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Volume 24, Issue 3



KMH 80th Anniversary, Just around the Corner!

Are you excited? Our KMH 80th Anniversary will be celebrated from August 18 – 20. Our theme for this anniversary is “Prosperity from Generation to Generation.” The KMH 80th Anniversary committee was eager to have the theme relate to not only the past and present, but also the future. The current Konko-Sama (Spiritual Head) cherishes this, so let’s talk about this during this special occasion.

The first day will be our anniversary service at the Konko Mission of Honolulu. After that, the *naorai* reception will be held at the second floor, and we will enjoy the various entertainments such as hula, songs, and dances.

The second day will be held at the Japanese Cultural Center in Moili’ili. We will be listening to Konko-Sama’s message and interview video in English. We will have two keynote speakers, and group discussions for our future. We will recognize the members who are over 80 years of age.

The third day will be a beach picnic at Ala Moana Beach Park at Area 8. We will enjoy games, swimming, and ono food at the picnic.

All three days are going to be held to fulfill our three objectives: 1) To define prosperity in Konkokyo, 2) To explain why Konkokyo is important to this and future generations, and 3) To appreciate the accomplishments of Konkokyo in Hawaii on behalf of all people as individuals and families. We all want KMH to move forward to the dawn of a brilliant future.

We hope this special event will be a beacon to

guide us toward even more “prosperity” for Konkokyo in Hawaii. To achieve this dream, our KMH 80th Anniversary committee has held more than 16 meetings since March 12, 2005.

Just to let you know, thanks to you, nearly 200 people have registered to attend the 80th anniversary event from Hawaii, Japan, and the U.S. mainland. At the time of the deadline to register, attendees had numbered only forty. So a whole lot of us went out and encouraged members and friends to join this special event for KMH. Through the divine intervention of Kami-sama, we will be celebrating the anniversary with about 200 attendees.

An order for about 250 t-shirts has already been placed, for our 80th anniversary fund-raising project. Thank you very much for helping out through your purchase of our 80th anniversary limited edition t-shirts. Only 300 t-shirts will be screened. We will have only fifty extra, so hurry in with your order if you haven’t already done so.

Thank you very much to all of you who will join in with us on the celebration. Being there will be wonderful. Helping with our 80th anniversary in various ways will be even more than wonderful. We want the entire function to go smoothly.

To move forward to our bright future, we need to persevere in what we’ll gain from the anniversary. We shall mark this 80th anniversary as a new beginning, and create a path for a bright future of Konkokyo in Hawaii.



Facilitator Training for KMH 80th Anniversary



T-Shirts Screening & Folding

Summer Youth Gathering

By Rev. Edna Yano (Wahiawa)

Let's talk about that summer camp we just had. It was a lot of fun. Those that were able to go, you would know what I mean. And it wasn't at Camp Timberline like we all had anticipated—It was at Camp Honolulu Church! To make a long story short, another church group had reserved the entire camp site for the entire week. The KMH youth camp was actually canceled—for a few hours, but then through a meaningful discussion, the camp was going to be held once again. It was held from Friday, June 16, through Sunday, June 18. The theme for the camp was, "One with our Parent Kami."

On day 1 we had a candle-light discussion. Candles hold their own mystical powers, which have the ability to soothe the soul within us. My group was the teen and young adult group. I was the group facilitator, but had no clue where to start, but the mood gradually set in when I asked everyone about a recent dream they've had, or an unforgettable dream that they recall. Everyone started getting goose bumps. Some people saw the same dream a few times. Our Founder used to say, "Those who practice faith conscientiously should not mock the dreams they have at night. Kami teaches good and bad even through dreams" (*Gorikai I, Kondo Fujimori 58-2*).

From dreams, we switched to talking about supernatural encounters. Then the room started to get a little chilly so we seriously started talking about Konkokyo—which we were originally supposed to.

Taking things for granted is what came up. In Japanese we call it "Atarimae." Even a single blink of an eye requires many nerve functions, coordination, and detailed muscle work. One step forward with our own leg is even more complicated. Humans are rarely concerned with what they are already blessed with. We always want more, and better quality items. We wish that our bodies were this way and that. The usual, "I wish I was a few inches taller, or I wish my nose was smaller, etc." If we did get our wish, then we'd look for another thing to fix. And it's an endless

string of selfish desires. Better yet, we can acknowledge that we even have a nose. Some people might have beautiful noses, but cannot smell with them. That would be useless. Which would we prefer?

In going one step higher in thankfulness, we can always be a little more appreciative for things that we normally wouldn't be thankful for, like having to wash all the dirty dishes after a party. The many dishes mean that we have been surrounded by friends. How about that last parking stall we'd find at the far end? We need to be thankful that we even got that last stall, and second, we

must be thankful because we can walk for good health. We discussed that the simple act of being thankful for our blessings can go a long way. The following morning, we all went for a hike up Lanikai. Thinking it was going to be a piece of cake to climb, I went up with my rubber slippers (aka: flip-flops). BIG MISTAKE! Going up was hard enough. I was climbing up that mountain on

all fours. Other than that struggle, the scenery was magnificent. There were a couple ledges that were very scary. There were no fences or rails, so one little slip is a fall to one's death. Descending that hiking trail was crazy. I was slipping all the way down with my slippers. It's no wonder they call 'em slippers. My slippers were all stretched out and loose. But it was the most satisfying hike ever, with lots of sunshine and great exercise. We definitely felt, "One with our Parent Kami."

The whole way through, I was saying "Konko-Sama, Konko-Sama." My mother and brother were in an even worse situation, since they were both carrying three year old tots. If any of them slipped and fell, that would have been disastrous.

They were also saying "Konko-Sama, Konko-Sama." However, they never slipped even once. That's amazing. My descent down that mountain was like one long slip for me. But if I was slipping in place of my brother and mother, I am perfectly ok with it. In fact, I'll take it all as a blessing. In a way, I am thankful that I did not get hurt at all. No scrapes or bruises—just a dirty bottom, and stretched out slippers. Everyone survived that hike



without getting hurt. Many thanks to Kami-Sama!

To cool off from that hiking trip, we all headed down to Kailua Beach; known worldwide as one of the most beautiful beaches on the planet. At Kailua Beach, we ate hot-off-the grill hotdogs, hamburgers, and yakitori. It was all onolicious to da max. They have been specially grilled to perfection by our chef/leader: Rev. Roy Yasutake from Wailuku Church. After we had our fill of ono grinds, we headed back to Honolulu Church. When we got back, we immediately started working on our Saturday Night Live presentations.

The group discussions the previous night seemed to have sparked some ideas for the Saturday Night Live camp fire group presentations for the following day. We didn't actually have a camp fire, but it was a candle light ceremony. There were two groups, the Japanese group, and the English group. The Japanese group used "Atarimae" as their theme. Our English group tried to think about relating the skit to the theme, so we used the scenario of toritsugi mediation at church. Rev. David Yano played the role of Kami-Sama. Rev. Megumi Yano was the sensei sitting at the toritsugi mediation seat. And the rest of the members were the worshippers who had problems. Everyone that mediated their problems to the minister had his/her share of guidance from Kami-Sama. It was hilarious—but very meaningful, because every word that came out of Kami-Sama (David's) mouth made perfect sense. Maybe it was Kami-Sama really talking through my Rev. David's mouth.

The Japanese group really put on a show for us. Some scenes were very sad. Like the part when they acted out one very wealthy mother and child pair. They had so much to eat, that the child couldn't eat another bite. Next a mother and child pair of the poverty class was played. They had a plate with less than a mouthful of bread. The next scene was of a typical middle class sassy teenage girl who talked non-stop on her cell phone to her friend. "I can talk all I want to; daddy's paying the phone bill; my dad gets on



my nerves, blah, blah, blah." After that scene, one of the members played the role of a child whose parents abandoned her, leaving only a stuffed animal.

Another act depicted a typical middle class girl who wasted water. Following that scene was a man who lived in the desert where water was scarce. With sweltering temperatures, he even went as far as wiping his sweaty forehead with a cloth, and wringing the sweat back into his water jug. Water is precious. While I was watching these scenes, I was reminded again that such things do happen in our world, where some parts of the world are living in poverty, and the other side of the world is living wealthy lives. Wouldn't it be nice if no one had to die because of starvation or thirst? I assume that majority of us are blessed with plentiful food in our refrigerators and pantries. The next time we have to dispose of expired foods, or food we couldn't finish up, let us remind ourselves of the people who are unable to eat. Thus we shall request for Kami-Sama's forgiveness for having to dispose of the food, which are the products of Kami-Sama's grace, and peoples' hard work. On day 3, we joined the congregation for the Sunday Service. There was also a meaningful sermon by the Rev. Roy Yasutake. Afterwards, we all stayed and took our group picture and headed on upstairs for clean up. Since we were allowed to use the facility, the bathroom, kitchen, and hall, we showed our appreciation by cleaning every corner spick-and-span. Then the end came for our summer gathering at Camp Honolulu Church—but then I hope it was the beginning of a more enriched life of being one with our Parent Kami.

I would like to thank all of the people who planned the camp, regardless of the many emergency change of plans due to the cancellation of Camp Timberline. All that hard work has paid off. I pray that such gatherings will continue till no end. If you were unable to make it during this gathering, we hope to see you at our next youth gathering—in Maui!

Excerpt from "Wahiawa Konko Mission Children's Newsletter (July 2006, Volume 14, No. 151)"

From LCC Students of Religion Class

By Rev. Edna Yano (Wahiawa)

About a dozen students along with their professor, Dr. Jay Sakashita from Leeward Community College came to the Konko Mission of Waipahu for an hour-long Konkokyo info-session. Rev. Saijiro Matsuda of the Konkokyo Hawaii Center explained about the various features of Konkokyo in detail. Also assisting was Konkokyo Hawaii Center Chief, Rev. Masahiko Oka, Rev. Koichi Konko from Honolulu Church, and I from Wahiawa Church.

The first question that was asked by the professor was, “Why does Kami-Sama get Budweiser, and Mitama-Sama (Altar for the deceased) gets Coors light?” These are obviously brands of beer. Everyone burst out laughing. True. Why does Kami-Sama get Budweiser and Mitama-Sama get Coors light? Before I answered that question, I asked them, “Do you realize that there is even alcohol offered up there?” To that everyone was very surprised, and didn’t quite notice that until I said it. There are some religions that prohibit members from alcohol consumption, but in Konkokyo, it’s perfectly ok. Ok meaning, since everything is a blessing from Tenchi Kane no Kami-Sama, it is offered in the altar as a way to acknowledge Kami-Sama. Everything in moderation is good. Drinking so much that it causes discord in human relationship is considered bad. Everything must be consumed in thankfulness to Kami-Sama.

So, going back to the original question, all offerings placed in the altar are first offered to Kami-Sama. Then it is taken down during a monthly service and re-offered to Mitama-Sama. After the items are offered to Mitama-Sama, it is finally taken down.

The students asked very interesting questions. One student said, “It may sound kind of dumb for me to ask this question, but why is there junk-food offered up there?” She was referring to the big bag of potato chips. Kami-Sama loves Ruffles, too.

Well, first things first, in Konkokyo we never use the term junk-food. That is just one of those words that should never exist in our vocabulary. Since everything came out of the blessings of Tenchi Kane no Kami-Sama, we do not say “junk-food.” One bag of chips requires so much energy to produce. Going way back to growing just one potato; it takes more than half a year to produce a potato. In that time, the plant required sunshine, rain, and nutrients. Then comes the labor of the

farmers and the people who transport the potatoes to the factories. Now we have the people who actually work in the factories to have the potatoes peeled and fried. The packaging is also another family of workers. Once the potato chips are packed, there is someone who delivers the final product to the various retailers to be put on the shelves of our favorite super market. All this hard work for less than \$2.50 a bag. That is pretty amazing.

Only wealthy countries could enjoy snacks. The people of America have an abundance of snacks. We are lucky. Snacks rich in saturated fat and salt—like the potato chips is not bad for you. It gets bad for our health when we eat too much of it. That is where the word “junk-food” came to be. But if you take that bag of chips and give it to someone starving to death in Ethiopia per say, think of how they would feel. What we would refer to as junk-food, to them it would be well worth a pot of 24K gold. There are probably enough calories in that bag of chips for a person to stay alive for an entire month. They would probably be able to enjoy one bag of chips to the last crumb, and last salt crystal. Are we able to enjoy the various foods to this extent?

If everyone is aware of what is going on in impoverished countries, such word may not exist. In the 6 billion or so people who live on the face of this earth, nearly one half of the people is malnourished or is starving. Kami-Sama’s wish is for all mouths to be fed equally. But reality is different. In one side of the world, there are supermarkets and convenience stores discarding expired foods, and drinks, while on the other side of the world, the people are scrambling for a scoop of fresh water—which to our dismay is bacteria infested muddy water. So, for the sake of the people that are starving, and also for the life that was taken to sustain our lives (beef, chicken, pork, fish, plants, etc.), the least we can do is eat food in thankfulness.

With this one question that the student asked, Kami-Sama has reminded us about the significance of the offerings placed before the altar, and the importance of every morsel of food.

Kami-Sama blessed us with this wonderful opportunity for us to share the Konko faith with the students from Dr. Sakashita’s Religion class.

Excerpt from “Wahiawa Konko Mission Children’s Newsletter (May 2006, Volume 14, No.149)”



Prosperity--The Way of Ease and Pleasure

By Rev. Masahiko Oka

We are grateful for the many blessings of Tenchi Kane no Kami, our Parent God. We are grateful for all the hard work and effort our ancestors have put into Hawaii. We will continue working hard to share Konko Daijin's timeless Faith, that "Kami and people live together through an interdependent (*Aiyo Kakeyo*) love-and-sharing relationship," as we move on to tomorrow and beyond.

Holding fast to this wish, the Konko Missions in Hawaii will celebrate the 80th anniversary from August 18th to 20th this year under the theme of "Prosperity from Generation to Generation."

The Meaning of the "Prosperity"

I'd like to focus on the meaning of "Prosperity" in Konkokyo. First, what exactly does 'prosperity' mean? Many of us think that this means 'money' or some material gain. Sure, why not? Wishing everyone to be rich and happy – prosperous - is a natural. No one wants people they care about to be unhappy. Everyone wants this kind of blessings. It's natural. And who, by the way, would practice Faith without positive results. We believe in what we're doing in Konkokyo when we pray for the Blessings of Kami.

Our Founder taught us about the importance of this wish for prosperity in the following way:

"People, who are able to live because of the blessings of Kami, should work for Kami everyday. The daily work that you do is your faith training. Therefore, if you work with a thankful heart, you can receive great blessings everyday." (Voice of the Universe, No.280)

Konko Daijin is here teaching us what "Desire" is, or what a Wish for Prosperity is: It is a wish that we be able to live and do our 'daily work.' And if we were grateful to Kami Sama for what we can do, we 'can receive great blessings everyday.'

Here's another teaching:

"There is a folk song which says: 'Oh young pine! You are the symbol of happiness. You will grow, spreading your branches with lush pine needles.' Konko Daijin teaches the way for the prosperity of your descendants and family. (VU, No.136)

And so what is prosperity? Our founder is saying that we will receive divine blessings if we walk in the way of good health and of natural growing.

What is the "Way"?

Our founder once said:

"People living between Heaven and Earth are Kami's children. If your body has pain or illness, it is difficult for you to work. Pray for physical well-being, diligence in your work, rich grain harvests, and for your horses and cows. Pray with sincerity for everything." (VU, No.172)

We human beings all cannot live without divine blessing, not even a minute. This is reason. So this is the way we should pray to Kami Sama for everything, and to receive the Divine Blessings.

Here is yet another teaching:

"Be prudent. Any undertaking, even a small one, will be considered successful if it continues over a long period of time. Even a narrow road is advantageous if it becomes wider by being traveled on frequently. Do not let grass grow on your road." (VU, No.271)

We tend to forget Kami's works and the gratitude we should express to Kami when everything's going well. Why? Because then we start to take things for granted, and then our ego gets in the way. We get a little arrogant, and we think we don't need to pray anymore. Our founder taught us that we should seek to prosper based on a true belief in our Faith, which is a humble sense of where we stand inside our world, and not an arrogant demand, like that a kind of a king or a queen, for this or that.

The continuance and passing on faith

I would like to see this following teaching studied more often:

"What should be our goal in the practice of Faith? The sick come to pray for a cure, while the healthy come to pray for a good harvest or for a prosperous business. But these goals are only temporary. When practicing faith, you must look forward to a future free of anxiety, or else your faith will not continue.

In order to free your future from anxiety, not only must divine blessings be received by you, but also it is important that you practice a faith that will be passed down to future generations. It cannot be passed down if the family is not harmonious and if family head doesn't practice faith.

Requesting to stop pain is the start of faith. However, after being cured and offering thanks, one will often stop coming to worship. Reforming your heart and receiving a healthy child are the most important goals of practicing faith. Kami won't be happy with only one generation of faith." (VU, No.310)

When we run into trouble or come down with a pain, we depend on Kami Sama for relief. Then we hope Kami can save us. However, our founder said this kind of thinking was only temporary. Passing down Faith, from generation to generation, and creating a future free from anxiety are the most important goals. We are able thus to really 'prosper' if we walk the way of a peaceful and easy mind with Kami Sama. An easy mind means free of worry and with no complaints. This is what living continually with Kami Sama means – there is no happiness like this.

Some examples

In my childhood I had digestive problems. I'd have to eat food that would be easy to digest, and often different from regular food what the rest of my family ate. So, I would eat rice gruel and *umeboshi* (pickled plum), *miso* soup, *udon* noodles, or boiled vegetables, etc. And I ate at another room with my father, not at dining room. My father was kind, and he ate the same things that I had.

And my parents prayed to Kami for a cure to my ailments. They'd say, "Don't worry; we've prayed to Kami. You'll get divine blessings." And when I'd get over some sickness, they'd tell me, "We've received divine blessings, Masahiko. We appreciate Kami's working to help us. Your condition is improving through the blessings of Kami."

These encouraging words really lifted my spirits. And they naturally helped me to realize the wonders of Kami's work, and made me grateful. I think these things my parents shared about my relationship to Kami built the foundation of my faith.

However, I tend carelessly as a grown-up at times to forget Kami's working and gratitude. At times I lose sight of how every day I should be grateful for Kami's guidance. For example, I was reminded of the gratitude for health that I should express every day, and not just when I'm in pain. I needed two surgeries last year. Both were painful. I won't go into details. But the lesson is clear: Too often we pray only when things are going poorly. We should more direct our heart toward Kami when things are going better.

And here are other examples. Recently my older son Yoshiharu, 11 years old, surprised me with this question: "Hey Dad! How much do you make on your job?" His teacher had told him in class: "Study hard if you want to make good money. Differences in wages often depend upon academic background."

Wow! I reacted. I was in shock about this, and had to think it over carefully for a while. I could see the cult of money and material priorities filtering into the conversation my son would soon be having with his friends.

One more thing from my family. Lately, when I get home from my work at the KMH Center, my younger son Yoshiaki, three years old, asks me with a big smile: "Hello Papa! Did you enjoy it at the center?" This special hello always seems to lift me up. It makes me realize Kami's working and gratitude, as well as drive all my tiredness away. Kami is here asking me through my son: "Have you served today's work, as the Goyo with a thankful heart? Are you taking pleasure in your life?"

Yoshiaki's greeting makes me ask whether I am truly enjoying my life. Now if I cared only for money, or prestige, or had a self-centered mind, I would probably not so be able to enjoy my life, or take pleasure from the little things every day. But this I do. And Yoshiaki reminds me to continue doing it. Other people and Kami will be happy if I not only serve my family or myself, but also serve my community outside of this; and thus I'll be happy as well.

I believe that we all should talk this over at home, in our family's quality time, about the Reasoning and the Workings of Kami. Our lives are a divine blessing. We should appreciate them every day. Then we can pass on our faith to our children in a very natural way.

Spread the way of ease and pleasure

In looking around at our modern lives, we can see there's no shortage in material prosperity. But we know too there are difficulties all over the world: pollution, violence, war, disasters, crimes, and the list goes on. Every day we're on the run to keep up with the Joneses in a dog-eat-dog world. Worries, anxieties, they never end; we're far from ease in our spirits; we're far from spiritual fulfillment.

The time is now, though, to get relief. Each of us in Konkokyo should live up to the true way of the universe, to find ease, to find peace. This is the responsibility of all of us who practice this faith. We Konkokyo exist here for the sake of this Kami's wish.

Please reflect on the wish of the original head ministers of our church. They spread our faith with an only



wish that true peace might be achieved in the world, and that the well-being of all *Ujiko* be fulfilled. We've been praying this same wish in the 'Kami Prayer' every day. This is the true purpose of Konkokyo.

Let's receive divine blessings and pray that our Prosperity derives not from selfish desires, but from an *Ease* and *Pleasure* for what we do every day in our lives. And let's be truly helpful to other people in our inner and outer worlds. This is what we will commemorate in our 80th anniversary.

I would like to conclude today's insights with these teachings of our Founder:

"Teach and pass on the true faith to future generations without losing or straying from it." (VU, No.399)

Konko-Sama (our Founder), on January 16, 1883, the year of his passing, said,

"Today, I'll tell you about the name Konko. Konko means 'golden light shines'. The 'Kon' comes from the 'Kane' in Kane No Kami. The 'ko' comes from 'hikari,' meaning sunlight. Sunlight provides the world with light. Therefore it means that the entire world is being blessed by Kane No Kami's light shining throughout the world." He continued, "I'll tell you this little poem that Kami revealed to me: The true way of Konko makes the world bright, shines through Heaven, and will last forever." (Gorikai II, Konko Hagio 21)

Memorial Day Visitation



A total of 17 members and ministers from the Konkokyo Community in Hawaii gathered for the annual Memorial Day visitation to the National Cemetery of the Pacific at Punch Bowl on May 29, 2006. This tradition of offering prayers at each grave of a former Konkokyo believer on Memorial Day goes back a long way—dating back to our founding ministers post war.

First Konkokyo Invocation at State Capital

Through the grace of Kami and connections with the Hawaii Conference of Religions for Peace (HRCP), the very first Konkokyo invocation for the Senate was given on April 26, 2006 at the Hawaii State Capitol. The prayer was led by the Rev. Edna Yano of the Konko Mission of Wahiawa.



Information

Konko Missions in Hawaii 80th Anniversary Conference

August 18—20, 2006

Theme

“Prosperity from Generation to Generation”

Day 1: Konko Mission of Honolulu
Day 2: Japanese Cultural Center
Day 3: Ala Moana Beach Park Area 8



Notice:

Rev. Koichi Konko has become a staff of Konkokyo Hawaii Center on a fulltime basis since July 1, 2006 .

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