



Konko Spirit Newsletter

April 2014

Food becomes medicine or poison depending on your heart.

Eat your favorite foods because they are like medicine for the body.
However, eating too much will make you throw up.

It is said that you should fill only eighty percent of your stomach.
Try and fill a bowl eighty-percent with water.
The water won't spill even if you take the bowl and run a little.
This is a natural law.

Remember that eating more of your favorite foods after you are full is being irreverent to Kami.
Those practicing faith should always respect Kami's protection and not disregard it in everything they do.

(Voice of the Universe 293-297)

Message forwarded by KCNA from Honbu-Konko Headquarters about our beloved Konko-Sama

Dated March 28th, 2014

On Konko-Sama's health condition

Our Spiritual Leader, Kyoshu Konko-Sama, has recently been not quite well. Konko-Sama went to the hospital accordingly and his family doctor advised Konko-Sama to take a good rest for a while, and to have a medical check at this time, diagnosing that he has too much fatigue that his body can no longer bear.

Because of this circumstance, we would like to inform you that Kyoshu Konko-Sama will take a rest for a while.

We would also like to inform you of the following: The Konkokyo Headquarters will hold the Tenchi Kane No Kami (Spring) Grand Ceremony four times in all, starting on March 30, 2014. Following Konko-Sama's wish, Rev. Hiromichi Konko (Director of the Department of Konkokyo Central Worship and Mediation Hall) will serve as the Chief Officiant, replacing Konko-Sama.

Together with all of you, we would like to pray to Kami-Sama earnestly and sincerely that our Spiritual Leader will be allowed to restore his sound health soon.
Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Toshimasa Okanari
Chief Administrative Director of Konkokyo

!!Please have children prepare for Grand Ceremony!!
Sacred Branch Tamagushi- Symbolic to Actual Prayer Offering

Please have your child write or draw their prayers on a slip of paper (3" x 8.5"). These prayers will be fastened onto the representative Tamagushi with a shide on the top so that the representative (and all the other children as well) will be able to see physically and better understand that the representative is carrying the prayers of all the children to the altar and Kami sama. Thank you very much!



The Culture of Indifference

Spring Memorial Service Sermon - Rev. Andrew Uzunoe

Good morning. Thank you to all the people who helped get this video project up and running, it was so nice to see our history, and put faces with the names, or see old friends, relatives.

Able to attend KCNA's Ministers' professional development seminar in Gardena this year. Guest speaker from Japan, Rev. Tsuda, and Rev. Takube, who turned out to be classmates and my roommate at the Konko Seminary with us. Rev. Tsuda has developed a new system to use the current technology to help many people, and now thousands of people attend his church from having helped them.

I would like to talk about one of his core concepts that he sees in society today. He teaches, that the opposite of Love is not Hate. Though this seems to be so, they are actually very close to one another. Strong emotions, with a lot of care woven in. Many times in divorce cases, people end up hating the people they loved. Kids as they grow love their parents, but as they grow some see their parents in a different light and start to hate them, just to love them again when they get much older through forgiveness and understanding. No the opposite of Love is Indifference! As caring is woven into those strong emotions, nothing is put into indifference. Not caring what happens, not caring about a situation, not worth bothering with, not caring about people involved.

A great example I heard this past year was from, "The Captain," as his nickname as become, Derek Jeter from the New York Yankees baseball team. When asked about what he thinks about the fans booing him in places like Boston, he responded, (paraphrasing)

"I love it. I love to hear them boo, and to feel the powerful emotions running around the stadium. It means they care! I love baseball, and want everyone to love this game as well. If I can help create that strong emotional tie to this game, then I am very happy."

Fans love or Hate the Yankees, but they all care about the game, and now he has earned the respect of all the people. In his last game ever at Fenway next fall, I guarantee the fans in Boston will give him a standing ovation, for years of excellence and respect.

This past year we have talked about complacency being a poison of the heart and creeps in, so too is indifference. Though exposure of everyday problems over and over again, the heart will naturally start becoming indifferent. The "shock or awe" factor fades away.

Now today in this country, indifference is a disease spreading wildly through our culture.

Honor, Integrity, reputation, used to be very important parts of society, and people were shunned if they did not comply with the ideals or moral values of a society. People suffering everywhere, with more stress and less empathy to help them out. No time is left to digest problems and find solutions within. So more and more rampages are happening

These desperate actions are cries for help, for I have learned through working with kids that they feel negative attention is better than no attention at all. And so they act out, with stronger and stronger emotion and action till they get noticed. In many of the cases of these shootings by kids, many warning signs existed, but nothing was done.

This Rev Tsuda teaches is where Kami sama comes in, and us as his physical manifestation of His will to help people. Kami our divine parent, loves us all unconditionally, and will not fail you, leave you, and can never die. Kami is the cane on which we must lean in life to find our strength to go on, to fill the emptiness that some people suffer from.

The Founder taught, “do not ignore the problems of others that you yourself have endured.” Meaning that we should help people however we can, use an experience that we have to help them get through tough times.

How to help? We may not be able to sit and listen to people 14 hours a day as Rev. Tsuda does, but if we can even help 1 person a month, a week, a day - we are making a difference and fulfilling Kami’s greatest wish.

If we don’t just walk/drive by someone in need of help and think that someone else will probably stop and help, but bring empathy for all people back into our hearts, fight the indifference that grows there then we can help Kami make a difference in our church, community, city, and even country. Lets start making a difference today!

This service today, to honor our ancestors, keep their living memory alive, pray for their virtue is keeping indifference at bay. We hold these services to honor their memory, and to allow us a chance to show how much we still care. So thank you for coming and letting your love flow forth today!



Spring Memorial Service Video Presentation

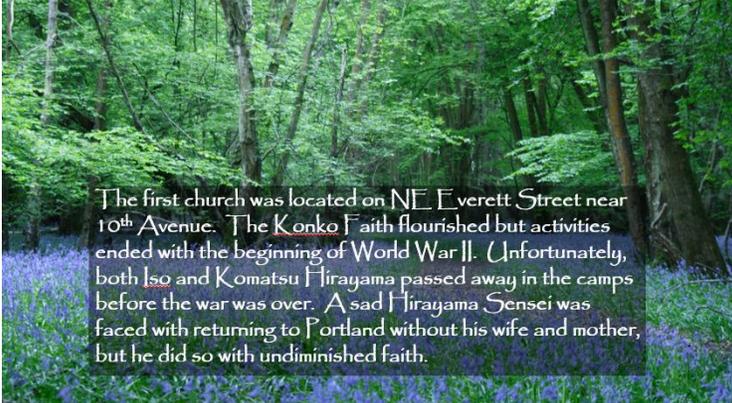
Thank you to Tomi Akagi for putting together a beautiful power point presentation!
And thank you again to Frank Sunada, Randy Akagi, and Andy sensei for installing and setting everything up. It was truly a heartfelt Memorial Service.

(Excerpts from presentation)

The Hirayama Family, strong Konko believers from Fukouka, Japan, arrived in 1919 to start new lives and build a business in Tacoma.



Bunjiro Hirayama, the first head minister of our church, was part of the main force in creating the Konko-kyo Association in Seattle in 1919. Accepting a request made by believers in Portland, his commitment to the faith and desire for proper training drove him enter the seminary and become ordained in 1930 and going on to establish the Konko Church of Portland in 1931.



The first church was located on NE Everett Street near 10th Avenue. The Konko Faith flourished but activities ended with the beginning of World War II. Unfortunately, both Iso and Komatsu Hirayama passed away in the camps before the war was over. A sad Hirayama Sensei was faced with returning to Portland without his wife and mother, but he did so with undiminished faith.



Chise Hamada, October 28, 1917
Naoichi Hamada, November 13, 1963
Harue Akiyama, July 4, 1986
Lillian Stansell, April 19, 2006



Thank you, mitama of the Portland Church, for continuing to guide us each day.

Let us not forget the contributions you have made, which allow us to have this place to gather and pray.

May we endeavor to carry on your faith and legacy, and be a guiding light to those seeking hope, faith and Kami in our community.

Thank you.

2014 NW REGIONAL SEMINAR

Thank you to the Vancouver Church and believers for hosting the 2014 NW Regional Seminar! Thank you to Dusek Sensei for your heartfelt presentation and sharing your experiences with all of us. Dusek Sensei's presentation derived from the sermon he gave at the Seattle Church in February so we have included his full sermon here. Thank you again!

Rev. Richard Dusek Sermon

Congratulations for this monthly service. Rev. Yuasa at the very end of the ceremony added a hymn. We sang *Yoyo no Oya wa (In Honor of our Ancestors)*. I feel he did that hymn special today. I don't remember singing it before in the monthly service. Why was Rev Yuasa doing that? Well, particularly to me ... My mother just passed away at age 88. We were singing, at least I was, for my mother.

She was 88 years old. She had a wonderful life. She loved life; she loved her family. All the way to the end she was telling stories of when she was young – 9 years old, 18 years old and meeting this man named, Dick, who became my Dad. And many more stories. I might get into some of them.

She received a beautiful blessing. She did not want to go to a hospital and spend a long time in the hospital. She received the blessing of passing away at home. Her mother, my grandmother, also passed away at home.

My grandmother years ago – I was still in Japan – I've heard she was in her bedroom sitting in her rocker doing some embroidery. She finished a little bit of the work, got tired and put the embroidery down very neat on the side of the bed. And she sat in her chair and fell asleep. And she passed away -- very, very simple.

Well, my mother was almost the same. My sister was helping her go to the living room to her rocking chair. This is where she passed away in her home on the 14th of February. As you know, here in America the 14th is Valentine's Day. "Ah-h, Grandma has joined Grandpa." Since her husband had passed away before her, everybody in my family, even my children in Japan were talking about, "Isn't it wonderful that she passed away on such a lovely day.

She was a woman who loved her family. She also loved her church. She began going to church at 9 years old. Her family – her papa, her mama – did not go to church; her sisters and brother did not go the church. But her father and mother were okay with her going. So, at 9 years old every Sunday she would walk to the nearest church. And each Sunday, she said, she would go to different churches, walking in her town in North Carolina.

When she was older, age 18, she was in high school and, as I said, she met this man. His name was Dick. Dick asked her, "I'm going to buy a car. What car should I buy?" Now, you have to remember my mother is telling me these stories just two weeks ago. Two weeks ago I was visiting my mother and she told me the story of 9-years-old walking to church; she told me the story of my dad, Dick, buying a car.

She was 18 years old and he asked her, "What car should I buy?" Well, she was young, a high school student – "Ah-h-h, I want a convertible." she says. [Laugh a little with an unbelieving tilt of the head] He courted her taking her on dates in this convertible.

Then there's another part to the story. This part is very interesting about my mother and father. She's 18 years old. They have a convertible. And my dad says, "Lee (her name was Lee), because you have a sewing machine, you can sew the top to the convertible." Who would believe that! She couldn't even as she was telling me this story. She said they bought the canvas; they cut out the pattern; and **she sewed the top to the convertible**. And even the day she told me the story, she could NOT believe that she had done that.

She was 18 going to school. I heard the story that my dad helped her write her English paper for her to graduate. These are some of the stories my mother told me.

When my mother married him he was a Catholic. She didn't know anything about the Catholic Church. So she studied at the Catholic Church and she liked the Catholic faith. So she became Catholic. And all her life and her whole family was Catholic. Even yesterday for her funeral -- we had a Catholic mass (service) in a very large, beautiful church. All of her children – there were 14 of us, I just happened to be the oldest – but all my brothers and sisters came, some from far away – and all of them are taller and bigger than I am. But I'm the oldest remember, okay?

Going to church ... Today we're going to the service in Seattle Church. Today is the 23rd of February. In Japanese, NI-SAN – 'ni' is two; 'san' is three. But then there is another word pronounced, 'ni-san,' which means each day going to worship. Today I was so happy to come to Seattle Church to do my worship.

'Nisan' you can do at home: each day you turn your heart to Kami-sama; you clap your hands; you can say prayers or ask for requests, maybe even telephone the church. You can do 'nisan' just worshipping at home each day, but it's so wonderful to come to church to worship. I was very, very happy.

It's been a very busy weekend with the funeral and all the family and some friends of my mother's. But it's been so wonderful. Everyone talks about how loving she was. She was such a wonderful person. When anybody met her, they loved her. I think some of you have met my mother. So you probably remember. I was surprised. Every day during the funeral and meeting with her friends, everyone would say, "I loved your mother." Everyone!

Well, her love was quite amazing. She was telling her stories all the way up till the very end. She had this large album. Maybe you put pictures in an album? This album was special. A very big album divided into 12 months of the year: January, February ... all the months of the year. And in each month she kept cards for birthdays and anniversaries for whom to celebrate this month, or that month. And all the time, every month, she would mail birthday cards and anniversary cards to the whole family.

Now she had 14 children, but her family is a hundred and thirty-six – maybe more. Everyone received a card for their birthday, or wedding anniversary. From memory she'd remember all the children's names, birthday dates and how much they weighed at birth. Quite an amazing woman!

Just two days before she passed away she told these stories: about being 9 years old and walking to church; about the convertible and sewing the top to the convertible. It was amazing. But I received such beautiful blessings from some of the teachings I have received lately.

Just before visiting my mother, I looked over the teachings that we have had in Tacoma at the beginning of the year, at the beginning of this month and recently just before giving this talk [in a printout] two weeks ago.

[To explain the handout, the teachings are listed on one side, a summary of major points on the other]

[Also a few copies of the talk given 9Feb14 in Tacoma was printed with illustrations]

So today I'll cover only what I decided to do. Reading from the handout:

To Remember Daily:: How strong our link to Kami is measured through the joy of faith we display and the peace of mind we realize

The joy that we have because we have faith -- And peace that we have because we know that Kami-sama is with us, for example. But that is kind of difficult to do. And you have to do it inside your heart.

So each day I decided to do:

Faith Training within the heart

Turn to Kami and pray for these two things to be my medicine

1. Doing everyday work in gratitude

2. Living happy and harmonious day to day

These are the medicine for the heart – these two things.

On Sunday, the 9th, I talked about this – a few copies of that talk I've handed out – you can read it later. The next day I went to work and practiced these things. Because I turned to Kami-sama, because I was praying for medicine to work in my heart so that Kami & I would be happy in my faith, would have peace & joy – because I was doing that, when my sister texted me needing help with mom, I called her and asked what time; instead of the usual “I'm busy & cannot help.” Because I was practicing my faith it was easy to do and Kami-sama had everything run smoothly. I couldn't believe it.

That is why I went to my mother's house. Then, my sister could take care of some things. That is why my mother told me the story of 9 years old, of 18 years old – what I already talked about. Otherwise, I'd never have heard those stories before. Then, while I visited with her she started shaking and jumping. It took about one or two minutes. Then it calmed down, but she couldn't breathe well. I'm watching her. Worries of danger come to me. I was sitting in front of her. I put my hands together in prayer. But interestingly enough, I was not just praying to help my mother, I was thanking Kami-sama because I felt so-o special that I am here at that time in front of my mother and Kami-sama is showing me this part of her life. She was getting ready for the next step and the next step and the next step. I was so happy.

She saw me and my hands praying. When she was okay, what do you think she said? She said, “Yes, peaceful, joyful heart.” Peaceful, joyful heart is my translation that my mother loves. It's the *Wa-Ga Kokoro*. She saw me with my hands together and she remembered, *Peaceful, Joyful Heart*. Even though she was suffering for two or three minutes, she received that peace and joy and felt good with God.

Step by step by step Kami-sama is showing us where to be, what to do. But to be ready for Kami-sama's important ... appointment -- to be ready to say, “Yes, I will go help my mother.” “Yes, I will go help my sister.” – to be ready, what helped me was doing these [indicating the handout]: Praying that every day I would be happy at my work; I would be happy with my day-to-day life; because my link to Kami-sama can be measured by that joy and that peace within me. I wanted to see a good measurement, a strong link with Kami-sama, so that one can be at the right place at the right time.

Even like today, ‘nisan,’ the 23rd of February to be able to come to the church. Maybe you think, *oh, because you had a car, or because you woke in time you could come to the church*. No, no, no. Kami-sama arranged everything to go just right so you could come here for the service.

Then we came and Rev Yuasa even included the hymn for Departed Souls. I just want to say an extra thank-you for remembering all the Departed, but for my mother's soul, too.

Thank you very much.

Honoring the Spirits of April

4/2/34 Mr. Shonosuke Bingo
 4/9/25 Mr. Tomosuke Nakamoto
 4/11/95 Mrs. Darline Vose,
 4/12/49 Mr. Roy Ichizou Akiyama
 4/14/80 Rev. Miyoko Iwamoto
 4/15/90 Mr. Fred Stansell
 4/16/37 Mr. Seizaburo Namba

4/17/71 Mr. Katsumi Yamashita
 4/18/84 Mr. Takeno Nigo
 4/19/06 Mrs. Lillian Stansell
 4/20/92 Mr. Akira Dusek
 4/26/06 Mrs. Mary Yokota
 4/27/82 Mr. Mikiji Kondo



Church Events Calendar

April

- 5 *Grand Ceremony preparations 10 am
- 6 **TENCHI KANE NO KAMI GRAND CEREMONY**
11:00 am
- 20 **MONTHLY MEMORIAL SERVICE** 10 am
Grand Ceremony: San Jose, Whittier-RH
- 27 Grand Ceremony: Toronto, Lancaster, Sacramento
KCNA East Regional Seminar - Toronto
- * Opportunities to serve the church "goyo"

May

- 4 **MONTHLY SERVICE** 10 am
Grand Ceremony: Vancouver, Fresno
- 5 *(Mon) Church Shed Clean-up 10 am
- 9 *(Fri) Mother's Day Rose Sale for Community
7:30 am & 2:45 pm
- 11 **Mother's Day Brunch** 11 am
Grand Ceremony - Gardena, Chicago
- 17 *(Sat) **Richmond Spring Fest- fundraiser** 10-4pm
***Montavilla Neighborhood Cleanup** 10am-3pm
Church cleanup
- 18 **MONTHLY MEMORIAL SERVICE** 10:00 am
Yukata Uzunoe 1 Year Anniversary (26th)
- 25 Grand Ceremony – Seattle, LA, South SF
- 26 (Mon) Memorial Day Service (Rose City Cemetery)

News:

Children's prayer book is being touched up for to comply with KCNA standards – will be submitted to KCNA for review and approval this month. Thank you for your patience!

3/30 – Thank you very much to everyone who helped with the **church clean-up**. Thank you to Kami-sama for the beautiful sunny weather making cleaning inside and outside possible. It started to downpour after we finished and were having lunch!

4/25-27 – Lisa sensei will be in SF for a FTI meeting.

The Konko Spirit is printed by
the Konko Church of Portland.

If you have any articles or events you would like to have included, please contact

Lisa Uzunoe (971) 221-8196.
E-mail: lisauzunoe@hotmail.com