



You are cordially invited to join us in prayer via Facebook Live for our annual **Autumn Memorial Service** Sunday, September 20, 2020 @ 10:00 am

Let us remember the very people who laid the foundations of our existence. We are here because of our ancestors. We must give thanks for this truth and honor their Mitama Spirit. Your diligence to continuously remember and honor your deceased loved ones will contribute to the continual salvation of their Mitama Spirit. If you wish to have your deceased loved ones remembered, please register their names to Yano Sensei by Thursday, September 17. He will be reciting their names during the memorial service.



The Concept of Ohatsuho Offering (All we have is a gift from Kami)



By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano
Head Minister

I would like to introduce a message of the Founder Konko Daijin.

"People will receive divine blessings if they pray to the earth while picking their vegetables. Also, if those vegetables are boiled and eaten with a grateful heart, there will be no illness" (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 32).

If you have your own garden in the yard, and grow some vegetables, try to remember this message and act accordingly as Konko-Sama stated, by pressing your hands together and extend a short of prayer in appreciation of the work of Heaven and Earth.

I water the garden almost every day. While watering the garden, I thank Kami-Sama for my good health and the fact that I can

move freely. I give thanks for the water I can feed the plants with. I thank the work of the earth and the sun. When I harvest things in our yard, such as yuzu Chinese citrons, avocados, and bamboo shoots, I place them on the Kami altar and extend thanks for the work of Heaven and Earth. Then I take them down and enjoy.

I do the same when I shop for some vegetables and any other items at the nearby store. I place them on the altar first and use them for cooking and so forth. Most of the offerings placed on the altar for the church services, such as vegetables, fruits, groceries, rice, water and rice wine are based on the Konko faith tradition that those items we need in everyday life are gifts from Kami-Sama. We try to use them and consume them as "Osagari" or as items given back to us from Kami-Sama. When I get mail from the mailman, I place them on the altar and extend my prayer for the postal services, and then open them.

In our Konkokyo faith community, we have a concept of "Ohatsuho" offering. The concept of making offerings is printed on the surface of the offertory envelope. The original concept of "Ohatsuho" means "First Harvest." All things are possible because of the fundamental life sustaining elements of Earth and the entire Universe. We simply express that fundamental work of the life sustaining elements as "Okage-Samade" or "In Blessedness" of Kami-Sama's workings, all things are possible.

Therefore, offering a portion of your first harvest of what you were able to gain acknowledges that it was only possible due to Kami-Sama's blessings. These acts may not sound significant, but those acts are the foundations of our faith life as Konko believers.

To clarify the importance of the thought, we printed the concept in the offertory envelopes. "The idea is to give back to Kami-Sama/God from the top, not from what is left over. And the idea is to give out of gratitude, not obligation. And the idea is to comprehend that all we have is a gift from Kami/God in the first place so that what we give back is an acknowledgement of our giftedness." The quotation is based on the original writing given to Edna from the Rev. Tomas Chittick (Pastor of University Lutheran Church and Lutheran campus pastor to Harvard University from 1993-2003).

Fortunately, I learned this habit of "Ohatsuho" and placing all produce or any items we purchase from a store on the Kami altar because my parents practiced this tradition. There was a big house altar in the room. In the morning, my parents placed cooked rice and a cup of water for the Kami altar and rice and tea on the Mitama altar and extended a daily prayer. Their daily

practices have been deeply embedded in my heart. In a sense, I just have followed what my parents had done in their daily living. My parents were wise in engraining the basic element of faith practice in such a manner. When I look back at my life as a Konko believer, I find myself following the exact practice my parents displayed to us. What if my parents didn't care about the concept of "Ohatsuho?" What if they did not treat anything with gratitude? I don't think I would have ever evolved to become a Konko believer and a Konko minister.

These seemingly subtle elements in life are the key elements for the family to get involved in the practice of faith.

The practice is a way of life that directs our hearts toward Kami-Sama. If I place any offerings before the Kami altar, my heart is already connected to Kami-Sama. It can be that simple.

Having a place of worship in the house is a must and vital in the practice of the Konko faith.

You can place a packet of Goshinmai Sacred rice at a corner and regard it as your house sanctuary. You can extend your daily prayers and place any offerings. When you respond to church services regularly, the family members develop appreciation for the significant meanings of getting involved in the practice of faith.

Konko-Sama Says . . .

Konko Daijin said, "Since Tenchi Kane No Kami is the Parent Kami of this world, all people who live between heaven and earth are the children of Tenchi Kane No Kami regardless of whether they practice this faith or not. If you practice faith in Kami, you will become close to Kami. Kami will then bestow divine blessings and turn major misfortunes into minor ones, and will take away the minor mishaps. Those who say that they practice faith but are still unable to receive divine blessings, do not yet know the true virtue of Kami. You should realize that misfortunes cannot be fully understood by man." Even among devout believers, there are some who stop practicing faith because they experienced great misfortunes. They cut the roots of their faith instead of practicing faith to receive divine blessings that can cut the roots of their misfortunes. This is because they do not realize the true virtue of Kami. When people practice faith, they should know the true virtue of Kami. (III Jinkyukyogoroku 32)

Bulletin Board

Church Services for September 2020

- 1 Tue -Monthly Service, Tenchi Kane No Kami (Facebook Live 7:30 pm)
- 6 Sun -Sunday Service (Facebook Live 9 am)
- 13 Sun -Monthly Service, for the Founder,

- Ikigami Konko Daijin (Facebook Live 9 am)
- Honolulu Church Autumn Memorial Svc (10 am)
- 20 Sun -Autumn Memorial Service (Facebook Live 10 am)
- 27 Sun -Sunday Service (Facebook Live 9 am)

October 2020

- 1 Thr -Monthly Service, Tenchi Kane No Kami (Facebook Live 7:30 pm)
- 4 Sun -Sunday Service (Facebook Live 9 am)
-Honolulu Church Autumn Grand Service
- 11 Sun -Sunday Service (Facebook Live 9 am)
-Waipahu Church Autumn Grand Service
- 13 Tue -Autumn Grand Service (Facebook Live 6:30 pm)

Cancellations: The summer garage sale that was scheduled for August 22 had been cancelled due to the surge in Covid-19 cases and the island-wide lockdown. We thank you all very much for your generous donations and can't wait to open up shop for our church garage sale again soon. Ehimemaru activities, monthly hospital visits and KMH Missionary Women's Society Seminary are also on hold for the time being.

The Church Door is Open

We welcome you to make a visit to our church and church services. Please wear your face mask for Covid-19 precautionary measures.

You can make an appointment for your personal visit to church anytime between 6 am and 8 pm.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

September

Mikiko Yamamoto	9/3/2003
Tatsuyuki Kataoka	9/7/2007
Harumi Tokumoto	9/7/2001
Hiroko Toyoda	9/9/2018
Ben Furusho	9/15/1997
Takeshige Ootsuka	9/15/1998
Richard Masao Iwasa	9/17/2005
Kameji Takeshima	9/17/2000
Fumiko Hamai	9/25/1997
Richard Tadayoshi Noguchi	9/27/2009



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



Sharing of Faith

I would like to introduce one of the legendary episodes of Toritsugi-Mediation served by the founding minister of Konko Church of Amagi in Fukuoka, Japan. You may appreciate some elements of Toritsugi-Mediation, the vital function of the Konko faith.

The quotation an English translation of an article found in a publication titled, "Yasutake Matsutaro Shi No. 12 pages from 130 to 132." The translation is provided by Rev. Yasuhiro Yano



Nashi Dorobō (Pear Thief)

One day, a farmer who operated a pear farm came to see the Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake at Konko Church of Amagi in Fukuoka. When he proceeded to the Toritsugi-Mediation place, he complained about thieves who stole his pears from his farmland. Every night, somebody got into his farmland and stole some 20 to 30 pears. He asked about the troubling situation. The farmer related, "I've been vigilant and watching over the farmland till 2 a.m. to 3 a.m. and left the land assuming that no theft would occur. But as soon as I left the place, for a short span of time, someone got into my land and stole the pears." The Rev. Yasutake, after listening to complaint, responded, "I see. I will pray to Kami-Sama about the troubling situation. By the way, may I ask you who owns the farmland?" The person reflectively responded, "It's my farmland of course! All the fruits are mine, too." The Rev. Yasutake responded to him, "What you have just said is the very cause of the troubling situation. Even a small portion of the land you claim is yours, actually belongs to Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama. Even a single pear tree belongs to Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama. It is the work of Kami-Sama that helps the tree to blossom and bear fruits. Do you find any tags of ownership for each pear or the tree?" The farmer retorted in confusion, "That is just ridiculous!" The Rev. Yasutake responded, "When you extended your thought for your farming business, you would naturally understand that it is not you, who created a single pear seed. But when you sow the seed on the ground, germination takes place. First, the roots grow from the seed, then young leaves appear. The

roots excrete chemicals that react with the soil and suck up some elements of nutrients and the tree keeps growing. What you do is get rid of some harmful insects, apply fertilizers to the roots and place protective wrappers to each fruit by hand. Fertilizers, including natural and chemical based, they are all elements yielded from the blessed ground of Heaven and Earth. In a sense, even fertilizers belong to Kami-Sama."

Actually, everything, including a single tree in the farmland, even a single weed, even a single flower, even one fruit, even a portion of the field, all belong to Kami-Sama. Kami-Sama works hard to provide sustaining elements to many blessed children of Kami-Sama every day.

The work of Kami-Sama can be likened to the parental love. If the parents have five or ten children, the parents try to provide support for all of them equally through their hard work. But traditionally, only one of them would be designated to inherit the household resources. If one of the siblings took some of the family resources without parental consent, even the designated inheritor could not blame the other sibling that had stolen the resources he would have been entitled to in the future. He could claim the stolen resources as his own. The stolen resources by other sibling still belong to their parents. The same thing can be said to the stolen pears from the yard. Basically, you should extend your thanks for the work of Kami-Sama for the fruits grown in the pear farm and try to accept the harvested pears as gifts from Kami-Sama in the first place. Then you should extend your prayer to Kami-Sama that the thief would reform his heart and not to step into the farmland while the pears are in the harvest season." After he made a visit to church and asked the Rev. Yasutake for help in the troubling situation, there has been not a single episode of stolen pears from the farmland. If you extend your thoughts and prayers to Kami-Sama with your true sincere heart, your prayers would be fulfilled for sure.