



## Autumn Memorial Service

You are cordially invited to attend on  
**Sunday, September 25, 2022 @ 10 am**

Light naorai lunch will follow

**Honor Your Ancestors**

Immortality is important for humans.

Immortality is when others keep praying for

you after you die. (*Gorikai II Kondo Tsuru 1*)

*Service will be streamed via Facebook Live as well*

## My Recent Trip to Japan

*By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano  
Head Minister*

I joined a pilgrimage to attend the 10<sup>th</sup> Memorial Service for the late Mr. Masataka Yano, father of Reiko-sensei, held on August 14, 2022 in Oita, Japan. Reiko-sensei expressed she wanted to attend the memorial service in person in February of this year. Usually she alone would travel to attend such a family function, but this time I also felt like joining her to attend the service.

I wanted to respond to such significant functions that have affected me the most from time to time. It could be my expression of deep gratitude. So, my father-in-law was a big presence in my life simply because he was a dedicated Konko believer who helped to accommodate Reiko-sensei to keep her faith. If my wife's father rejected our marriage and missionary pursuit in Hawaii, life for me would have been quite different.

The restrictive nature of entering Japan has been one of the most cumbersome ordeals due to the COVID-19 pandemic for almost three years. I already made reservations for the flights to Japan using ZipAir, operated by one of the most trusted airlines JAL in February of this year. I expected it could be possible to travel there Japan in consideration of endemic stage of the pandemic. When I went there in November of last year, I remember that I had to spend 2 whole weeks in a quarantine hotel, with a smartphone app that would constantly have me on surveillance.

We were happy that our daughter, Edna sensei was also able to come with us to Japan to join our pilgrimage. She did so because she was a bit worried about us as we have become slightly forgetful and not tech savvy. It was a bit difficult to catch up to all ever changing technological advances in Japan.

Everyone entering Japan was required to have a smartphone with the My SoS app downloaded in to their phones for surveillance.

My wife did not have one; nor did she know how to use one, so our daughter purchased one for her to use. Edna made sure to put in all the necessary information in the My SoS app so we could go through the Fast Track lane when we arrived at the airport in Narita. She also taught my wife and I the basics of smartphone usage. It came in quite handy, as we were able to get out of the Narita Airport quite fast.

I was trying to limit the number of churches to visited in Japan. But as usual, my wife followed her instincts and insisted we visit several churches because of our deep connection with them. In all, we visited eight churches, including Gohonbu (Headquarters Church in Konko Town) Amagi, Iwatani, Fuchu, Tateishi, Hirao, Kawanoishi and Kawanishi Churches.

My father-in law's Memorial Service was conducted on August 14<sup>th</sup> by the Rev. Makoto Mitsutake of Konko Church of Tateishi assisted by his son Rev. Shinji. The service was held at the household altar, as well as at the grave site. We stayed over for one night at my brother-in-law's house. We were treated with such warm hospitality by him and his family. We left the residence in the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> and headed to the Beppu Seaport and boarded a ferry at midnight. The ferry arrived in Yawatahama, Ehime at around 2:30 a.m. But we could stay in the ferry till 5:30 a.m.

My younger sister came to pick us up at the seaport and prepared a hearty and delicious Japanese breakfast for us and drove us to visit the Konko Church of Kawanoishi, which was my hometown church. Usually I do not visit the church grave because it's difficult to get to. But Reiko-sensei insisted we should visit the grave site of the church founders that was located up in the steep mountain. Strangely, an interesting episode about our visitation unfolded in a dream Edna had after we came back to Hawaii. Please refer to her article in the Children's newsletter.

We later visited the residence of my family. My eldest brother had lost his mobility from the waist down three years ago after a visit to the hospital to diagnose his lower back pain went wrong. From being completely mobile, to completely paralyzed from waist down was shocking. He became bedridden ever since. He has been under rehabilitation for his bodily functions in the last three years. He lost all sensation from waist down, but he still had a strong appetite for food. He had no complains for his disability in reflection of his strong belief in Kami-Sama as a Konko believer. He was initially hesitant when we told him we were going to see him—because he was so afraid we were going to bring COVID to him. We went to his house anyways and we

prayed at the house altar and visited the room where my brother was resting in his bed. At one glance, I noticed his condition of improvement. His face looked good and he could move his legs and even feel the pains in his legs. It sure was Kami-Sama's blessing that he has improved to this extent. After seeing my brother, we visited our family grave and extended a prayer. Being able to witness the improvement of my brother's condition was one of the fulfilling things of the trip.

At the tail end of our trip, we stopped over Kyoto for one day. We visited Enryakuji Temple at Mt Hiei in the heavy rain. When I was young, I spent one year in Kyoto and Enryakuji was one of my favourite spots. The temple was under renovation. The entire building had been encased in galvanized steel panels to protect it from the elements as it went through renovations. The enormous project proved the historic value and the strong foundation that have lasted for the last 1234 years. In witnessing the grand scale of their renovation project, the temple has kept growing despite the many ups and downs. I simply wondered if this could be possible in Konkokyo as well. A constant effort to keep improving even a little bit at a time is one of the contributing elements that keeps the temple operating, as well as any other successful institutions.

It is my prayer for the expansion of the church, an increased congregation that can understand what true blessings are, and continuous improvement of the church and the faith community in Hawaii.

## 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

### September

Mikiko Yamamoto	9/3/2003
Tatsuyuki Kataoka	9/7/2007
Harumi Tokumoto	9/7/2001
Hiroko Toyoda	9/10/2018
Ben Furusho	9/15/1997
Takeshige Ootsuka	9/15/1998
Richard Masao Iwasa	9/17/2005
Kameji Takeshima	9/17/2000
Fumiko Hamai	9/25/1997
Richard Tadayoshi Noguchi	9/27/2009



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 September 2022

- 1 Thr -Monthly Svc for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 4 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
- 11 Sun -Monthly Service for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
- 18 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)  
-Honolulu Church Autumn Memorial Service (10 am)
- 25 Sun -Autumn Memorial Service (10 am)**

### October 2022

- 1 Sat -Monthly Svc for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 2 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)  
-Honolulu Church Autumn Grand Ceremony (11 am)
- 13 Thr -Wahiawa Church Autumn Grand Ceremony (6 pm)

### Announcements:

- **Mr. Hidehiko Makiguchi** passed away on August 23, 2022 (Japan Time) at the age of 92.
- **Ms. Sally Shigeko Nakano** passed away on August 20, 2022 at the age of 95.
- We extend sincere condolences to both families and pray for the salvation of their Mitama Spirits.

● **Blessing Ceremony at Honouliuli National Monument Site**  
On July 19, 2022, Rev. Edna Matsuoka conducted a blessing for the Honouliuli National Monument in request from the JCCH (Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii) in commemoration of the 20th anniversary since the site was initially identified in 2002 and pray for the safety during the construction of their new access way. In corresponding to the ceremony, the Rev. Matsuoka has also been invited to a dedication ceremony at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles to honor the people of Japanese ancestry who have been incarcerated at the internment camps throughout the United States in September 24 of this year. Rev. Dr. Todd Takahashi will also join the function from San Diego.

### ●Kaka'ako Waterfront Park Clean-up Program

Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace (HCRP) will host the annual Kaka'ako Waterfront Park Clean-up Program on Sat. Sept. 24, 2022 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Come join us and enjoy cleaning the entire park area. It will be a refreshing experience for you. Bottled water and clean-up supplies will be provided.

● We will conduct a **GARAGE SALE** with the many items that have been donated from people in the community on **Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 2 pm**. All the proceeds will be forwarded to the Honbu (Headquarters Church at Konko Town) as an offering from our church in corresponding to the KMH Annual Offering Program.

### Konko Missions in Hawaii

- KMH CEOC Meeting on Zoom on Friday, Sept. 16 (3 pm)
- The Community Engagement and Outreach Committee initiated the bi-monthly 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 Wednesday, September 7 and 21 (Wed at 5 pm)
- HCRP Mtg @Honolulu Church, September 13, 2022 (1:30 pm)

### ●Rotary Hanashikai Gathering on Zoom

The second Rotary Hanashikai Gathering will be held on September 11, 2022 on Zoom. The meeting will be hosted by the Konko Mission of Honolulu. Please join to share your okage blessings with other people in the faith community.

### ●KMH Kauai Gathering 2022

KMH Community Engagement and Outreach Committee has planned a one-day trip to the initial site of Konko Mission of Hanapepe. The plan was cancelled.

## 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, "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. (No.20 page 66 to 69)*

(continued from the previous issue)

### A Divine Message

Jiro Furukawa, who was a younger brother of Bunji, led the family members for the prayer session. Jiro was a devoted believer of Ishizuchi Deity and gained the title of "Sendachi" that was awarded to those believers who underwent ascetic training at Mount Ishizuchi three times.

Soon after they engaged in their unified prayer, the Deity of Ishizuchi spoke through the mouth of Jiro. The message revealed, "You committed irreverence against Hyobi Konjin Deity in regard to the construction of the main house." In accordance with the religious tradition of Ishizuchi, that form of divine revelations was commonly observed. In responding to the expressed divine message, Yaozo Furukawa, father of Bunji's wife, refuted by shouting back strongly, "As far as this household is concerned, no irreverence has been committed. The household head proceeded faithfully, in following the rules of the Days and Directions." The way Yaozo responded to the situation may sound odd, but that was a due correct manner in dealing with a dialogue with a deity in those days. They perceived that even deities could be likened to ordinary human beings except they were vested with some supreme dignity and power. Accordingly, a dialogue with any deity during a prayer session was likened like a competition of exchanging words between the person and the deity. If the deity defeats the opponent verbally, the person shall extend a due apology and sincerely ask the deity to heed the prayer of the person. If the person defeats the deity, the deity shall extend His apology and

respond to heed the prayer of the person. This sort of religious tradition prevailed in those days. The vigorous nature of exchanging words was based on the tradition.

The deity of Ishizuchi responded to Yaozo, "If the Directions were checked before the construction, would it be all right if he dies and this family is wiped out" (Obeogaki 3-4, 6)

Bunji was calmly observing the fierce exchanging of words in the prayer session at the next room. At that time, he felt a sudden surge of uneasiness when he heard the words of Ishizuchi Deity, "You committed irreverence against Hyobi Konjin Deity in regard to the construction of the main house." They say, "Hit on a sore spot." The message revealed by the deity sounded so serious. The deity pointed out opposite to the very way of life Bunji tried to be mindful in his life for over 10 years. Bunji's focus in life was to try to avoid any irreverence against Konjin deity. He realized he could have committed irreverence against Konjin deity even if he started the construction project by extending his apologies beforehand for any unknown irreverence he would have committed. He was defeated in fear and the consequences of the irreverence.

Bunji reflectively held a thought in responding to the words expressed by Yaozo, "There shall be no irreverence against the deity at this household." "I can't believe what Yaozo is saying!" Bunji felt in his mind. Yaozo was well aware of Bunji's meticulous behaviors of following the rules of the Days and Directions. Everyone in the village also acknowledged Bunji's way of life that have never been irreverent against Konjin deity. When Yaozo made the statement, "There shall be no irreverence against the deity in this household." Bunji developed a conviction of how he may have committed irreverence against Konjin, no matter how faithfully he may have followed the rules and the Days and Directions. Yaozo's refutation against the deity was a violation of the dignity and reverence against the deity, even if he followed the social norm of the society. Bunji extended his thought not just for the matter of irreverence against Konjin deity. He was urged to respond to the message of the Konjin deity, "If the Directions were checked before the construction, would it be all right if he dies and this family is wiped out." The message sounded as if the Konjin deity was asking Bunji to respond promptly to the divine message that could determine a possible termination of the household and his own death.

### Apology to Konjin Deity

Bunji interrupted the exchanging of words between Yaozo and Konjin and tried to extend his urgent thoughts. For some reason, in corresponding to his thought, a miracle happened to him. His throat which could not accept any fluid and food at all had suddenly opened and could speak. Bunji was still lying in his bed, "My father-in-law had just spoken while being totally

ignorant. Since I was born in the Year of the Dog, it was my unlucky year to do construction. I had the Days and Directions checked, but since the results did not agree with my construction plans, I had the Days and Directions rechecked to maneuver around the difficulties. I then proceeded with the construction while following the Days as instructed. I hereby built a house bigger than the old one. Due to my primal ignorance, I did not know which direction I was irreverent to. I do not think that just checking the Days and Directions is sufficient. I apologize for my irreverences sine starting the construction” (Oboegaki 3-5, 2, 3, 4).

Looking back at his life, Bunji extended a similar apology to Konjin deity at the age of 37. Later Bunji wrote “Oboegaki.” It could be possible that he was confused about the two instances of extending apologies to Konjin deity. The serious nature of the second apology was quite different from the first apology. The second apology extended during the time of his throat ailment clearly showed Bunji’s clear acknowledgement of the irreverence being committed that could not be forgiven. At the time of the main house construction, Bunji held some apprehension that he could be offending Konjin unknowingly, but also held a bit of hope that Konjin would forgive some of the irreverences Bunji had committed. Bunji understood that his thought was lenient against Konjin. In responding to the wakening message from Konjin that he had committed irreverence, Bunji tried to acknowledge every possible instant of irreverence he could have committed, such as the self-centered deeds, the facts of committing irreverence, and his ignorance as an ordinary individual. In the presence of Konjin, Bunji revealed all these elements and sincerely apologized.

It could be fearful that Bunji acknowledged his own irreverence against Konjin and exposed any offences he could have committed in the presence of Konjin. As for the punitive response of violating the rules, Bunji could have accepted the so-called “Seven Deaths” in the family. Admitting wrong doings meant he could be labeled and threatened as “A person of good for nothing.” It could be likened to an offender of the governmental law would have to accept any consequences of losing a status as a responsible person, could be executed. Who would admit his own mistakes that could imperil his own life.

Bunji faced the impending termination of the household and his own life. He hit rock bottom of his own life. He surrendered his own life before the presence of Konjin. The life he had built would have instantly collapsed. This was a life changing experience for him.  
(to be continued)



*In front of the household altar at my family’s house in Ehime*



*The longest cable car in Japan that took us up to Mt. Hiei in Kyoto*



*Konpon Chūdo Tendai-shū Honzan under renovation (At Mt Hiei)*



*The trio that went up Mt. Hiei*