



September 27, 1977



By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano

As this season of the year comes around, I always extend my thoughts to the day both my wife and I arrived at Honolulu International Airport for our missionary work to evolve. The day was September 27, 1977.

I still vividly remember the sweet scent of flowers as we stepped out of the airplane. There were many people who showed up to welcome us at the airport, including, Rev. Kikue Kodama and Rev. Shōichi Okuno (KMH Administrative Chief). We were escorted to visit Konko Mission of Honolulu, the parent church of Konko Mission of Wahiawa, our destination for our missionary work. Rev. Kodama allowed us to stay over the Honolulu Church overnight.

The following day, on September 28, we arrived at Konko Mission of Wahiawa. There were many Wahiawa Church believers, local ministers, and people from Honolulu who showed up to witness our arrival. Among them were Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Tadashi and Tsuneko Takahashi. They had taken care of the church for about two years prior to our arrival.

The church had been kept intact through the presence of Rev. Hiromichi Ishii, who was temporarily stationed at the church for about three years as a staff member of Konko Missions in Hawaii. After his return to Japan, the Takahashi family took care of the church.

It could have been Kami-Sama's arrangement for our mission at Wahiawa Church, which had lost its founding minister, Rev. Haruko Takahashi, and had been without a resident minister for five years. As I have related this episode from time to time to our church members, there was a reason why both my wife and I were guided to begin our missionary work at Wahiawa.

I gained some English language skills while I was in Tokyo. While in Tokyo, my parents, especially my mother, helped me get connected to Konko Church of Tokiwadai. She accompanied me there and introduced me to the minister, Rev. Michio Miyake, who wore a black garment like a Christian minister.

His father was Rev. Toshio Miyake of Konko Church of Izuo in Ōsaka. I had never before witnessed such unique and active Konko ministers who were involved in the international interfaith community, WCRP. Rev. Toshio Miyake would show up at Tokiwadai Church, and I had opportunities to listen to him from time to time.

I still remember an episode he shared about single-hearted prayer. He said that a single-hearted prayer could be likened to a situation in which a person had no water, picked up a rock, squeezed it, yielded some water from it, and kept traveling through the desert. Through conventional wisdom, such a thing would be impossible. But he seemed to have demonstrated this kind of prayer through his missionary work. I had never witnessed such a Konko minister before.

I responded to many church functions, such as the monthly services, regularly.

At one point, I had a faint thought that I might be of some help to the work of the Konko faith. I could not find a concrete reason why, but I wanted to receive some religious training as a shugyo-sei, a trainee. Initially, I thought the minister seemed to accept me for that purpose. Just one week before I was to move to the church, however, the minister told me that he could not accept my offer to be trained. He did not elaborate on the reason.

At that moment, I responded instantly, “I would like to get trained at Konko Church of Amagi, which was the parent church of Konko Church of Kawanoishi, the native Konko church through which our family became involved in the practice of faith.”

I related my thoughts to my father over the phone from Tokyo. He responded in surprise and said, “The Mitama Spirit of the late Rev. Hosaka-sensei would be pleased.”

The reason for my father’s surprise could be attributed to his relationship with the minister, who used to tell my parents, “Yano-san, I understand your family has received so many blessings from Kami-Sama. I would expect that one or two of your children would serve Kami-Sama as an expression of appreciation.”

My parents would respond to him, “Sensei, do not demand such an impossible thing.”
(*Sonna muchana koto inantoite kudasai.*)

The two of us—my second eldest brother and I from the Yano family—ended up becoming Konko ministers. This could be an eventuality of fate, having been born into a family deeply involved in the practice of the Konko faith for generations.

At that time, the only image I had of “Amagi” was a fish called amagi used for sushi making. I also remembered the talks of our parents and the minister of the church, who used to say that life at the Konko Church of Amagi was very strict and severe.

My thinking was, “If the church could be so strict, it could be the best place to get trained.”

Without any hesitation, I picked up the phone and talked to my father. Father responded with joy and expressed, “The Mitama Spirit of Hosaka-sensei would be in great joy.” That was the initial response of my father and my parents.

They talked to the minister, who made arrangements for my visit to Konko Church of Amagi as a student. He made a thorough investigation of the ministers who had been trained at the institution.

Rev. Toshihiko Hosaka concluded that the only way I could survive under the circumstances at Konko

Church of Amagi was for me to be presented as an offering in appreciation from the Yano family, who had been saved through the presence of Konko Church of Kawanoishi and the dedication of its ministers.

He used the term “osonae to shite”—as an offering in appreciation. He could find one of the ministers who had been “osonae” to Kami-Sama through the church.

Interestingly, I had heard the term “Inochi no Ohatsuho,” or an offering of a family member in appreciation for the blessings received by the family, when I was attending a church in Tokyo. Casually, the expression referred to a daily visit to church. But at that stage, I had no idea of the deeper meaning of the term. I thought I would get something.

Anyway, Rev. Hosaka took me to Konko Church of Amagi. It was my first visit to the church.

My first impression was the size of the facility. It was so big, with many buildings on the grounds. Rev. Hosaka introduced me to Rev. Fumio Yasutake, the Head Minister.

I entered Konko Church of Amagi on September 29, 1974.

A few days later, while I was cleaning the yard with a bamboo sweeper, an elderly man approached me and said:

“Yesterday, on our way back from visiting Konko Church of Kokura by microbus, Rev. Fumio Yasutake told us, ‘There was an osonae of shinja,’ or ‘an offering of a believer.’ Through our human perspectives, we do not know what kind of people Kami-Sama will use for His purpose.”

Later, I came to understand that Rev. Yasutake accepted me as an offering of shinja and forwarded me to Kami-Sama in that manner. I have learned to appreciate the grateful nature of my acceptance into the church in that manner more and more as the years have passed.

As both my wife, Reiko-sensei, and I celebrated the 49th anniversary of our mission and began taking a step forward into our 50th year, we have both been

grateful for the mission entrusted to us, for the good health we have been blessed with, and for the good relationships we have shared throughout all these years, up to this very moment.

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

WAHIAWA KONKO MISSION MONTHLY SCHEDULE

October 2025

- 1 Thr -Monthly Svc. for Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama (7:30 pm) 天地金乃神様 月例祭
- 3 Sat -Church clean-up for Grand Ceremony (8 am)
- 4 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am) *short service
-Honolulu Church Autumn Grand Ceremony (11 am)
- 9 Fri -Japanese Program at St. Francis (10:30 am)
- 11 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am) *short service
-Waipahu Church Autumn Grand Ceremony (11 am)
- 13 Tue-Wahiawa Church Autumn Grand Ceremony (5 pm)
生神金光大神様 御大祭
-Naorai fellowship dinner will follow.
- 14 Wed-HCRP Meeting on ZOOM (10 am)
-KMH Kyoten Study Session on ZOOM (5 pm)
- 17 Sat -Hawaii Gunpla Workshop at HNL Church (12 n-6 pm)
- 18 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am)
- 20 Tue -KMH CEC Mtg on ZOOM (5 pm)
- 22 Thr -Church clean-up (9 am)
- 24 Sat -HCRP Peace Prayer at Honolulu Church (4 pm)
- 25 Sun-Monthly Memorial Service 月例霊祭 (9 am)
- 28 Wed-Halloween Pumpkin Carving at Wahiawa Church (4 pm)
*Bring your own pumpkins. Light dinner prepared.
- 29 Thr -Church clean-up (9 am)
- 31 Sat -Happy Halloween!

November 2026

- 1 Sun -Monthly Svc. for Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama (9 am) 天地金乃神様 月例祭 *Share Okage
-Wailuku Church Autumn Grand Ceremony (11 am)

In Loving Memory: October

Rev. Sugako Yoshino	10/3/2022
Janet Kimie Faggard	10/3/2012
Hiromi Ishii	10/4/2003
Shizue Yamamoto	10/6/2008
Richard Mankichi Hirota	10/8/1990
Sangwoo Shim	10/09/1982
Henry Yoshiichi Uychara	10/10/2007
Saku Hasuo	10/12/1996
Francis Toshiji Suwa	10/12/1996
Isamu Tokumoto	10/14/1995
Kenneth Kenji Okimoto	10/20/2020
Pasqualine Webber	10/21/2010
Tahichi Higuchi	10/26/1945
Kazuyoshi Kidani	10/21/2006
Donald Takeshi Katsura	10/31/1953
Edith Hisayo Tamabayashi	10/31/2014

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 225

Later in Bunji's life, because of ever increasing conscious effort to spread the teachings, he tried to persuade those dedicated believer to give up their occupations and serve Kami-Sama as Toritsugi-Mediator to help people in distress. In reflection of Bunji's religious life, we can identify several sequences of his religious life. At first stage, he practiced faith to get fulfilled of his requests as a farmer up to the age of 42; from the age of 44 to 46 years, he practiced faith to believe in Kami; up to the ending phase of the Tokugawa Government, he practiced faith to fulfill requests from Kami; and the rest of life, he practiced to evolve to become a kami. Bunji related to Gihee Fukushima, "Gihee, practice faith and become a kami" (Gorikai II Fukushima Gihee, 1-3). The message reflected Bunji's ultimate purpose of practicing faith. Bunji related to Kondo Fujimori, "The word shinjin (faith) is not written with the kanji characters for belief and heart. I write it with the kanji characters for kami and man. Therefore, do not say Bushinjin. It will mean that both Kami and man are neglecting their duties. It's better to say that one's prayers don't reach Kami" (Gorikai I, Kondo Fujimori 66). The message also showed the same



meaning. The expression of “*kami ni naru*” or “神人” (*shinjin*) seemed to imply “helping others” or “save the world”.

Later in life, Bunji related, “Save one person, and you will be a kami to that person. Save ten people and you will be a kami to all ten” (Gorikai II Shirakami Shinichiro). It seems that the ultimate spiritual stage any people achieved did not necessarily mean that a person gains some mysterious superpower; or reaches the state of nirvana. Rather, it seemed to end up with one aspect of life that is saving others. Later in life, Bunji related to Sadajiro Yamamoto, “To be human is to save others. When a child has fallen, someone will promptly help the child up. A child who has fallen into the water will also be immediately pulled out by someone. Since man is the lord of all living things, he can move at will and save others” (Gorikai I Yamamoto Sadajiro 65-1). “When people suffer from sickness or disaster, they are saved by Kami-Sama and other people. Practice faith and remember that saving people in distress is to be human” (Gorikai I Yamamoto Sadajiro 65-3). In this manner, the most appropriate expression that showed Bunji’s distinctive perspective for human beings was expressed, “To be human is to save others.” A person who embraces a person in suffering of others in distress act in empathy of helping is to be human.

Expansion of the faith

The authorities turned a blind eye to Bunji’s religious work.

After Bunji’s status as a Shintō priest, he endured various forms of pressures and dealt with negative popularities. In January of 1874, when a believer was on his way to visit Hiromae, a stranger approached him and told, “Nowadays, people speak ill of Konjin-Sama, and they are not allowed to worship.” When he arrived at Hiromae, the Kami altar was closed with a bamboo blind, according to Mojirō Nakamura. Even after the removal of altar fixtures and closure of Hiromae, Bunji had to deal with government officers and inspectors who were vigilant of Bunji’s life. They tried to find out any element of violations of the rule. They visited Bunji who lost his certificate as a Shintō priest kept a shrine like interior of Hiromae and would have received some monetary offerings and items was the main reason for the inspections. Because of the restrictive

environment, Bunji engaged to his religious work with all due respect of the authorities and society at large.

In that restrictive time, Bunji submitted a petition to the Okayama Prefectural Office, “Religious education based on reverence to Kami” in the name of Bunji on October 19, 1876. The message of the petition was as follows: After losing my status as a Shintō priest, I stopped to engage to my religious work at all. When I had the status of a Shintō priest, I especially revered “Tenshō Kōtaijingu” and spread the message that if people demonstrate their reverence to Kami and the nation; live in accordance with the righteous way of life as human beings; they are to get protection of Kami and be free from getting illnesses, and other calamities. Some people who did not know that I lost my Shintō priest status occasionally came to Hiromae. Because of this situation, I believe that through religious education, people would get secure of their lives. I would never try to solicit monetary donations in pretending like a Shintō officer or Buddhist monk. I sincerely ask your generous considerations for the religious education petition being forwarded to your office.”

Some of the people who could not bear witness to the difficult situation Bunji had to deal with so hard might have acted in submitting the petition for the sake of Bunji. But the message of the petition referring to reverence to “Tenshō Kōtaijin” and “religious education based on reverence of Kami” could hardly be accepted by Kami and Bunji.

The Okayama Prefectural Office responded to the petition in this manner: What you would be allowed to respond to the people who come to see you is only to share your own personal perspectives of your religious belief and nothing more. You are not allowed to practice the religious education and act like an evangelist called “kyōdo-shoku”. The response from the Office was unexpected for Bunji. That message meant that the government turns a blind eye to Bunji who would respond to visitors in the capacity of just sharing his personal religious perspective. Even though Bunji was allowed to practice the minimal religious work, the message ended the situation of impasse for his life. Because of the government message, Bunji could avoid persistent inspections of the authorities. Page 226