



Saseteitadaku “To be allowed to do (something) with gratitude”



Rev. Yasuhiro Yano

On Saturday, March 28, 2026, we had a Zoom meeting of local ministers with our guests, Revs. Tomohiro and Ayako Yagi from Konko Church of Ayabe in Kyoto.

Tomohiro Sensei was originally a complete stranger to the practice of the Konko faith. His family was rooted in traditional Buddhist practices, and he himself was active as a city council member in Ayabe City. The path that led him to become a Konko minister began through his marriage to Ayako Sensei, who is the daughter of a Konko minister.

Ayako Sensei assisted Tomohiro Sensei in his election campaign, and through that encounter, their relationship developed into marriage. After their marriage, she lived with the Shirai family, Tomohiro Sensei's family, for several years before they eventually moved to live with the Yagi family. Through these circumstances and relationships, he was gradually guided toward becoming a Konko minister.

He learned about the practice of the Konko faith through casual conversations during daily evening meals, often while sharing a drink. His father-in-law,

the head minister, would speak for hours each day. At first, Tomohiro Sensei could hardly understand the teachings being conveyed. The head minister would often point out details of daily living—such as correcting the placement of posters or arranging shoes properly.

He emphasized the importance of revering the Founder, expressed in Japanese as “*Kyōsō-sama no itadaku.*” This became one of the central teachings for Tomohiro Sensei. Gradually, through these daily interactions, he grew into his role as a minister. Then one day, quite casually, the head minister said to him, “From tomorrow, you will be the head minister.”

As I listened to his presentation, I felt that his father-in-law was truly skillful in guiding Tomohiro Sensei, helping him absorb the essential elements of the Konko faith through ordinary, daily interactions.

During the meeting, the theme of “*sasete itadaku*” came up. This is a common and important expression in the Konko faith tradition. At the Konko Church of Amagi, where I received spiritual training under Rev. Fumio Yasutake, the very first lesson I learned was this idea of “*sasete itadaku.*”

Oyasensei, Rev. Fumio Yasutake, used to say, “*Suru ja nai zo, sasete itadaku no zo.*” In other words, do not think, “I will do things by my own power,” but recognize that everything we do is possible only because we are allowed to do so within a state of blessedness.

Whenever we say “*sasete itadaku,*” it expresses gratitude. When we eat, we say “*itadakimasu,*” acknowledging the blessings that make the food possible. We also use the term “*goyō,*” meaning service to Kami-Sama. Such service can only be carried out with the spirit of “*sasete itadaku*”—a heart of gratitude. Only then can our actions truly be received by Kami-Sama.

Even something as simple as visiting the church becomes meaningful through this mindset. It is through the heart of “*sasete itadaku*”—through gratitude—that we are able to make such a visit.

The Fourth Konko-Sama, Rev. Kagamitaro Konko, taught that when we say we “do” something in our daily lives—such as washing our face—we must recognize that even this simple act is supported by countless elements: water, the sink, our physical ability to move, and many other unseen conditions.

All the daily activities we take for granted—eating, breathing, speaking, and performing our daily tasks—are possible only because of these foundational elements. These can all be understood as blessings given to us.

The Founder taught:
“Practicing faith on your own will not bring divine blessings. Practicing faith with the support of Kami will.” (Gorikai III, Gorikai Juishū 39)

I have often said that anything we are able to do, and everything that supports our lives—whether visible or invisible—is a blessing. It is within this blessedness that our lives are sustained. Becoming aware of these supporting elements is itself a way of life in the practice of faith.

The Founder also stated:
“Though Kami-Sama cannot be seen, He is all around you. You are walking within and right through Him.” (GII: Tsugawa, Haruo: 3.1)

The Fourth Konko-Sama, Kagamitaro Konko, expressed it simply:
世話になる全てに礼を言う心平和生み出す心といはん。

This can be translated as:
“The heart that naturally responds with gratitude for all that supports us is the heart that brings about peace in the world.”

If we become aware of the blessed nature of our lives, then it is only natural that we respond with gratitude for all that sustains us.

Voice of the Universe...

There are people between Heaven and Earth. Heaven is father and Earth is mother. Humans, plants, and other living things live on Earth through the blessings they receive from Heaven. *I Ishihara Ginzo 12.*

Bulletin Board

April 2026

- 1 Wed -Monthly Svc. for Tenchi Kane no Kami-Sama (7:30 pm) 天地金乃神様 月例祭**
3 Fri -Japanese Program at St. Francis (10:30 am)
4 Sat -Church clean-up for the Godaisai (8 am)
5 Sun -No Sunday Service (Let's go to HNL)
-Honolulu Spring Godaisai (11 am)
12 Sun -No Sunday Service (Let's go to WPH)
-Waipahu Church Spring Godaisai (10:30 am)
-1-year Mem Svc for Rev. Noriko Yasutake (WPH)
13 Mon -Wahiawa Church Spring Grand Ceremony 天地金乃神様御大祭 (5 pm) *Naorai dinner
15 Wed -KMH Kyoten Study Group on Zoom (5-6 pm)
17 Fri -Church Clean-up (9 am)
19 Sun -Monthly Mem. Svc 月例霊祭 (9 am)
-KMH 100th Hula Practice at WPH (1:30 p)
21 Tue -KMH CEOC Meeting ZOOM (9 am)
22 Wed -KMH Centennial Meeting ZOOM (5 pm)
25 Sat -Ehimemaru citrus tree care at Kakaako (9 am)
-HI Gunpla Workshop at HNL (10 am to 6 pm)
26 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am) *share okage
29 Wed -Church clean-up (9 am)
-KMH Kyoten Study Group on Zoom (5-6 pm)

In Remembrance: April

Shinichi Furushima	4/30/1996
Yoshiro Kamitomo	4/16/2000
Robert Mendoz	4/27/2006
Gilbert Toshio Iwasa	4/9/1999
Kiku Takahashi	4/26/1967
Zenji Takahashi	4/12/1966
Frances Shigeno Takahashi	4/13/2009
Richard Yoji Noguchi	4/28/2017
Rev. Masato Yoshino	4/30/2021
Alyce Yoshie Yamamoto	4/12/2022
Jean Fusae Noguchi	4/17/2022



The Life of the Founder 金光教祖の生涯 瀬戸三喜雄 金光教学研究所 紀要別冊教学叢書 2
The following is an English translation of a book titled, "Konkō Kyōso no Shougai" or "The Life of the Founder Konko Daijin" authored by the Rev. Mikio Seto and published by Konkokyo Theological Research Center in 1980. Many biographies about the life of the Founder Konko Daijin exist. I would like to introduce this article for your reference in your pursuit of faith. An English translation was provided by Rev. Yasuhiro Yano. (continued from the previous issue)

A New Theology (page 206)

The Meiji government implemented new regulations for society, and Bunji had to respond to the changing demands placed upon his religious work while also examining older theological concepts and practices.

In July of 1871, Kami stated:
“For those who come with requests for fate and fortune, building construction and renovation, Days and Directions, marriage arrangements, or house moving, just give them the teachings of this Faith” (Oboegaki 19-5).

This message referred to how Bunji should respond to believers who came with such requests—not merely by offering prayers, but by teaching and guiding them so that their lives could be fulfilled through faith.

Further clarification was given in a statement on December 10, 1871:
“Since Konko Daijin’s way of Toritsugi mediation has been established, if people listen to and accept my teachings, they can find relief. Kami as well as Buddhas will rejoice. People are to value their parents and get along well with their spouse. The family should be harmonious” (Oboecho 15-12).

Through these divine messages, Kami emphasized that praying to Kami and reforming one’s way of life were more important than addressing specific worldly concerns mentioned earlier. Notably, these messages were revealed about one year before major societal changes, such as the abolishment of Shugendō practices, the introduction of a new calendar system, and governmental restrictions on beliefs related to Days and Directions under the Civilization and Enlightenment policy. In this sense, Kami appeared to anticipate these developments. In response to the changing society, Kami also began to guide adjustments in theological understanding.

As mentioned earlier, Bunji faced a very serious situation as he approached a time when he could no longer freely perform religious practices. He was forced to invalidate his status as a Shinto priest. Government authorities monitored his activities, and the religion he practiced was regarded as a

superstitious cult, prohibiting him from engaging in prayer for others.

In response to these restrictions, Bunji temporarily withdrew from his intense, prayer-centered practices. He secluded himself in a back room of his home and continued his prayers inwardly, focusing on the cultivation of his mind. When visitors came, he would place a sacred mirror in the alcove, allow them to pray to it, and ask them to leave without meeting him. He instructed them, “Pray to the mirror with a single heart and return home.”

Through this practice, it is said that many people had their requests fulfilled and received blessings, as recorded by Fujimori Kondo. In another episode, Bunji advised, “You do not have to travel from afar. Direct your sincere heart to Kami and practice faith,” as shared by Jingoro Yuasa.

Although these actions and messages may appear random, when viewed collectively, they reveal a clear direction from Kami. These seemingly unconventional methods, apart from established religious systems, helped Bunji awaken to the deeper practice of refining and exercising his heart in faith.

In response to Bunji’s evolving spirituality, Kami stated:
“Pray wholeheartedly for the Konko Daijin community. Instead of saying, ‘I will chant a prayer for you,’ say, ‘I will mediate your request to Kami-Sama.’ Tell all the believers that they should offer their requests through their own hearts. Blessings are found in one’s heart” (Oboecho 16-19-2).

At that time, many people approached Bunji with the expectation that their wishes would be fulfilled simply by relying on him, as someone perceived to possess divine power. This attitude did not align with the true nature of Toritsugi mediation, but rather reflected a casual and dependent approach to faith.

Due to the prohibition against performing prayer-oriented practices for others, Bunji had to modify how he engaged in religious work. Kami instructed him to guide people toward directing their own hearts to Kami and receiving blessings through that connection. This divine message emphasized that fulfillment comes through one’s own heart.

The phrase “Blessings are found in one’s heart” represented a significant shift in understanding faith practice. At first glance, this idea may seem difficult to reconcile with Bunji’s earlier teaching: “Pray to Kami for anything at all with a single heart.” However, these teachings are deeply connected. When a person prays with a single, sincere heart, that intensity of prayer allows Kami to respond. Through this exchange of hearts between people and Kami, a strong, mutual relationship of trust is formed.

Later in Bunji’s life, he told Tsugawa Haruo: “Think that divine blessings come from practicing faith, rather than from Kami-Sama. Practice faith with lasting patience” (Gorikai II, Tsugawa Haruo 17-4).

This teaching closely relates to the idea that “Divine blessings are found in one’s heart.”

Closure of the Hiromae

However, external pressures on Bunji continued to intensify. On February 17, 1873, after hearing an Oda Prefectural government bulletin, a family member informed Bunji, “Shinto priests will not be allowed to continue their activities.” This marked the enforcement of the “Service Regulations for Shinto Officers.”

Bunji, who had devoted himself to Toritsugi mediation since 1857—from the age of 46 to 60 over 13 years—now faced a major impasse. Concerned family members worried deeply about his situation. In response, Kami conveyed the following message through Bunji:

“Your family is not to forget about Me. Whatever happens, do not depend on others. Rely on Me in both good times and bad. Do not worry. The world keeps changing, so wait patiently for five years. Above all, have the family get along well. Speak to one another politely. Do not say things that lack sincerity” (Oboecho 17-3, 4).

Kami gave detailed guidance for navigating these difficult circumstances:
Do not try to avoid challenges; always direct your

heart toward Kami and live a Kami-centered life. Do not depend on others or seek help from them. Do not judge matters based on human-centered thinking; instead, rely on Kami. Recognize the impermanent nature of the world. Be patient. Face external difficulties, but do not allow them to create disharmony within the family.

Through these instructions, Kami showed how to live through adversity.

On January 18, Bunji was summoned by Kawate Iseki, the village chief magistrate. Hagio went to meet him and was ordered to remove the altar fixtures. After returning home and informing Bunji, the altar was promptly cleared away.

“This made the Hiromae look dreary” (Oboegaki 21-30).

This moment reflects the deep sense of loss Bunji must have felt, as the sacred space he had built through a lifetime of devotion was taken away. Now in his later years, Bunji stopped serving the Hiromae, which was closed indefinitely.

In response, Kami told him, “Take a rest without feeling disappointment.”

In the now-empty Hiromae, only the sound of the spinning wheel, operated by his wife Tose, could be heard. *(to be continued)*

Join us for the Konko Missions in Hawaii Centennial Celebration on Saturday, August 15th at the Ko’olau Ballrooms and Conference Center. The 6th Konko Sama will also make his appearance at the celebration. To register, online, please scan the QR code below.

RSVP By July 13th

