



The Konko Missions in Hawaii will fulfill Ikigami Konko Daijin's vision to embrace the world with the Konko Faith.

From Divine Request to the Establishment of the Faith Trials, Training, and the Entrusted Divine Wish

Continued from the last issue, the third installment of the Founder's life

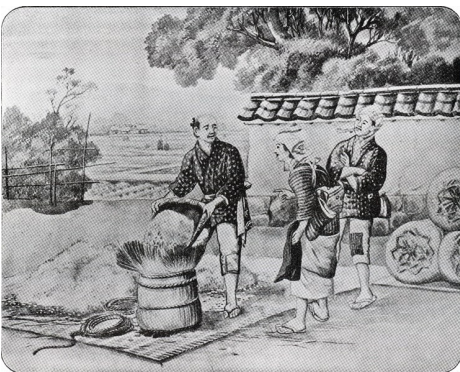
The Balance between Helping People and Household Work Becomes Difficult - Devotion to Serving as Kami's Intermediary is Requested by Kami

As the New Year dawned in the 6th year of Ansei, Kami instructed the Founder to retire and hand over the household to his 15-year-old son, Asakichi, early in January. Retirement meant stepping away from public duties within the village as well.

Afterward, Kami continued to give detailed instructions to the Founder and his family on how to act in situations like wheat harvesting and children's illness. These were severe trials, testing their faith in Kami, challenging them to follow Kami's words beyond common sense in agriculture and the natural affection of parents for their children.

However, by leaving everything to Kami and striving to follow Kami's instructions, the family began to witness the unmistakable truth of Kami's blessings and revelations. With the further progression of their faith, in June, the Founder was granted the divine title "Kanshi Daimyoin" by Kami.

Among those quietly watching the Founder's devotion was a neighbor, Suzuki Kyuzo. Kyuzo saw the Founder follow Kami's instructions, packing the harvested wheat into bags without drying it, and decided to try the same.



However, when bugs infested Kyuzo's bags, he asked the Founder whether he should take out the wheat to dry and exterminate the bugs. The Founder replied, "If there are bugs, it's good to let the sun in." He fol-

lowed the advice and dried the wheat, but countless bugs that came out of the bag infested the main house where his brother, Imazo, lived.

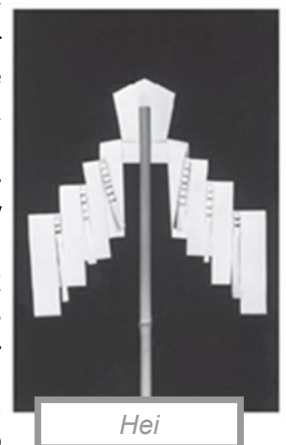
The angered Imazo suffered the consequences. "It's absurd. Taking the words of a layman seriously. If praying could prevent bugs, there wouldn't be any in a prayer practitioner's house. Who else would put raw wheat in bags? The fool has ruined even our things." He was unappeasable and directed his anger not only at the situation but also at the Founder, whom he derisively referred to as a "layman."

Kyuzo, without hiding the situation, told the Founder, "Despite everything, thanks to your advice, the wheat was not much damaged, and the quantity decreased less than I thought. It was a blessing. Please express my gratitude to Kami." And he seemed delighted.

When the Founder expressed gratitude to Kami, he received a revelation from Kami saying, "Anyone can mimic the work. Yet they can't mimic the heart." By this time, people from the neighborhood who had problems began to ask the Founder to pray to Kami for them. The number of people increased gradually, and each time someone came to ask for prayers, the Founder had to stop his farming work and return home.

In October of the sixth year of Ansei (1859), the Founder was instructed to stack five colored papers and make a "hei" (a kind of offering), and offer it. Upon doing so, a solemn revelation was given by Kami.

"Konshi Daimyoin, accept this Divine Call that from this day you are no longer to devote yourself to farming. Though your family has been engaged in farming, you are to leave this work. With so many calling you out of the fields requesting help and guidance, you do not have time for the family occupation. Those seeking



.....continued on page 2

help often have to wait, causing difficulties for both them and you. For these reasons, you are to give up this occupation.

"Your illness when you were forty-two years old caused doctors and others to give up hope for your recovery. You prayed to kamis and buddhas and recovered completely. Remember this critical moment in your life.

"Consider this Divine Call as your passing and put aside your self interests and give assistance to Kami. Furthermore, Tose, you should think of yourself as a widow. This kind of widowhood is preferable to real widowhood, as you will still be able to be with your husband. You should take the children with you and continue farming as best you can.

"There are many people who are troubled. A person like you who has sincere and conscientious faith in Kami should help them through Mediation. Kami will be fulfilled and people will be saved. Kami exists because of people, and people exist because of Ka-



The rice field the Founder had been cultivating

mi. Everyone will become forever prosperous through the relationship of mutual reliance between Kami and people."

This divine call reminds the Founder of the hindrance in dealing with those who came for help while continuing farming, and urges him to remember when his life, seemingly lost, was saved by Kami at the age of 42. It pleads with him to gain the understanding and

consent of his wife and encourages him to make the decision. Moreover, unlike previous divine messages that appeared like directives, the phrase "please do ~" suggests that Kami seems to be fully aware of how difficult this request is for the Founder. One can sense the intensity of Kami's desire for the Founder to mediate and assist the struggling parishioners.

The Founder responded, "As per your instructions, I will stop my work and devote myself to serving in the worship hall."

Visiting the Founder - Part 4

Increasing Participants and the Divine Message "Remove the Front Door": **Building the Shrine with Kami's Wishes for "A Place of Worship where people Can Give Requests And Thanks"**

In October (according to the lunar calendar) of Ansei 6 (1859), Kami requested the Founder to dedicate himself to mediate and helping the troubled people. In this installment, we look back at the movements and events centered around the worship hall following the Founder's dedication to Toritsugi Mediation.

Dedication to Toritsugi Leading to Increased Visitors: Unperturbed by the Aggressive Actions of Yamabushi (Subtitle)

The Founder transitioned to a life entirely different from before, leaving his family's farming business to focus solely on mediation. He spent his days seated before Kami, mediating people's requests, explaining understandings, and prioritizing the salvation of people.

Quitting farming, the family's livelihood, must have brought its own worries, but the Founder never wavered from his belief that this path was instructed by Kami. However, those around him, hoping he would reconsider and return to farming, were concerned. Tose (his wife)'s father, Yaozo Furukawa, was particularly troubled, fearing the family's future

might be jeopardized. Sometimes he even insisted, "Stop this faith."

Shoyemon Ono, the village headman and the Founder's childhood friend, admonished him twice for leaving agriculture. As headman, he was concerned about the future of the Founder's family. Despite repeated advice and attempts to change his mind from those around him, the Founder, while listening silently, never faltered and sometimes spoke of the blessings of Kami. Kami had encouraged him, saying, "Do not worry about your children. I will not let them starve or suffer in the future."

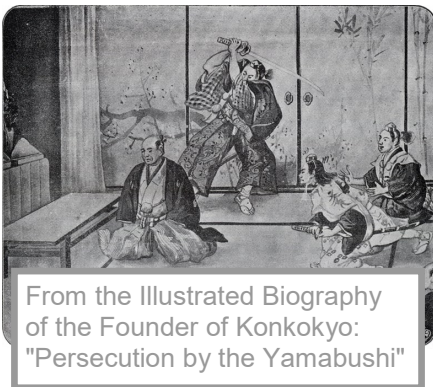
Gradually, the headman's disapproval turned into tacit acceptance, and even the initially resistant Furukawa family, including Yaozo, started receiving mediation and became devoted believers.

As word spread of the abundant blessings from Kami, increasing numbers of people burdened with worries and problems visited the worship hall. In the following year, 1860, the Founder was instructed by Kami to keep a record book, "Shinmon-cho," listing visitors' addresses, names, ages, and mediation details. In May, he was instructed to rename it

"Negainushi Toshigaki-cho," and the records over several years include names of direct believers who later opened churches and dedicated believers who took care of the worship hall.

As visitors increased, the Founder's house became cramped. In 1861, Kami instructed the reconstruction of the longhouse on the east side of the main house. The dimensions were unconventional, being four by two ken, and not adhering to auspicious dates, as per the instructions. At that time, a building with such dimensions was avoided due to its association with death. Kami deliberately chose these specifications, and despite disapproval from the community, the construction proceeded successfully. Throughout the process, the weather also cooperated as Kami had promised, revealing Kami's divine power to the people.

With more visitors receiving Kami's blessings, further expansions to the building followed smoothly. However, not everyone was pleased. In particular, the reaction of the *yamabushi*, practitioners of *Shugendo*, was intense.



From the Illustrated Biography of the Founder of Konkokyo: "Persecution by the Yamabushi"

here to auspicious dates. This naturally did not sit well with *yamabushi*, especially since the Founder, a former farmer without formal qualifications, attracted large crowds. In March of Bunkyo 2 (1862), the *yamabushi*, through the village headman, demanded to stop the teachings and even took away the sacred objects and items around the worship hall. Despite various *yamabushi* visiting to disrupt and take away items, and hurling insults, the Founder himself remained passive.

Although he occasionally expressed anger or indignation, the Founder advised the visitors, "If you are confronted, yield and leave it to time, as Kami says. Even if the worship hall becomes empty, the blessings remain the same. Worshiping towards the wall is just as effective. Repelling such trivial matters with Kami's power is easy. But the frequent visits by the *yamabushi* are arranged by Kami, so I

Yamabushi's main roles included determining auspicious dates and performing rituals to suppress Konjin or evil deity people believed at that time. However, the Founder preached that worshipping Konjin and need not ad-

am not upset. Even if something is lost today, it will be replenished tomorrow. This path of Kami will prosper year by year. You'll understand in time."

In November, the Founder received a new divine name from Kami, changing from "Konshi Daimyojin" to "Konko Daimyojin." 'Konshi' signifies those who believe and follow Kaneno Kami, while 'Konko' indicates those who manifest the light of Kaneno Kami in the world. This change hints at Kami's great joy towards the Founder, who began to spread and manifest Kami's blessings in the human world.

Starting the Construction of the "Mediation Hall": Permission Granted but Not Realized (Subtitle)

In March of Bunkyo 3 (1864), Kami instructed the Founder to remove the front door and keep it "doorless," ensuring that people could visit for prayer at any time. Although the building, including the worship hall, was also the family's residence, and there were concerns for their safety, the Founder believed that "those serving Kami's purpose should not keep their doors closed."

Four years later, Kami further instructed to open the gate and flatten the threshold, making it impossible to close the gate. This was to prepare the worship hall as a place always open to people, as if Kami was ready to welcome anyone at any time. It was like a serious challenge from Kami for the Founder. In January of Genji 1 (1865), Kami conveyed the following message:

"There is no shrine nor place where Tenchi Kane No Kami can be worshipped. Build Me a shrine, square in area. I will look after the safety of the people. No government rules Tenchi Kane No Kami. However, a government rules you. Ask your assistants to apply for the approval of the construction.

If the wood is already prepared and the government does not approve of the construction, don't mind it. The wood can be given to someone who needs it. Start preparing the wood promptly. If the government does approve, you can build the shrine and it shall be yours. Should I, Tenchi Kane No Kami, enter this shrine, the world shall turn dark. This shrine is where people can give requests and thanks. Through your toritsugi mediation, Kami, as well as

people, will be fulfilled. Kami is Kami due to people, and people are people due to Kami. Parents pray for their children, and children pray for their parents. Like Heaven and Earth, practice the mutual reliance of aiyo kakeyo."

The Founder's



From the Konkokyo Founder's Illustrated Scroll: "The Outrage of the Yamabushi" and "Closing the Door" Scenes

worship hall, as reproduced at the Konkokyo Headquarters' Rikkyo Seijo, was very modest, despite its reputation as a place where significant blessings were received.

However, building a hall as instructed by Kami wasn't straightforward. Permissions from the village office, lords, and clans were necessary, as Kami mentioned, "You have superiors too." The Founder was careful to follow human regulations and sought assistance from caretakers for the required procedures.

The Founder himself needed official qualifications to engage in religious activities and joined the Shirakawa in Kyoto, a central authority in Shinto, to get a permit to worship Kami at home. This also meant that yamabushi could no longer interfere on the grounds of lacking qualifications. His disciples, who had been serving in various locations, also obtained official permissions, legitimizing their public religious activities.

The process required additional time and effort, but following the rules, three years after the initial notice, in Keio 3 (1867), permission for the construction of the hall was finally granted. During this time, the Founder received the divine title "Konko Dai-Gongen" from Kami, and his wife Tose-sama was granted the title "Isshi Myojin."

However, the construction of the hall was inevita-



"The Entrance to the 'Rikkyo Seijo. Replica of the Founder's worship hall'." Following the historical events, a board is nailed to the threshold.

bly interrupted. Kami was deeply concerned about the lifestyle of the appointed master builder, Kawasaki Moto'uemon. Despite the Founder's hopes for his improvement, the lack of change led to Kami's strict command in Keio 4 (1868) to stop the construction and inform the authorities about the postponement.

Around this time, there were significant changes in the Founder's family. In September of Keio 2 (1866), his foster mother, Iwa-sama, passed away. Iwa-sama and her husband, having no children of their own, had adopted the 12-year-old Founder. They nurtured him, give him opportunities to learn reading, writing, and using the abacus, and raised him into a hardworking young man. After losing her own child, husband, and three grandchildren, Iwa-sama shared her grief with the Founder and his wife. Her funeral was the Founder's final act of filial piety.

The date of the funeral was directed by Kami. Attending the procession were the Founder's sons, Asakichi and Ishinojo, who were allowed to carry swords as they served as samurai in the clan. It was an unusually grand funeral for Otani Village. Understanding the detailed arrangements by Kami, the Founder deeply appreciated and respectfully bid farewell to Iwa-sama.



The KMH and KCNA pilgrimage groups attending the 140th anniversary of the Founder's passing



Attending the 140th Anniversary of Konko-Sama's Passing

Mr. Wayne Hiraoka, Konko Mission of Honolulu

We were fortunate to attend the 140th Konko Daijin-Sama Memorial Anniversary.

We arrived in Konko Station on October 7 after touring Tomonoura. Tomonoura is a seaport village in Fuku-yama, where the Founder had visited to meet with the minister of the Shinto Shrine located on the hill of Tomonoura. This village is breathtaking with a character of historical homes and untouched land with the sea by its side. Could not believe we were there.

We got off the train at Konko Station and walked to Otani Area, Konko Town. A country town is what I would describe this place. Few cars driving through roads just wide enough for a small car. We checked in to Kohfukan, an Inn with tatami rooms, luckily we had a room with beds. That night we were invited to a welcome dinner located somewhere in town to meet with ministers from all locations. Sensei Iwai introduced himself as the minister from Brazil. Wow, what a surprise to meet the sensei from Brazil. A question was asked what is your feeling being in Konkokyo? Truly speaking, being in a room full of Konko Sensei's has a sense of harmony and brought me closer to this religion.

We were up early next day(3am) to view the procession of Konko-Sama. It was 3:30am, standing along the walkway in a crowd waiting for Konko-Sama. Then came 4 sensei dressed in black walking briskly followed by Konko-Sama towards an area where they would pray. They proceeded into the Main worship hall where we all gathered for the morning service. Koichi Sensei gave us the prayer book so we could pray in Japanese. It was mesmerizing to hear the prayers. It was time for otoritsugi so

we waited in line until it was our turn. I just sat there quietly. Diane also was nervous wishing she would

have said more.

The town became alive with thousands of Konko worshipers pouring in from all directions. The Konko Missions in Hawaii stayed together and entered the Grand Service Hall sitting in a designated area. Again Koichi Sensei provided us with the prayer book as the prayers were done in Japanese. I estimated several thousand of konko worshipers all prayed together. The Hall was filled with music backed by an orchestra, koto players, and taiko drums. The event went well and it was a great experience to witness and be a part of.

Another essential part of this trip that I will remember was visiting Konko Daijin-Sama gravesite which was open for viewing. We were told his gravesite only opens for special occasions.



Wayne at Tomonoura



The next day we were privileged to have Koichi Sensei's aunt take us on a guided tour through Headquarters with Sensei translating for us. And we were allowed to drink the sacred water. So much detailed history to remember.

In conclusion, all my worries had vanished since being in Konkokyo. We were staying in the grounds of the Founder and so I believe he was there to make everyone comfortable as possible. The beauty of Konko Town is because of its old and simple structures. Hopefully, it never changes. We learned a lot and it gave us the utmost respect for Konko Daijin-Sama's life.



Wayne and Diane in Nara

140th Anniversary Ikigami Konko Daijin Daisai

Mrs. Reiko Motosue, Konko Mission of Honolulu

We attended the 140th Kyoso Anniversary. The anniversary program was impressive, particularly the 10,000 people in the audience. The floor and the balcony of the *Saijyo* were packed. However, my fondest memory of the 140th anniversary was the *odemashi* and *gokinen* that I attended in the morning.

We attended the morning *odemashi* at 3:40am. It was dark. It was rainy and cold. Everybody had umbrellas. We waited patiently. Soon we heard the *clip clop* from the *geta* (wooden slippers). Then we saw the first man carrying a *chochin* (Japanese lantern), and Konkosama followed the light. The next two people carried the boxes of sacred rice and Kiyoji sensei (head of the Hiromae) brought up the end of the procession. We went into the Hiromae. Konkosama was behind the door. The doors were opened at the same time. Konkosama was seated and faced the altar (*goshinzen*). Then followed 20

minutes of silence (*shinchukinen*). Konkosama remained still. Then he bowed to the altar and moved to the other side of the altar (*Mitama*). Another 10 minutes of silence followed. Then Konkosama brought the *gokinencho* to the *okekkai*. Then he went off the altar stage. A sensei came up and started chanting (*haishi*). We followed. After chanting the *haishi*, the *okekkai* was opened.

Konkosama sat at the *okekkai* and people lined up at the *okekkai*. I also got in line for mediation.

Konkosama said human beings were given Kami's heart when we were born. Most of the time Kami's heart is sleeping in people's hearts. Attending the morning *odemashi* and *shinchukinen* with Konkosama, I felt my Kami's heart is gradually awakening. I started to feel more gratitude and I felt Kami's warmth in my heart. I feel so full of blessings. So I want to attend the morning *odemashi* and *shinchukinen* with Konkosama and chant *haishi* again.

Realizing Blessings

Ms. Aimee Yasutake, Konko Mission of Wailuku

This ohanashi was given during the Autumn Grand Service at the Konko Mission of Wahiawa on October 13, 2023.

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to join us tonight in Wahiawa for the Autumn Grand Service. Thank you to Yano-sensei for asking me to speak tonight.

I wanted to talk about blessings. We are taught in Konkokyo that blessings are received knowingly and unknowingly. As Konkokyo believers we can easily recognize that we are receiving blessings in every moment. The members of this Wahiawa church are especially aware of the blessing of life, because I know Edna-sensei often shares stories of her patients and the experiences she has as a nurse.

Blessings are all around us. Yet, why do I have such a hard time recognizing blessings? Do you wake up every morning praising the blessings you received while you were asleep? Some of you do. I can tell you that I do not. I try to remember to wake up and the first words I say in my head or out loud is, "*Kyou mo inochi itadaite, arigatou gozaimasu.*" BUT! On those mornings that I wake up and stub my toe on that darn table at the foot of my bed, or wake up with a crick in my neck from sleeping funny...the last thing in my mind or out of my mouth is "*Arigatou gozaimasu.*" Nope, it's usually a frustrated "Aaargh...great, now I'm probably gonna have a headache all throughout the work day...and people are gonna be asking what's wrong with me cause I'm staring at everybody at a 32-degree angle..."

Or how about when you're stuck in a traffic jam...you woke up late, so now you're leaving the house late and now you're stuck behind this fool who thinks the speed limit is only a suggestion and you should never come within 10 miles of the said limit...."AAAAARGH!" I can guarantee you, the furthest thought in my mind is that "this is a blessing."

But, what if I told you that these situations are actually blessings. That waking up, even with a crick your neck, is a blessing. We understand what it means to not wake up. Maybe waking up with a crick in your neck was so that you could realize the blessing it was to be able to wake up without any pain. To be able to bounce out of bed....which I can't do anymore at this age...but to feel grateful for what I took for granted.

The traffic jam, while a major inconvenience, actually forced you to find a different route to work. Maybe an even faster route that you might not have discovered if it weren't for that traffic jam. Or, what if I told you that super cautious driver, who also doesn't understand the meaning of a green light, was actually placed in front of you to slow you down. Because if you had been rushing to work as usual, you would have been t-boned by a car that ran the red light that morning.

Blessings are not always obvious. They are often not seen until after the fact. It has been my experi-

ence that I often need help in recognizing blessings in certain situations. Whether through toritsugi meditation at the okkekai with sensei, or talking about it with a friend. In fact, my friend gave me this gem while discussing what I could talk about tonight... blessings are a gift, it is not how it's wrapped, it's what's inside.

It is through discussions with friends, that we have identified one crucial factor to recognizing blessings is to have an open mind. We need to keep an open mind in order to understand that situations are blessings even if they may not seem like it. That blessings come wrapped in all different ways. It could be nicely wrapped with a pretty bow and obvious that it's a blessing...or it could be a wrinkled old brown paper bag. It could be an increase in your salary at work. Or it could be a crappy coworker, who makes your day miserable, but doesn't realize that by being crappy and refusing to help, makes your boss see how willing you are to be a team player, and actually helps to boost your evaluation at work.

Realizing blessings has usually been in hindsight for me. As they say, hindsight is 20/20... and it really is true. But my challenge to myself is to shorten the time between the bad situation or irritation to realizing the blessing in it. Because the faster I can identify

the blessings or silver lining, the quicker I can appreciate the blessing and enjoy it more.

When blessings are easy to see, I tend to take them for granted. Or they are often soon forgotten. Have you ever noticed that? It has been explained to me as when you have to work a little harder for something, you'll tend to value it more. I remember completing a marathon more than any other walk through the neighborhood. I remember taking 3.5 hours to climb up and come back down Koko Head more than walking up University Avenue. When a blessing isn't clear until you do a little soul searching or have to dig a little deeper to understand it, it means a little more.

There are still times when it is almost impossible to recognize blessings in situations, like war or disasters—like the earthquake and nuclear fallout in Fukushima or most recently the Lahaina wildfires. It is so much harder to see blessings in situations like these.

So, instead, I choose to try to see the silver lining in everyday annoyances and use it as faith practice to catch signals to pivot and find the blessings in even the really difficult times. I invite you to try and do the same. I feel it will help us to find more reasons to be grateful for what we have and to build that better bond with Kamisama.

Kohaku Namasu

This recipe for Kohaku (Red and White) Namasu is a must-have as part of the New Year's osechi menu. It's an easy make-ahead recipe that will bring color and bright flavor to your osechi. Try it this New Year season!

Ingredients:

- Daikon 250g
- Carrot 50g
- Salt

For the *amazu* (sweet vinegar)

- Sugar 1-1/2 TBSP
- Rice vinegar 1-1/2 TBSP
- Water 1 TBSP
- Salt 1/4 tsp



- 1) Julienne daikon and place in a bowl. Sprinkle with 2/3 tsp salt and massage to soften the daikon.
- 2) Once soft, rinse with water. Squeeze excess water out of daikon and place in bowl.
- 3) Place in plastic freezer bag. Spread out in even layer and seal bag. Place in freezer.
- 4) Repeat steps 1-3 with the carrot.

**Daikon and carrot can be stored in freezer for 2-3 weeks. When ready to make the namasu, make the amazu.*

- 5) Pour sugar, vinegar, water and salt in a small pot and bring to boil.
- 6) Take daikon and carrot out of freezer and place in bowl together. Pour the still hot amazu over the frozen daikon and carrot.
- 7) Mix together and the flavor will soak into the daikon and carrot while it defrosts. SERVE AND ENJOY!

Thank you for the love and support for Maui!

Thank you all for your continued prayers for our ohana on Maui, especially those affected by the devastating wildfires in Lahaina and Kula. There will be an article from the Konko Mission of Wailuku updating everyone on the situation in a future issue. Until then, please know that the outpouring of support from the Konkokyo community has been overwhelming and there are no words to express our gratitude. As we bid farewell to 2023, let us give thanks for the blessings we have received and pray for a better and even more blessed 2024.

Konko Missions in Hawaii

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KMH Mission Statement

The Konko Missions in Hawaii addresses the spiritual needs of the people of Hawaii by promoting the Konko faith through a better understanding of the life and teachings of Konko Daijin, and through the practice of Toritsugi (Divine-Mediation).

“Malamalama” is now available through e-mail!

For our devoted readers who would like to receive the “Malamalama” electronically, please let us know at kmhcenter@konkomissionshawaii.org

For our readers who would still prefer a hard (paper) copy, please do not hesitate and let us know.

Thank you!

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We welcome any and all article contributions! If you have an interesting story of faith, inspiration or have any ideas or suggestions for material you'd like to see in future issues of the Malamalama, we're all ears! Please contact us at kmhcenter@konkomissionshawaii.org.