those people who have never experienced illness are likely to fail to appreciate the suffering of the people who are coping with hardship in illness and take their given good health for granted.

On the other hand, those people who have ever experienced suffering from illness would be able to appreciate both the suffering and grateful nature of being in good health. The late Rev. Kiyoshi Hata, Head Minister of Konko Church of Tokyo, referred to the positive aspects of getting sick in such an expression, “Byou-on” or “Indebtedness from illness.”

Japanese expression of “arigatai” or “有り難い” refers to the condition in which something impossible could be actualized. We should learn to appreciate deeper meanings of “arigatai.”

No. 325

Since we have been created by Kami, isn't asking Kami to cure our illness a natural way to practice faith? (I Yamamoto Sadajiro 21-4 Kyoten page 372-373)

Due response in illness

The message is an excerpt from the original statement given to Sadajiro Yamamoto from the Founder. The Founder stated, “Since there hasn't been anyone who taught about prenatal development, people get confused. You people who come to this Hiromae, how is man and all else created? A person dwells in the mother's womb first. Before that, when the mother conceives, *Ten No Kami-Sama* bestows a *mitama* soul. A doctor cannot open the womb and show the

child's soul. Being given an invisible soul by an unseen Kami-Sama is a wondrous thing. The child's body develops through the mother who eats and drinks her favorite foods. This increases blood production to produce another body. After about ten months, when there is a child birth, it will be known if it's a boy or a girl. During pregnancy, the child develops through the grace of Tenchi Kane No Kami.”

He continued to talk, “Those who practice faith must understand the natural laws of all things and eliminate doubt. Since we have been created by Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama, isn't asking Him to cure our illness a natural way to practice faith? This faith is based on the nature of all things. For example, a house which has been built by a carpenter will be repaired by a carpenter when necessary. Clothing is sewn by women, and washed and sewn by women when it becomes worn. This is common knowledge. Since man is the lord of all living things, he must understand all things and practice faith which follows their natural laws.”

The Founder didn't deny medical treatments and medications. The Founding father elaborated, “When you go to a doctor, the doctor's medicine and practicing faith are important. Pray single-heartedly to Tenchi Kane No Kami and Konko Daijin-Sama to recover completely with only five of the ten prescribed doses of medicine. If you are blessed with complete recovery, Kami-Sama and the doctor will be happy. The doctor is also a child of Kami-Sama, so if you pay him the fee for eight does, he will say that those who practice faith are really different.”

One of the pioneer ministers showed an example when he underwent a surgery. He extended a prayer, “Please guide the operating doctor to respond to remove only the absolutely necessary portion and keep intact any other functional parts during the procedure.” The surgery went smoothly without any complications. In this manner, a doctor who is not faith-oriented could act as an agent of Kami-Same through our practice of faith.