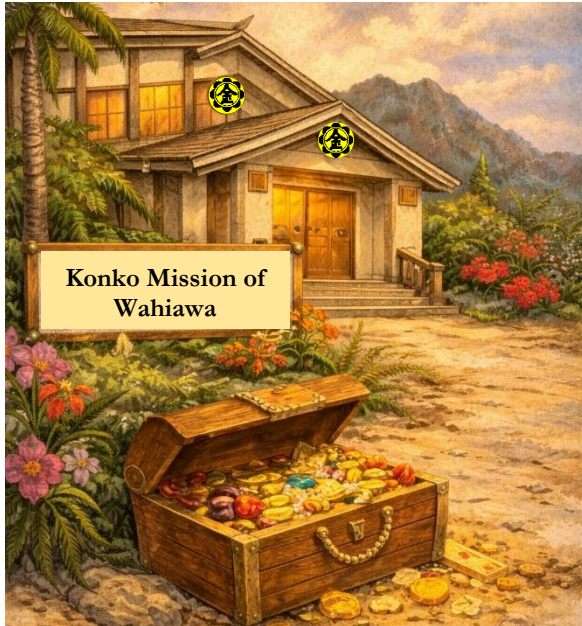




## Treasure Found



*By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano*

Those who are argumentative and hard to convince ask to see Kami's existence or to hear the voice of Kami. They think they can embarrass us by asking for such things. Even if I try to let them see or hear Kami, how can they see or hear without having the eyes or ears to do so? They are pitiful because they are unable to see or hear.

Surprised at the bumps they get on their heads after being "hit" by heaven, they gain their sight and open their ears so that they gradually become able to see and hear. Those who have already opened their eyes and ears to faith should teach those who are pitied, with kindness and warmth.

[GIII:]jinkyu Kyogoroku/ed. Kataoka, Jiro:93.4]

I used to say that when you practice faith, you should try to think things out in the exercise of faith. It can be likened to learning to speak a foreign language. I am Japanese, and Japanese is my native tongue. When I learned to speak English, the teacher advocated that when you speak English, try to think in English. To be able to speak English, we must learn the basic sounds of English. I practiced those basic elements and learned to speak English. Although my English is not that proficient, I can understand and communicate to some extent.

The same is true if you want to speak Japanese—you must learn the basics. The same is true when you practice faith. You should learn the basics of the Konko faith. The basics of the Konko faith are to cultivate the visual power to see things through the exercise of identifying the elements of blessings we enjoy. We must also develop the ears to listen to the teachings of the Founder and the words extended by the Life Force, Tenchi Kane No Kami. The best and most natural way to develop both the visual power to see elements of blessing and the ears to identify the voice of the Life Force, Tenchi Kane No Kami, is through practice.

A child naturally learns to speak the language spoken by the parents. The child also learns to imitate the way of life displayed by the parents.

I was raised by parents who practiced faith. As a third-generation Konko believer, I naturally learned some of the basic elements of faith practice. You can also learn some basic elements by exposing yourself to the place of faith learning—the church. If you do not develop an appreciation for those basic elements of faith, the church should be blamed. The minister should be blamed.

I appreciate the thought of a college teacher. Every year, teachers face evaluations of their teaching. He did not care about the evaluating board. He simply picked one of the students who excelled in his class and showed that student's writing. The same could be true for the church.

My father, Ichiro Yano, developed some knowledge of palm reading as a sort of hobby. Sometimes, he invited a trusted professional palm reader to the house for his personal interest. I have not cared about palm reading and do not want to know how things will evolve in my life. Before we departed for our missionary work in Hawaii some 49 years ago, my father showed interest in how my life would unfold as a missionary in Hawaii. After looking at my hand, he said, "It looks like you are going to sail out into the wild ocean in a tiny vessel, as if attempting to find treasure in the deep sea." He looked casual and laughed, ahahaha!" Occasionally, both my wife and I remember that episode.

After spending almost half a century here, I tell myself that I could identify the treasures in Hawaii we have obtained in our missionary work. The treasures would be our children and some of the church members who have shared in practicing faith.

It could be considered unconventional for the children of ministers to become ministers following the path of their parents. I still remember a message given by a local minister soon after we arrived in Hawaii: "This is America, not Japan. It would be impossible for children of ministers to become Konko ministers." If I had believed that message, we would have ended up unable to witness the growth of our children becoming Konko ministers.

This could also be true for our church congregations and the faith community in Hawaii. I simply wish to witness people living the faith and the expansion of the faith community as we commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Konko Missions in Hawaii on August 15, 2026.

## 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 Ishihara 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

### March 2026

- Monthly Service for Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama Sunday, March 1 at 9 am.
- Sunday Service Sunday, March 8 at 9 am.
- Rotary Hanashikai Gathering on ZOOM 10:30 am. Hosted by the Wailuku Church. To join: ZOOM ID: 847 4142 7204 PASS: 063254
- Monthly Volunteer Activity at St. Francis The next activity will be on Fri, March 6 @ 10:30 am
- Garage sale for Wahiawa Church fundraising on Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 1 pm.
- Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin-Sama Sunday, March 15 at 9 am.
- Honolulu Church Spring Memorial Svc Sun. 3/15 10a
- Spring Memorial Service Sunday, March 22 at 10 am. Naorai fellowship lunch will follow.

### In Loving Memory: March

Thomas Toshito Yamamoto	3/16/1991
Matsuyo Arikawa	3/8/1995
Richard Fujio Tamabayashi	3/7/1999
Mitsuko Suwa	3/21/2012
Sandy Abe	3/4/2014
Yoshikazu Hirota	2014
Edith Lin Hai Noguchi	3/7/2016
Gregg Sadao Miyasaka	3/5/2019
Minako Yano	3/23/2025

### **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 the Rev. Mikio Seto and published by 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) Page 203*

### **Firing of the Head Carpenter**

The construction of the shrine, initiated by the divine message in January of 1864, encountered a difficult situation. In August of 1867, Kami instructed Bunji, "Since the head carpenter's heart is foul, the construction of the shrine will not be completed."

The following year, in April of 1865, Bunji received a message in the early morning of April 3 (April 25). Kami-Sama said, "Since head carpenter Kawasaki Motoemon disregards his indebtedness to Me, I shall dismiss him. Inform the local government that the shrine construction will be postponed. Stop the construction for now." Motoemon had already left for an inn in March.

On April 10 (May 2), Kami-Sama instructed, "Have him come and take home his belongings." On April 16 (May 8), the head carpenter visited Mukai Myojin (Fujii Kiyono) and the two Hiromae assistants. He asked them to have me apologize to Kami-Sama for him. When I relayed the apology, Kami-Sama said, "Konko, don't apologize for him. It is useless. I am displeased with him."

On April 17 (May 9), I made him take all his belongings, and he went home (Obucho 12-4). On the sixteenth (May 8), the head carpenter visited Mukai Myojin (Fujii Kiyono) and the two Hiromae

assistants (Kawate Yasuhei and Morita Hachiemon) and asked them to have me apologize to Kami-Sama for him. The three came to the Hiromae and presented the carpenter's request.

When I relayed the apology, Kami-Sama ordered, "Konko, don't apologize for him. It's useless. I am displeased with him. Have him leave with his belongings."

On April 17, the next day (May 9), the head carpenter took all his belongings and went home. That day, Kami-Sama said, "Tell the two assistants to tell the head carpenter, 'You will be paid for the months until the Bon season in July. Mention any debts that you have. They will be repaid. Since you have been dismissed prematurely, I will let no problems befall you'" (Oboegaki 16-2-5,6,7,8).

In this manner, Kami extended His warm consideration to Motoemon.

In July of 1869, Juemon Saito and the people who learned of the termination of the shrine construction went to see Bunji and pleaded to resume the construction. Kami responded, "I do not make any decisions to stop or continue the construction. I will leave the matter to you." Saito summoned and scolded Kawasaki for the situation and ordered the construction to resume.

However, in May of 1871, Kami informed Bunji, "Head carpenter Kawasaki Motoemon's character has gone astray. He and Hashimoto Uhei were pressed by creditors because they owed money for the construction materials. Using Konko Dainin's name, they deceived the believers and embezzled hundreds of ryo from them" (Oboegaki 19-11-1, 2, 3).

Kami-Sama said, "Don't allow carpenter Kawasaki Motoemon to handle the construction. He has been using the construction project for his own gain and not for Kami. He has gone completely astray from the Faith. The construction will be realized only if he reforms his heart" (Oboecho 16-5-3).

Bunji had to deal with many other issues but never witnessed the completion of the shrine while he was alive. Bunji had to deal with the turmoil in which Kami showed anger toward Motoemon Kawasaki while at the same time showing leniency toward

Motoemon in pity, as Kami could not ignore him completely. Bunji's agony in dealing with the situation could be viewed as his inability to be cold-minded because of his faith in Kami. But Kami might have identified the true, solid nature of Bunji, who believed in Kami. Because of Bunji's fundamental religious nature, Kami responded by revealing His messages to him.

### **(III) Dealing with Difficulties and Survival**

While Bunji responded to many difficult encounters at the same time, he had to be patient and was guided to new paths in order to overcome those difficulties and sustain his way of life with perseverance. Though dealing with these difficulties, Bunji showed distinctive ways of responding to difficult encounters during the turmoil of the ending phase of the Edo Government.

How did Bunji respond to the ever-changing social environment? It is apparent that Bunji had to deal with Otani Village, which had to adapt to the changing society affected by the governmental transition around the year 1869. In 1871, Bunji instinctively grasped the drastic social changes.

Kami spoke on September 16, "There is the proverb, 'A deep pool becomes a rapid current, and a rapid current becomes a deep pool.' And, 'During a flood, part of the land resembles an ocean.' These things do happen. Like the Reverse-Direction River from of old in Bitchu province, things can go into reverse" (Oboegaki 19-8).

In this manner, Bunji could perceive the drastic changes taking place in society. Bunji understood that people would fail to maintain indispensable elements in society.

There was an earthquake on February 6 at around six in the evening. "Tenchi Kane No Kami is disturbed. The world is chaotic," warned Kami-Sama" (Oboegaki 20-3). In the past, people used to correlate earthquakes with social unrest. But the expressed message by Bunji, "The world is chaotic," meant a great deal.

At the initial stage of Bunji's practice of faith, it was based on the perception, "There are many people in need." That concept referred to the individual way of life, attributed to troubling encounters people had to deal with. On the contrary, the statement, "The

world is chaotic,” implied that difficult encounters in life could be attributed to unstable social conditions rather than the individual way of life.

During the ending period of 1872, Bunji used the expression, “Oceans and rivers change, and even a deserted village can turn into a bustling town. The world is ever-changing. Society will shift from confusion to peace” (Oboegaki 20-8). Bunji perceived that social norms, the political system, traditions, and things taken for granted in everyday life could change drastically at any given time.

### No Need to Follow Social Norms

It seemed that Bunji responded with recognition of the nature of society and tried to live an orderly daily life. Bunji responded to the given social conditions with recognition of the importance of solidifying his own stance within society.

He instructed the members of his family to follow the revealed message: “Don’t run away from your problems, whatever they may be. There is no need to flee. Don’t depend on others. As for your daughter, don’t mind if she is still unmarried at thirty and is called a spinster. Don’t be perturbed by what people say. Think of your own and your daughter’s particular situation. Kami will have you enjoy your future. Pray for long life and prosperity” (Oboegaki 19-9-2).

These instructions for the family members seemed quite meticulous and could even be burdensome. What was unconventional about the message given to the family members was his conviction that they should not necessarily follow social norms, traditions, and rules blindly. Bunji’s perception of life seemed to maintain some distance from social norms and refrained from the common practices of society. In this manner, Bunji held a strong fundamental perspective about the society to which he belonged.

Kami instructed Bunji, “As a reminder for your family members, write, ‘How and why things will change are unknown. However, they can be for the better depending on one’s heart.’ Tell this to the family and give them the reminder” (Oboegaki 20-14-2). (To be continued.)

### Pictures from our recent family trip to Japan:

