



Functional elements for religious practice

By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano

Recently, my wife, Reiko Sensei, daughter, Edna Sensei and my son-in-law, Clayton recently went to Japan and attended the 126th Konkokyo Independence Celebration Service, along with the ceremony recognizing ministers who have dedicated themselves for 40 years since their ordination. Reiko Sensei was honored as one of those ministers. Edna also sent many pictures from Japan and had the opportunity to meet many people at Gohonbu.

As I looked through those pictures, I strongly felt that I should encourage our church members to make a pilgrimage to Gohonbu at least once in their lifetime. In Haruko Sensei's times, several members from Wahiawa visited Gohonbu. They did not go sightseeing. Rather, they went as a prayerful pilgrimage to express appreciation for the blessings they had received.

We will be holding the 100th Anniversary Celebration of Konko Missions in Hawaii on August 15 this year, and we are also planning an appreciation pilgrimage to Gohonbu in November. This will be one of the good opportunities for those who have been thinking about visiting Japan.

Kami-Sama entrusted the Founder, Konko Daijin, with the mission of saving people through the divine work of Toritsugi-Mediation. As we read in the Divine Call, people came from far away seeking his guidance.

For Toritsugi-Mediation to function, there must be communication between the Toritsugi Mediator and the person bringing the request. If a person does not have the ears to listen, then Toritsugi-Mediation cannot truly take place.

Sometimes I wonder whether I have been an effective Toritsugi Mediator during all these years in

Hawaii. I was ordained in 1975, which means I have now served as a Konko minister for 51 years.

Throughout those years, I have always believed that people come to church through the unseen guidance of Kami-Sama. We use the expression *obikiyose itadaku*, meaning that we are drawn or guided by Kami-Sama rather than coming solely by our own will. Therefore, Kami-Sama knows whether a Toritsugi Mediator can truly help a particular person. Ultimately, it is Kami-Sama who decides whether someone is guided to a certain Toritsugi Mediator.

Perhaps even the Founder, Konko Daijin, encountered people for whom the full purpose of Toritsugi-Mediation could not yet be realized. One episode gives us something to think about.

There was a wealthy man from Nagasaki who became seriously ill. He spent a great deal of money on many different treatments, but nothing helped. Then he heard about Ikigami Sama of Otani in Bitchu Province and traveled there. After finding lodging, he worshipped every day.

Konko Sama asked him,
"Would it be enough just to cure you?"
The man replied,
"All I need is to cure my illness, nothing else."
The next day, Konko Sama asked him the very same question.
"Would it be enough just to cure you?"
Again the man answered,
"All I need is to cure my illness, nothing else."

Eventually, he was blessed with recovery and returned to Nagasaki. However, sometime later, he passed away. [GII:Unknown:12.3]

Perhaps Konko Sama realized that it would be difficult for the man to understand the deeper message because of the way he had lived up to that point. He was wealthy, and his only wish was to be healed of his illness. His wish was granted, but that blessing did not lead him to a deeper way of living.

When I was a *Shugyosei* trainee at Amagi Church, the head minister, Rev. Fumio Yasutake often shared this episode with us. From time to time, he would ask us what we thought about it. He never told us what the "correct" interpretation was. Instead, he allowed each *Shugyosei* to develop our own understanding through reflection.

The purpose of Toritsugi-Mediation is not simply to fulfill people's requests. Rather, it is to help people receive blessings and continue living a blessed life—not only today, but throughout the future, perhaps even from generation to generation.

As ordinary ministers, we may wonder why Konko Sama did not continue persuading the man to seek a life of lasting faith and happiness. Yet he did not.

Instead, Konko Sama simply allowed the man to receive the blessing he had asked for.

Konko Sama also taught,

"Being healed is not a blessing; being in good health is."

After receiving blessings, we should keep this teaching in mind. Our everyday lives unfold within blessings, and true faith is learning to recognize and continue living within that blessedness.

Perhaps the highest stage of becoming a true believer is expressed in a waka composed by the Fourth Konko Sama, Rev. Kagamitaro Konko. One of his favorite expressions was *sewa ni naru*—to live while receiving the care and support of others.

He wrote:

Sewa ni naru subete ni rei o iu kokoro, heiwa o umidasu kokoro to iwan.

"The heart that gives thanks for everything upon which we depend is the heart that brings forth peace."

If we can live with gratitude for all the people, things, and blessings that support our lives every day, then peace naturally begins within our own hearts. And when peace begins in our hearts, it spreads to our families, our communities, and to the world around us.

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 Ishibara Ginzo 12.*
2. Heaven and Earth continue to live. Because Heaven and Earth are alive, all people can live. *III Jinkyu Kyogoroku 104*

WAHIAWA KONKO MISSION MONTHLY SCHEDULE

July 2026

- 1 Wed -Monthly Svc. for Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama (7:30 pm) 天地金乃神様 月例祭
- 3 Fri -St. Francis Japanese Program (10 :30 am)
- 4 Sat -Happy 250th Birthday, America!
- 5 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am) *Share okage
- 8 Wed -KMH Kyoten Study Session on ZOOM (5 pm)
- 9 Thr -Church clean-up (9 am)
- 12 Sun -Monthly Svc for Ikigami Konko Daijin-Sama 生神金光大神様 月例祭 (9 am)
-Hula practice at Waipahu Church (2 pm)
- 16 Thr -Church clean-up (9 am)
- 17 Fri -KCNA Conference in Toronto, Canada till 7/19 (Edna attend)
- 19 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am) *Share okage
-Hula practice at Waipahu Church (2 pm)
- 21 Tue -KMH CEOC mtg on ZOOM (9 am)
- 22 Wed -KMH Centennial mtg on ZOOM (5pm)
- 23 Thr -Church clean-up (9 am)
- 25 Sat -Hawaii Gunpla Workshop (12 noon to 6 pm)
-Ehime Kenjinkai Ehimemaru Memorial Clean-up (9 am)
-Ehimekenjinkai Picnic at Kaka'ako Waterfront (10:30 am)
- 26 Sun -Monthly Memorial Svc 月例霊祭 *Share okage
- 29 Wed -Church clean-up (9 am)
- 31 Fri -Hula practice at Waipahu Church (10 am)

August 2026

- 1 Sat -Monthly Svc. for Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama (7:30 pm) 天地金乃神様 月例祭
-KMH Board of trustees meeting on ZOOM (10:30 am-3 p)
- 2 Sun -Back-to-School Service (9 am) *Share okage
-KMH Rotary Hanashikai Host: Waipahu (10:30 am-12 noon)

In Loving Memory—July

Shimeno Iwasa	7/1/1966
May Shimaō	7/30/2004
Masao Yoshihara	7/12/2002
Yasuo Hayashida	7/5/1998
Miyamoto Asa Iratsume	7/23/1933
Rev. Yoshie Yoshino	7/21/2005
Randy Yamamoto	7/5/2014
(Curstin Abe)	7/2/2015
(Robert Walker)	7/15/2015
Wesly Katsumi Ooyama	7/4/1981
Masae Baba	7/20/1987
Mary Elizabeth Valmoja	7/13/2022
Joseph (Kaoru's dog)	7/13/2016

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. (continued from the previous issue) Page 218

Sending Ikigami Konko Daijin

Kami declared the purpose of sending Ikigami Konko Daijin to the world to save people who encounter suffering due to the human-centered way of life in which they do not acknowledge the nature of their existence being saturated in blessings of Heaven and Earth. The function of Ikigami Konko Daijin was to awaken people to get blessing as beloved children of Kami and let people understand the nature of way of living in which they commit themselves irreverence against Kami unknowingly.

Prior to the response of Kami to send Ikigami Konko Daijin to the world, Bunji might have experienced some transformation of perspective about his status and designated mission rendered by Kami in the same manner as had been described before. As an individual, Bunji tried to pursue to get fulfilled of his wish to be a responsible individual and pursued his religions endeavor step by step. Eventually he became evolved to be able to

help and save people in distress. From a general point of perspective, Bunji's life would be described in that manner. But Kami identified Bunji as a designated savior for humanity. The path Bunji lived to that point in life would be conceived to be in line with the Kami's doing for salvation of humanity. The hardship Bunji had to deal with were intended by Kami to show the presence of Kami (Tenchi Kane No Kami) in the world and identify possibilities of human salvation. It does not mean that Kami directly imposed those difficulties for Bunji. Bunji accepted those difficult encounters as Kami's "sashimuke" or doing.

We need some additional explanations about the terminology, "sashimuke". *Sashimuke* can be identified by active presence of Kami's intended will to save humanity. Any difficult encounters would not necessarily identify as *sashimuke*.

Any encounters, good or bad through human-oriented perspective can be identified as *sashimuke* only when that person would be able to identify and accept any encounters in which Kami's active intent to save humanity. To those people who can find active Kami's will to save humanity can deal with any encounters as designated Kami's doing.

There exists a big difference between Kami's religious perspective and human-oriented rational perspective. The same could be said about the perception that humans live between Heaven and Earth versus we live in our own houses. The same could be said about the concept that identifying humans as Kami's children; identifying humans commit irreverence or not. The differences generate confusion and frustration. Differences of perspectives generate fundamental motivation and energy for human salvation. Bunji expressed, "Though they say the world is becoming civilized, it is not. It is collapsing. Hence, Konko has come forth to save the world" (Gorikai I Ichimura Mitsugoro-1, 17-1). The message could be a good example of how differences generate energy to correct to the right way through Kami's perspective.

The perception held by people that society was civilized. But through Kami's perspective, the state of being civilized could be a path to destroy something else. That difference of perspectives brought forth sending Ikigami Konko Daijin as a savior to the world.

In corresponding to identification of Ikigami Konko Daijin as a divinely designated savior of humanity from that stage, all those people who had interactions with Kami through their religious works as Konko Daijin's First Disciple. Because Konko Daijin was identified as divinely designated saviors, Kami expected all those people who were identified as Konko Daijin's First Disciples would also fulfill workings as saviors as well.

Some pictures from the Japan trip

