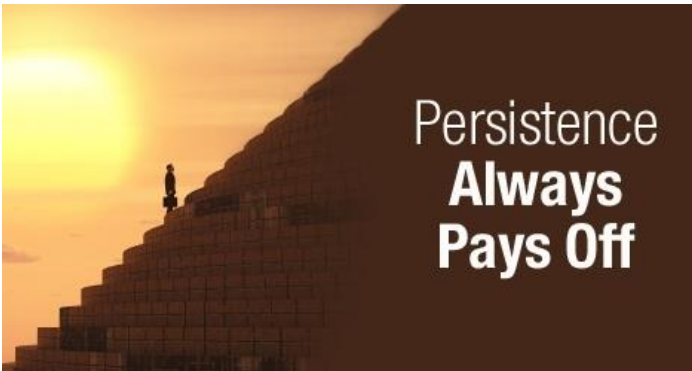




## Virtue of Persistent Commitment



By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano  
Head Minister of Konko Mission of Wahiawa

Just a few days ago, while my wife and I were reading Kyoten in Japanese after our daily prayer service in the morning, a particular message strongly appealed to me. The message is from Jinkyu Kyogoroku, authored by Kataoka Jiroshiro.

“Be patient. Patience is like a strong stick. It won’t break no matter what you carry on it. If it breaks or bends, it is not true patience. Konko Daijin said, ‘Practice faith with patience.’ If you want to receive divine blessings, you must be patient. You should practice your faith continuously. You cannot imagine the many great divine blessings you can obtain by continuously practicing a strong faith with patience. You should look forward to the future and ask Kami to allow you to practice faith with patience” (Gorikai III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 18.3).

Especially the message of “*shinjin shinbō no toku*” reminded me of the message I received when we left Konko Church of Amagi some 46 years ago. Oyasensei, the late Rev. Fumio Yasutake, gave me a goshinmai (sacred rice) packet. On the surface, he inscribed the letters 信心辛抱の徳, pronounced “*shinjin shinbou no toku*,” meaning accumulation of virtue through perseverance in the practice of faith.

Upon our arrival at this church, I placed this goshinmai packet at the innermost place of the sanctuary. I learned

to appreciate the nature of this message after almost half a century at this designated place of Konko Mission of Wahiawa. Initially, I had not given deep thought to the message. I simply felt I needed to be patient at the given place where the founding minister, Rev. Haruko Takahashi, departed five years ago. The core number of visitors was limited, and financial resources were insecure. Our only source of income were the free will offerings from the believers. We had no other means of income. Maybe because of the unpredictability of the situation, I could be convinced that the only resource I could depend on was Tenchi Kane No Kami. I still fondly remember that at one monthly service, the items placed on the altar table were omiki bottles, washed rice shaped in a pyramid, and a wild pumpkin harvested from the yard.

On that occasion, for some reason, without having any negative thoughts, I still felt grateful to Kami-Sama for the ability to conduct the service and felt I should show my appreciation for the blessings received. The only thought was to make a visit to our parent church, the Konko Mission of Honolulu to extend gratitude for being able to conduct the regular church service. From that occasion, I have kept the tradition of visiting our parent church, after every monthly service. I also took our children to visit the church every month until they graduated from high school, and up until the Honolulu Church changed the evening services to day-time. In blessedness, I have kept this tradition for 46 years to this day. I see the same spirituality in some of our church members who have enjoyed 信心辛抱の徳 (*Shinjin shinbō no toku*) or simply getting blessed. If I had given up my regular visitation to our parental church in appreciation, the continuation of it would be terminated. The meaning of 信心辛抱の徳 would be lost at that instance.

“Patience is like a strong stick. It won’t break no matter what you carry on it. If it breaks or bends, it is not true patience.”

To tell you my personal matter, when I tried to find my better half for my missionary work in Hawaii, I had a conviction that my partner for my missionary task should have the spirit of *Shinjin shinbo*, that is, to be patient and unbreakable. If it breaks or bends, it is not true patience. I asked Kami-Sama to give me such a person for my missionary work. I simply used the expression "*Kowarenai jose?*" or maybe a resilient woman.

Personally, I had a thought: If I had to separate from my better half, I must resign as a Konko minister. Reiko sensei has just manifested the meaning of 信心辛抱の徳 for all those years.

### **Konko-Sama said...**

Konko-Sama always prayed, "When the people of the world pray to Ikigami Konko Daijin with a sincere and single heart, please fulfill whatever requests they have." (II Unknown 7)

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*]

## **Bulletin Board**

### **December 2023**

- 1 Fri -Monthly Svc for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)
- 3 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
- 10 Sun -Monthly Svc for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
- 17 Sun -51<sup>st</sup> Memorial Service for the late Rev. Haruko Takahashi  
And Monthly Memorial Service (10 am)
- 24 Sun -End of the Year Service (9 am)
- 31 Sun -No Sunday Service (Church clean-up)

### **January 2024**

- 1 Mon -Ganjitsu-sai New Year's Day Service (9 am)  
\*Ozoni and osechi cuisine will be served
- 3 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

### **•Monthly Volunteer Activity at St. Francis**

The next activity will be on Fri, Dec. 8 @ 10:30 am

### **•KMH Board Meeting**

Saturday, December 2 (10:30 pm-3:00 pm)

### **•KMH Kyōten Study Group via Zoom**

Voice of the Universe

Join us: Dec. 13 (Wed. 5 pm-6 pm)

**ZOOM ID:** 815 2952 9465 **PASS:** 914385

### **•KMH CEOC Meeting**

ZOOM on Monday, December 4 (3-4 pm).

### **• Mochitsuki Schedule:**

**JCCH(Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii):**

Saturday, December 9th, 10 am (We will arrive 8:30 am to set up)

**Prince Waikiki:** Wednesday, December 27th at 10 am.  
(We will arrive 8:30 am to set up)

**Wahiawa Church Mochitsuki:** Saturday, December 30<sup>th</sup>. 8 am start pounding.

**Ritz-Carlton:** Tuesday, January 2 at 10 am. (We will arrive 8:30 am to set up).

## **Honoring the Mitama Spirits**

### **December**

Hilda Kazuno Yamamoto	12/14/2007
Isamu Iwasa	12/17/1943
Rev. Fumio Yasutake	12/23/1995
Shizuko Takayama	12/21/2006
Rev. Haruko Takahashi	12/24/1972
Lillian Tanigawa	12/16/2010
Fumitake Yoshiiwa	12/15/2012
Frederick Michael Conti	12/6/2015
Francisco Bareng	12/12/2017
Hitoye Higuchi	12/25/1969
Sojiro Noguchi	12/15/1961

*If you would like to have your deceased loved one memorialized by registering their names with the Konko Mission of Wahiawa, please contact the Rev. Yasuhiro Yano and we will be honored to add them.*

## **The Life of the Founder**

"Konko Kyoso no Shougai" or "The Life of the Founder Konko Daijin" is an English translation of a book authored by the Rev. Mikio Seto, published by Konkokyo Theological Research Center in 1980. This biography explores the life of Konko Daijin, and I would like to introduce this article for your reference in your pursuit of faith. The English translation was provided by Rev. Yasuhiro Yano (Page 120-124) (continued from the previous issue).

## **Test by Kami**

Bunji's adoptive mother's health deteriorated in November; she was 68 years old. Kami instructed Bunji to go shopping to prepare for the eventual passing of his mother in Tamashima Town. Bunji struggled to find satisfactory items and only purchased 20 cups decorated with gold at the rim. Kami instructed him, "Do not buy any other items and return home. When your mother passes away, family members will come to buy any other needed items." He returned home as instructed. Contrary to the assumed situation, Bunji's adoptive mother regained good health.

Bunji recorded the facts about the development without additional personal remarks. It was challenging to understand Kami's intent for the situation where Kami's prediction seemed to be wrong. In his later years, Bunji stated, "At first, Kami-Sama tested me from time to time. On some occasions, Kami-Sama's predictions turned out wrong."

Bunji recalled instances when Kami-Sama's predictions were incorrect. On one occasion, Kami-Sama instructed Bunji to pick up a treasure someone left at Satomi area. Despite being engaged in prayer and daily farm work, Bunji promptly responded to the situation. Some neighbors recalled such episodes. (According to Hirotake Fujii) On another occasion, Kami-Sama instructed Bunji, "A crane landed at a spot in the rice field. Dig the place, and you shall find some gold." (Sanokichi Sunami) Both episodes turned out wrong. On another occasion, Kami-Sama instructed Bunji, "I will let you pick up some money. Prepare your lunchbox and travel west." He reached the area of Kasaoka but could not find any money. Upon his return home, Kami pointedly asked him, "Did you find the money?" Bunji responded, "I sure got some amount of money that could not be figured out. Through the excursion, I could walk a long distance. Usually, I have kept sitting down on the floor of the house most of the time. I would get good blood circulation. I believe I picked up the treasure of good health. (Kondo Fujimori) He responded to any instructions from Kami as training and never doubted Kami's intent.

Many other episodes served as divinely arranged training for Bunji. On some occasions, Kami instructed him to walk on the slope of the hill where the grass was cut fresh, barefoot. (Hagio Konko) At one point, while Bunji was making "amazake," sweet, fermented rice drink, Kami instructed him to put some salt in the ingredients. (Kijuro Asano) Kami instructed Bunji to grow vegetables without fertilization. (Tomie Takahashi) At another time, Bunji was instructed to leave the house and run toward the east and west. (Norio Sato) Bunji followed all these instructions sincerely without any doubts. People in the village community who witnessed these unusual behaviors of Bunji displayed mixed reactions. Some people responded that Bunji became insane. Kami responded to Bunji, saying, "You followed whatever instructions that ordinary people denounced, ridiculed, and degraded by saying you became insane being possessed by the spirit of fox and badger. You don't care about other people's gossiping at all with a smile. You showed no hesitation in fulfilling Kami's instructions. Please sit down at the designated seat in front of the alcove. I will bring visitors to this place. You always try to identify Kami's intentions without any doubts. From today, I shall never test your belief in Kami." (Fujiwara Kazo) It is challenging to identify the period in which these episodes took place because the evidential materials are limited. Still, it is a fact that these episodes were documented in many materials, validating that Bunji experienced them.

## **III Revelation of Divine Will Initiation of Divine Will Setting Up the Kami's Altar**

On November 6, (1858), Kami instructed Bunji to renew the surface of the sliding doors (fusuma) at the room with an alcove at the main house. On November 29, Bunji was instructed to build a house altar at the main house. "Set up an altar in the alcove of the Hiromae. Place a miniature shrine, offering stands, and half-liter" bottle of sake" (Oboegaki 6-6-2). "On December 6, 1858, (January 9, 1859), make a foot warmer to be used only by yourself, apart from your family. Have it made by carpenter Kunitaro Endo of Rokujoin Naka" (Oboegaki 6-6-3) The initial altar for Kane No Kami was set up in the main house was

constructed when Bunji was 37 years old. The altar was kept at "ada no ma" till this time of January 1858 when the altar was built at the same place. Kami responded to the situation in which Bunji's belief in Kane No Kami began to advance deeply, and Kami responded to keep the altar for Tenchi Kane No Kami with other deities was not appropriate for the dignity of Tenchi Kane No Kami.

At the same time, Kami intended Bunji to live isolated from other family members at the designated place at Hiromae. Placement of a foot warmer in the room could also be attributed to the old tradition in which the family used a different source of cooking fire for some sanitary and purification reasons under certain occasions that was kept from ancient times.

Some people who witnessed the way of life displayed by Bunji responded to visit the house and listened to him around the autumn season of the year. This phenomenon should also be taken into consideration. In accordance with some stories shared in the village, they said, "Bunji who practiced hie farming without using any fertilizers yielded a plentiful harvest." Some of them wondered the reason and visited Bunji and listened to him. The number of visitors gradually increased as days went by. (Yuuzo Okuyama) Some visitors asked Bunji to find some displaced items through the power of his mysterious power; asked prayers for the difficult encounters in their lives; asked matters regarding the Days and Directions. In dealing with the potential perspective of an increasing number of visitors, Kami might instruct Bunji to prepare the place to deal with these people and the place where Bunji was designated to serve Kami.

### **Divine Title Bunji Daimyojin**

On December 24, 1858, Kami granted the divine title of "Bunji Daimyojin" to Bunji. This given title was referred to as "shingo," occasionally referred to as "Shinmei." The title was given to Bunji who manifested some apparent divine power.

Bunji began to interact with Kami-Sama in the spring of the same year of 1858. He could predict future events to happen beforehand. Later in Bunji's life, he stated, "If you save one person, you are a kami to that person."

(2nd Shinichiro Shirakami) That message may imply that at this stage in life, Bunji gained some mysterious power and the ability to save others. At the same time, Kami expected Bunji to be ready to engage in the task of helping others. The meaning of saving others could vary depending on the depth of Bunji's belief in Kami. In this regard, Bunji was given a different divine title in correspondence to his stage of spiritual advancement. Divine titles were also given to Bunji's disciples as well. From that stage, Kami referred to Bunji by the given divine title, not only between Kami and Bunji but also on other appropriate occasions.

It could be assumed that the given title of Bunji Daimyojin was given to Bunji, who began to evolve as a savior.

**Mahalo for your help with our Garage Sale 11/25/23. In great blessedness we were able to raise \$1792.00 which will go towards the church general fund. We thank Kami-Sama, all the donors, helpers and buyers that made this event possible.**



**Below is a picture of a Sakura flower that just bloomed at the end of November!**

