



“Konko-Sama, Arigatou Gozaimasu”

By Rev. Yasuhiro Yano

I was blessed to attend both Centennial Anniversary Celebrations: the Konko Churches of North America Centennial, held at the Konko Church of San Francisco on August 12, and the Konko Missions in Hawaii Centennial, held at Ko‘olau Ballroom on August 15, 2026. I was grateful to take part in both celebrations, which were carried out with great joy and happiness and concluded so successfully. The 6th Konko-Sama’s presence certainly made a difference.

The 6th Konko-Sama, the Reverend Hiromichi Konko, together with his wife, Rev. Nobuko Konko, three of their children, and the accompanying entourage from Gohonbu Headquarters in Konko, attended both functions. It was truly exceptional that the presiding Spiritual Head of the Konkokyo organization, called the “Kyōshu,” attended these local celebrations. Konko-Sama does not usually visit places in Japan and elsewhere, but this time, we were able to personally witness the presence of Konko-Sama in America, both in San Francisco and Honolulu.

I also witnessed how the presence of Konko-Sama brought about some unforgettable moments that would not normally have been possible. When we learned that Konko-Sama would come to celebrate the Centennial anniversaries, we were also informed that he would visit three local churches on Oahu: Honolulu, Waipahu, and Wahiawa. His visits were supposed to be discreet and were not openly announced.

After the Centennial celebration, we were told that when Konko-Sama visited each church, he would make a visit to the Toritsugi-Mediation place, and the local minister should sit at the mediation desk to receive Konko-Sama. Such a manner of Konko-Sama’s visit was unprecedented in the history of Konkokyo. This was an instruction given to us by the Headquarters office.

At Wahiawa Church, as Konko-Sama entered the Hiromae, he proceeded to the Toritsugi-Mediation desk, accompanied by his wife, and took his place on the seeker’s side of the desk. I was seated on the mediator’s side to receive him.

Konko-Sama then extended his greeting, saying, “Konko-Sama, arigatou gozaimasu,” and related his message regarding his visitation. I simply received his visitation. I had prepared tamagushi (sacred stem) for both Konko-Sama and his wife to offer on this very special occasion.

Ever since that moment, I have tried to understand the message that Konko-Sama was trying to convey through his actions.

The Fourth Konko-Sama, Rev. Kagamitaro Konko, used to say that he was a believer. As a believer, he served in the designated position of “Kyōshu,” or Spiritual Head of the entire Konkokyo religious organization. If my memory is correct, he taught that there should be no difference among believers, whether one is a minister or a lay believer. We are all believers.

This thought also reminded me of something the Rev. Hiromichi Konko himself stated:

“My words, ‘Thank you very much, Konko-sama,’ do not refer to any one particular individual. When I say these words, many people come to mind—Ikigami Konko Daijin (our Founder), Tenchi Kane No Kami (the Divine Parent of the Universe), my ancestors, numerous Mitama spirits, successive Konko-samas, their wives, everyone around me, and everything that takes care of me. I am thinking of all these people and things when I say, ‘Konko-sama.’

“I find myself spontaneously saying ‘Konko-sama!’ when, for example, my child stumbles over a stone. I do this without even thinking. I have been trained to say ‘Konko-sama’ even in an emergency. With this in mind, I say, ‘Thank you very much, Konko-sama’ every day.”

These words appeared in the Konkokyo International Center newsletter *Face to Faith*, issued in July 2026.

Based on this expressed thought, I came to better understand the deep meaning behind Konko-Sama’s actions and his regard for the ministers who have faithfully served at their designated places. Both of our faith communities in North America and Hawaii are commemorating the centennial of the organized development of the Konko faith, which was greatly influenced by the visitation of Rev. Kōkichi Katashima from Japan in 1926. He was interested in learning about the activities of

Japanese religious communities, including Konko believers in the eastern regions of the Mainland and in Hawaii.

During his visitation, he learned that there were already two Konkokyo faith communities in Seattle. Following the visit of Rev. Katashima, the Seattle Konkokyo Mamichi Kai was established, and we also witnessed the formation of Mamichi Kai in Tacoma, Los Angeles, and Hawaii.

These Mamichi Kai on the Mainland and in Hawaii eventually developed into the Konko faith communities we have today, sustained through one hundred years of endeavors by ministers and believers.

Through my half a century of service to Kami-Sama, the conclusion I have come to is simple:

Live as Konko believers under any circumstances.

The continued existence and operation of our local faith communities depend upon Konko believers who truly live the faith. The work of the church cannot be sustained by ministers alone. It continues because there are believers who practice the teachings in their daily lives and carry the faith forward from one generation to the next. As we commemorate one hundred years, my wish is also simple.

I wish to witness the continued growth of Konkokyo faith communities made up of people who truly live the faith—people who, through happiness and hardship, ordinary days and extraordinary moments, can naturally express from their hearts:

“Konko-Sama, arigatou gozaimasu.”

May this spirit continue in both the Konko Churches of North America and the Konko Missions in Hawaii for the next one hundred years and beyond.

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*

WAHIAWA KONKO MISSION MONTHLY SCHEDULE

September 2026

- 1 Tue -Monthly Svc. for Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama (7:30 pm) 天地金乃神様 月例祭
- 3 Thr -Church clean-up (9 am)
- 4 Fri -St. Francis Japanese Program (10:30 am)
- 5 Sat -KMH Faith Enrichment at Honolulu and ZOOM (1:30 pm-3 pm)
- 6 Sun -Monthly Svc. for Ikigami Konko Daijin-Sama (9 am) 生神金光大神様 月例祭 *Okage sharing
- 7 Mon -Labor Day Holiday
- 9 Wed -KMH MWSS at Wahiawa (10 am-4 pm)
- 13 Sun -No Sunday Service (Let's go to HNL Autumn Mem Svc 10 am)
- 16 Wed -Kyoten Study Session on Zoom (5 pm)
- 17 Thr -Church clean-up (9 am)
- 19 Sat -Hawaii Gunpla Workshop @HNL Church (12 n-6 pm)
- 20 Sun -Autumn Memorial Service 秋季霊祭 (10 am) *Naorai
- 22 Tue -KMH CEOC Mtg on ZOOM (9 am)
- 26 Sat -Ehimemaru Clean-up (9 am) and HCRP Clean-up (10 am-11 am) at Kaka'ako Waterfront Park
- 27 Sun -Sunday Service (9 am) *Okage sharing
- 29 Tue -Founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin Sama's 212th Birthday
- Church clean-up (9 am)
- 30 Wed -Kyoten Study Session on Zoom (5 pm)

October 2025

- 1 Thr -Monthly Svc. for Tenchi Kane no Kami-Sama (7:30 pm) 天地金乃神様 月例祭
- 2 Fri -Japanese Program at St. Francis (10:30 am)
- 3 Sat -Church clean-up for Grand Ceremony (8 am)
- 4 Sun -Honolulu Church Autumn Godaisai (11 am)
- 11 Sun -Waipahu Church Autumn Godaisai (11 am)
- 13 Tue -Wahiawa Church Autumn Godaisai (5 pm)

Please join us for the Autumn Memorial Service on Sunday, September 20th at 10 am. Naorai fellowship lunch will follow

In Remembrance: September Memorials

Yin On Yip	9/24/2025
Hiroko Toyoda	9/9/2018
Richard Tadayoshi Noguchi	9/27/2009
Tatsuyuki Kataoka	9/7/2007
Richard Masao Iwasa	9/17/2005
Mikiko Yamamoto	9/3/2003
Harumi Tokumoto	9/7/2001
Kameji Takeshima	9/17/2000
Takeshige Ootsuka	9/15/1998
Fumiko Hamai	9/25/1997
Ben Furusho	9/15/1997

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 the book titled “Konkō Kyōso No Shōgai,” or “The Life of the Founder Konkō Daijin,” authored by Rev. Mikio Seto and published by the Konkokyo Theological Research Center in 1980. Many biographies about the life of the Founder, Konkō Daijin, exist. I would like to introduce this work for your reference as you continue in your pursuit of faith. The English translation was provided by Rev. Yasuhiro Yano. (Continued from the previous issue.) Page 223

While holding the “Oboe” notes, Bunji spoke to Tomie Takahashi, saying, “Kami-Sama repeatedly expressed His compliments toward me from this morning, saying, ‘How could you have been able to fulfill my requests so well up until now!’” Bunji became overwhelmed by the words expressed by Kami-Sama and shed tears of gratitude.

The Oboe represented Bunji himself and served as a record of his accomplishments in responding to Kami-Sama’s requests.

Ieyoshi Konkō, Bunji’s third son, who took over the responsibilities of serving at the Hiromae, was the first person to see the Oboe. Ieyoshi read through the entire writing of the Oboecho by December 22, 1883. This was approximately 100 days after Bunji’s passing and about 50 days after Ieyoshi began his service at the Hiromae.

As for the Oboe, Ieyoshi not only read the document meticulously, but also copied the entire work from the fifth month of the lunar calendar in 1888 through the middle of the eighth month. Through the act of copying the document, Ieyoshi may have been trying to better understand the message left by his father, Bunji. He may also have regarded the copying of the document as a form of spiritual training and a source of spiritual support for his own service at the Hiromae.

In this way, Bunji’s way of helping others was passed on to future generations through the valuable records preserved in both the Oboe and Oboecho.

The Oboe recorded Bunji’s life from his birth through the age of 43. Bunji kept this record with reference to the Oboecho and made modifications by adding further material in an orderly manner. The writing eventually extended through 1876, when Bunji reached the age of 63.

Bunji continued to supplement and organize his writings even after 1879, and it may be assumed that he continued working on them until near the time of his passing.

Even today, we can appreciate Bunji’s writings in the local dialect of his region. In fact, the simple and ordinary language used throughout the writings contributes to their interesting and unique character. The interactions between Bunji and Kami-Sama are depicted in such a direct and personal manner that we can continue to appreciate them even today.

Messages Delivered Late in Bunji’s Life

As society moved into the Meiji Era, especially during the period after 1873, Bunji had to deal directly with governmental authority and its policies concerning religious organizations.

In response to these social changes, Bunji’s religious determination became even stronger. The manner in which he delivered his religious messages also changed, reflecting his strong desire to spread the teachings to others.

One factor that may have strengthened Bunji’s religious determination was his encounter with ideas and values that differed fundamentally from his own. More than that, however, he also encountered the different form of authority exercised by the Meiji government.

The government issued the “Three Articles of Instruction,” presented a different perspective regarding “Ikigami” in relation to the Emperor, and brought about changes in society that may have influenced Bunji’s response.

Encountering ideas based on different systems of values may have helped Bunji clarify and organize his own theological understanding and strengthened his conviction in the teachings he had received.

During this distinctive period, the “Tenchi Kakitsuke” and the “Divine Message” revealed on October 10, 1873, were presented in a more clearly defined form.

Bunji related to Shimamura Hachitaro:
“Tenchi Kane No Kami has endured, since the existence of Heaven and Earth, for millions of years. Other kamis come and go.”
(Gorikai I, Shimamura Hachitaro 1)

To Kataoka Jiroshiro, Bunji related:
“Konko is light to give light to the dark.”
These messages reflect the strength of Bunji’s conviction in the religious understanding he had received.

To Ichimura Mitsugoro, Bunji related:
“Izanagi and Izanami No Mikoto, and Tensho Kotaijin were mortals. Therefore, the Emperor is a mortal. The same goes for Munetada No Kami.”
(Gorikai I, Ichimura Mitsugoro 2-7)

Bunji also related to Ichimura Mitsugoro:
“Izanagi and Izanami No Mikoto, and Tensho Kotaijin and her emperor descendants, are all mortal humans. Munetada No Kami (founder of the Kurozumi religion) is also a mortal. They are called kami, but they all got their bodies from Tenchi Kane No Kami. If they don’t eat the grains provided by Tenchi Kane No Kami, their lives will not continue.” (Gorikai II, Ichimura Mitsugoro 2-2)

In this manner, Bunji clearly expressed his understanding of the fundamental nature of Tenchi Kane No Kami.

The act of spreading religious teachings could only be undertaken by a person who held a firm conviction about the mission entrusted to him by Kami-Sama.

Bunji related to Ichimura Mitsugoro:
“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)

To Kunieda Sangoro, Bunji related:
“Sangoro, while you concern yourself with only trivial things, I am aspiring for a blessing which will

completely embrace the world with this Faith.”
(Gorikai II, Kunieda Sangoro 11)

Bunji also related to Kondo Fujimori:
“We must spread this Way of Faith throughout the world.” (Gorikai II, Kondo Fujimori 53)

These episodes reflect Bunji’s firm conviction in, and assurance of, the mission entrusted to him by Kami-Sama. (to be continued)

Snapshots from the KMH Centennial

