



6th KMH-KCNA Missionary Women's Society Joint Gathering on ZOOM 7/22/23

Rev. Yasuhiro Yano (Vice President of KMH)

Greeting

Good morning, and I'm glad to be able to join this meeting. I was asked to greet everyone on this occasion as the Vice President of KMH. My name is Yasuhiro Yano.

The theme for today's meeting is "The practice of Appreciating the ordinary." I found a very appropriate story for today's meeting, which was shared by Rev. Shikie Kouda from Konko Church of Ootsuru, Ooita Prefecture.

The article was found in the "Ametsuchi," an official monthly publication of the Konkokyo organization, in the February 2020 issue. The following is my English translation.

Unexpected message from Konko-Sama

The first time I received a message from Konko-Sama was when I was young and taking care of my three children. My husband, who served as an instructor at Konkokyo Gakuin Seminary, became unable to teach due to some serious issues at the seminary. He secluded himself in his own room and was bedridden for about a month, never coming out.

While I had to take care of my three children, my husband didn't come out of his room. I had to cook and bring food to serve him. I became so frustrated and could no longer bear the situation. I carried my youngest son on my back, held the hands of my eldest son and daughter, and left the house by slamming the entrance door.

Then I rushed to see Konko-Sama at Toritsugi-Mediation Desk and expressed my complaint by saying, "My husband refuses to go to work at Gakuin Seminary." It was not a formal manner of seeking Toritsugi-Mediation, rather a way of telling Konko-Sama about my husband's disturbing behavior. At the same time, I had a faint expectation that Konko-Sama would give me a sort of message that would help

dissolve my frustration. I expected him to provide some consolation for my suffering in a manner like, "You shouldn't have such negative thoughts toward your husband and should try to keep a positive attitude and take care of your husband," or something like that.

But Konko-Sama responded to me in such an abrupt manner without referring to my husband and said, "Do you cook rice? Do you clean your rooms? Do you wash your clothes?" I was prompted to respond to his extended words in my mind, "How dare Konko-Sama ever ask me such rude questions? He should know how I have to deal with three of my children and manage the household chores every single day."

I was just looking at Konko-Sama in puzzlement. Konko-Sama continued to say, "When you cook, do you say thank you for any elements of cooking? Do you pray that your cooking will go smoothly without any disruptions? When you use your rice cooker, do you say thank you for the rice cooker? Do you pray for the good health of your family members through the food you cook? When you finish cooking rice, do you say thank you for the cooking without any troubles? When you wash your clothes, do you say thank you to the laundry machine? Do you say thank you for the water used for washing? Do you say thank you for using the machine to wash clothes? Do you say thank you when the laundry work is done? When you use the dryer for clothes, do you say thank you for the dryer? Do you say thank you to the machine when the machine finishes the task? He continued to keep on talking in such a meticulous manner."

After a pause, Konko-Sama said, "I have been doing all those things I have shared with you every day. When I find myself awakened in my bed in the morning, I say thank you for the fact of my being awakened in the morning. I give thanks for the life I was given on that day. I give thanks for the clothes I wear. When I wash my face in the morning, I give thanks for the water I use. When I put my feet into the geta clogs at the entrance, I say thank you for the clogs. I give thanks for the passage on which I can walk to Hiromae. When I arrive at Hiromae, the worship hall, I say thank you for the fact that I could walk all the way from my residence to this place without any disruptions. I say thank you for being able to fulfill my duties at this place. If I ever forget to say thank you for any of those elements, I will

try to fulfill in extending thank you later on when I become aware of the forgotten elements. You say you wish to actualize and practice this way of faith in your own life. But without practicing what I have shared with you, there shall be no way to fulfill your wish!" Konko-Sama firmly stated in that manner.

This was the first time I had ever received such a message from Konko-Sama. I had no idea how the message Konko-Sama gave me is related to the practice of Konko faith.

I held such a rude thought against Konko-Sama, "Konko-Sama became the Head of the Religious Organization just recently. Maybe he could not have developed a full appreciation of the true essence of Konko faith."

After returning home from visiting the church, I felt compelled to follow what Konko-Sama had shared with me, as a sort of reluctant obligation to show respect to Konko-Sama. When I cooked, I tried to say thank you for the cooking utensils used and for washing them. I wasn't initially serious about expressing gratitude for these elements in life, but I practiced saying thank you as a way of reminding myself and honoring Konko-Sama. It felt like I was just a nursery student following the instructions given by a caretaker. Nevertheless, I continued reminding myself to say thank you for whatever I did in my daily living, saying, "Thank you. Please let me get engaged in such and such things." The following day, my husband got out of his bed and greeted me in a normal manner, saying, "I am going to report to Gakuin Seminary from today." I was truly surprised to witness such a drastic change in my husband, who had secluded himself in his own room and been bedridden for one month. How could he have suddenly become so well and full of energy, ready to fulfill his duties at Gakuin Seminary? At that moment, I couldn't help but feel that it was because of Konko-Sama's prayer that my husband got blessed.

Overwhelmed with a pleasant surprise, I immediately visited the church to see Konko-Sama. I said to him, "Konko-Sama, thank you very much. My husband has recovered and will report to Gakuin Seminary." Konko-Sama responded to me with just one phrase, "*Sore mi!*" which meant "You see the blessing you received!" After this remark, he didn't say anything more. I looked at Konko-Sama with puzzlement. I was only 31 or 32 years old at that time, and I just couldn't fully comprehend the meaning behind "*Sore mi!*"

Through this experience, I realized that following and practicing the words given by Konko-Sama led to a blessed situation.

I have shortened the latter part of the article. I felt it would be the best material for today's discussion. Thank you for allowing me to take this opportunity.

Konko-Sama said...

Konko Daijin said, "People have often wondered why a man who is honest, doesn't do anything bad to others, and is like a kami or Buddha, is often afflicted with many misfortunes. This is because he has somehow shown irreverence to Kami.

[*GIII: Jinkyu Kyogoroku*/ed. Kataoka, Jiro:105.1]

2 No matter how honest and good he is, he is apt to commit irreverence to Kami if he does not practice faith. There is a difference between having a good personality and showing reverence to Kami." [*GIII: Jinkyu Kyogoroku*/ed. Kataoka, Jiro:105.2]

3 No matter how good he is, if he doesn't practice faith, he will not receive divine blessings. [*GIII: Jinkyu Kyogoroku*/ed. Kataoka, Jiro:105.3]

Bulletin Board

August 2023

1 Tue -Monthly Svc for Tenchi Kane No Kami
(7:30 pm)

6 Sun -Sunday Service at 9 am, followed by KMH
Rotary Hanashikai on ZOOM, Wailuku Church
hosted from 10:30 am to 12:00 noon

13 Sun-Monthly Svc for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)

20 Sun-Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)

27 Sun-No Sunday Service, instead, let's attend the
50th Memorial Service for the Late Rev.

Masayuki Kodama (Founding Minister of
Honolulu Church) at 10 am.

●Monthly Volunteer Activity at St. Francis

The next activity will be on Fri, August 4 @ 10:30 am

●KMH Board of Trustees Meeting

Sat., August 5 (10:30 am to 3 pm) at Honolulu Church.

●KMH Kyoten Study Group via Zoom

The main reference book will be "Voice of the Universe."

Join us: August 2, 16, 30 (Wed. 5 pm- 6 pm)

ZOOM ID: 815 2952 9465 **PASS:** 914385

●HCRP Meeting on ZOOM

Monday, August 21 6:30 pm-7:30 pm

●KMH CEOC Meeting

ZOOM on Friday, August 25 (3-4 pm)



Honoring the Mitama Spirits

August

Jinpei Hayashida	8/13/1939
Sunao Hayashida	8/8/1958
Helen Y. Eguchi	8/14/1946
Masaru Nakano	8/5/2004
Rev. Masayuki Kodama	8/24/1973
Masataka Yano	8/14/2012
Shizue Eguchi	8/19/2012
Kima Yamashita	8/1979
Hidehiko Makiguchi	8/23/2022



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

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, "Konko Kyoso no Shougai" or "The Life of the Founder Konko Daijin" authored by the Rev. Mikio Seto, and was published by Konkokyo Theological Research Center. The publication was made in 1980. There are many biographies about the life of the Founder Konko Daijin. I would like to introduce this article for your reference in your pursuit of faith. An English translation was provided by Rev. Yasuhiro Yano. (Page 106 to 110) (continued from the previous issue)



Divine weather forecast

During autumn, the farmers were busy harvesting the rice crop. Their minds were preoccupied with thoughts of whether they would be able to proceed with the harvesting smoothly and how to get the work done. One day after Bunji's family had harvested cotton, Kami gave Bunji detailed instructions for the rice harvest. Kami said, "Today, harvest the rice in the field in front of the house and dry them on the field. Continue harvesting even if it rains or drizzles intermittently. There will be three consecutive sunny days, so leave the harvest out on the field to dry. Later, separate the rice from the pangs at the Shimobuchi field tomorrow and the day after" (Oboegaki 5-10-1).

Furukawa Sansaku went outside carrying a sickle and looked at the sky. He surmised, "It is definitely going to rain. We shouldn't work today," and went back inside (Oboegaki 10-2). It was practical not to harvest rice

when it rains, considering the need for the harvested rice to be dried in good weather. However, Bunji persisted and continued harvesting rice in his field for two consecutive days, and he also separated the rice grains at the Shimobuchi field.

The following day, after finishing the process of separating the rice grains on September 20, and after three days of fine weather, it rained heavily. Thankfully, Bunji could separate the rice grains inside the house. In a sense, Bunji utilized the four days without any rest, taking advantage of the favorable weather conditions. He was impressed with the truthfulness of the divine instructions.

"(One day,) while Bunji was plowing the Oshinden paddy with a cow, it began to rain. Bunji asked Kami what he should do. Kami answered, 'Don't stop using the cow. It will rain only for a while.' Bunji continued working, and later, the skies cleared for the rest of the day. I expressed my thanks" (Oboegaki 5-11). If he could not get the divine instruction, he would have had to return home with the cow and go back to the field again depending on the weather condition. He didn't have to waste his time and labor by following the divine instruction.

"(The next day,)" while Bunji was using a cow to plow the Koda paddy near the house, it began to rain. Kami said, 'Go home for today and take the cow with you. You won't be able to use the cow in the afternoon due to heavy rains.' When I got home, the rain turned into a heavy downpour. Those who pondered over whether or not it would rain heavily supposed that it would not, and therefore came home drenched" (Oboegaki 5-12-1-2).

In this manner, Kami gave Bunji an exact weather forecast for his fieldwork. Farmers try to predict reliable weather conditions for their fieldwork, but they can hardly predict if it will rain or not. Farmers heavily rely on the weather conditions for their work. During the harvest season, if they make mistakes in finding the most opportune time for harvesting, they would lose income for the season. On the contrary, if they could predict good weather conditions, they would surely enjoy a good harvest and income. Kami told Bunji, "Everyone says that since they don't have relatives in

Heaven, they can't tell if it will rain or shine. I will give you relatives in Heaven" (Oboegaki 5-13). Bunji was overwhelmed with gratitude that he has been experiencing some totally new perspectives in life one after another ever since Kami responded to his prayers in his daily living.

Bunji also recorded other episodes in which Kami gave him instructions about weather conditions in "Oboegai." For example, once while Bunji was using a cow to cultivate the soil of the rice field, it began to rain. Some farmers mocked him, saying, "Are you out of your mind to use the cow now?" It was considered highly unconventional to use the cow to till the soil in the rain, as it turned the soil into sticky mud that would not be suitable for farming. To ordinary farmers, it seemed like Bunji was preparing for rice planting in a less than ideal way. Bunji responded to those mocking people, "I am preparing for rice planting," and continued to use the cow all day in the paddy. He could not reveal that he was following Kami's instructions for the fieldwork. Bunji understood that ordinary people would never appreciate the message behind his not-so-ordinary farming practices and his pursuit of faith. For him, it was a priority to treasure the ever-developing trust relationship with Kami, and he could endure the unusual situations.

Contrary to the expectation of the farmers, the following day turned out to be the finest day, as if Kami had proved his extended promise. They said, "Bun-sa, your hard work in the rain was a blessing. Yesterday's unstable weather turned out to be the finest today," and they envied him for it. Bunji could sow the barley in his paddy successfully.

After Bunji finished sowing the barley, Kami gave him another instruction, "Do not prepare for the scheduled fieldwork. It will rain. Prepare the cut straws and spread them over the field where you sowed the barley yesterday. When it rains heavily, the soil on the field will turn into sticky mud that would prevent healthy germination of the seeds." This episode took place in the afternoon. Bunji prepared to finish the fieldwork and was ready to leave the site. Some villagers asked him, "Have you finished sowing the barley?" They thought it was unconventional for Bunji to finish the

work in the field and return home on such a fine day. Soon after Bunji spread the cut straws over the field, it started to rain heavily while he was having lunch at home. People cannot predict what will happen in the future. No matter how well farmers prepare for the future work, expecting the weather to be favorable, if it rains, their preparations would end up in vain. That would be the nature of ordinary people, and Bunji might have believed in that manner in the past. However, he became overwhelmed with gratitude for the extensive consideration that Kami bestowed upon him.

Pictures from July:

KMH Beach Clean-up and BBQ held on July 1 (26 attended)

