



KONKO MISSION BULLETIN

Konko Mission of Wahiawa, 207 Muliwai Avenue, Wahiawa, HI. 96786. Phone/Fax: (808) 621-6667, Cell: (808) 294-6331
E-mail: konko-wahiawa@hotmail.com. Also, find us on Facebook. Head minister: Rev. Yasuhiro Yano. Vol. XXIV, No. 9, September 1, 2012

The **Annual Autumn Memorial Service** will be observed on Sunday, September 23, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. Through the service, we will extend our sincere appreciation for the contributions, support and guidance of the deceased ministers, family members and our ancestors for our blessed lives we now enjoy. Please join us in commemorating this vital function of the Konko faith in person and on time. A fellowship lunch will follow the service.

Numbers in the Konko faith tradition

By *Yasuhiro Yano*
Head Minister

The other day, while I was looking at the Konkokyo Facebook page, a person forwarded a question about the practice of clapping hands four times in solemn greeting before the altar.

In corresponding to the situation, I consulted the Konkokyo terminology dictionary called “Konkokyo Yougo Jiten” for the reference of “*Kashiwade/Hakushu*” on page 113. The following is my translation of the description.

“*Kashiwade/Hakushu*” refers to a Japanese religious tradition of clapping both hands together in solemn greeting as a believer extends his or her prayer to the deities they believe. In Japan, there is an expression of “Hakushu Kassai” clapping of hands in applause. “Hakushu” is a natural response in corresponding such occasions of jubilation, exclamation and so forth. The tradition has been perpetuated from the ancient times as an expression of solemn greeting when they face the Kami-oriented deity or deities in prayer.

The Founder Konko Daijin received a revelation through his brother Shige’emon Kandori in 1858. The revelation stated that the Founder was given the title of “Kane no Kami Shitaba No Ujiko” or the First Disciple of Kane No Kami, and was granted the privilege of clapping hands for his engagement in a prayer. In accordance with the tradition, the practice of clapping hands means, “Through

the clapping of hands, the door to reach Kami will open and the extended prayer will be heard.” The practice was referred to as “Shinmon Kashiwade.” From 1860, the practice was granted to lay believers as well. And in 1878, the Founder received a divine revelation that stated, Konko Daijin has already evolved to become a kami, there would be no reason for him to practice the clapping of hands like a Shamanistic prayer who tried to seek divine guidance.

Konko Daijin stated that what was most vital in extending a prayer is to direct one’s heart toward Kami. It would not be necessary to make extra big sounds of clapping hands.

The Konkokyo Organization adopted a resolution that the formal solemn greetings before the Kami altar and Mitama altar shall be the practice of clapping hands four times in 1983. It is believed that the adoption of the practice was intended to dispel the generally perceived negative implications for the number “4” and tried to give positively inclined meanings in such a manner as; “4” can be integrated in a phrase, “Yo-kare” or be good and “shi-awase” or happy. But no records show that the Founder practiced clapping of hands four times and made explanations about the meaning of the practice. The Founder Konko Daijin was granted a license titled “Shinpai-Shiki-Kyojo” on April 9, 1864. The document instructed to practice clapping hands twice in solemn greeting.

I have gotten involved in the interfaith community of Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace for over two decades. Every year we have organized Peace Prayer in October. Many religious community people have responded to attend the meeting and share their prayers for peace. I have noticed only a few religious communities from Japan, including the Konko religion which practices the solemn greeting of clapping hands.

At one occasion, a person introduced an interesting practice of a group of people who have tried to minimize any disruptions in the world. They walk barefoot to not kill ants and other small insects on the ground. In place of clapping hands in applause, they cross their hands to avoid disruption of the air by making sounds with clapped hands. In amusement, we mimicked that practice during the meeting to give complements for the presentations. But I had to demonstrate the Konko way for my presentation of the prayer for peace. At that occasion, I made an explanation that the right hand represents the heart of Kami, and the left hand represents my heart. When both hearts meet together there shall be sound of blessing realized. The number of clapping can be once, twice, three times, four times or 100 times. The number actually does not

seem to matter. What matters is the heart being directed to Kami.

What if I clapped my hands over 100 times when I extend my prayer? When I practiced clapping 100 times, the only compelling thought that occupied my mind is the expression “Arigato gozaimasu” for some reason.

During services, there shall be a coordinated action of the congregation. If one person keeps on clapping hands endlessly, the whole service will be ruined.

For me, clapping hands four times means a solemn greeting that I am fully aware of the presence of Kami-Sama and ready to extend my prayers.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

“Few have a heart that Kami can accept. Those whose hearts can be accepted by Kami will be blessed with good health, wealth, and wisdom for three generations, resulting in a strong family lineage. Those whose hearts are not accepted by Kami may have wealth as well as wisdom, but will get sick. Those who have wisdom and good health will lose their wealth. If they do not lose their wealth, their beloved children will die, leaving no heirs. Since these people are not aware of Kami’s blessings, they are always lacking one thing or another. If you practice faith and understand Kami’s blessings, you will live a peaceful and stable life. You will have descendants and gain wealth. You will receive divine blessings from year to year, and then from generation to generation” (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 78).

Bulletin Board

H.C.R.P.

The Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace will hold its regular monthly meeting on Monday, September 10 at the Gedatsu Church at 1:30 p.m.

Volunteer Activity at Wahiawa General Hospital

The regular visit to the Wahiawa General Hospital Long-Term Care Facility for volunteer activity of entertainment will be scheduled for Sunday, September 2 at 10:00 a.m. following the Sunday Service at 9:00 a.m. After the program lunch will be served at the church. Also the monthly volunteer activity at the same facility will be held on Friday, September 14 at 10:00 a.m. Your participation to the program will be very much appreciated.

All Believers Network Symposium

The interfaith community named All Believers Network will hold a symposium “From conflict to community” at the Harris United Methodist Church on Monday, September 3, 2012 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Autumn Memorial Service

The annual Autumn Memorial Service will be held on Sunday, September 23 at 10:00 a.m.



A tribute to the late Mr. Masataka Yano

By Yasuhiro Yano

Mr. Masataka Yano, father of the Rev. Reiko Yano, departed on August 14 Japan time at Oita, Japan. He was 89 years old.

He was such a dedicated Konko believer and he guided many people in the area to the Konko Church of Tateishi because of his strong conviction about the blessings he had enjoyed through his own pursuit of the religious faith. After WWII, after discharged from the military duty, he volunteered to start off a new life as a farmer through the government sponsored program of “Kaitakudan” or turning uncultivated land covered with bushes into farmland from scratch in the remote mountainous area in Oita. When he passed away, he became the owner of more than 37 acres of land (15 cho).

Personally, I am indebted to him immeasurably for allowing me to marry Reiko for the missionary work in Hawaii. When Reiko related about the prospect of marriage with me, he responded by saying, “*Kore wa Kamisama goto dakarana*” or “There must be some divine intention for this proposal.” And he asked Reiko to make a pilgrimage to the Gohonbu Headquarters of Konkokyo at Konko Town in Okayama with him. Both of them extend a prayer at the gravesite of the Founder. While he was praying he became overwhelmed with intense sense of happiness and gratefulness that he had never experienced before. In responding to the feeling of awe he received, he approved of our marriage.

He sounded so happy and grateful in witnessing his daughter’s contribution to the missionary work in Hawaii whenever Reiko made a call or made a visit back home in Japan. I extend my prayers that he will continue to guide his family in the pursuit of the Konko faith. And that his spirit will be at peace and happiness.

Honoring August Mitama Spirits

Mikiko Yamamoto	9/3/2003
Harumi Tokumoto	9/7/2001
Tatsuyuki Kataoka	9/7/2007
Ben Furusho	9/15/1997
Takeshige Ootsuka	9/15/1998
Kameji Takeshima	9/17/2000
Richard Masao Iwasa	9/17/2005
Richard Tadashi Noguchi	9/27/2009
Fumiko Hamai	9/25/1997

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 followings 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 19, 20 and 21)

No. 19 The blessings of Kami will never let up.

The present is the same as the past. Regardless of how many millenniums pass, the world will not change. It is the same. People and the foods they eat will not disappear. The seeds will keep growing. (II Goka Keishun 8 Kyoten page 498)

This message pertains to the infinite nature of divine work. What kind of example can we think when we try to relate a tangible existence which has existed from the unknown past and continue to thrive in future without any change?

For this matter, the Founder referred to the human beings who have sustained perpetual evolution through the cycles of birth and death for millions of years as well as all the living things, which have been consumed for the sustenance of human beings, have also continued to exist from generation to generation.

We may feel wondrous for the thought that the existence of our own lives means that the line of cyclical reproduction has never been terminated even once from the origin of human existence in this world. As for myself, my own

blood line has intact to the very beginning of the human existence. At each stage of life reproduction, parents have produced children who have evolved to become parents and produced children. The perpetual cycle of reproduction from unknown past has produced me. This is not only limited to myself, but can be true to each and every individual.

The culture and social situation in the world have evolved in many ways, but the perpetual nature of cyclical pattern of human reproduction and the supply of foods we consumed for sustenance have never changed regardless of the circumstantial changes.

It can be said that human race has sustained its perpetual existence through the work of Kami as well as the foods for sustenance of human race have also been provided through the virtuous work of Heaven and Earth for millions of years. It is through the unimaginable work of Kami that sustains the life of each and every individual. Each of us represents a miraculous actualization of infinite divine work.

No. 20 The source of divine blessings

They say if you pray to Kamis and Buddhas, you will receive divine blessings. But all blessings originate from none other than Tenchi Kane No Kami. (I Shimamura Hachitaro 2 Kyoten page 326)

The Founder made such a bold statement. He identified that they said they received blessings from various deities, but all the blessings received have originally derived from Tenchi Kane No Kami. He did not deny the work of other deities for the blessings their believers enjoyed. He actually acknowledged the work of all deities for the manifestation of blessings. Yet, the Founder’s statement sounds so bold.

How this statement can be relevantly understood? The electricity to a house will be supplied through the line connected to the utility pole near the building. The house appliances and devices such as ceiling lamps, range, a TV set, a refrigerator and so forth can be activated by the supply of power through the wall outlet.

The message in this page and the message previously discussed in page 14 were shared by the Rev. Hachitaro Shimamura. The message in page 14 stated, “Tenchi Kane No Kami has endured since the existence of the universe, for millions of years. Other kamis come and go” (I Shimamura Hachitaro 1). The statement in this page 20 which reads, “All blessings originate from none other than Tenchi Kane No Kami” is relevant to the message in page 14. That is, all blessings originate from Tenchi Kane No Kami, who represents the supreme deity of Heaven and Earth.

Some people may feel puzzled how Tenchi Kane No Kami possess such a universal power to give life to any living things in Heaven and Earth as well as the power to give blessings to all.

The question derives from a person whose perception of the deity is just the opposite the one held by the Founder. The Founder named Tenchi Kane No Kami as the divine power that exists in Heaven and Earth, and believed in Kami in that respect. For the Founder, Tenchi Kane No Kami represents a supreme deity of universal power.

Some of the believers in the Konkokyo faith community have developed initial understanding of the deity through the Chinese character representation of “Tenchi Kane No Kami” but have yet developed little insightful understanding of the true powerful nature of the deity. This is one of the concerns we need to be aware of.

No. 21 A heart in prayer will reach Kami.

A heart in prayer will reach Kami. Tenchi Kane No Kami has a web like a spider’s enveloping the world. If a dragonfly gets caught in a spider web, the web trembles and the spider will come out. Kami is the spider. The Way of Kami is spun around the world. Even if you feel you are far away from a Hiromae, your prayer will reach Kami. (II Goka Keishun 5)

What a reassuring and strong message the Founder provided for the believers!

Those who have gotten involved in the practice of faith, especially those believers who have yet established strong confidence in their belief, have always been concerned about the following matters: If their extended prayers will reach Kami; If their prayers are strong enough to reach Kami; If their prayer was appropriate to reach Kami. But Kami seemed to give an assuring answer for those concerns that even if Kami is invisible to the physical eyes of humans, a heart in prayer will reach Kami. Tenchi Kane No Kami has a web like a spider’s enveloping the world.

A dragonfly cannot see the presence of the spider web because of the invisible nature of the spider’s web, a dragonfly gets trapped. But there exists a web. The reason why the Founder paralleled the passage to reach Kami to a spider’s web is the invisible nature the both share. The other reason is that the Founder vividly illustrated that the reflective response of the spider to the trapped prey is quite similar to how quickly Kami responds to an extended prayer from a believer.

This message seems to provide a much deeper meaning. Let’s try to figure out the function of the web. We can assume the spider can parallel to Tenchi Kane No Kami.

But what does the function of the web imply? The spider’s web figuratively represents the functions of Toritsugi-Mediation activated by Ikigami Konko Daijin.

The Founder also experienced a spiritual dissatisfaction in regard to the nature of extending prayers till the age of 42, as has been stated, “Whenever people worshipped, their prayers were only one-sided” (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 5). He experienced deep frustration that he could not be assured whether his extended prayers would have reached Kami. It has become evident that through the divine function of Toritsugi-Mediation provided by Ikigami Konko Daijin, the extended prayers would be conveyed to Kami. What the spider’s web parallel is the divine function of Toritsugi-Mediation which works as a conduit to transmit the extended prayer to reach Kami.

How blessed we are to be able to appreciate the wondrous work of Tenchi Kane No Kami who listens to our extended prayers which are conveyed through the work of Toritsugi-Mediation.