



A Thought about Mochi Pounding



Rev. Yasuhiro Yano Head Minister

Happy New Year! I wish you good health, relationships, and financial well-being as we enter the New Year 2024.

Thank you for your extra support, hard labor, and contribution of your time and resources for the 32nd New Year's Mochi Pounding we held on Saturday, December 30. It was truly inspiring to witness so many people, especially young individuals, respond enthusiastically to the mochi-pounding tradition. I couldn't help but exclaim, "too much power," while observing the young participants vigorously pounding mochi with all their might. In Japan, they say the best mochi is made by women and children due to their gentle pounding. However, the reality is that we need significant power to achieve smooth mochi; softer pounding would take too long, causing the mochi to cool down and become challenging to handle. It is important not to split the mochi by hitting it too hard.

The mochi pounding in our church community is quite unconventional, as we use a stainless steel mortar not found elsewhere. We respond to requests from community organizations such as JCCH, and hotels like Prince Waikiki, Ritz-Carlton, Sheraton Waikiki, and Moana Surfrider repeatedly ask for demonstrations.

We have been accommodating requests for mochi-pounding demonstrations and found something interesting about them. One distinctive aspect is the presence of children. Only those organizational requests that involve

children's participation keep the annual mochi-making demonstration tradition alive. If guests with children enjoy the mochi-pounding demonstration and actively participate, the joy of the experience will be deeply ingrained in their minds. This could lead them to return to the same hotel where they enjoyed staying, contributing to the hotel's business strategy in a small but meaningful way. If there were no benefits from the mochi demonstration, they would not repeatedly request for our return. It could be that simple.

In Japan, the younger generation's interest in pounding mochi in a traditional manner with a mortar and wooden kine mallet has been slowly waning. They may not have experienced the joy of real mochi-making and freshly produced mochi, as they can easily purchase ready-to-eat mochi attractively packaged and perfectly made through advanced mochi maker machines.

Simply pounding mochi in a traditional manner with a wooden mallet from scratch can be laborious, and the preparations and post-event cleaning can be cumbersome. This led to the invention of mochi-making machines, evolving over the years to produce almost perfect mochi. The first mochi-making machine was introduced over half a century ago. I still recall a neighbor's remark that making mochi in a traditional manner might taste better, but they use a machine. At that moment, I pondered, "If mochi made in a traditional manner tastes better, why not stick to it?"

The same principle applies to our practice of faith. There cannot be a machine-like mentality in the practice of faith. Nowadays, we rely on AI for various aspects of our lives. AI can translate different languages instantly, be used for military purposes, and even create deadly weapons using AI technologies. Some suggest that AI may eventually eliminate human beings on this earth to maintain peace. I hope it remains a mere joke.

Even today, AI can provide good answers for the issues brought to the church for resolutions. The Founder Konko Daijin simply stated, "Get blessed through your own practice of faith." Practicing faith is merely understanding that our lives exist in a state of saturated blessedness of The Life Force: Tenchi Kane No Kami. Everything exists

through the principle of interdependence, and any element in life can function through the theory of Interdependence.

The 4th Konko Sama, Kagamitaro Konko, succinctly put it: 世話になる全てに礼を言う心平和生み出す心といはん。That message could be translated into English as, "The heart that naturally responds to show gratitude for any elements of interdependence would prevail peace in life."

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)

For faith, daily renewal is most important. Live each day with the same happy heart you have on New Year's Day. When the sun sets, think that it is the last day of the year. When the sun rises, think that it is New Year's Day. If you are happy every day, there will be no discord in the family. (III Konko Kyoso Gorikai 35)

Bulletin Board

January 2024

- 1 Mon -New Year's Day Service (9 am)
- 7 Sun -Sunday Service, Kagami Biraki party (9 am)
- 14 Sun -Monthly Svc for Ikigami Konko Daijin (9 am)
- 21 Sun -Monthly Memorial Service (10 am)
-General Meeting, New Year's Party
following the service
- 28 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)

February 2024

1 Thr -Monthly Svc for Tenchi Kane No Kami (7:30 pm)

- Monthly Volunteer Activity at St. Francis The next activity will be on Fri, January 5th @ 10:30 am
- KMH Board Meeting Saturday, January 13 (10:30 am-3:00 pm)
- KMH Kyōten Study Group via Zoom Voice of the Universe Join us: January 10 & 24 (Wed. 5 pm-6 pm)
ZOOM ID: 815 2952 9465 PASS: 914385
- KMH CEOC Meeting ZOOM on Monday, January 26 (3-4 pm).
- Mochitsuki Schedule: Ritz-Carlton: Tuesday, January 2 at 10 am. (We will arrive at 8:30 am to set up). Moana Surfider: January 19 at 10 am

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 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 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 Shougai" or "The Life of the Founder Konko Daijin" authored by the Rev. Mikio Seto and published by Konkokyo Theological Research Center in 1980. Many biographies about the life of the Founder Konko 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. (Page 124-127) (continued from the previous issue)

Issues regarding the household

After receiving the divine title "Bunji Daimyoujin," Bunji became aware of his somewhat supernatural power held deep in his mind. He could clearly perceive Kami's intent.

Naturally, he might have some hesitation to accept the situation. One of the apparent elements of hesitation was the issues pertaining to the household, and another concern was the difficulties he had to deal with within the family relationship. As for the household, as has been stated beforehand that he acknowledged his own presence at the household based on the message forwarded from the souls of the family ancestry. Bunji also acknowledged his own contribution to the household. But his understanding of the meaning of his presence at the household was because Bunji was responsible for the continued operation of the household. Bunji wondered how he could be able to accept

Kami's request while dealing with the operation of the household for prosperity.

One of his biggest concerns was how to interpret and deal with the fact that he had to build 7 graves for the five family members and two oxen that were treated as indispensable household members. He wanted to understand Kami's intent for his successful household management in blessedness. Yet he had to deal with the so-called "7-deaths" in the family at the juncture that he wished to accept Kami's request to save people in distress.

Kami seemed to respond to Bunji's concerns. Kami stated, "Originally, this family built and lived in a humble cottage by the sea. This was four hundred thirty-one or four hundred thirty-two years ago. Later, the family gradually prospered. (However, the family ultimately became poor and was without descendants.)" Another family (Akazawa) took over the Kawate family's ancestral tablet. But this family also did not prosper, and there were no direct descendants to continue the family. Both families had committed irreverence to Konjin. When this area was close to the sea, the families built their homesteads on land where buried animals lay. This was irreverent" (Oboegaki 6-9, 2, 3).

Bunji learned that the household committed irreverence against Konjin when the household was initiated some 430 years ago when the house was located along the shore of the ocean where carcasses of four-legged animals were buried. Kami pointed out that that was the cause of irreverence against Konjin committed by the household. He could identify the reason why the household bloodline was terminated and could not perpetuate the household from generation to generation.

When Bunji encountered a grave life-threatening illness at the age of 42, he was informed about the irreverence committed against Konjin but could not know the nature of the irreverence. Bunji responded to the situation not to try to find external causes but try to figure out the nature of the irreverence he could have committed internally and tried to extend apologies he could have committed unknowingly sincerely. Kami responded to Bunji's ultimate sincere heart and spared his life. Kami also found an individual who would be able to fulfill Kami's wish.

In the same manner as he responded at the time of his grave illness, he perceived the grave nature of Kami's message that the household committed irreverence against Konjin because he could not understand the nature of

irreverence committed by the ancestors. In this sense, the message about the irreverence committed by the ancestors who buried the carcasses of four-legged animals at the property of the household could be identified as the original irreverence against Kami, could be relevantly understood as the original sin in terms of religious symbol. We perceive the property of the household as our belongings. It implies that the moment we try to live our lives in the belief that we live on the household properties owned by ourselves could already be committing irreverence against the deity of Heaven and Earth that is Konjin. From the beginning of the household, they could have committed profound irreverence. Bunji perceived that through his acknowledgment of the nature of irreverence committed by the household and extend due apologies would be able to find a path through which the household be saved to continue.

Bunji understood the limitations of human power alone could contribute to thriving the household. In the past, the household could not understand irreverence and offenses committed against Konjin and tried to manage the operation of the household; they could enjoy thriving household for some period of times but eventually collapsed. This was the answer Kami responded to Bunji's concerns.

Through the divine message, Bunji looked back at his life spent and recalled as follows: "I could not help thinking, 'My adoptive father and younger brother died on successive months, and three of my children died on anniversary years. My cow also fell ill on July 16 (August 23). A doctor gave acupuncture treatment and drugs, but the cow died on the eighteenth. Also, in the following year, another cow fell ill and died on the same month and day. In every case, I had a doctor give treatment, and I gave fervent requests and prayers to various kamis and did all I could. Even after I prayed to the kamis and buddhas, the victims were not saved. I stood by helplessly. I lived with this constant frustration and futility. I suffered without being aware of my irreverence toward Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama. And now, Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama was giving me this thankful revelation'" (Oboegaki 6-9-4, 5, 6).

Ever since Bunji was adopted into this household, family troubles happened one after another. He felt sorry for the household for the difficult encounters that seemed to get attributed to some unknown force that caused consecutive deaths of the cows and the family members despite the fact

he tried all available means to avoid the unfortunate encounters. He felt an unyielding feeling of sorrow not just for the deaths in the family, but also, he could not find the way to deal with the onslaught of deaths in the family.

In this manner, Bunji was tormented by the unavoidable family troubles. But Kami extended a different perspective for him. Through the eventualities of the family tragedies, Kami wanted Bunji to acknowledge the irreverence of the household. Unaware of this extended Kami's intent, Bunji tried to avoid the tragic encounters in exercising human-oriented wisdom and attempts but could not dodge the unfortunate eventualities one after another. This time, Bunji received the message from Kami and understood the nature of tragic eventualities in the family. He was grateful from the bottom of his heart for Kami's considerations.
(Continued)

Picture memories of December



Rev. Masato and Alice Kawahatsu came to visit out church on December 4, 2023



Rev. Mitsuo Miyake of Konko Church of Izuo came to visit on December 5, 2023

Revs. Yasuhiro & Reiko Yano perform the End of the Year Ceremony on 12/24/23 (Below)



Revs. Yasuhiro and Reiko Yano and Edna Sensei went to Waimea on December 7, 2023 for the annual prayer for Mr. Tatsuyuki Kataoka and all the people who have perished at sea. (Below)



Mrs. Rumi Takai, staff member of the Aiyō Kakeyo Konko Magazine and her husband, Augustus Browning came to visit on January 3, 2024

