

Together in Marriage, Together in Faith

Good Morning everyone! Thank you very much for attending our monthly service for August, 2019. I hope you are all in good health & excellent spirits.

Konko Daijin taught,

“Tenchi Kane No Kami is the kami who watches over everything. Heaven & Earth are indispensable to our lives and cannot be divided. It is Tenchi Kane No Kami who put them together for them to function well.

“If we compare the Universe to people, Heaven is man and Earth is woman. It is good when they are joined in marriage. It is not good when a man & woman are separated. When they come together, things go well. It is Tenchi Kane No Kami who puts them together and arranges for things to go well. Then Heaven & Earth can work together as father & mother to help their children prosper.”

It's the same for a marriage. Marriage is the sacred union of two people to share their lives together, help each other, respect each other's individuality as well as their togetherness, and create a harmonious home & family like Heaven & Earth working together to sustain everything on earth and beyond.

Three weeks ago, the wedding ceremony was held for Koyo Lanna Moriwaki & Alex Keio Yasutake. It was on Friday, July 19 at the Grove Redfield Estate in Glenview, Illinois.

Alex's grandparents and parents came from Hawaii, and his sister and family came from England to join the wedding celebration. His parents are the Revs. Akinobu & Miyoko Yasutake; and grandparents are the head minister & wife of Konko Mission of Waipahu, the Revs. Tetsuro & Mitsuko Yasutake. His younger sister, Lisa Rowan, came together with her husband, Matthew, and their one-year-old daughter, Ellie.

Lanna's mother, Mrs. Katsuko Omura, is a member of KC Gardena came to the wedding from Los Angeles. And other relatives joined the celebrations from Virginia, Maryland, & Colorado.

Rev. Nobuharu Uzunoe, head-minister of KC Gardena, came to officiate at the wedding service. I assisted him in the ceremony. However, he had difficulty getting here from California. Due to weather in Chicago his flight was cancelled. So he was put on stand-by. Finally he got an overnight flight. He arrived at O'Hare airport early in the morning on the day of the wedding. I could feel the great depth of his spirit as I picked him up at the airport. His strong devotion to serve Kami had helped him to arrive in time.

When I saw him at the airport, he told me that he had been moved to tears before landing. ***When we respect everything, good or bad that happens, as Kami's sacred doing with gratitude, Kami will be most pleased*** and we come to be moved to tears ourselves. Those tears of emotion are but a reflection of Kami's emotions.

It was so hot that day in Chicago – 99 degrees Fahrenheit. I believe it was an indication of the newly-wed couple’s wonderful love. Alex & Lanna were filled with joy & happiness throughout the day. Often you could catch the caring eyes they had for each other. Their smiles were wrapped around everything making the atmosphere relaxing & enjoyable the whole day. I was so happy to be surrounded with the wonderful atmosphere of this couple & their company that I didn’t feel the heat at all.

There is never any complaining or dissatisfaction at all before such joy & gratitude.

Every member of my family had been invited & they all enjoyed themselves to the fullest. Mitsunori was the MC for their reception; and I danced with my granddaughters, Angelyn & Katelyn, after the newlyweds’ first dance.

Alex & Lanna will encounter adversities in their lives together, but their faith will clearly show that those adversities are paths for purifying their hearts, and deepening the peace & joy in their hearts. When they practice faith this way, Kami will bless them with a better state of well-being.

Each of them has been brought up in different circumstances and each molded with unique personalities. Therefore, sometimes their opinions may clash. One may demand something unexpected of the other. That is the time to polish the heart, by praying, “I can deepen my heart thanks to this clash, or through this demand.” It may take a while to accomplish such peace & joy that’s unbreakable; that is to say, to build a heart which neither breaks down nor is shaken with whatever happens & no matter how difficult it may be. When they practice faith in this way, each may realize Kami has arranged the best person for them.

From now on when Alex & Lanna receive the divine favors of their lives together, please allow them to do so with appreciation for the wondrous bliss of life. When they experience these wonders of life, please allow them to share it with those whom they care for & who love them. We sincerely pray that Kami continues to protect & guide Alex & Lanna so that they may build a strong faith & create a harmonious home & family as our sacred teaching says, “***Faith is the foundation of a peaceful home.***” We earnestly hope their precious married life may be fulfilled like this:

***Praying each to the other ---
Worshiping, adoring.
Together polishing &
Being polished.
There is nothing to compare with ---
The joy of this day.***

In Japan, there is a part of the Konko wedding ceremony where the officiating minister presents the couple with a teaching for leading their married life. Alex & Lanna joined our Wagakokoro Day Service a week ago for the first time as husband & wife. So I asked Kami to let me know the teaching for them to deepen their hearts in their new voyage

as husband & wife. When I opened the sacred Wagakokoro book after our Morning Prayer Service, I received the following teaching, “「養素拝山」 — *The essence of cultivating one's spirit is to single-heartedly train oneself by worshiping the very difficulties of life.*” It is our hope that Alex & Lanna practice faith to develop peace & joy in their hearts by putting this teaching into practice in their daily lives together.

Today through this service, we also pray for students to improve themselves in all aspects of their academic achievement. Our founder prayed for young people to have good health & education. He said, “Young people should work hard to become smart & be able to remember what they learn very well.”

Young people are the treasures of the world. It is vitally important for an up-and-coming generation to perfect themselves physically, mentally & spiritually in order to be of great service to the world.

I truly feel young American people want to know the Konko Faith once they are introduced to it. There are many religions in the world. Among them, they sense some important message in our faith. We should be open-minded to them whenever they want to contact us through email or some other way, like phone-calls & visits. I want to do anything I can to show them what I know about our faith and what I have experienced about Tenchi Kane No Kami & how Kami functions.

Like this young couple, Alex & Lanna, I hope young Americans come & learn our faith sincerely and become a light to the world, because the way to real happiness is found in this faith.