



Be an Upstander



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

The 26th Interfaith Peace Prayer coordinated by the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace and co-sponsored by the Interfaith Alliance Hawaii, was observed on Sunday, October 20, 2019 at Konko Mission of Honolulu. Approximately sixty people showed up from various faith and peace oriented religious organizations and communities. Sixteen representatives from each community were invited to offer their thoughts and prayers for peace based on the theme. In representing Konko faith, the Rev. Edna K. Matsuoka performed the rite of "Oonusa-Purification" and read a prayer for peace.

We enjoyed an interactive and inspiring keynote presentation. The theme for this year was "Compassion in Daily Lives." The keynote speaker, Mr. Scott Nishimoto, Executive Director of Ceeds of Peace, made a presentation. The main message was to be an upstander for the promotion of peace. He showed a picture in which all male high school seniors in their senior prom suits putting their right hands up in a Nazi salute. Only one senior refused to follow along. That student in the class photo was referred to as an upstander. The same scene can be witnessed in everyday life. Being different can be the target of bullying. But an upstander is not afraid to be different from others and show that wrongs should be corrected. In reference to a dictionary, an upstander is a person who speaks or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly someone who intervenes on behalf of a person being attacked or bullied. While I was listening to his message, I remembered the message of the Founder Konko Daijin who stated, "Do not be afraid to be different from others (変人). You cannot practice faith without being different. A person who is different is one who has a pure heart (直い)" (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 73).

The Founder Konko Daijin said, "People are too self-centered. At birth, even the intelligent and virtuous have no concerns about lucky or unlucky days. They are concerned about such days only after birth and before death. They die without concern for lucky or unlucky days" (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 66). He also stated, "People long ago made up the Days and Directions for every day of the entire year, not just for the first three days. Isn't it arbitrary to claim that there are auspicious Days and Directions, you'd have to check your compass every minute of the day. But no one does that. If you want to follow the Days and Directions precisely, say it with your mouth and do it with your heart. Regardless of how careful you are; you cannot follow the calendar's instructions exactly. Instead of attempting such impossible things, people should practice faith by requesting the ever-present Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama for all things. Every morning, give prayers, apologize for the irreverence committed by your ancestors, and request to have that day go well. At night, give thanks and pray to have a peaceful sleep" (I Yamamoto Sadajiro 10-2).

Konko Daijin said, "People have often wondered why a man who is honest, doesn't do anything bad to others and is like a Kami or Buddha, is often afflicted with many misfortunes. This is because he has somehow shown irreverence to Kami" (Jinkyukyogoroku 105).

I have enjoyed my involvement in the interfaith community of the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace from the very stage of inception that was initiated by the late Rev. Michio Miyake of Konko Church of Tokiwadai in Tokyo. The initial meeting for the formation of the interfaith group was held at the Konko Mission of Honolulu in 1991. The Rev. Michio Miyake came to visit Hawaii to offer a service on board Arizona Memorial and Punchbowl Cemetery for the victimized people in the wake of the Pearl Harbor attack by Japan in 1941.

The very first "WCRP Hawaii Chapter" meeting was held in 1992 at Chaminade University of Honolulu. The name of the organization was changed to the "Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace" (HCRP) in 2002.

You will learn different and some universal elements found in any religious practices and learn to appreciate much about the unique Konko faith through your involvement in the interfaith functions.

We will be holding the 80th Anniversary Celebration of our church in Wahiawa on March 15, 2020. As a precursor for this auspicious occasion, I was able to make a pilgrimage to attend the 115th Anniversary Celebration of Konko Church of Amagi

in Fukuoka from October 23 through 28. The Amagi Church is the grandparent church of Konko Mission of Wahiawa. Both my wife and I have been trained at the church before we came to take over the operation of the church in 1977. We already have moved into our 43rd year of life in Hawaii. Our three children were also given opportunities to get trained at the church and evolved to become Konko ministers. Our founding minister, the late Rev. Haruko Takahashi was also trained at the church. The Amagi Church is one of the great elements that has contributed to the continued operation of the church in Wahiawa. In appreciation of the blessings we have received in one way or another, in the concept of "Konnichi made no orei" I could be able to attend the service held on October 27.

The Rev. Ryoko Katsura of Konko Church of Kokura made a brief congratulatory remark for the well-attended celebration of the 115th Anniversary Celebration of Konko Church of Amagi. The following is my understanding of the message delivered. She said, "The Rev. Sueko Katsura, the past generation Head Minister stated that encountering the anniversary celebration can be very dangerous and fearsome. The more the celebration is held in an extravagant manner, the danger and fear would expand. Because no matter how humble we could be, we may develop some conceit that 'I made it possible to hold the celebration in such a grandeur manner.'" We are just ordinary human beings. We may become self-conceited and arrogant in corresponding to the ever changing circumstances. Everything is possible due to "Okagesamade" We are indebted to any and all elements in one way another. The realm of the perception of "Okagesamade" can be defined by each of us. Some people may say thank to the immediate elements that give comfort and support, some other people may say thank you for the universal elements for the concept of "Okagesamade." The blessings we can enjoy may correspond to the elements of blessings we would be able to identify.

One of the major projects in welcoming the 80th Anniversary was the re-roofing of the church building which was completed on October 29 by J&K Roofing Company. They did an amazing job. We will also be painting the church, and some other repairs are planned. Thank you for your involvement, support, contributions, thoughts and prayers that have helped with the operation of the church in the last 79 years.

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. (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 3)

Bulletin Board

Monthly Services for November, 2019

- 1 Fri -Monthly Svc. for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 3 Sun -No Sunday Service
-Hilo Church 90th Anniversary Grand Service (11 am)
- 9 Sat -Wailuku Church Grand Service (11 am)
- 10 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
- 17 Sun -No Sunday Service
- 24 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)
-Rev. Kikue Kodama's 22nd Memorial Service (9 am)

December 1, 2019

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

Pilgrimage to Gohonbu Headquarters Church

The 160th Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the Konko Religion will be held on November 15 at Gohonbu Headquarters Church at Konko Town. Twenty people from Hawaii will join to attend the commemorative functions held in two days from November 14 and 15. The church will be closed from November 11 through November 19.

Volunteer Activity

The regular monthly visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility will be made on Friday, November 8, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

Garage Sale

-We will hold a fund-raising garage and white elephant sale for the 80th Anniversary Celebration of our church on Saturday, November 30, 2019 from 9 am-2 pm
-The Karate Fundraiser Garage sale for Sensei Clay held last month was a great success. We thank you for your help and support.

Church Re-roofing Project

The Church re-roofing was completed on October 29th. The shingles, rotted wood and gutters have been replaced. J&K Roofing Company did an outstanding job and our church looks so much better with this renewal toward our 80th Anniversary next year.

Book Signing Event

The Rev. Masato Kawahatsu of South San Francisco Satellite Church will be holding a book signing event for the publication titled, "Thank You 100 Times a Day" on Friday, November 22, 2019 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Konko Mission of Honolulu. A light curry and rice dish and refreshments will be served at the end of the event.

KMH

- The KMH Community Engagement and Outreach Committee Meeting will be held on Thursday, 11/7 at 6 p.m.
- The KMH Board of Trustees Mtg will be held at HNL Church on Saturday, 11/23 at (10:30 am)
- The 2020 KMH-KCNA Joint Conference Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday, 11/29 at 4:30 pm at HNL Church.

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
Rev. 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 394, 395 and 396)

No. 394: Some people have decided to serve the Faith by conveying truthful teachings. If there were such people in each town and village, this Faith would spread easily.

(Kondo Fujimori 80 Kyoten page 295-296)

How the Faith would spread easily

The grandfather of the Rev. Kinjiro Hachiya of Konko Church of Kosai, Kanenosuke Hachiya, once served as an apprenticeship at a store owned by Ryozo Yoshihara. Ryozo Yoshihara was one of the believers whose messages were recorded in the Konkokyo Kyoten Scriptures. While Kinjiro Hachiya was serving at the store, he accompanied Ryozo Yoshihara for his pilgrimage to see the Founder. Later, Kanenosuke Hachiya owned a large scale store in Okayama City.

The Rev. Norio Sato, one of the disciples of the Founder worked hard for the preparations of the 30th Year Memorial Service for the Founder. At one occasion, he made a speech for a group of lay leaders in Okayama City. During his speech, he asked the audience by saying, "Now we are enjoying a thriving operation of the Konko faith like a rising sun. A symbolic rising sun in any pictorial messages, a crane also should be present. Are there any enthusiastic believers in this room who would be able to serve as the crane in the picture?" Kanenosuke Hachiya

responded to the call and declared, "Sensei, please use me as a crane for your endeavor."

He served the Rev. Norio Sato and gained his trust. He gained a reputation and respect from people who nicknamed him as "the Treasurer for the Rev. Norio Sato." Later on, the Rev. Norio Sato made a remark by saying, "If there could be three, no, even one such dedicated believer in any local church, the church shall enjoy thriving accomplishment to become the first class church." I learned about this episode from a senior minister.

A believer who would be able to convey truthful teachings lives the faith in deed and in action. If there could be one such believer in a family, and a family in town, the faith would naturally gain popularity in town.

The original message of the quoted passages begins with an additional sentence, "When retiring and handing down the family business or occupation, people may think it's a waste to just retire and relax".

We see many believers who retired follow the message and dedicate themselves in helping spread the faith.

No. 395: While you concern yourself with only trivial things, I am aspiring for a blessing which will completely embrace the world with this Faith. *(II Kunieda Sangoro 11 Kyoten page 491)*

Embrace the world with this Faith

Sangoro Kunieda lived at Tamashima Town in Okayama. He got blessing for his visual disorder and regained normal vision through his practice of faith. He prayed for other people who were in need of help. Eventually, he gained the trust of the people in town. He was respected for his earned virtuous power. The church he operated thrived very much.

His personal concern was focused how he would be able to get blessed for himself and for others. But he could not appreciate deeper meanings of faith held by the Founder.

He related, "Once, while I was at the Hiromae, mountain ascetic priests came and destroyed the paper lanterns and other ornaments. Konko-Sama said, 'When Kami tells you to give in to those opposing you and to let time take care of it, He is referring to times like these'" (II Kunieda Sangoro 9).

The Founder seemed to identify the nature of Sangoro's manner of pursuing faith. Even though Sangoro seemed to listen to the Founder, his mind was filled with the thoughts of how he would be able to help people who came to ask help for their personal concerns. The Founder said, "Sangoro, look ten years into the future. I will make Otani into another Tsu. Watch for it. Like the way Tsu supports Ise, I will make Otani into another Tsu. You'll see. From now on, things will gradually change" (II Kunieda Sangoro 10).

People came to seek help from the Founder to get blessed for their immediate needs and personal concerns. But the Founder stated, "While you concern yourself with only trivial things, I am aspiring for a blessing which will completely embrace the world with this Faith."

Sangoro Kunieda may have become surprised to the extended thought from the Founder. He might get enlightened and changed the way how he pursued faith. We should also learn to appreciate the extended message from the Founder.

No. 396: I asked Konko-Sama about eliminating human desire He said, "No, no, I also have a desire. I have the desire to save people throughout the world. Do not eliminate your desires." (II Kondo Fujimori 54 Kyoten page 550)

The desire to save people

The Rev. Fujimori Kondo stated, "While serving as a Toritsugi Mediator on the west side of Kano Bridge in Nanba, Osaka, I felt much responsibility in serving the Hiromae. I thought, 'A person like me with no virtue cannot continue serving the Faith. I must acquire more of Kami's virtue.' I decided that I had to do ascetic training, so I asked Konko-Sama for advice. 'I would very much like to go to a mountain and undergo ascetic training for time. What do you think of this?' Konko-Sama asked, 'If you go to a mountain, how will you do ascetic training?' 'In the mountain, I will first live on dumplings made from barley. Then I will live on the nuts and leaves of trees. And towards the end, I will survive only on water.' Then Konko-Sama asked, 'What kind of mountain will you go to?' 'I will go as deep into the mountains as I can, to separate myself from the world.' In a blessed teaching, Konko-Sama imparted, 'That is fine. However, Kondo-san, you need not trouble yourself by going to a mountain. Create a mountain in your heart, and do religious training there. Enter the mountain which you have created in your heart, then no matter if there are difficulties or unsavory meals from your wife, you will not complain'" (II Kondo Fujimori 20). He might have attempted to gain spiritual enlightenment in such a manner of ascetic training by giving up personal wants and earthy desires.

Fujimori Kondo might become puzzled by the forwarded message from the Founder who stated, "No, no, I also have a desire. I have the desire to save people throughout the world. Do not eliminate your desires."

In general, the majority of the established religious faiths in Japan may emphasize the importance of eliminating their desires in pursuit of their faiths. While the Founder appreciated the fundamental desires we all have in common. The Founder guided the believers to live the rightful living in fulfillment of our basic life-sustaining desires, and not to get indulged in pursuit of fulfilling our self-centered earthy desires. The message of the Founder liberated the people who had been suppressed by many restraining elements in society.

Norio Sato once asked the Founder, "I would like to know what the essence of this faith is." The Founder responded, "There are nine significant points. And one of them is 'yoku-toku' or virtue of wishes" (Naiden 12). "Yoku-toku" or virtue of wishes implies that a believer who lives in fulfillment of righteous causes will gain virtuous power and will also gain respect from others. The Founder showed us there are ways to gain virtue through fulfilling our desires in line with the heart of Kami.

The expressed prayer of the Founder, "I have the desire to save people throughout the world. Do not eliminate your desires." reflects pure and sincere heart of the Founder. The message has the power to move us to take the path shown by the Founder.

Rev. Yasuhiro Yano visited the Konko Church of Amagi for their 115th Anniversary Celebration 10/26-27/2019

