



In commemoration of the 25th Memorial of the late Rev. Fumio Yasutake



Painting by Rev. Rodney Yano (in high school)

By Yasuhiro Yano

The 25th Year Memorial Service for the Late Rev. Fumio Yasutake, the second Head Minister of Konko Church of Amagi was observed at the church on November 23, 2020. He passed away on December 23, 1995. The Konko Church of Amagi has been publishing a bi-annual booklet titled "Dougama" or "Same Pot". "Dougama" was named by the Rev. Fumio Yasutake and implies those who shared the same meals at the Amagi Church. The following is an English translation of my article.

My family back in Ehime, Japan got initiated into the practice of the Konko faith by my grandfather, Tousuke Yano at the Konko Church of Kawanoishi. The reason for his initiation into the Konko faith was simply because he was blessed with children after encountering Konkokyo.

The third Head Minister of the church, the Rev. Hidejiro Hosaka used to say to my parents, "Yano-san, I understand you have enjoyed overwhelming blessings for your family. I have been expecting one or two of your children to serve Kami-Sama directly someday." Our family in Shikoku was blessed with eight children altogether. My father used to respond by saying, "Sensei, don't say such things." He didn't have the slightest idea that any of us would end up becoming Konko ministers because

he was well aware of the difficult nature of serving Kami-Sama as a minister.

The minister had extended his prayer that one or two of us would become a Konko minister as a token of appreciation for all the blessings the Yano family has enjoyed. If my grandfather had not encountered the Konko faith, the Yano family may have been terminated without children to take over the family lineage.

In a sense, it could be a divine arrangement that I became a Konko minister and then my second eldest brother also became one too. I had developed some English language skills and tried to find a job but could not find a job I wanted. In one of those days, I had an idea if I could use my English skills in the Konko faith community. While I was in Tokyo, I regularly visited the Konko Church of Tokiwadai. The minister was the Rev. Michio Miyake. He was involved in the WCRP (World Conference of Religions for Peace) and was traveling around the globe. I asked him if I could become one of his shugyo trainees at his church.

Initially, I was accepted to enter into the church for training. I asked my family members to send needed items, such as futon and so forth. Just about one week prior to the shipment of the items, the sensei told me, "I am sorry, I cannot allow you to enroll at our church for a trainee." I didn't ask him the reason, although I could assume some reasons since I have been keenly aware of his expressed thoughts in some of his speeches from time to time. At one occasion, he related to the audience that he had a vivid dream. In the dream, while he was thinking about someone, and he was to get killed in an auto accident. I immediately thought he might be indirectly referring to me. The reason why he could not accept me as a shugyo trainee could be attributed to that dream he had.

In responding to the rejection from the minister, strangely enough, I remembered Konko Church of Amagi, the parent church of Konko Church of Kawanoishi. And I concluded if I would not be able to get shugyo training at the church, I would like to get trained at Konko Church of Amagi. One day, I called my father back in Ehime and told him my decision of getting trained at the Amagi Church. My father responded by saying, "That is great. The late Rev. Hidejiro Hosaka might be in great joy and happiness."

My father was born through the Toritsugi-Mediation of the Rev. Hidejiro Hosaka. And I thought he could have been a Konko believer ever since he was born. But my father told me at one occasion, it wasn't until he met the Rev. Hidejiro Hosaka, at the age of 19 that he became a Konko believer. My father used to

think that the Konko church was just a place to get blessed by extending prayers to Kami-Sama. But the Rev. Hidejiro Hosaka introduced the true nature of the Konko faith so tirelessly and patiently to him and other believers in the faith community. And at that point he was convinced that the Konko faith is a true spiritual path and then formally became a Konko believer at the age of 19. But, at one occasion, the Rev. Hosaka made a pilgrimage to see the Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake, the founding minister of Konko Church of Amagi and asked for help by saying, "I can no longer continue to serve at the Konko Church of Kawanoishi." The reason could be conflicting issues between my difficult father in my assumption. The Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake responded to him by saying, "The Yano family exists because of the Konko Church of Kawanoishi, and the Konko Church of Kawanoishi continue to exist because of the Yano family" in accordance with my father. My father used to talk about matters relating to the practice of faith and especially respected the Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake and the virtuous nature of the Konko Church of Amagi. He used to say that the shugyo training at the Amagi Church was very strict and hard. In corresponding to the evolving situation I had to deal with, my awareness was that if the training at the church was that strict and hard, it could be the best place for me to get trained.

When I returned to Ehime I made preparations to get into the Konko Church of Amagi for training. The fourth Head Minister, the Rev. Toshihiko Hosaka accepted me as a temporary shugyo trainee at the church and gave me books relating to the messages given by the Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake and other references to the Konko faith. But those materials were quite foreign to me and difficult to understand.

While I was staying at my native house and waited for the time to move to Amagi, the Rev. Hosaka thought out how I could get trained at the given condition of Konko Church of Amagi. After deep consideration, he concluded that the best way to forward me as a trainee was to forward me as an offering from the Yano family in appreciation of the blessings received. That offering form can be referred to as "Inochi no Ohatsuho" or an offering of life in appreciation of the blessings received. The Rev. Hosaka knew some of the ministers in the faith community followed the pattern of "Ujiko no Osonae" from the families who enjoyed great blessings.

I entered the Konko Church of Amagi on September 29, 1974. A few days later, while I was cleaning the yard with a bamboo sweeper, an elderly man approached me and said, "Yesterday, on our way back from visiting the Konko Church of Kokura in the microbus, the Rev. Fumio Yasutake told us, 'There was an osonae of a shinja' or 'an offering of a believer.' Through our human perspectives, we do not know what kind of people Kami-Sama use for His purposes."

Later on, I understand that the Rev. Yasutake accepted me as an offering of shinja and forwarded me to Kami-Sama in that

manner. I have learned to appreciate the grateful nature of my acceptance to the church as years passed by.

A few months later, I was called to the room of the Rev. Yasutake. He asked me, "There is a vacant church in Hawaii. Will you go to serve at the church?" Without any hesitation, I accepted the offer by saying, "Hai, or Yes." According to the regulation for the foreign religious workers to serve in the United States of America, the minister should fulfill the required two years of actual services.

My wife, Reiko and I got married at the Amagi Church in September 24, 1977. The following day, we left the church and headed to Hawaii. On the way, we stopped by at Gohonbu and greeted Konko-Sama, the Rev. Kagamitaro Konko and also visited Konko Church of Tokiwadai. We arrived at the Honolulu International Airport on September 27. We made a visit to Konko Mission of Honolulu and stayed overnight there. The following day, September 28, we arrived at Konko Mission of Wahiawa. I still vividly remember the first impression of Hawaii, smell of sweet tropical flowers in the air and the people who showed up to greet us. Upon arrival at the church, I turned on the lights of the worship hall and proceeded to the sanctuary area and extend my first prayer at the altars. From that day on, I tried to extend my prayer of "Konnichi Made no Onrei" or Perpetual thanksgiving for the blessings of each day. I am glad both my wife and I have been able to keep this spiritual tradition till this day.

We were able to hold the 80th Anniversary Celebration of Konko Mission of Wahiawa on March 15 this year. The fear of COVID-19 was beginning to spread throughout the world. Some people said that we should cancel the function in consideration of the people's health. But we have prepared for this event from over one year ago, we simply were not going to cancel this milestone. Personally, I was ready to hold the service even if there were no attendees. The Rev. Michiyoshi Yasutake from Konko Church of Amagi in Fukuoka also responded to our request regardless of the emerging COVID-19 precautions in Japan. He stated to the congregation that even if nobody goes, I shall go alone to Hawaii for the service. It could be possible that the entourage of seven people from Amagi Church would have to make a U-turn if the situation became serious. It is this conviction exhibited by the ministers at Amagi Church that has made it possible for the continued operation of the Konko faith in Hawaii and at Wahiawa.

The late Rev. Fumio Yasutake said, "When you get blessed with children, encourage them to become Konko ministers." When we were told that he got lung cancer, the doctor gave the prognosis that he has 500 days to live. In corresponding to the situation, I thought, "I should let my children see the minister who lived a bonafide faith." I took all my family members to attend the 90th Anniversary Celebration of the church held in 1994. When my son David was a senior and my son Rodney

was a freshman in high school, I sent them to experience life at the Amagi Church during the summer of 1995. This was just several months before Rev. Fumio Yasutake passed away. When David graduated from high school in 1996, I sent him to Amagi for three years for spiritual training. Rodney also followed David and our daughter Edna also followed their footsteps. It took six years for three of our children to complete the program at Amagi and Honbu and returned home. During the six years, I continued sending English scripts of my speech every week by fax. After our three children returned home from spiritual training, they enrolled in college, graduated, received employment and got married. As for my son Rodney, after returning from Japan, he stayed at Konko Mission of Honolulu for some time. And there was an offer to work and study for the ministerial educational program offered by the Konko Church of San Francisco. He responded to the program sixteen years ago and beginning this year, his residence as a minister was officially transferred to Konko Church of San Francisco.

Today, it would be impractical to keep the operation of the church without the engagement and support of our children. In a sense, the next generational ministers have already been in charge of operating the local church in Hawaii. We are grateful for the contributions of the pioneer ministers and believers who have dedicated and helped pave the foundations of the Konko faith community in Hawaii.

From time to time, I ponder about the Rev. Fumio Yasutake who was quite aware of the given condition of the vacant Wahiawa Church that had lost its resident minister five years ago, and sent us to take over the responsibility of the operation. While I was at Amagi Church, a senior minister who was knowledgeable about the condition of the Wahiawa Church asked me point blankly, "Omae wa bakaka?" or "Are you out of mind?" After spending over 10 years in Hawaii, we met people who revealed, "We thought you would give up and return to Japan within one year." If the Rev. Fumio Yasutake was such an "ordinary person" I would not have responded to come to Hawaii from the initial point. It could be attributed to the prayer of the Rev. Fumio Yasutake who accepted me as "Shinja no Osonae" that I have been enabled to serve here in the last 43 years.

I learned that the Rev. Fumio Yasutake once told the Rev. Masahiko Yoshino of Konko Mission of Honolulu to let Yano do whatever he is determined to do in his missionary work. I truly appreciate the expressed thought as an assurance for the reason for our services in Hawaii. Yasutake Fumio Oyasensei, *Hontouni Arigatou Gozaimasu*. Thank you very much!

Konko-Sama Says . . .

There are various faiths which profess certain punishments and curses. But in this Faith, we give requests to Tenchi No Kami-Sama to have our misfortunes dispelled. Kami-Sama is like a parent who chases away the bad children who pick on

the weaker ones. When the parent approaches, the bad children turn pale with fear and run away. If people pray single-heartedly to Tenchi No Kami-Sama, their troubles will be purged. For all things, rely on Kami-Sama and practice faith. You ask someone to settle something and count on him. Then you think he probably won't succeed, so you ask another person to settle it for you. But in doing so, the matter to be settled may get worse and you may end up having problems. Don't stray in your faith. Straying in your faith to receive divine blessings quickly is like taking an unfamiliar road for a shortcut. In this Faith, you are to take the main road. Be single-hearted and practice faith. (Gorikai I Yamamoto Sadajiro 57)

Bulletin Board

Church Services for December 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 Ikigami Konko Daijin (Facebook Live 9 am)
- 20 Sun -48th Memorial Service for the Late Rev. Haruko Takahashi (Facebook Live 9 am)
- 27 Sun -End of the Year Service (Facebook Live 9 am)
- 30 Wed -29th Annual Mochitsuki (Facebook Live 8 am)
*Mochi orders are now closed.

January 2021

- 1 Fri -New Year's Day Service (9 am)
No osechi cuisine this year due to COVID-19
- 3 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

Garage Sale was a success!

We held a Garage Sale on Saturday, November 7th from 9 am-2 pm. Many people came by to purchase goods. Despite the pandemic, many people also donated various goods and volunteered their time to help set up and clean up. We really appreciate all your help. We raised \$893.80 including generous donations. All proceeds will go to the Konko Mission of Wahiawa Educational Fund.

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 of the days.

KMH

Head Ministers Meeting will be held on Saturday, December 5, 2020 at Konko Mission of Honolulu from 10:30 am to 3:30 pm.

Honoring the Mitama Spirits

December

Frederick Michael Conti	12/6/2015
Francisco Bareng	12/12/2017
Hilda Kazuno Yamamoto	12/14/2007
Fumitake Yoshiwa	12/15/2012
Lillian Tanigawa	12/16/2010
Isamu Iwasa	12/17/1943
Shizuko Takayama	12/21/2006
Rev. Fumio Yasutake	12/23/1995
Rev. Haruko Takahashi	12/24/1972
Hitoye Higuchi	12/25/1969

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



The Life of the Founder Konko Daijin

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 Yasuhiro Yano.

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Birth and Growth

Birth

A boy (Founder) was born in the evening of August 16 (in today's Gregorian Calendar, September 29), 1814, at a farming village of Aza-Kandori, Satomi Village in Bitchuu Province (current locality of Okayama Prefecture). The name of the father was Juuhei Kandori, the mother was Shimo. The boy was the second eldest son and the fourth child in the family. The boy was given the name Genshichi. On that day, the village people celebrated the annual grand festivity of the Oomiya Village Shrine. The entire village was filled with festive air accompanied by the lively sounds of drums, bells and other instruments. It would not be appropriate to assume that the birth of the boy was somehow implied to a divine intent. But it was a fact that the boy was born on such a special day of the annual observance of the village deity which people showed deep

reverence to. The deity provided protection and well being of the village community. The fact the boy was born on such a particular day of the village might have provided him some spiritual influence to the life of the boy as he grew up.

Satomi Village

The birth place of this boy was Satomi Village (current locality of Konko Town, Asakuchi County, Okayama). Satomi Village was blessed with many elements for farmers. The village was close to the main road of Sanyo area. Youshouzan mountain, the highest peak in the area stood high on the northern part of the village; In the south direction, Satomi River ran along the flat and long belt of the farm lands from east to west. There were 136 households; the village population was approximately 780; acreage of the farm land was approximately 68-cho and 4-tan. The village was under the jurisdiction of Ikeda Clan in Okayama for generations. The village was located easily accessible to the Seto Inland Sea by passing through a couple of low-rise mountains. The weather was mild. There were few calamities such as storms and drought. In all, the village was featured with many favorable elements for farming.

Birth Place

The boy (Founder) was born in a household of the Kandori family. The grandfather of the boy, Sennosuke Kandori branched off from the main household and established his own branch household. But the regional government suppressed the practice of branching off from main household and establishing a new branch household. The branch household established by the grandfather was not recognized officially. The family name Kandori was the same locality of Kandori. It could be assumed that the Kandori household might have some venerable historic backgrounds. Some materials that could support this assumption were available. But it could be difficult to find out resources of the family history of Kandori before his grandfather.

(to be continued to the next issue)