



# KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

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E-mail: konko-wahiawa@hotmail.com. Also, find us on Facebook. Head minister: Rev. Yasuhiro Yano. Vol. XXV, No. 10, October 1, 2013

You are cordially invited to attend the  
**Autumn Grand Ceremony**  
**For Ikigami Konko Daijin**  
教祖 130年 生神金光大神大祭

**Date:** Friday, October 11, 2013

**Time:** 6:30 p.m.

**Place:** Konko Mission of Wahiawa

**Sermon:** Rev. Edna Kazuko Yano

**Kibimai:** Ms. Keala Takahashi

This year marks the 130<sup>th</sup> Memorial Year for the Founder who passed away on October 10, 1883. Please join the service in person and on time to express our sincere appreciation for the perpetual work of Divine-Mediation initiated by the Founder. Naorai fellowship dinner will follow. Let's receive the divine arrangements of being able to worship on this very important day.

## Be Different

**By Yasuhiro Yano**  
**Head Minister**

In Konko faith community in Hawaii, we used to celebrated the birthday of the Founder Konko Daijin through the annual service named "Yatsunami Festival" in the month of August. But the service ceased to function some 15 or so years ago due to various circumstantial elements. "Yatsunami" stands for the official eight-petal logo for the Konkokyo Religious Organization. The Founder Konko Daijin was born on August 16, 1814 in accordance with the lunar calendar that is equivalent to September 29, the official birthday of the Founder we celebrate today. Accordingly, this year marks the 199<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Founder, we fondly address as "Konko-Sama." This year also marks the 130<sup>th</sup> year since the Founder passed away on October 10, 1883. A special commemorative service was held at the Konkokyo Headquarters Church at Konko Town in Okayama and over 30 people from Hawaii made a pilgrimage to attend the service held on October 3, 2013.

On Sunday, September 29, after the service we had a mini-celebration for the birthday of Konko-Sama, with a birthday cake specially inscribed with the date of celebration, a Happy Birthday song and a short quiz and talking. I would like to see

the expanded function of this annual celebration of the Founder Konko-Sama.

Can you answer these questions about Konko-Sama? What is the name of the deity of Konkokyo? When the Founder was born? What is the unique feature of Konkokyo? What did the Founder enjoy on holidays and day off in his young age? When is the start of the Konkokyo Religious Organization? The answers were given in multiple choice.

When I think of the Founder, the first thing I can associate with him is his nature of honesty or sunao in Japanese. He was the most trusted human being that ever existed in the history of humanity who gained the absolute trust and confidence of Tenchi Kane No Kami, Our Divine Parent of the Universe. It is because of Konko-Sama who helped to reveal the existence of Tenchi Kane No Kami to the world. For an ordinary person like me, it is beyond my perception to fathom the deep and broader trusting relationship ever developed between Tenchi Kane No Kami and the Founder Konko-Sama. It is this trusting relationship between the Founder and the deity, Tenchi Kane No Kami or Our Divine Parent of the Universe the Konkokyo Religious Organization unfolded in today's organizational establishment. Without this trusting relation there would have no birth of Konkokyo Religious Organization. This vital relationship between the Founder and the deity Tenchi Kane No Kami evolved through the exhibited honesty and sincerity of the Founder Konko-Sama. But the Founder Konko Daijin always expressed, "If my heart goes awry, even I, Konko Daijin, cannot foreknow what will happen to me" (II Asano Kijuro 2).

As for this distinctive character, the Founder stated as follows: The original teaching in Japanese reads, "変人になれ、変人にならと信心はできぬ." In English translation, "Do not be afraid to be different from others. You cannot practice faith without being different. A person who is different is one who has a pure heart" (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 73).

One of the quiz questions shown above, "What did the Founder enjoy on holidays and day off in his young age?" The answer is he enjoyed to make visits to shrines and temples on day off and holidays. Actually, when the Founder was adopted into the Kawate family at the age of 12, the adoptive father asked him what were his likes and dislikes. The Founder honestly extended his heart by saying, "I have a favor of request. I like to visit shrines and temples. Please let me go out on holidays with your warm sending off." This episode is one of the typical examples that showed the honest and receptive nature of the Founder which can be different from ordinary people of his age. How can a mere 12-year old boy ever make such a request of visiting temples and shrines? At the same stage, the Founder requested another hard to believe request by saying, "Since I don't like barley, please let me eat white polished rice." The reason why the Founder wanted to eat could be his physical condition that barley didn't agree with him physically. In those days, it was against social norms even adults farmers to eat

polished white rice. The price of the rice was more than twice as much for barley and the rice was paid as form of tax to the government. But the adoptive father warmly accepted the extended request and fed his adoptive son with rice for daily meals. This episode also showed another aspect of “henjin” or being different from ordinary social norms.

Adoptive father also might be “henjin” or different from other villagers in warmly accepting the conditions expressed by his adoptive son. If the adoptive father refused to accept the extended preferences of the son like an ordinary person in that age, it could be possible we might not have witnessed the emergence of the Founder. The same pattern of relationship could be found between the Founder and the deity Tenchi Kane No Kami.

There are many other episodes that Konko-Sama showed this nature of henjin character. The initial divine instruction for training was, “Train yourself during the entire season of autumn. When you get up in the morning, change into your formal robes, proceed to the worship hall, engage in your daily offering of prayers; upon your completion of prayer offering, let your wife bring in a tray of breakfast for you; as soon as you finish your breakfast, change into your work-clothes, walk to the field for work on bare feet.

Bunji followed the instruction faithfully and underwent the training. It was the first time Kami provided a specific instruction of training as part of the expressed intent of Kami teaching Bunji.

But Bunji’s wife vehemently opposed the practice instructed by Kami by expressing her frustration, “I don’t want to let you do such a practice. It was heavily frosted outside. If you walk bare feet, the people in the village make will certainly make degrading comments of you and call you a fool. You are crazed in your practice of faith, and cannot even make your own waraji slippers as a farmer, could you?” In responding to her remark, Bunji responded, “Then why don’t you carry my waraji slippers and follow me to the work site?” In this manner, Bunji tried to fulfill the expressed divine instruction as well as his spousal concerns. And when Bunji alone went out into the field to work, he tied a pair of waraji slippers to the hoe he carried on his shoulder. When other villagers threw quizzical questions about his practice, Bunji tried to persuade them by saying, “Because the waraji slippers bite into my feet...” It was told that his wife occasionally brought a pair of waraji slippers for his husband and placed them on the edge of the narrow footpath in the rice field.

Have you been aware of your “henjin” elements as Konko believers? It would be “henjin” to attend church regularly regardless of your other prioritized daily scheduled preferences and tasks. Just try to be a “henjin” to deepen your relationship with Our Divine Parent of the Universe. Practicing faith can be our relationship with the deity we believe. For this purpose, the church is there and the ministers are there to help deepen your relationship with Our Divine Parent of the Universe.

## Konko-Sama Says . . .

Konko-Sama told me, “Practice faith (shinjin). *Shin* means your heart, and *jin* means kami. Practicing faith means you direct your heart toward kami. Though you are surrounded by divine virtue, you won’t receive blessings unless you have faith.” This was a profound and blessed teaching. Thus enlightened, I realized that even a lamp full of oil cannot give light without a wick (shin). Without faith, the world would be dark as night with unlit lamps. (I Ichimura Mitsugoro 1-6)

## Honoring Mitama Spirits

### October

Founder Konko Daijin	10/10/1883
Hiromi Ishii	10/4/2003
Shizue Yamamoto	10/6/2008
Richard Mankichi Hirota	10/8/1990
Henry Yoshiichi Uyehara	10/10/2007
Francis Toshiji Suwa	10/12/1996
Saku Hasuo	10/12/1996
Isamu Tokumoto	10/14/1995
Pasqualine Webber	10/21/2010
Kazuyoshi Kidani	10/?/ 2006
Donald Takeshi Katsura	10/31/1953



*If you wish to have a name added to the church Mitama listing or removed, please contact Rev. Yasuhiro Yano.*

## Bulletin Board

### Monthly Services

10/1 Tue	-For Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama at 7:30 p.m.
10/11 Fri	-Wahiawa Church Autumn Grand Service for the Founder Ikigami Konko Daijin at 6:30 p.m.
10/13 Sun	-Honolulu Church Autumn Grand Svc. at 11:00 a.m.
10/20 Sun	-Waipahu Church Autumn Grand Svc. at 11:00 a.m.
10/27 Sun	-Monthly Memorial Service at 9:00 a.m.
	-HCRP Peace Prayer at Gedatsu Church at 4:00 p.m.
11/10 Sun	-Hilo Church Autumn Grand Service at 11:00 a.m.
11/17 Sun	-Wailuku Church Autumn Grand Svc. at 11:00 a.m.

### HCRP Peace Prayer

The regular monthly meeting of the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace will be held at the Gedatsu Church on Monday, October 14 at 1:30 p.m. The annual Peace Prayer will be held at the Gedatsu Church on Sunday, October 27 at 4:00 p.m. This year’s theme is “Mindfulness for Peace” and the featured speaker will be Rev. Dr. Jonipher Kuponon Kwong. Peace cups will also be displayed at the church. Refreshments and some light meals will also be provided after the service. Please join this unique interfaith gathering for peace. If you are interested in this program, please contact your minister at 621-6667.

### Monthly Volunteer Activity at Wahiawa General Hospital

The 100<sup>th</sup> monthly volunteer activity at the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility will also take place at the same facility on Friday, October 18 at 10:00 a.m. Your participation to the program will be very much appreciated.

## 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 Matsutaro Kōsaka contributed the insightful articles. The translation is provided by Yasuhiro Yano. (Reference pages 58, 59, 60)*

### No. 58

**Because humans are born through the blessings of Kami, they must also die with the blessings of Kami. Therefore, if a child’s birth is a happy event, then death is a much happier event since one becomes a kami. The reason why death is so abhorred is because people have not yet developed enough peace of mind to accept death. Practice faith, so that you will be blessed with peace of mind. There is no knowing when one is to die. It is determined by Kami. It is too late to practice faith after a crisis has already arisen. People must always have faith which will be strong enough for critical times.** (III Jinkyū Kyōgoroku 23-1, 2, 3 Kyōten page 816 to 817)

### Death can be celebrated.

Through the Konkokyo religious perspective, we believe that we depart from our physical existence in blessedness of Tenchi Kane No Kami. Therefore, we do not taboo death. But the quoted message shows a bit broader perspective about the concept of death in such a manner that death is a much happier event. But such an expression pertaining to death is quite unconventional. The expression is totally opposite to the generally held perception for death. Where does this unique perspective for death come from?

There are two elements that support the idea of death is a happier event. First, we perceive that both birth and death take place in the realm of blessedness of Tenchi Kane No Kami. It would be irrational that we celebrate only the birth of a child, while we do not celebrate the death of an individual.

The other reason is based on the celebrating nature of death in accordance with the Konko religious perspective. As for the birth of a child, we celebrate the birth of a new life and the beginning of a person’s journey in life for maturity. But what element of death can be celebrated in the Konko faith? The answer is that we celebrate death of an individual based on the statement that one becomes a kami upon separation from the physical life. If death is perceived as the termination of a life, there would be no elements of celebration. But a departure from our physical life is viewed as the beginning of life as a Mitama Spirit. We can celebrate the death as a birth of Mitama Spirit in the same manner as we celebrate the birth of a new life.

How can we appreciate this quoted message depends upon our own conviction for the explained two elements,

namely, even death takes place in the realm of blessedness of Tenchi Kane No Kami, and death is a transformation to become a kami, and our conviction of endeavor to become a kami through our engagement in the practice of faith.

Those people who live aimlessly will get distressed when they encounter a crisis. The message gives us a strong warning that we should develop enough peace of mind to be able to accept our own death.

### No. 59

Everyone is given a body and soul from Tenchi Kane No Kami and then born into the world. Thus, if they suffer pain or difficulty when leaving this world, it is because of their hearts. When the body given by Kami departs, those who have been bestowed with Kami’s soul should have a peaceful and painless death after having a long life and having seen their grandchildren. If you follow Konko Daijin’s teachings, you can look forward to the future and leave this world peacefully. So practice faith and work hard to receive such divine blessings while you are young. (II Sato Mitsujiro 29-2, 3, 3, 4 Kyōten page 581 to 582)

### Leave this world peacefully.

What would be a blessed way to encounter death as a beloved child of Tenchi Kane No Kami, who is bestowed with the divine soul within the heart? In this quoted message, the Founder showed us three types of stages for death encounters.

The Founder stated, “If they suffer pain or difficulty when leaving this world, it is because of their hearts.” Basically, it is assumed that those who have been bestowed with the physical body and Kami’s soul are supposed to be able to live peacefully. But they live only in pursuit of their selfish desires and greediness and are to encounter difficulties in life. The statement sounds quite serious. We have to understand the serious nature of this message.

Secondly, the Founder stated, “Those who have been bestowed with Kami’s soul should have a peaceful and painless death after having a long life and having seen their grandchildren.” This is an ideal way to depart that Kami intends and also everybody wishes to attain. But it seems we can hardly be able to fulfill our life in such an ideal manner, instead, it seems that the foods we consume, the way of living, the social systems and other elements have contributed to foster rapidly accelerating negatively inclined living condition that damages our physical health, shorten our lives and encounter death in dissatisfaction. What do you think about this issue?

Thirdly, the Founder showed us how we should respond. The Founder stated in his teachings, “Practice faith and work hard to receive such divine blessings while you are young.”

To practice faith means that we should try to follow what the divine should within our hearts dictate in our daily faith

life and try to do away with out selfish desires and greediness. For example, even when we enjoy a meal, as has been stated in the teaching found in page 296 of this book, we should learn to appreciate the working of the divine soul within us, when people eat and drink and think they've had enough, it is Tenchi No Kami-Sama informing them of their limits. This is just one of the examples to follow what the divine soul within tells us.

To work hard in good health can be actualized through our daily engagement with the heart of fulfillment. If we are to depart peacefully and painlessly, it would be a must for us to set ourselves free from our selfish desires and greediness and find comfort and fulfillment in our hearts whenever we look back at the life at any given moment.

#### No. 60

**Don't prepare for death. Do preparations for living. When you die, you will only return to the ground.**

*(I Shimamura Hachitaro 45 Kyoten page 333)*

#### **Don't prepare for death.**

The statement, "Don't prepare for death" is short, but exhibits the Founder's strong conviction for how we should deal with our own death.

What would be the Founder's intent for the extended statement of "prepare for death and prepare for living"?

"Prepare for death" implies various elements. The message discussed in the previous page 59 also can be one of those preparations for death. But it would be obvious that the Founder didn't prohibit us to prepare our minds and functional elements for death. What would be the intent of the Founder shown in the brief statement of "Don't prepare for death"?

The answer can be found in the statement, "When you die, you will only return to the ground." The Founder told us that in encountering death, we should not prepare for the how the physical body, which would eventually be absorbed in the ground, should be handled.

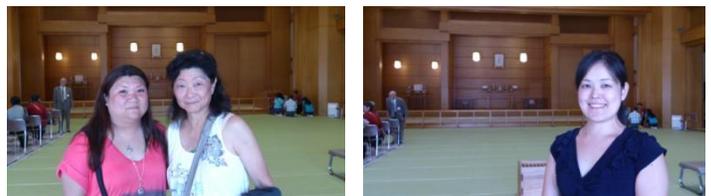
Preparation for death implies some of the ordinary reactions we may naturally follow in encountering death, such as how many more days we would live; what would happen to us after passing?; we would wonder how the family members and others would take care of us after passing? The Founder stated that such worldly concerns would not be necessary. The Founder showed us to develop a firm conviction that it would be totally meaningless for such worldly concerns because after we die, we are to be absorbed into the ground.

Then what is the meaning of "prepare for living"? Here is an excellent reference we can relate to the subject. There was a renowned sculptor named Denchu Hirakushi. He exhibited such an extraordinary enthusiasm in pursuit of his art even when he reached over 90 years old. One of those days, he made a huge purchase for materials which

would be more than enough for ten to fifteen years of his envisioned future art work. Likewise, as long as we live, we should try to exercise our hearts mindfully to live each and every day in fulfillment.

#### **Image News:**

Representing Wahiawa Church, the Rev. Edna Yano, along with Mrs. Donna Toyofuku and her daughter, Andrea Toyofuku joined the Konkko Missions in Hawaii Pilgrimage tour to the Konkokyo Headquarters. The 130<sup>th</sup> Memorial Anniversary was held on 4 separate days. The KMH Group made it to the service on October 4<sup>th</sup>. A total of 33 people went to Japan for this occasion from Hawaii. Many attended from North America, Korea, Brazil as well.



*Above and Below Picture by Konkokyo Headquarters*