

KMH 80th Anniversary, Well Done!



November 2006
Volume 24, Issue 4

It's been a hot summer season for the Konko Missions in Hawaii. Our 80th Anniversary Conference was celebrated. The Theme for events was, "Prosperity from Generation to Generation." We set out with three objectives in mind: 1) *Define the Prosperity in Konkokyo.* 2) *Explain why Konkokyo is important to this and future generations.* 3) *Appreciate the accomplishments of Konkokyo in Hawaii on behalf of all people as individuals and families.* The conference would stretch for three days.

Day One would consist of conducting the anniversary service to appreciate Parent Kami and all the people before us in the KMH, and to pray for our future. **Day Two** would consist of sharing thoughts for expressing appreciation, as well as help us build for a strong future. **Day Three** would consist of enjoying a beach picnic to deepen family and friendships.

Day One:

Our Anniversary Service was conducted at the Konko Mission of Honolulu on August 18th, 2006. It was close to five o'clock in the afternoon. Almost two-hundred people from Japan, the Konko Churches of North America (KCNA), and from all our Islands in Hawaii took their part in this service. A processional of the fourteen officiants wearing sacred white robes began events. *Tengaku* music was provided by five players wearing sacred purple robes. The service began with a hymn sung by all, *Shinjin no Eiko*. This was followed with the Mediation Prayer, and then and Kami Prayer. Then the Main Japanese *Saishi* Prayer was conveyed to Parent Kami by the event's head officiant, Reverend Masa-



hiko Yoshino. Simultaneously, Reverend Roy Yasutake, wearing sacred black robes, recited in English the Main *Saishi* Prayer. After the *Tamagushi* Offering by Rev. Yoshino, and then the Recitation of the Tenchi Kakitsuke, we all sang the second hymn, *Shinjin no Michi*. Guest ministers, special guests, and representatives of six churches in Hawaii then offered *Tamagushi*. Then we all recited the Adoration Prayer, and sang the third hymn, *A Shining Shimmering Light*.

After this the fourteen officiants receded, two girls then stepped forward wearing sacred and traditional pink *Kibimai* clothes. They offered their *Kibimai* Sacred Dance at the Altar to Kami. At the end of this service, Reverend Masahiko Oka, Director of the Konkokyo Hawaii Center, and Reverend Roderick Hashimoto, Chief Administrative Minister of the KCNA, shared congratulatory remarks. At this point the nearly two hundred guests from both sides of the Ocean ascended stairs to the

smell of ono foods hanging nicely in the air. The second floor of the Honolulu Mission had been decorated so very nicely for the reception. Poi, Lomi-lomi, Fried Chicken, Ahi Poki, Sashimi, Poi bread, and many other great foods lay there wafting in redolence for an ono buffet. Conversations bubbled over; the entertainment had now begun. The Oahu choir group for Konkokyo sang a number of beautiful songs. A youth member from Wailuku danced two traditional Japanese dances. An Amagi church group from Japan showed us their *Chikichiki Banban* dance. A Hula group for Konkokyo on Oahu danced a wonderful hula. And two members

of the Momoyama Gagakuryo band from Japan played pop music, but while using traditional instruments.

What a day! We'd really launched our **Day One**.

Day Two:

Our participants gathered at the Japanese Cultural Center. We all met in the morning in their conference/ballroom. First we enjoyed a continental breakfast together. Events for **Day Two** commenced soon after this, around Eight. We first viewed a very meaningful DVD



message and interview from our current Spiritual Leader, Konko-Sama, the Reverend Heiki Konko. Our Konko-Sama acknowledged all the work of the many KMH pioneers and predecessors and early ministers. And he also acknowledged the Anniversary Theme for our Conference. Konko-Sama declared, "Let us rejoice in the fact that we are related to the faith which has been handed down from our founder, and let us make a renewed effort to realize Kami's Wish." He conveyed to us that it is vital "to recognize that all human beings are the precious lives which are connected to Kami, regardless of nationality, race and language." and he continued, "We must strive to create a world where Kami and people, people and people, and people and all things can live together through an Interdependent Relationship of *Aiyo Kakeyo*."

The interview of Konko-Sama had been conducted by Miss Aimee Yasutake from the Konko Mission of Wailuku on Maui. And she asked personal questions. We learned more about the daily life of Konko-Sama. For example, in her interview we learned that he reads Japanese and English newspapers every morning. When he has time, he studies German. Konko-Sama enjoys listening to classical music. And her last question to him was about his dream. Our Konko-Sama's big dream is to follow in the footsteps of the 3rd and 4th Konko-



Samas, and this also he shared: "My sincere wish and dream is for all people, as many as possible, to practice our founder's faith and to connect with Kami. It is my dream for the creation of the world where all mankind are saved."

After the message & interview DVD, we heard the words of two keynote speakers, of Reverend Koichi Konko from the Konko Mission of Honolulu, and of Dr. John Tamashiro from the Konko Mission of Waipahu. Rev. Konko intoned: "Prosperity is the status of well-being, and our Konko Faith is a necessity for us to fulfill, and just in the way that our founder already experienced." Dr. Tamashiro spoke on the meaning of "Prosperity." It refers to our health, to our having a good job, to our survival during an emergency. He shared examples from each Church in Hawaii as to how we relate to the meaning of Prosperity: healing, solving work-related problems, surviving crises and reconciling the conflicts within our families.

The next part of our program for **Day Two** took the form of group discussions. We divided ourselves into eight English groups, seven Japanese groups, and a little-keiki group. Each group met in small numbers around tables, ten or so at each table. And "Constructive discussion!" would many say afterwards. People meeting in groups, and face to face with each other at tables, were asked to share what they felt about Tomorrow's Konkokyo: How do we move to find our future together? Suggestions, recommendations, optimistic advice made a hum in the big conference room. Few were shy in these smaller discussions. Recommendations bubbled out from each group. And each group reported back later on to the larger assembly.

11:30 rolled around. Over three hours had elapsed in the blink of an eye. Now we realized we were hungry. Cue the food. Tender teriyaki fillets, sautéed *mahi mahi*, and other great ono foods got wheeled in. During the lunch we watched interview



videos of KMH senior members. Oh the stories they shared from years back and eras long ago gone, from Konkokyo's early history. We so appreciated their faith, their stories of divine favors received, their

own suggestions for the future of KMH. We also recognized at our luncheon all the members of KMH who were over 80 years old, and in attendance. Our younger members presented leis to our seniors, and hugged them in gratitude. Both young and old were beaming warmly.

At the close of our Program for **Day Two**, we sang three hymns, *Shinjin no Eiko*, *Shinjin no Michi*, and the third one, *A Shining Shimmering Light*. Then, the Hawaii *Yosakoi* dance team and Amagi church *Yosakoi* dance team collaborated on a very energetic *Yosakoi* dance. Many in attendance felt energized at their enthusiasm. Many felt renewed to move on in our efforts, and overcome hurdles.

Day Three:

The blue sky, the green grass, the tall coconuts trees, and of course the big ocean and sand - This was perfect: a big beach picnic gala at Ala Moana Beach Park. One-hundred- and-twenty very spirited folks from Hawaii, from the American Mainland, and of course from Japan all met up at Area Eight in Ala Moana Beach Park at about Ten in the morning. First, to break ice, we all played an introduction game. Everyone there had to go up and introduce himself or herself to at least three other people they'd never met at any time in the past. Meet new friends. Next we played a game called "*Jyanken pon* (paper, stone and scissors) CATERPILLER." If a person lost at the *Jyanken pon*, he or she had to grab the winner's shoulders from the back and follow him or her around for the rest of the activity. The winners in front then played *Jyanken pon* once again with other winners, and if they won, then the loser, plus his or her followers behind, increased the train of the winners. A



lot of CATERPILLERS were thus formed. And guess what? The youngest and littlest girl at the game became the ultimate winner. And when the final game finished, everybody there was CATERPILLERING her.

Through this game, and other icebreakers, we came closer together. We could make up teams easily for the next games. We next did charades using Konkokyo teachings. One-sentence teachings were picked out for each team. A team then had to show this one sentence, but not through talking – they had to show it through pantomime skills. And then the Ministers' teams had to guess what those teachings, through charading, really were. All the teams, believe it or not, did so well that every meaning was revealed. We enjoyed all our games. We enjoyed our relearning of all our Konkokyo faith just as well.

When we finished our games at Ala Moana Beach Park, we could smell delicious barbeque food. We recited our grace before the meal and lined up near food tables. There were so many picnicky items, such as meat, sausage, fish, salad, sodas, and desserts. We were hungry. People gobbled almost all of the food on the tables. There was free time after this. Some people played in the Park.

Others swam in the ocean. We all returned to our Area Eight by 1:30 p.m. Having finished festivities, we lined up for group photos.

And so it ended. What a lively, and fulfilling, and very meaningful conference we'd just experienced, for the Eightieth Year of Konko Missions in Hawaii. We truly hope that what we shared in these days of mid August in 2006 will help guide us to our future, and do it all with a smile.



How was it?

The following two articles are written by participants of the KMH 80th Anniversary Conference.

Problems and Prosperity

*By Miss Lisa Yasutake
Konko Mission of Waipahu*

The KMH 80th Anniversary Conference was held August 18-20 with the perfect theme “Prosperity from Generation to Generation.” Not only did the theme apply personally (I was able to attend with my parents, grandparents, and family I had not seen in a long time), it addressed the issues at hand for KMH today. I would like to focus on the second day of the conference when group discussions were held and speeches were given about the meaning of prosperity. Everyone deliberated on the problems of Konko Missions in Hawaii and of the possible solutions. There were several problems that recurred among many groups’ reports. Mainly they focus on the needs of each generation in Konkokyo; we need to retain our older generation by remaining accessible while at the same time be appealing in order to recruit and retain the younger generation.

First, there is the problem of language. The congregation being a mix of Japanese-speaking and English-speaking persons, when a minister is not bilingual, one of the two groups becomes somewhat deprived. To remain understandable for the older generation, services and sermons need to be in Japanese. However, for the younger generation to hold interest, they must be done in English. There is also the cultural gap between Japan and America that makes it difficult for young and new members to understand Shinto-style ceremonies. The solutions given were to train ministers to be bilingual or have one English-

speaking minister and one Japanese-speaking minister at each church and have separate English and Japanese services. Both solutions may prove difficult, but it is definitely achievable. Our younger, American-born and raised ministers are already working hard to fill the language and cultural gap.



Miss Lisa Yasutake

The second problem is that unfortunately, not all churches are handicap-accessible, a service needed by some elderly and handicap members now and in the future. Again, this goes along with the hope to retain the older generation. If going to church becomes so physically challenging, the trip will cause not only physical stress on the members, but emotional stress as well. The solution for this problem is of course to make churches

handicap-accessible. Some churches *have* taken a step forward by constructing features such as ramps and railings, but there is still more that needs to be done. Perhaps members with tools, supplies, or construction experience can volunteer time and donate materials to make this happen.

Finally, there is a lack of information. Not only is this a problem for younger members who may feel detached because they do not fully comprehend Konkokyo, it is difficult to recruit new members without sufficient information. There needs to be a way to recruit and retain younger members and spread information to the public. Prayers, teachings, bibliographies, and other written documents have been used and read over generations and many of these have been translated. However, still there is the problem of lacking information. I believe this is because orally, members have difficulty explaining to non-members what Konkokyo is. Older genera-



tions seem more capable of this (as seen in the interviews shown during the conference) so perhaps we need them to pass on information to the younger generations. Other solutions given were to have more programs to educate the youth—be it Sunday School or youth activities—and also to have more conferences like this one to help educate all members. On a personal note, I have been attending the KCNA (Konko Churches of North America) Youth Camps, Young Adult Seminars, and Conferences every year and they have been the most educational (not to mention the most fun) church experiences I have had.

Having described the needs of each generation, next is to ask how each can prosper. But first we must know what prosperity means. I would like to tell a story about my high school English teacher that reflects the concept of prosperity. She and her two young sons were watching their new house being constructed in a brand new, wealthy neighborhood. A construction worker passing by them said, “Lady, you are very lucky! You are rich!” Trying to be modest and not at all believing she was rich in comparison to other families on the block, she said, “No, no. You can see this house is smaller than the other ones.” The worker replied, “No,” looking at the two boys, “they are treasures. You are very rich!” Prosperity for the two people meant different things. It is not that one of them is wrong,



but that prosperity can mean different things for different people.

So what is prosperity in Konkokyo? Reverend Koichi Konko and Dr. John Tamashiro defined in their speeches what they felt prosperity means. Rev. Konko defined prosperity as the “status of well-being” that consists of three parts: health, wealth, and faith, the most important being faith. Similarly, Dr. Tamashiro referred to prosperity as good health, a good job, and the ability to survive crises. Again, the definition of prosperity will differ from one person to the next, but I believe we can all agree on Rev. Konko’s point that prosperity is what brings

happiness. As members of Konkokyo, we all have the ability to achieve happiness by practicing faith. Also, solving the above named problems is a way to extend more happiness to everyone, thus ensuring prosperity from generation to generation.

Stepping back to the big picture, I believe the KMH 80th Anniversary Conference was a

great success. We were able to hold a wonderful service, enjoy diverse entertainment, listen to Konko-Sama’s interview, think about what prosperity means, converse about the problems and solutions for Konko Missions in Hawaii, and mingle

with fellow members in a fun-filled day with ONO food and games (Whew!). It was three days filled with prosperity—spiritual growth and happiness—for all members of every generation.



KONKO MISSIONS IN HAWAII EIGHTYth ANNIVERSARY SERVICE

**By Herbert A Nishikawa, PhD, RN
Konko Mission of Hanapepe**

On the late afternoon and early evening of August 18, 2006, Konko Mission in Hawaii began its 80th year celebration with an Anniversary Conference of three days. The Anniversary Conference began with a spiritual service attended by 170 participants from Japan, Konko Churches of North America, and Hawaii. Participants filled the church and were greeted with friendly smiles and eager assistance; while old friends and associates genuinely re-united with introductions of new acquaintances established.

The church altar was elegantly decorated with multiple magnificently large red anthuriums. The service processional of fourteen regal Konkokyo ministers adorned in their traditional ceremonial white robes opened the celebration; preceded by informational directions and announcements from the master's of ceremony. Five talented musicians wearing vivid purple attire played sacred traditional Japanese melodies appropriately commencing the occasion. Traditional Japanese musical instruments and music encapsulated the service into a state of celebration and recognition. The service was inspirationally conducted in the Japanese language augmented with English translation. The master's of ceremony was clearly informative; and directional in monitoring and informing English speaking participants during the entire service. The methodical movements and stoic conduct at the altar established the spiritual and momentous atmosphere of the occasion.

The service was conducted with traditional prayers, singing hymns and blessings. The inspirational Japanese Main *Saishi* prayer was delivered by Reverend Masahiko Yoshino in the Japanese language accompanied by an English version read by

Reverend Roy Yasutake. Accommodations for English speaking participants were both enhancing and inclusive to bridge the across the generations. As part of the service, special guest ministers and representatives of the six churches in Hawaii offered *Tamagushi*.

Immediately after the formal service, two splendid girls dressed in pink traditional costumes meticulously and gracefully danced the *Kibimai* Scared Dance to Kami's altar. The performance was inspiring and offered participants an opportunity to transcend into their ethnic and rich cultural heritage. The service concluded as planned and monitored by the Master's of Ceremony.

At the conclusion of the service, participants merged and humorously gathered for a group photo. Thereafter, a magnificently arranged reception of food from multiple appetizers to desserts and drinks was waiting and enjoyed by all. The only other perfect ingredient was the company and the socialization engaged during the dinner. Adding to the glorious evening were the variety of talented entertainment that including harmonious chorus singing, talented hula dancing, graceful Japanese dancing and rare cultural musical instrument recitals. The evening concluded with smiles, laughter and hugs from old and new friends; the spiritual contentment deserving and generated from the celebration.



Dr. Nishikawa, the Second from the Left

In addition, the program brochure and handouts were meticulously written and available with both historical and present information; accompanied with explanatory photographs or graphics. Every detail for a successful and accommodating conference was generated and executed; even plastic bags were provided to ensure the security of your shoes. All, who participated in the planning and delivery of the conference, are truly deserving of our deepest expression of thanks for the laborious energy and time it took to create a memorable experience of spiritual and heartwarming well being.

New Director of KHC

Splash It out of the Cup!

Rev. Saijiro Matsuda



I hope none of you wonderful folks will pass out if I tell you some news: Rev. Oka has gone back to Japan. And I've been asked to walk around in his shoes. I've replaced him. I'll do my best. Please give me help. Please help us all.

And now on to new futures. As you know very recently we celebrated the 80th Anniversary of Konko Missions in Hawaii. We had our wonderful conference. We shared all of our faith and our dreams and our hopes, and for the future. And we had a great time. No one seemed to want events to have to end. Let's keep it going! - I heard more than one person request! And me too! Let's keep it going! I say. Let's keep the joy from our conference intact.

But now how can we do this? A good question.

My English teacher at UH was at our conference. And as you know, he is not a Japanese. And he told me this afterwards, in September: "Konkokyo today is like water, Saijiro, but it's like the water in a cup. It's essential of course, your Konkokyo. And it's a wonderful Faith. But the cup holding all of this water is Japanese. It's a Japanese cup. Only Japanese can hold the cup of Konkokyo right now."

"Student Saijiro," said my teacher Mister Dave, "Splash it out. Splash the water all out. Splash that water all out of the cup. Let it float in the air, then let it fall on the face of the world. Share Konkokyo with the rest of the world!"

Wow. My UH teacher can be so inspiring!

And so now what do you think? Is that a challenging thought? an adventurous thought? an outsider kind of thought? Is it relevant to the question: How do we keep all the joy from our Conference intact?

"Prosperity from Generation to Generation!" we all say to each other.

And so I ask for your help, your *kokua*. Might we work as an *ohana* on this? Can we splash the joyful water from our cup of Konkokyo, up and out to a larger thirsty world?

Former Director of KHC

Aloha and Mahalo

Rev. Masahiko Oka



Aloha, Hawaii. I'd like to take a little time to thank all of you, and thank you so much for your continued dedication to the Konko Missions in Hawaii. Thank you for your wholehearted support. Thanks too for being so helpful, and not only to me, but also to my family.

I came to Hawaii four years ago, on assignment to the staff at the KMH center. I came here to Hawaii fully willing to work hard, go to meetings every day, and fulfill my assignment's responsibilities. These four happy little years been touched me very much. There are so many great people in the Islands. I have been warmed in the heart (almost tanned) by such an abundance of aloha. Your natural beauties are so rich. There is such decency in all you people who live there. My heart has been warmed indeed, by such *Aloha*, by such *Mahalo*, by such a spirit of the *Kamaaina*, by so many People and Cultures out there. And on top of all this, I have even been able to learn a little bit of the English language (not enough, but a little). I've tried my best to work together with you all on behalf of the KMH community in Hawaii.

With divine blessings, and with your support, I have now fulfilled my missionary work at the KMH Center.

The rainbow Culture in Hawaii embraces differences. It imbues a respect for other peoples. It enhances world peace. And the Rainbow Culture in Hawaii shines forth with the golden Faith of Konkokyo. Let's continue to live and to share our Founder Konko Daijin's timeless faith.

At the moment I am serving on the editorial staff of the Konko Shinbun, at the Gohonbu. So when you visit the Konkokyo-Gohonbu, please stop by and see me for coffee at the Konko Shinbun. I'll extend a big *Aloha*.

My home address at the Honbu is the following: 135-1 Otani, Konko-cho, Asakuchi-shi, Okayama-ken, Japan 719-0111. Let's keep in touch. I look forward to hearing news of Hawaii from you.

May we all jump out into blue skies and azure spirits, and step forward throughout the world. Aloha and Mahalo!!

Information

KMH

Faith Enrichment Meeting

Theme: **More Konkoko!**

Guest Speakers:

Rev. Roy Yasutake Rev. David Yano
Rev. Alvin Yasutake Rev. Edna Yano
Rev. Koichi Konko (Japanese)

Date: November 18, 2006 (Sat.)

Time: 1:30 pm-3:30 pm

Subject: Function of Konko Church
-Attending Church,
-Prayer,
-Having Toritsugi Mediation

Location: Konko Mission of Honolulu

We are going to have a small group discussion about each subject after short speeches.

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