



## Mutual Interdependence in Gratefulness



Graduation crowd at  
Kapolei High School

*By Yasuhiro Yano Head Minister*

Recently, as the graduation season has started, we have had opportunities to attend two high school graduation ceremonies. One thing we have never witnessed in Japan is the overwhelming number of attendees: family members, relatives, friends, and other people. For about 400 and 600 graduating students, maybe five to 10 times more people than the number of students showed up to celebrate one of the most significant rites of passage in life. When I witnessed the waves of people in celebration of the graduates, I also felt the presence of the Mitama spirits of the families. Just imagine, each person in the crowd would be related to how many ancestors. Their Mitama spirits might have also shown up to celebrate the individual's growth to the point of graduation, at the age of 17 and 18.

Public and private school education is a fundamental element of the life of the United States of America and any other countries. Educational systems supply the needed resources for any entities to be functional. Each entity in society tries to get the finest resources to be formulated to maximize productivity. They simply want to get the best resources to perpetuate the operations of their endeavors. The production of the finest resource that would also be programmed to suit the needs of society. We are talking about highly sophisticated computers that could overpower humankind. But each individual could be the most

sophisticated biological computer that could be programmed to suit the needs of society.

When I attended the Mililani High School graduation ceremony, one of the impressions I held was the principal who was full of smiles, confidence, and gratitude as he addressed the congratulatory remarks for the graduates. I have never witnessed over 90 out of 600 students being awarded the title of valedictorian. As he handed out the diplomas to each valedictorian, the students were full of joy, and the principal was also full of joy. The production of such a great number of outstanding students is an undeniable accomplishment for the school.

I still remember a remark made by an instructor at a college. He didn't care about the annual evaluation of the faculty by the evaluation board. He said that he just picked the finest student of the class he taught for the semester and submitted their term paper for evaluation. The finest student in the class proved his excellence in teaching. And he could be proud of the student.

When I have been impressed with the presence of so many excellent students, I also extended my thoughts about the presence of the Founder Konko Daijin. Tenchi Kane No Kami, the Life Force, did not educate the Founder to excel as Ikegami Konko Daijin, the highest achievable spiritual status acknowledged in the spiritual world. The Founder faithfully followed the divine will of Tenchi Kane No Kami. The Founder evolved as Ikigami Konko Daijin, who could fulfill Kami's endeavor for the salvation of humanity. The Founder's presence was the ultimate reward for The Life Force: Tenchi Kane No Kami. I want to quote a message given to Fujimori Kondo: "I am not an Ikigami. I am a manure carrier. Pray to Tenchi Kane No Kami Sama. I just mediate requests to Kami Sama," said Konko Sama.

When he went in front of the altar, Kami Sama immediately gave a revelation. Konko Daijin says that he is a manure carrier and that people should pray to Tenchi Kane No Kami. But through Konko Daijin, Tenchi Kane No Kami's blessings can now be received. For thousands of years, Kane No Kami has been called a fearful kami. But through Konko Daijin,

Kami has been revealed to the world. Konko Daijin is Kami's savior. Even for people, through Konko Daijin, they can now receive Kane No Kami's blessings. He is the people's savior as well. Konko Daijin is the savior for Kami and people. Give your requests to Konko Daijin. Listening to and obeying what he says is the same as obeying Kami. Follow the words of Konko Daijin well and practice faith" (Gorikai II, Kondo, Fujimori:3.3).

## 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]

## Honoring the Mitama Spirits

### June

Florence Tamaribuchi	6/10/1997
Matsu Suzuki (興語)	6/2008
Akio Sekine	6/6/1998
Clara Kimiko Hiromasa	6/10/2014
Edith Suzuyo Noguchi	6/14/2014
Nancie Chieno Ooyama	6/3/2013
Katherine Sumiko Araki	6/5/2013
Rev. Kōji Hiramoto	6/1/2018

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

## Bulletin Board

### Church Services for June 2023

- 1 Thur -Monthly Svc for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 11 Sun -Monthly Svc for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
- 17 Sat -10<sup>th</sup> Memorial Service for the Late Rev. Masahiko Yoshino at Honolulu Church (10 am)
- 18 Sun -60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Konko Church of Wailuku (10:30 am)
- No Sunday Service at Wahiawa Church
- 25 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (9 am)

## July 2023

- 1 Sat -KMH BBQ and Beach Clean-up at Haleiwa Ali'i Beach Park (10 am to 2 pm)
- 2 Sun -Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami (9 am)

## Announcements and Acknowledgements:

Congratulations, Bryce K. Adkison on your graduation from Kapolei High School. He is the second son of Mr. and Mrs. Jason Adkison.

### ●Monthly Volunteer Activity at St. Francis

The next activity will be on Fri, June 2 @ 10:30 am

### ●KMH Kyoten Study Group via Zoom

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

Join us: June 7 & 21 (Wed. from 5 pm to 6 pm)

ZOOM ID: 815 2952 9465 PASS: 914385

### ●KMH CEOC Meeting

ZOOM on Friday, June 23, 2023 (3 pm)



## 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 99 to 102) (continued from the previous issue)

## Divine Instructions about Rice Insects

In July (lunar calendar) of 1858, when the rice plants began to bear rice grains, the rice insects started to affect the paddies in the area. The rice insect was a pest for the rice plant. The insects entered the rice plant stems and consumed the plant fluid, causing damage and eventually killing the plant. The infestation of rice insects in autumn caused the most harm to the plants. Farmers responded to the situation by spraying rapeseed oil in the rice paddies, which helped suppress the infestation. Bunji also attempted to follow this practice like any other farmer.

However, Kami instructed him, "Don't spread any rapeseed oil on your paddies" (Oboegaki 5-6-2). The instruction given by Kami went against the traditional treatment for such cases of insect infestation. Bunji wondered how it would be possible to minimize the damage caused by rice insects by following Kami's instruction. If the method failed, he might not harvest any yield at all, leading to difficulties in feeding his family. There was also no guarantee for the divine instruction. Kami imposed a difficult decision-making process on him.

Kami attempted to provide some assurance to Bunji regarding the seemingly unproven and unconventional method for dealing with rice insect infestations. Kami offered an opportunity for Bunji to test the method by being exposed to a swarm of mosquitoes. Kami instructed Bunji, "Sleep in the Hiromae tonight and see if you are overwhelmed by mosquitoes. I will inform you whether or not the insects will devour your paddies" (Oboegaki 5-6-2). Bunji followed the instruction and lay down on the floor of the Hiromae. There was a bush of bamboo spread on the east side of the house, which was located near a mountainous hill. The presence of mosquitoes was overwhelming, but they touched Bunji's skin without biting or causing any uncomfortable itching. Normally, Bunji was allergic to mosquitoes and experienced bites, swelling, and skin disorders. However, that night he experienced no itching at all. Reflecting on this episode, Bunji wrote, "Kami-Sama tested me. I felt overwhelmed by the awesomeness of Kami-Sama's nature." Bunji acknowledged that Kami-Sama had shown sure assurance in following the instructions for dealing with rice insects through the example of the mosquito experiment. Kami-Sama tested how Bunji would respond in his heart. Even though experiencing unusual results from the mosquito exposure didn't provide complete assurance for dealing with rice insect infestation by following Kami's instruction, Bunji overcame the test's hurdle and refrained from spraying oil.

What could be Kami's intention in instructing Bunji to follow this seemingly contradictory and unconventional method for dealing with rice insects? How could Kami ask Bunji to give up the family occupation of farming to which he had dedicated so much time and effort? These instructions seemed unconventional and difficult to follow, but Kami's instructions could be rational. Regarding the rice plant, the fact that the rice insects consumed the plant fluid did not affect the plant's well-being. The wounds caused by the insects damaged the plant and led to its eventual death. If the rice plant grew well and strong enough, a few wounds would naturally heal, minimizing the damage. Spraying rapeseed oil on the field would have harmful effects on the plant, and stepping on the paddy could also cause damage. Bunji, who was engaged in rice farming and harvested more crops than anyone else in the community, could easily understand the rationality of Kami's instruction, which aimed to minimize disruptions to the plant with foreign substances.

However, Bunji had never encountered such an unusual instruction from Kami before. It was undeniably a challenging matter for the farming village community to abandon their conventional methods. Letting go of established practices was not easy. There was no guarantee of success if they followed Kami's instructions. For Bunji, the most practical solution to deal with the situation would have been to resort to the customary method of spraying oil on the paddies. But the "test" imposed by Kami compelled Bunji to act without any doubts, placing absolute trust in the instruction, disregarding safety concerns, common practices, and customs. He embarked on a path that offered no security or guarantees, even if it meant disregarding his own life. As mentioned previously, Kami aimed to introduce Bunji to a completely new realm of experience that he had never encountered before in his life.

Another issue that needed to be addressed was minimizing the damage caused by the rice insects. While Bunji didn't mind the consequences for his own rice paddies following Kami's instructions, he also

had a responsibility for the shared paddy with another farmer (tonai-ta). If Bunji refused to spray oil on the shared paddy, it would not only affect the other farmer but also potentially cause trouble. Bunji could not bear the thought of behaving irresponsibly towards others. Therefore, Kami instructed him as follows: "In the paddy that you share with another farmer, follow his example by using rapeseed oil. If he uses one bottle of rapeseed oil, use two bottles. Use twice as much as he does. Spread a lot of oil where there are many insects. Don't walk around the paddy to brush away the insects from the rice plants, as doing so will damage the plants. I said to use a lot, but use only as much as he does. And let him know that you used twice as much" (Oboegaki 5-6, 7, 8).

Bunji made regular trips to inspect the rice fields. While he could observe the presence of rice insects, for some reason, he did not see any damage to the rice plants. Witnessing the powerful and miraculous work of Kami deeply moved Bunji. In awe of Kami's intervention, Bunji experienced a purified, peaceful, and rejuvenated state of mind. He felt as if he was witnessing a promising perspective on life. Bunji's faith in Kami's guidance was strengthened, recognizing the transformation within himself regarding the perception of rice insects as enemies.

In later years, Bunji shared his thoughts with Hirotake Fujii, saying, "Insects are also born between Heaven and Earth. Leave a tenth of your field for the insects and use insecticide in the other areas" (GII:Fujii, Hirotake:3.1). However, he could not let his guard down until he witnessed the harvest of the crops.

According to a local legend, the Marodo Daimyoujin shrine came into existence when a wooden placard from one of the branch shrines of Hiyoshi Shrine in Omi Prefecture washed ashore in the area, which was once part of the ocean in ancient times. The people retrieved the wooden placard and enshrined the deity. Subsequently, the Ohashi household, the main branch of the Akazawa household, took responsibility for the shrine and continued its operation. Every year, all the families and relatives gathered to observe the Bon

memorial service. The Akazawa household had a deep connection to the faith community for generations. However, when the kami Marodo Daimyoujin conveyed a request, Bunji could only listen without taking any action. He was unable to respond to the forwarded request from the kami Marodo Daimyoujin.

*Below is a brief tour explanation for the October 8<sup>th</sup> service in observation of the 140<sup>th</sup> Memorial Anniversary of the Founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin at the Konkokyo Headquarters in Okayama, Japan. Please contact Yano Sensei if interested in joining this tour.*

<b>10/7 Sat</b>	10:00 am	Visit Fukuyama Castle, located at a walking distance from the rail station, 1-hour tour (option). Meet up with other Hawaii people at Fukuyama Station in front of Fukuyama Castle. Visit Tomonoura, bus from Fukuyama 30 minutes, tour 2 hours, lunch
	4:00 pm	Hotel check in at Fukuyama, vicinity of the station.
<b>10/8 Sun</b>	10:00 am	Depart Fukuyama to Konko. Visit the Main Hall, visit the grave sites of the Founder and the generational Konko-Sama. Lunch at Noon
	1:30 pm	Attend Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Service in commemoration of the 140 <sup>th</sup> Memorial Year of the Founder, service will be over in two hours.
	5:42 pm	Leave Konko to Kyoto. Arrive in Kyoto and stay at a hotel near the station
<b>10/9 Mon</b>	8:10 am	Rinkan Bus to Koyasan (4,700 yen RT)
	10:55 am	Arrive at Koyasan
	4:47 pm	Rinkan Bus back to Kyoto
	7:55 pm	Arrive at Kyoto, stay at a hotel