



Perpetuation of the Family Tradition



Yano family memorial service at Kawanoishi Church

By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano

The other day, one of the local ministers asked me point-blank, “What is Kami-Sama?” I referred to the expression of the Life Force: **Tenchi Kane No Kami**. Kami is the universal energy that sustains everything in the world.

We wake up in the morning and prepare for the day’s work as ministers. I prepare the rice offerings. When decorating the cooked rice, we put on masks, a gesture showing reverence to the presence of Kami. Each time we prepare for a service, we clean the entire place—the walls and the inside of the altar—as preparation for the service to be held. It is a ritual of purification. We prepare for the service in a state of awareness of the presence of Kami. Symbolically, we put on masks to carry out our duties in reverence.

I also remember an episode shared by Rev. Fumio Yasutake. When he was young, on one occasion during the evening prayer, after the service, offerings placed on the altar were being removed by the ministers. He felt that he wanted to help and walked into the sanctuary with the casual thought, “I want to help.” Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake responded by looking at him with a demeanor that conveyed, “Do not bother; be mindful of the area.” He simply could not help Oyasensei at that time. Rev. Fumio

often quoted this episode as a reference to being mindful of the presence of Kami-Sama.

Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake behaved with such a reverent attitude, as if there were highly regarded people at the altar, like the emperor. At that moment, Rev. Fumio Yasutake was not fully aware of the presence of Kami-Sama.

What Kami-Sama is can be demonstrated by how one behaves, without spoken words. Only those forms that are identifiable and taken for granted will be perpetuated within the family and the faith community.

On January 31 of this year, a joint family memorial service for my father, Ichiro; my mother, Nobuko; and my younger brother, Takahiko, was held at our family’s native church, Konko Church of Kawanoishi in Ehime.

My wife and I have served at Konko Mission of Wahiawa for 48 years and are entering our 49th year this year—almost half a century. Seven members of our family responded to join this tour, which may have been a once-in-a-lifetime occasion.

I asked Rev. Michiteru Hosaka to conduct the service in advance. One of the reasons for this pilgrimage was to witness and encourage the continued tradition of our family religion, the Konko faith, which was initiated by my grandfather, Tōsuke Yano. Only through the practice of Konko Faith was he blessed in response to his earnest prayer for children who could inherit the family lineage. He told my father, “The Konko faith is the true religion. Never forsake the family religious faith.”

I have reminded myself and our children of the message left by Tōsuke. My parents perpetuated the family tradition of Konko faith. All eight children, including myself, preserved this faith tradition. This may be the legacy of my parents. My eldest brother, Masateru, used to say, “I cannot die until I witness my children keeping the Konko faith.” When I visit my family in Ehime, to be honest, I sometimes feel

that the family spiritual tradition seems to be weakening.

However, at this memorial service, more than 20 people gathered. As I witnessed the scene, I felt relieved of my concern. The family tradition of maintaining the Konko faith has been perpetuated into the fourth and fifth generations of our family.

After the service, we visited Konko Church of Amagi in Fukuoka. There, I witnessed the same scene of cleaning and preparation for church services by ministers and lay members, in the same manner I experienced fifty years ago. The services were prepared exactly as I remembered. This is a vital element in preserving the church's functions at Konko Church of Amagi. It is one of the distinctive practices that has been maintained year after year, allowing the church to celebrate 120 years of operation.

This was one of the lasting impressions from this trip centered on our family memorial service. I reassured myself that only those practices that are identifiable and taken for granted will be perpetuated within the family and the faith community.

We must be careful not to simplify rituals. The Founder conscientiously followed rituals. If one has sincere faith in one's heart, it should be reflected in one's actions. Chanting Oharai prayers becomes unnecessary only after one's virtue has reached the level of Kami's virtue.

[GIII: *Naiden* / ed. Sato, Norio: P1:6.11]

I would like to introduce a passage from the *Naiden* that relates to today's subject:

“He deepened his faith and finally became one with Kami, so that the words spoken by Ikigami Konko Daijin were the words of Kami. Rather than giving the Oharai Prayer, he used the time to speak to people.

It was exactly as taught: ‘In this faith, you are saved not by chanting prayers, but by listening to the teachings.’ Thus, the Founder stopped chanting prayers and exclusively performed *toritsugi* for the requests of people. We came to receive blessings without the need for formal rituals between the Parent Kami and the Founder.

Requests made to Tenchi Kane no Kami through *toritsugi* became the prayers of the Founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin. This practice was established during his lifetime.

The Founder always said, ‘In this faith, you are not saved by chanting prayers. You receive divine blessings by understanding—even through conversations as you walk or as you sit on a ridge between fields.’

This is related to the 61st Teaching of *Selected Teachings of Konko Daijin (Konko Kyoso Gorikai)*, which states:

‘Konko Daijin speaks of unlimited divine blessings from Kami. If you receive blessings through faith and teach them with the same heart as Kami's, you are truly practicing this faith. Passing on Konko Daijin's words without changing their meaning and helping others practice this faith makes Kami happy. This will also make you a kami. You should not consider yourself above Kami, even if you become a kami.’”

Voice of the Universe...

1. 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 Ishibara Ginzo* 12.
2. Heaven and Earth continue to live. Because Heaven and Earth are alive, all people can live. *III Jinkyu Kyogoroku* 104

Bulletin Board

February 2026

- Monthly Volunteer Activity at St. Francis The next activity will be on Fri, February 6 @ 10:30 am
- 8 Sun -Monthly Svc. for Tenchi Kane no Kami-Sama (9 am) 天地金乃神様 月例祭
- 10 Tue -KMH CEOC Meeting (9 am)
- 14 Sat-KMH General Meeting at HNL (1:30p-4p)
- 15 Sun-Monthly Svc. for the Founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am) 生神金光大神様 月例祭
- 22 Sun-Monthly Mem. Svc. (9 am) 月例霊祭
- 25 Wed-KMH Centennial Com Mtg on Zoom (5 pm)

In Loving Memory—February

Jiro Oho	2/14/1937
Umi Yasuyo	2/3/1965
Elisa Albarran	2/20/1977
Suetsuki Toyofuku	2/24/1995
Dennis Fujio Tamashiro	2/6/1998
Yoshiyuki Momotomi	2/10/2003
Mildred Chiyoko Oka	2/12/2004
Thomas Takahashi	2/9/2005
Ichiro Yano	2/5/2006
Norma Teruko Katsura	2/18/2008
Marilynn Olsen	2/22/2009
Rev. Yukio Hiramoto	2/10/2012
Rebecca Jean Burns	2/14/2013
Robert Yoshikazu Hirota	2/16/2014
Kay Yamamoto	2/22/2015
Betsy Tomie Maesaka	2/10/2016
Rev. Michio Miyake	2/21/2017
Terry Anne Takase Shlaes	2/27/2018

(friend of Janet Miyasaka)

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 Shōgai” or “The Life of the Founder Konkō Daijin”, authored by Rev. Mikio Seto and published by the Konkōkyo Theological Research Center in 1980. Many biographies about the life of the Founder, Konkō 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)

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(II) Internal Concerns

Bunji’s Wish for the Children

Bunji had to deal with many external and internal difficult encounters during the uncertain period of the Meiji Restoration.

Toward the ending period of the Tokugawa Government, Bunji extended deep prayers for Asakichi, who lived as a samurai. Bunji jotted down a message from Kami on April 15 (May 18), stating, “Asakichi shall rise to prominence.” The message implied that Asakichi, whose rank was *ashigaru*,

would be promoted to the rank of *genkan-ban*. Bunji enjoyed witnessing that Asakichi was promoted in his status on May 3, as predicted by Kami.

On January 6, 1868, Kami gave a message to Bunji: “Both parent and child would look forward to April of the leap year.” This implied that something favorable would unfold for both Bunji and Asakichi. As predicted by Kami, in March of that year, Asakichi accompanied the lord and sailed from Edo to Asao. When the ship arrived in the area of Akashi, it encountered a heavy storm and lost control due to damage to the ladder, facing the danger of shipwreck. Among the lord’s entourage were sumo wrestlers, but they could not handle the situation. Asakichi thought about how he could deal with it. He took out a note from his clothing in which a message from Kami was jotted down and prayed to be able to control the ship with a single heart. He was able to control the ship and avoided the critical moment. The lord promptly promoted Asakichi to the rank of *kachi-gumi* and gave Bunji a formal ceremonial garment called *kamishimo* with the crest of Konkō. That incident was exactly the encounter Kami had predicted in October of 1865. Corresponding to this occasion, Kami gave Asakichi the divine title of *Ichino-deshi* and also gave him another divine title, *Konkō Shōjin*, in November of 1868. These granted divine names implied that Kami would engage him in the work of helping others.

A few years later, the governmental system changed based on “the return of the land and people to the Emperor,” or *Han-seki-hōkan*. Due to this drastic governmental change, Asakichi lost his status as a samurai and lost his stipend from the clan. In response to the situation, Asakichi attempted to earn a living by engaging in various businesses and lived in a state of discomfort. He dreamed of making a large profit, but every attempt ended in failure. Asakichi visited Bunji for financial help. He could be considered one of the people victimized by losing control of life during turbulent social conditions. Bunji tried to help Asakichi, who struggled under such difficult circumstances. On several occasions, Bunji extended help, gave him *kakitsuke*, and guided him to live according to a proper way of life. At times, Bunji sternly scolded him, urging him to live a normal life, and even tried to cut off the family relationship in order to help him escape his confused way of living. In this

manner, Bunji attempted to help him. Bunji also experienced deep sorrow and anger toward Asakichi. The situation Bunji faced—dealing with Asakichi amid confusion and disturbance—can be likened to the relationship between Kami, who tries to save the unsavable nature of people. Bunji witnessed the prominence of Asakichi and enjoyed his vibrant life as a samurai, but Asakichi's confused way of life imposed a great burden on Bunji, bringing him to the point of impasse.

Kami instructed Bunji that Ishinojo, who had turned seventeen, should practice the martial art of swordsmanship. He was hired under the *yūshi-gumi* samurai rank. He was also affected by the drastic social turmoil. Ishinojo stayed at Bunji's residence and occasionally reported to the lord's office. He had some exposure to the way of life demonstrated by Bunji.

“On September 9 (October 6), Ishinojo (Hagio) went to the Asao Provincial Office. He returned the same day and was exhausted. On the eleventh (October 8), he went to Nishi Kosaka Village to extend condolences for Kaihata Kyutaro, who succumbed to illness. From the twelfth onward, he fell ill and worsened each day. On the night of the twentieth (October 17), Kami-Sama directed, ‘Bring Ishinojo from the new east outbuilding to the Hiromae.’ The next morning, on the twenty-first, I had Ishinojo rest in the back room of the Hiromae. Kami-Sama said, ‘Tonight and tomorrow are the service days for Tenchi Kane No Kami. Pray that he recovers completely by tomorrow.’ On the twenty-second (October 19), his condition worsened. Around noon, my wife concluded, ‘He’s near death. Look at him. What should we do? Please pray for his life.’ I replied, ‘How do you expect me to pray for his life? You should know that we all belong to Kami-Sama. Change your overall way of thinking in this regard. For him to suffer from a life-threatening illness on this important annual service day is due to the hearts of the children and yourself. His illness can’t be helped. Don’t mind if he dies. Leave him alone. Today, I must serve Kami-Sama.’ Kami-Sama informed my heart, ‘Kill your concern for him.’ I then told my wife, ‘Have him sip some sacred sake,’ and went to the Hiromae. I then performed *toritsugi* for people continually until after dark” (*Oboegaki* 15).

How could Bunji respond in such a manner? He may have been frustrated by his inability to educate

others to live as he demonstrated. He may have felt frustration or anger toward family members who did not practice faith as he wished. Kami instructed Bunji to give Ishinojo *goshinpan*, cooked rice offered on the Kami altar. After eating some rice, Ishinojo's health began to improve.

In the same manner that Kami gave divine titles to Asakichi, divine titles were given to each family member. Bunji's wife, Tose, was given the title *Isshi Myōjin* on October 10, 1864, and was promoted to the title *Isshi Daijin* on November 1, 1868. On the same day in 1868, Ishinojo was given the title *Konko Sanjin*; Torayoshi was given the title *Konko Shijin*; Kura was given the title *Shōsaijin*; and Kono was given the title *Sueno Tamejin*. Kami assumed that all of them would engage in the task of helping people.

(to be continued) Page 206

New Year's Day Service 2026

