



## Acceptance and confidence of Kami

*By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano*

Happy New Year! I hope that last year went well for you. I would like to thank all of you for helping with our 31<sup>st</sup> Mochitsuki. It was a great success. I pray that you will all have a wonderful year in 2023. I would like to share a passage from the Rikkyo Shinden (Divine Call to the Founder and his family) given on October 21, 1859 (Lunar Calendar). The passage reads in original Japanese, “此方のように実意丁寧神信心いたしおる氏子が、世間になんぼうも難儀な氏子あり、取次ぎ助けてやってくれ。”

This passage has been translated into English as “There are many people like yourself, who have sincere faith in kami, but still have many problems. Help these people by performing Toritsugi.”

Theologically, this passage has been a kind of controversy since the passage could be interpreted in other ways. The other interpretation is that Kami acknowledges you as a believer of sincerity and being meticulously thorough in using your heart to be in line with the heart of Kami. And in doing so, it shall save many people in the world who are in suffering.

As we study the life of the Founder, it was apparent that there was no other individual like the Founder who changed the very nature of the deity, Konjin. The Founder could be the only person whose sincerity was acknowledged by Kami.

There is a book titled “Michi No Shiori”, which is a reference to the Konko faith tradition. The central theme of the statement was our solid belief in Kami-Sama. And the story was related in 1948. The booklet was published in commemoration of the 25th Year Memorial of the late Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake (Founding minister of the Konko Church of Amagi). One day, all of a sudden, Kami-Sama instructed the Founder, “Tomorrow, I will let you pick up some money, so prepare a bento lunch and walk toward the west.” The Founder prepared his bento lunch and went out toward the west as has been instructed by Kami-Sama. He asked for Kami-Sama’s instructions occasionally if he should continue to proceed in the same direction. Kami-Sama directed him to do so. Then the Founder reached a place near Kasaoka Town. It was almost noon, and he enjoyed lunch. After lunch, the Founder asked Kami-Sama again for further direction. Kami-Sama instructed the Founder to go back home. As he reached home, he proceeded before the Kami altar and extended his prayer of thanks for

his safe return home. Then Kami-Sama asked the Founder point-blankly, “Did you find the money?”

“Yes, I did,” responded the Founder. Kami-Sama asked again, “How much did you find?” The Founder responded by saying, “I have no idea.” Kami-Sama further pressed to answer by asking, “What? You don’t know how much you picked up?” Then the Founder answered back, “For the first time ever in a long period, I was able to travel afar on foot, and got good exercise. The food I took have been well digested and turned into blood and flesh and my blood circulation improved, so I can enjoy good health. The positive experiences I received from this excursion is something more valuable that cannot be purchased with money.”

This back and forth conversation between Kami-Sama and the Founder may seem crazy, but this is based on actual events that took place. The Founder was given many instructions in this manner.

The Rev. Matsutaro Yasutake interpreted this story in this manner. Kami-Sama might have enjoyed the responses of the Founder as a test through a questionable instruction that was given to him. The Founder earned the greatest credit from Kami-Sama. Kami-Sama became convinced and developed absolute confidence in the Founder. The spirituality displayed during the dialogue between Kami and the Founder manifests the prevailing nature of the Founder as Ikigami Konko Daijin.

In accordance with the analysis of the Rev. Yasutake, through the episode, Kami-Sama tested the Founder to see if he can be completely trusted, based upon the standard set by Kami-Sama--not the human-oriented standards.

Kami-Sama prompted the Founder to pick up some money. The Founder had little interest in getting rich by picking up some money that was dropped by somebody else. He simply followed the instruction of Kami-Sama. He followed exactly what he has been told to do and the result was an empty hand. He was sort of deceived by Kami-Sama if we apply our human-oriented responses. But the Founder tried to see another aspect of Kami-Sama’s intention. What he found was something quite positive while being put on the spot of total negativity.

If the Founder was an ordinary person, he might have stopped believing in Kami-Sama. He could have defeated Kami-Sama and discredited Kami for failing

to fulfill the divine promise. But the Founder acted in a totally unexpected way and found a different perspective about the development involving the contradictory episode. He didn't complain that the money was not there. Instead, he thanked Kami-Sama for the blessings of good health, which resulted from the excursion. The Founder could identify some extraordinary positives in the totally negatively inclined situation.

The greatest blessing the Founder received from this confusing episode was Kami-Sama's ultimate acceptance and confidence of the Founder. The Founder manifested the true character being qualified to act as Ikigami Konko Daijin, the ultimate medium through whom Kami-Sama can help people. I see the same pattern of him using his heart and mind in pursuit of faith. Kami acknowledges that this very spirituality of the Founder and Tenchi Kane No Kami has been actualized by the Founder's presence. Does Kami accept our way of life? The most reassuring and happy life would be a life that is accepted by The Life Force: Tenchi Kane No Kami.

### Konko-Sama Said...

Everyone is now able to receive the blessings of Tenchi Kane No Kami because Konko Daijin received divine blessings first. If there is one true believer in a family, then all of the family members will become believers. If there is one family in a village who truly believes in this faith, all of the villagers will begin to receive divine blessings. Practicing faith is like one seed becoming ten thousand. Therefore, those who initiate faith should sow a good seed. If the seed is bad, it will be a bad start, and it will be difficult to raise no matter how hard you try. (III Jinkyukyogoroku 37)

### Honoring the Mitama Spirits

#### January

Owari Kaneshige	1/2/1989
Clarence Olsen	1/3/2013
Paul Akita	1/13/2008
Alesandro Caraballo	1/17/1985
Tama Noguchi	1/17/1985
Mitsuru Miyamoto	1/20/2007
Tsuneko Takahashi	1/24/1997
Chikiko Hayashida	1/24/1940
Marc Perrone, Jr. (MJ)	1/27/2010
Karen Matsuoka	1/29/2012



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

## Bulletin Board

### January 2023

1 Sun -New Year's Day Service (9 am)

7 Sat -Mochi Demo @Sheraton Waikiki (11:30 a)  
 8 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)  
 -Mochi Demo at Moana Surf rider (3 pm)  
 11 Wed -Mochi Demo @CPB Main Branch (10 am)  
 15 Sun -Ikigami Konko Daijin Monthly Svc (9 am)  
 22 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)  
 29 Sun -Sunday Service (10 am)  
 -General Meeting (11 am) &  
 New Year's Party (Bring \$5 Grab-bag)

### February 2023

1 Wed -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)

#### Announcements:

●KMH Kyoten Study Group via Zoom. The main reference book will be "Voice of the Universe." Please join the study session and deepen your understanding about the messages of the Founder on January 11 & 25 (Wed., from 5 pm to 6 pm)

#### ●KMH CEOC Meeting

The regular monthly meeting will be held on Friday, January 20 (3 pm)

#### ●KMH Board of Trustees' Meeting

The first of the meeting will be held both in person and on ZOOM on Saturday, January 14, 2023 at 10:30 am.

#### ●General Meeting & New Year's Party

We will hold the annual meeting of Konko Mission of Wahiawa on Sunday, January 29 at 11:00 am after the Sunday Service which will be at 10 am. And New Year's party will follow the general meeting. Officers of the church will be renewed. We will review the activities of 2022, scheduled events for the year 2023 and financial report. Please join the meeting with a minimum of \$5 of item for grab-bag per person. We will do guessing games, BINGO, Piñata, etc.

## The Life of the Founder

金光教祖の生涯 瀬戸三喜雄 金光教学研究 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 78 to 82)*

(continued from the previous issue)

Tenchi Kane No Kami

The author would like to mention about "Tenchi Kane No Kami". As has been mentioned before, when Bunji

tried to write about the matter pertaining to his 42-year-old-encounter in the writing called “Konko Daijin Oboegaki”, he used the divine name of Tenchi Kane No Kami. The divine name of Tenchi Kane No Kami appeared for the first time except he used the word in the opening remark of “Konko Daijin Oboeicho”. That implies Bunji acknowledged the manifestation of the work of Tenchi Kane No Kami at that stage. How did Bunji identify the work of Tenchi Kane No Kami?

When we encounter some unexpected serious developments in life, in responding to such situations of desperation, something emerges from the bottom of our inner heart. For example, we try to look back at our life in the past; we try to reform our way of life; we may naturally feel like extending prayers to deities we believe in. Regardless of whether we are aware of what takes place deep in our heart. Bunji surrendered himself to deities; tried to understand Kami’s heart; tried to acknowledge the irreverence he could have committed unknowingly in dealing with unfortunate encounters one after another. He could be totally defeated in desperation; or could become insane. But he endured those unfortunate encounters and regained a normal state of heart. Bunji could have overcome the difficult encounters with the same spirituality displayed at the serious illness at the age of 42. In witnessing a person’s unfortunate encounters, people would have responded to the situation by extending their concerns and helping hands. Typically, Jiro and the relatives gathered at Bunji’s house in prayer of helping him in distress. Yaozo fiercely exchanged dialogue with Kami. This was one of the typical examples. Bunji acknowledged the existence of some fundamental life sustaining forces. Any behaviors he took could be attributed to a mysterious life-sustaining force. On the other hand, years later, Bunji acknowledged that the message revealed by Ishizuchi deity in regard to the irreverence Bunji committed for the house construction, “ujigami” (village deities) and any other kami and buddhas responded to support Bunji at the time of serious illness at the age of 42; and Konjin deity sternly admonished the irreverent way people lived. All those manifestations of deities could be attributed to the work of Tenchi Kane No Kami. In this manner, Bunji referred to this Life Force and the fundamental elements that could be identified in the various deities that worked for the salvation of wellbeing of humanity. This could be based on the work of the deity Bunji identified. Later, Bunji referred to this vital life sustaining force as “Tenchi Kane No Kami”. The divine message that reads, “Tenchi Kane No Kami is the Kami of all kamis”, Tenchi Kane No Kami is a rank above all other kami’s (II Ichimura Mitsugoro 2-2).

Bunji’s serious illness at the age of 42 and the phenomenal encounters at that stage helped him to take a new path in pursuit of relationships with Tenchi Kane No Kami.

Initiation of the three days’ monthly pilgrimages to shrines and temples

Although Bunji could overcome the serious illness at the age of 42, he could not regain his good health yet. At the busiest season of farming in 1854, he could hardly fulfill his normal duties as a farmer. His weak physical condition prolonged till the next year as he reached the age of 43. He could not respond to public duties from time to time.

Bunji contemplated about his physical condition. His poor health prevented him to fulfill his daily tasks. He experienced some irregularities in his life. But he could not do anything about the given situation. He responded to renew his appreciation for the good health he had in the past. He wished to regain his good health. He had to deal with his daily tasks as a farmer. He thought even if he was not that much in good health. He thought what if he ended up his life at the age of 42, and appreciated the life he had. As he extended his thought for the given condition of impasse in his life and the life being spared, for no reason at all, a thought came up in his mind. He wished to visit the shrines and temples on the days of village holidays in observance of the festivities held on the first, 15<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of each month. He wished to extend his prayers in thanksgiving and in supplication for his good health. In accordance with family member’s memories, Bunji made pilgrimages to those shrines and temples late in the night or early in the morning. Bunji practiced the visitations to the shrines and temples throughout the night and till the time of 10 o’clock in the morning. The amount of time he spent was almost equal to the hours spent for his regular work in the field. He regarded his pilgrimages as his spiritual training. He attributed to Kami that he could have such a thought of pilgrimages to the village shrines and temples. He developed a spiritual inclination that he would try to respond to any occasions that could be intentionally directed for him by some unknown force, rather than try to indulge in fulfilling his own wishes and endeavors.

Bunji showed some distinctive manners of pilgrimages to those shrines and temples. He tried to make arrangements for his visitations to the shrines and temples so that he would not disrupt his work as a farmer. He did not neglect his own tasks as a farmer because of his dedication in pursuit of faith. He tried to set aside some time for his own purpose of pilgrimages by managing time in his daily living. He had to weigh both his daily tasks as a farmer and also for his religious devotions. His arrangement for the visitation of shrines and temples during the midst of night and early in the morning in fulfillment of both his tasks and his religious devotion. Bunji experienced some stress due to the changed way of life pattern because he was not in good health condition yet. But his devotion for his own pursuit of faith gave him much spiritual strength and enjoyment

in life that was yielded deep in his heart. During this phase of life, Bunji had to deal with two tasks. The first one was how he would be able to perpetuate the experience of getting blessings from Kami during his serious illness at the age of 42. Bunji experienced a miraculous episode of blessings received at the moment of life or death situation at the age of 42. He had to find a way to keep that miraculous experience with Kami in his ordinary daily living.

The other aspect of change in his daily living was the change resulted by his ever expanding religious devotion. He had to manage the time and productivity of his farming business. He had to find ways to deal with this situation that need to be fulfilled in both his farming and spiritual devotion.

In this manner, his physical condition between the age of 42 and 43 gradually imposed some stressful situations for him. The first one was how he would be able to manage his farming carrier; and how he would be able to fulfill Kami's will. This stressful situation became a starting point for him to undergo a so-called "shugyo" spiritual training.

Around this period in his life, the people in the village began to call him by his nickname "Shinjin-Bunsa." People in the village responded to Bunji's apparent extraordinary way of life half-jokingly and in amazement for Bunji's dedication for both his farm work and faith devotion.

*Pictures from Mochitsuki Demos at Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii (12/10/22) and Prince Waikiki Hotel (12/27/22). Please see Children's News for Church mochitsuki pictures.*

