



Young Ministers' Workshop

By Rev. Alvin Yasutake

Konko Mission of Wailuku

Aloha, Malamalama readers!

On February 16 to 18, 2007, there was a Young Ministers' workshop where three *sensei* came from Japan to talk to us about the "Shonen Shojo kai" (The Konko Youth Organization) and also taught us ways in which we could have more people interested in Konkokyo. The three *sensei* were: Reverend Toshiyuki Chigusa, Reverend Hironori Ushio and Reverend



Yujiro Tsukamoto. They talked about how they teach youths about survival, and educate them or lead them to become good adults. We learned a couple of songs that they sing for campfires and many other activities, like games. All the games and activities really made us think about how we could win the game, or what would work best when it came to the activities. There



were many things that I thought was interesting, such as the "knot-tying" activity, taught to us by Reverend Hironori Ushio. I was amazed at how easy he made it look.

Following that, we teamed up to build a miniature camp watch tower—using sticks and strings. I didn't know what to do or what kind of knot I had to use for certain places, so my tower was left unfinished with no ladder to get to the top.



The second thing I really enjoyed was going down to the stream to pick up rocks of all shapes and sizes to make an animal or what ever we wanted to make. Using glue, paint, and paint brushes, we could use our imagination to make our rocks come to life. The third thing I enjoyed was the different kinds of songs they sing at camps, which were entertaining and fun. Lastly, I would like to mention the creative games. We had to think and have good teamwork and trust in order for our team to win.

Overall, the program was very well organized and I think it will really help us to make this year's youth camp a little more interesting. After learning about planning the youth camp and the Konkokyo Youth Organization of Japan, I was thinking about making a Konkokyo Youth Organization in Hawaii, so we could have these kinds of things continue from generation to generation like the 80th anniversary theme, "Prosperity from Generation to Generation."



An Exciting, Interesting, and Memorable Day!!

By Mrs. Bernice Sato

Konko Mission of Honolulu

On Tuesday, April 10th, I came to the church. At that time, Reverend Koichi Konko told me that he has



good news. The news was that the “Lost” television series production company was going to film in our church. Reverend Koichi asked me to help with the written agreements for the crew to film. I was very excited, and thought to myself that I was not going to miss this wonderful opportunity.



Starting from Sunday afternoon, the crewmembers started to arrive and brought over truckloads of props for the scene. The main church hall was transformed dramatically. It is amazing what the filming crew can do. The pews were all cleared out, and the final touches were added

to make for the perfect funeral hall scene—complete with a wooden casket.

On Monday, April 16th, the filming crew started filming from 6:00 a.m. at the Liliha Times Super



Market Pharmacy, and after that on Liliha Street, near the Liliha Medical Building.

The production company started

to film in our church from about 1:00 p.m. and they finished at about 4:00 p.m. It took three hours to film one scene that lasted only a few minutes. We learned that they have to continually retake the same scene to adjust lighting, shoot from different angles and etc. There was only one main actor in the scene, Matthew Fox, who plays Jack.

Thank you to Mr. Jim Triplett, Location Manager for choosing the Konko Mission of Honolulu for filming. Of all the churches on Liliha Street, this church has been chosen. Thank you also for inviting us to the wonderful catered lunch with the employees.

Thank you to Mr. Devin Sardinha, Location Assistant for accompanying us to lunch, and also for all the interesting information of being a filming crew member.

Thank you to Mr. Dallas Dornon, Male Costume Coordinator who gave us information, regarding the filming of the scene in our church. He mentioned how important it was to have the wardrobe fit the scene, by matching the colors, making sure it was clean, or appropriate for the scene.

We learned that the employees work about 80-100 hours a week. Every day they have a free catered lunch and snacks. All of the films that are shot in Hawaii are sent to Los Angeles for editing. I was very amazed at how courteous and helpful the “Lost” crewmembers were.

Reverends Masahiko and Sugako Yoshino, Koichi Konko, Megumi Yano, Edna Yano and myself had a very exciting, interesting and memorable day.

What a blessing!





SUMMER OHANA CAMP

"Together With Kami"

When: June 15 (Fri) ~17 (Sun), 2007

Where: Camp Olowalu, MAUI

Who: Open to all interested persons

All youth from age 3 and up

Youths younger than 5th grade will need to be accompanied by an adult chaperone

Fees: \$30.00 participation fee per person

*Fees include lodging, meals, and snacks.

**Airfare will be fully subsidized for



Waiting ever so anxiously for the Summer Camp flier to come out...The Konko Missions in Hawaii is proud to present to you the, 2007 "Summer Ohana Camp". Not only is it a camp for youths, but people of all ages are welcome, too. It's about time we have summer fun as a family. As you read the flier above, you will notice that the camp will be held at Camp Olowalu on the beautiful island of Maui. A walk around the town of Lahaina, and a dip in the ocean are some of the many fun activities that are planned ahead for you.

"Together with Kami" has been selected as the theme of the camp. The Parent Kami (God), Tenchi Kane no Kami-Sama exists in every corner of the world—if there ever are corners in this world. Camps are places where we can experience nature in its more pristine forms. Away from the hustle and bustle of traffic and electronic devices, you will find the peace that whispers from the stars at night; the gentle rustling trees against the breeze; the echoes of the rumbling waves; and the soft glow of the moonlight.

Have we been detaching ourselves from Kami-Sama lately? In this seemingly complicated world we live in right now, we tend to get easily carried away with logical explanations. As a teaching from the founder goes, "Although they say the world is becoming civilized, it is not. It is collapsing. Because of this, Konko Daijin has come forth to save the world" (Gorikai I, Ichimura Mitsugoro 1-17).

If we are able to develop and maintain a trusting relationship with Tenchi Kane no Kami-Sama, and allow ourselves to revolve around Kami-Sama at the center of our lives, life will seem more meaningful, and worthwhile; society would not be collapsing, either. So, let's all take this opportunity to reflect upon ourselves and our relationship with Kami-Sama, and reconnect with this deity that endlessly showers us with divine blessings. Application forms are available at your local Konko Church. Hurry, deadline for all application forms is **Sunday, May 27, 2007.**

The Late Reverend Shoichi Okuno

A Selfless and Compassionate Pioneer of the Konkokyo Faith

This year marks the 10th year memorial anniversary of the Reverend Shoichi Okuno. The following is a reprint of Reverend Okuno's biographic accounts from the KMH 80th anniversary booklet in 2006.

By Mr. Glenn Okuno
Konko Mission of Hanapepe

Reverend Shoichi Okuno was a selfless and compassionate Teacher of the Konkokyo faith. He devoted 44 years saving people and propagating its teachings to the people of Hawaii. He served as Reverend of the Hanapepe Konkokyo Church and as Administrative Head of the Konko Missions of Hawaii.

Reverend Shoichi Okuno graduated in 1949 from the Konkokyo Theological Seminary. In 1952, he was sent on an assignment to Honolulu to assist in the compilation of a book of Konkokyo teachings, "Yasutake Matsutaro Kyo Go Shu". Upon its completion, he received the divine guidance from the Third Konko-sama to immediately open a Konkokyo Church in Hanapepe. Hanapepe was a rural agricultural community on Kauai with a diverse ethnic mix of different cultures and languages. He arrived in Hanapepe on June 17, 1953. After a year of start-up challenges of the Church and stimulating test of his faith, he was joined by his wife Reverend Setsuko Okuno on July 4, 1954, after she graduated from the Konkokyo Theological Seminary. Together they pursued their challenging Mission in Hanapepe of saving people and propagating the teachings of Konkokyo in Hawaii.

As the children of Reverend Okuno, the three of us have personally witnessed his selfless dedication and commitment to the divine Mission that was bestowed upon him by the Third Konko-sama. We have watched our father put his heart and soul into saving other people, enduring long hours of teaching, counseling, and praying without break, putting their needs before his own. The concept of a "vacation", as known in our working careers, did not exist in his life.

Our father was very warm-hearted and not only physically strong with "big muscles" but also skilled and strong-willed to endure many personal hardships and challenges to pursue his Mission. From the start, he faced very difficult conditions in Hanapepe in unfamiliar multi-cultures and languages. Within those challenges, his Mission was to save people and propagate the Konkokyo teachings, to which he well succeeded in his 44 years.

After the conversion of two consecutive old houses to be

the Konkokyo Church of Hanapepe, Reverend Okuno built his third (and last) Konkokyo Church of Hanapepe with his own muscle and sweat, alongside its members. The large two-story solid wood and concrete structure was built to last, withstanding major floods and direct hits of Hurricanes Iwa and Iniki. Through each ordeal, Reverends Shoichi and Setsuko Okuno helped people to endure throughout their trying aftermaths of each natural disaster.



In their Mission, for members who could not drive or was inconvenienced to attend Church in Hanapepe (west-side), Reverends Shoichi and Setsuko Okuno brought the Church to them. Specific locations in Koloa (south-side) and Anahola (east-side) were established to hold regular monthly services to accommodate its members, in addition to individually requested services at homes and businesses.

In 1979, Reverend Okuno was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, but his strong will to battle and endure its degenerative symptoms for over 18 years allowed him to continue with his Mission to help people. During his latter years, he relocated to Oahu for better medical attention and despite the eventual decision to close the church in Hanapepe Valley, the church operation still continues in Foster Village, Oahu, by Reverend Setsuko Okuno.

On January 26, 1997, at age 75, Reverend Shoichi Okuno passed on to become a "Mitama Spirit". His passing was Kami Sama's will and personal acknowledgement to Reverend Okuno saying, "You succeeded in your Mission, Gokuro-sama deshita!" The people of Hawaii, as well as each of his children, have truly been inspired by Reverend Okuno's selflessness and compassion extended. He pioneered the faith of Konkokyo in many people on Kauai and throughout Hawaii. His Konkokyo legacy and memories of his selflessness and compassion for people will live-on in all of our hearts.

Be Happy!

Keynote Speech Presentation

KMH 80th Anniversary Conference Day II

Rev. Koichi Konko

Konko Mission of Honolulu

Good morning, everyone. My name is Koichi Konko from the Konko Mission of Honolulu.

First of all, I would like to explain why the Konko Mission in Hawaii 80th Anniversary Committee set a theme for this anniversary conference. One of the reasons is because Konko Sama cherishes, “Prosperity from Generation to Generation.” The Committee also needed the theme to relate to the past, present as well as the future.

After deciding the theme, we discussed the objectives to make the anniversary conference successful and worthwhile:

- 1) To define “Prosperity” in Konkokyo
- 2) To explain why Konkokyo is important to this and future generations
- 3) To appreciate the accomplishments of Konkokyo in Hawaii on behalf of all people as individuals and families.

I am hoping that my speech will reflect the three objectives. Before I begin, please turn to the person next to you and say good morning. Also, please take a good look at them. What is your first impression of them? They have a nice face, right? Whenever I visit a Konkokyo church, everybody seems to have a nice face. I thought, “is it because of their good faith?” Actually they have a nice smile because of the Konko faith. I think a smile relates to our theme today.

First, I wanted to define “prosperity”. So I looked up on my high-tech electronic dictionary and prosperity is defined as, “a condition in which a person or community is doing well financially.” I kind of understand this definition, but I wasn’t really satisfied with it. Is the definition of prosperity only characterized as being financially well off? I think prosperity is a lot more than this.

I think there are three elements to “prosperity”.

They are:

- 1) Physical Condition – Health
- 2) Financial Condition – Wealth
- 3) Spiritual Condition – Faith



If we are wealthy and healthy, but if we are never satisfied and constantly complain, I don’t think that is “prosperity.” On the other hand, if we were to be hospitalized and do not have much money—if we have faith, I say it’s “prosperity” because we can find our own means of salvation. I believe that developing our faith depends on how well we realize what Kami-Sama has been doing for us, as well as to what extent we appreciate the divine blessings we are receiving. We have to realize that we are constantly in the midst of divine blessings. Thus we need to understand Kami-Sama’s unconditional love for us. Let us realize the workings of Kami-Sama, and the Mitama Spirits, as well as the many people and things in the environment that we rely on.

I believe that the most important element of prosperity is our spiritual condition or Faith.

When do you feel happy?

In my case, when I bought something that I really wanted, I was happy. When I went to the beach and saw good waves, I couldn’t stop smiling. When I caught a good wave and could ride it well, I was very happy. When I got an “A” in college, especially when I didn’t expect it, I was happy. I know many Hawaii people like to go to Las Vegas to gamble. I’d like to try and gamble at places like Las Vegas or some other casinos in countries such as Korea. So, if I visited a Korean casino and won, I would be happy. I would shout, “I won, I won! I won 10,000 *won*! (by the way, *won* is Korean currency).” “So how much is 10,000 *won* ?” “about \$10 US”, but anyway, I would still be happy. When I went out on a date with a really cute girl, I was very happy. Sadly I haven’t had this experience lately.

I am also happy when I am able to help people. For example, when my friend has a problem, and I am able to give advice that is helpful, I am happy. Last month, a friend of mine really needed to have someone pick up several Japanese students, take them to their house for a

welcome party, and drop them off at the hotel later on. I was available to be the driver for my friend. The students and my friend were very happy, and it showed with their bright smiles and “thank you”. I was very happy to bring happiness to others. When we are able to help people who really need help, we feel happy.

Moreover, I feel very happy when I’m doing what Kami-Sama wishes for me to do. When we are very young, our parents praise us. When we are praised, we feel very happy, right? I feel the same kind of happiness in doing things for Kami-Sama because Kami-Sama is our ideal parent. In my case, I was not the “good son” of the family, so I’ve only been praised a few times. However, the few times I have been praised, I was very happy because I was able to make my parents happy.

How about our role model, Konko Daijin, the founder of the Konko religion?

When was he happy? When I look at our founder’s life, he lived his first half of his life as a farmer. He increased his land and renovated the main house and barn. He was an ordinary, but very successful farmer. However, he also experienced the death of many relatives including his brother in law, adoptive father, 3 children, and his biological parents, as well as valuable livestock. He has experienced very tough times.

The Founder spent the latter half of his life as a *toritsugi* mediator, where 15,000 people came to see him in the small village of Otani. He witnessed people being saved, and saw happy people in his worship hall. He was gaining Kami Sama’s trust, but still had difficulties in his life including health problems, social problems, and government pressure.

When do you think our founder was the happiest?

Here is a teaching that gives us a hint:

What should be the goal in practicing faith? The sick come to pray for a cure, while the healthy come to pray for a good harvest or 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 won’t continue.

To free your future anxiety, divine blessings must be received by not only you, but by future generations as well. 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 the family head doesn’t practice faith. (*Excerpt from Gori-kai II Yamamoto, Sadajiro 7*)

The way I see it, the founder seems financially prosperous in the first half of his life. He focused on his health and financial condition when he was a farmer; however, he changed his perspective in the latter half of his life. He conveyed in the teaching, “looking forward to a future free of anxiety.” That is more important than one’s health and financial conditions. He was able to realize this by connecting to Kami-Sama directly and opening his spiritual eyes. He was able to live an anxiety free life during the latter

half of his life. He went from being in constant anxiety to being anxiety free and happy. The way our founder perceived hardships was different between the first half and the latter half of his life.



In my case, due to my younger brother’s grave illness, I was able to change my perspective about prosperity and my sense of values.

When my brother was 23 years old, he was diagnosed with a very rare illness. His doctor said, “Three months.” And my brother knew that he had only three months to live. When I was told of that situation, I realized that I couldn’t do anything for him. Money could not help his situation. But then, I realized the Konko faith was the only answer. Faith helped him and our family cope with the situation.

Faith kept our family and my brother calm. We went through a process of *toritsugi* mediation, trusting Kami-Sama, receiving Konko-Sama’s prayers, as well as the prayers from other ministers’. The Tenchi Kakitsuke (or the Divine Reminder) helped us a great deal:

Through Ikigami Konko Daijin (Toritsugi Mediation)

To Tenchi Kane no Kami (Divine Principle and Parent of the Universe)

Pray with a single heart (a single heart directed to Kami Sama)

The Divine favor depend upon one's own devout, sincere, and peaceful heart,

On this very day pray.

Today, we can say this crisis situation was definitely a divine blessing because we were able to tackle it with a positive attitude. Although it was a difficult time for all of us, we were able to come together as a family and focus on our faith. I truly understand that one's spiritual well-being as well as keeping a joyful heart in any situation is very important.

We were able to improve our family relationship. We were able to strengthen our faith. We were able to experience the true essence of the Konko faith. The Konko faith opened up a new world for me. At this turning point in my life, I decided to become a Konkokyo minister, even while my brother was still in the hospital. I thought to myself, "I cannot do anything for my brother, but I can do something to please Kami-Sama and the Mitama spirits. At that time, for me, I thought it was to become a Konkokyo minister.

When I was younger, I admit I was a mischievous older brother. My family used to say, "because of you, we are sometimes unhappy." Because of my brother's illness I started to study, understand, and practice the Konko faith, and to some extent I was able to reform myself. I think this was the point of opening my spiritual eyes. My brother soon recovered and was discharged from the hospital. Soon after I graduated from the Konkokyo Seminary, my brother followed in my path. He also enrolled into the seminary and became a Konkokyo minister. He got married in 2005; currently training at a church, and soon to become a father. One of our seminary instructors told me, "When we asked your brother why he chose to become a Konkokyo minister, during the entrance interview, your brother said to us 'Seeing my naughty big brother praying for me when I was sick, I was extremely moved.'" My youngest brother also became a Konkokyo minister and wants to propagate the Konko faith. He is doing *goyo* at the main worship hall at the Konkokyo headquarters. I think my whole family is enjoying prosperity now because we are all happy. I hope and pray that we are doing Kami-Sama's work.

If we are happy, we could have a joyful heart, and we will enjoy life. This is prosperity. Our health or financial status doesn't really matter; what matters is how much happiness we feel in our day-to-day living. The most important thing is our spiritual well being. Through learning about the founder's life and my experiences, and by relating my experiences with the people surrounding me, I am certain that the Konko faith is very important in maintaining prosperity.



Prosperity is the status of how much joy we have in our hearts during any situation. In other words, SMILE. The Konko faith teaches us how to be happy, and that being happy is the way of the universe. When we smile, we are pretty, handsome or cute. Take a look at your neighbors again, please. Are they smiling? I believe they have a good face



because they are doing *goyo* (something for Kami-Sama) by attending this anniversary conference. Being a participant of this conference is very important *goyo*, and with so many people, this conference has come to fruition. The "Generation to Generation" in the theme of our conference is to share our happiness, show how to be happy to others, and how to have a joyful heart. Opening our spiritual eyes is one of the ways to be happy. If we can open our spiritual eyes, we can see how much divine blessings we are receiving from Kami-Sama, and how much we are loved.

We all want to be happy, so the Konko faith is important not only to this generation, but also to the next generations as well.

I cannot help but appreciate the fact that this wonderful faith has been passed down to me. I would like to thank all the ministers and members for passing down the Konko faith to this generation in Hawaii. Many people have been saved and helped. It is because of the Konko faith that many people are able to have a joyful heart. I am pretty sure that the vast majority of us would not be here today if it were not for the Konko faith. Do we find ourselves showing enough appreciation? Let's do something to show our thanks. Let's take action. For Kami-Sama's sake, I find I must do something now.

We need to study, learn, and practice the Konko faith to a greater extent to avoid going in the wrong direction. That is the way to improve our faith. Let's share our stories of faith to many people in this generation and to future generations. We should not keep the blessings that we've received to ourselves; we must reveal it.

Lastly, I have a dream. My dream is to have many local born ministers spread the faith throughout Hawaii and the world. I believe that it is also one of the elements for the prosperity of Konkokyo in Hawaii. The next minister could be you!

Thank you very much.

Highlights of this issue...

- 1) Young Ministers' Workshop
- 2) "Lost" Films at Honolulu Church!
- 3) Summer Ohana Camp Notice
- 4) Memories of the Late Rev. Shoichi Okuno
- 5) Rev. Koichi Konko's KMH 80th Anniversary
Keynote Speech Presentation

Notice: Revs. Alvin Yasutake and Edna Yano will be going to the Konkokyo Headquarters to attend the 5th and 20th year ordainment ministers' seminar. It will be held from May 28-30, 2007.

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