



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

Konko-Samas' 150 Years of Dedicated and Generational Prayers



On November 15, 2009, Konko town, our spiritual home, was filled with joy and happiness of many people who gathered together from all over Japan and the world. 23 believers from Hawaii also attended this memorable service.

The service was held exactly 150 years since our Founder, Konko Daijin received the Divine Call and dedicated his life to Mediation. The service started at 1:30 p.m. at the Grand Service Hall with a capacity of over 10,000 people, and additional monitors were set up in the Central Mediation Hall, Faith Training Facility and the newly built Kofukan Inn for those who could not enter the Grand Service Hall.

During the service, Konko-Sama prayed:

At the Day of Establishment, which is the day when the Founder received the Divine Call, we reflect on the beginning of our Konko Faith. We express our gratitude for the blessings we have received through Ikigami Konko Daijin's Mediation.

He further prayed:

Please allow us to renew our efforts to convey and spread the Way through Mediation starting from the Central Worship Hall to all churches and through all religious activities. Let us renew our heart daily and allow us to help save people and share this Way of Faith through Mediation.

After Tamagushi offering, Konko-Sama turned to face the worshippers and recited the Rikkyo Shinden, or the Divine Call (<http://web-konkokyo.info/data/m1258520948>), making it a very special and memorable moment for all Konkokyo believers. Witnessing this inspires us and allows us to realize the accumulated divine virtue, which spans over five generations since our Founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin. 150 years of continuation, prayers and inspiration of the Konko-Samas made this very day special.

As we begin the new 2010 year, let us renew our hearts and continue to practice faith in our daily lives and help save others by sharing our faith following the faith of Ikigami Konko Daijin.

The year 2010 will be an eventful year. Ministers and members of the Konko Missions in Hawaii are organizing the 2010 KMH-KCNA Joint Conference on August 13 to 15 under the theme of "Spiritual Investment." We invite all of you to come and join this special occasion. This Conference aims to raise our own awareness of our faith and to envision how we can move our faith forward.

Please join this special occasion and let us strive forward with this Way of Faith. (Yomisu Oya)

Konko-Sama's Life, Faith, and Prayers

Introduction

Twenty-three believers from Hawaii attended the 150th Anniversary Grand Ceremony of the Divine Call on November 15, 2009. On this occasion, the Konkokyo Headquarter convened a two-day faith training prior to the service, which consisted of lectures from Rev. Kiyoji Konko, Assistant Director of the Central Mediation Hall in English and Rev. Kojiro Takahashi, Konko Preschool Principal and former Director of the Konkokyo Research Institute in Japanese with English interpretation. The training provided the opportunity for believers to understand different aspects of the Divine Call, with both lectures showing how the will of the Divine Call is continuously carried out and links to our lives today. This *Malamalama* issue features the first half (*Odemashi and the True Pathway*) of Rev. Kiyoji Konko's lecture titled *Konko Sama's Life, Faith and Prayers*, with the second half (*Konko-Sama and I*), which will conclude in the next issue.



Reverend Kiyoji Konko
Honbu

Opening

Rev. Kiyoji Konko warmly welcomed believers from North America, Hawaii, Korea and Brazil to the Konkokyo Central Mediation Hall and commended them for joining the pilgrimage to the 150th Anniversary Grand Ceremony of the Divine Call. He noted that he has been serving as the Assistant Director of the Central Mediation Hall and the second son of the current Principal Mediator, or the Fifth Konko Sama. He expressed his pleasure to see 51 believers from around the world receiving this divine arrangement to worship in this “once in a lifetime” service.

Rev. Konko remarked that this occasion is very special for Konkokyo and its believers, as it is the day the Founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin received the Divine Call in 1859, 150 years ago in this very former Otani Village in Okayama Prefecture, Japan. He called this day as the day designated for celebrating the foundation of the Konko Faith. Rev. Konko explained that this ceremony previously had been held at the Central Worship Hall, though the 150th service was to be held at the Grand Service Hall, making it the first time in Konkokyo history for Konko Sama to recite the Divine Call at the Grand Service Hall.

Rev. Konko continued to briefly explain the history of the Divine Call: In 1859, 150 years ago, the Founder Ikigami Konko Daijin received the Divine Call from the Divine Parent of the Universe on October 21 (Lunar

Calendar) and November 15 (Solar Calendar), and since then, the Founder served Toritsugi Mediation at the Central Worship Hall for 24 years, Second Konko Sama for 10 years, Third Konko Sama for 70 years, Fourth Konko Sama for 28 years, Fifth and current Konko Sama for 18 years and counting.

He mentioned that he chose the lecture title as *Konko Sama's Life, Faith, and Prayers*, as it is in line with the theme, “*Kyoshu Konko Sama wo itadaku*”, directly translated as “Accept and receive Konko Sama's

Faith and *goyo* in our daily lives”, or in short, “Follow Konko Sama's footsteps” or “Do as Konko Sama does.” He expressed his honor in lecturing prior to such a memorable service and speculated that he was asked to do so because he works closely beside Konko Sama.

Rev. Konko pointed out that Konko Sama has been serving Mediation daily at the Central Mediation Hall from 3:50 in the morning into the evening, 365 days a year with no holidays. He noted that we all recognize this; however, he asked whether many of us, including himself, really understood the content of Konko Sama's important *goyo/tasks*? He asked further questions such as: How is daily mediation performed? What are Konko Sama's important tasks for Konkokyo? How can we come to see the connection between Konko Sama's daily *goyo* and our daily lives?

He noted that he would speak about how he accepts and receives Konko Sama's Faith and *goyo* in his daily life and focus on several key points. He expressed his hope that through this lecture, each and every one of us would be able to open our spiritual eyes, here in the sacred ground of Konko.

Odemashi and the True Pathway

Rev. Konko introduced the Japanese word, *odemashi*, and in the Konko Faith, he explained that *Odemashi* begins from Konko-Sama's residence and ends with his arrival at the Mediation Hall. He noted that this process, which takes a few minutes, began on April 15, 1925 – the day after an extensive, unexpected fire, which burned down the former wooden Central Mediation Hall.

Rev. Konko further elaborated on the silent but faithful act of *Odemashi*, at which Konko Sama is promptly escorted from his residence at 3:43 in the morning to the Central Mediation Hall, walking

through the *Omichisuji*, or he called it, “The True Pathway.” He described how Konko Sama gives silent prayers at his private altar everyday prior to the *Odemashi*, and as the *Odemashi* begins, the escorting minister lights the candle at exactly the same time every morning. He observed that Konko Sama then withdraws from the private altar and joins his escort’s candlelight at the home gate for the Central Mediation Hall, wearing his *geta* wooden clogs. Rev. Konko highlighted that Konko Sama withdraws from the altar at the very moment the candle is lit. He emphasized that this is how Konko Sama’s day begins every morning.

Rev. Konko then spoke about the 25-meter long pathway within Konko Sama’s home, at which there are garden trees and a 1.5 meter-wide concrete on both sides of the True Pathway before reaching the public road. He mentioned that this concrete is dark gray and upon careful inspection, one can see a narrow white line in the center of this True Pathway.

Rev. Konko further explained that as Konko Sama approaches near the Central Mediation Hall onto the more visible part of the True Pathway for believers, there are people awaiting for his arrival and praying, and as Konko Sama passes by, he enters into the Central Mediation Hall. Rev. Konko re-emphasized that *Odemashi* has never ceased, not for a single day for over 80 years since April 1925.

Konko Sama’s *Odemashi*

While seeking for the Way, Rev. Konko spoke about how he ponders questions such as: How does Konko Sama serve and devote himself in the daily *goyo*? Who is the Principal Mediator who performs daily Toritsugi in a physical form? What is the significance of the Principal Mediator’s daily Toritsugi? How should I perform my *goyo* while Konko Sama has been devoting himself entirely on his *goyo* since succeeding his predecessor? Rev. Konko expressed his realization that the Founder’s eternal divine virtue dwells and is renewed every single day, the moment the candle is lit. In this sense, he noted that those that cannot worship or join Konko Sama’s *Odemashi* do not need to feel bad, but he rather suggested praying sincerely during daily prayers.

Rev. Konko spoke that he accepts Konko Sama’s home altar as the place where the Reverend Heiki Konko is reborn into the Principal Mediator Kyoshu Konko Sama and he emphasized how “a new day” is embodied in his body. Though this practice is beyond human understanding, Rev. Konko is grateful that Konko Sama performs this every day throughout the year. As highlighted in his various questions, he noted that he is seeking the meaning of *Odemashi* and Toritsugi in a living form in his daily practice.

Regarding the True Pathway within Konko Sama’s home, he asked the participants what they thought was the white line on the dark gray concrete. He answered that the white line is in fact footmarks of the Third, Fourth, and current Fifth Konko Samas’ *geta* wooden clogs from 84 years of daily *Odemashis* and *Ohikes*, or return to his residence from the Central Mediation Hall. Rev. Konko remarked that he did not clearly see this white line until the year 2005, though he had previously escorted Konko Sama and Konko Sama’s home is his parents’ home. He said he was truly impressed for this, for he was able to open his spiritual eyes rather than looking through his physical lens, and the True Pathway indeed was the decisive instrument to put this into perspective.

Though many believers visited Konko Sama’s residence to give prayers, Rev. Konko mentioned that he noticed a greater number of ministers and members peering in to see the white line of the True Pathway after he shared this story at several Konko churches four years ago. He half-jokingly mentioned he has even heard a believer living in Konko town guides worshippers on a so-called “True Pathway Blessings Tour.”

When Rev. Konko emphasized that there was nothing like the True Pathway white line anywhere else in Honbu or *Goreichi*, or sacred grounds, he mentioned that the Head Minister of the Konko Church of Kurume in Fukuoka Prefecture responded, “Sensei, a True Pathway exists in our church, too. The way one walks from his/her home to the church or his/her office to the church are also True Pathways.” Rev. Konko said he agreed and thought, “Anyone can see the True Pathway in your heart wherever you are, as long as you can open your spiritual eyes.” (Y.O)



The True Pathway

Unfinished Business and Ohaka Mairi

John Tamashiro
Waipahu

I cared for Dad until he died in June 2009, but seriously question whether I did enough for him. Wanda cooked his meals, I helped dress him, and we both drove him to church on Sundays. However, did we meet his emotional needs? When he told me that he never found out why he, a boy of thirteen, was the only member of a large family present at his mother's deathbed, I showed Dad an article about his older sister that explained how depressed she felt about her absence on that lonely day. But I did not try to counsel him. When I recalled my Uncle's story about how Dad's sickly father had treated him harshly as a three year old child by making him cry in order to strengthen him for his impending death, I did not have the nerve to ask him about it.

All of these incidents during his early life may have repressed feelings of anger and guilt for a lifetime. In regard to the reasons for his anger, he might have felt deserted by his deceased parents as well as by his older siblings for leaving him alone to comfort his dying mother. As to the causes of guilt, he may have felt this way because, orphaned at an early age by both parents, he had fallen short of what should be the model father, husband, and provider.

After Dad's funeral, I had begun to forget about these low points in his life and even to doubt whether one, in particular, had ever occurred. About the incident of his father's mistreatment of him, did it really happen? After all, it was so long ago that my Uncle had told me about it--back in the 1960's. Even if it had occurred, did it and the other occurrences bother my father so much? He had lived for ninety-six years; perhaps, he had transcended the pain or enjoyed life despite these problems. Finally, there was a conversation with my good friend who had been his mother's caregiver before she died. He told me that she had given him an unmistakable sign of her passing into the contented afterlife.

Uncertain about whether a particular occurrences constituted communication from Dad, I began to think of ignoring his emotional problems, but these resurfaced, not in any haunting way, but in appealing to my sense of duty as a son and Konko member. That the deceased person continues to live on earth as a *mitama* spirit comforted me when I planned for the funerals of both parents. This unique belief meant that they did not ascend into heaven as advocated by Christians. It also implied the existence of negative feelings in the afterlife and implored the living should help the deceased with their problems. Furthermore, the Founder's biography suggested a way to address these difficulties: remember how Kyososama started on the road to enlightenment by engaging with Kamisama directly rather than by avoiding him, according to the traditional norms of his village. Learning from Kyososama's example, I wanted to encourage a spiritual reunification of Dad with his father thus initiating an *aiyo* *kakeyo* relationship. So if I helped my Dad with his shortcom-

ings he might assist me in many ways, for example, in working with my stubborn brother.

Just as I had turned to Konkokyo for help in comforting my father when he lived with us for ten months before he died, I looked to my faith for ritual guidance after he passed on. I had heard that *otoritsugi* had helped particular Konko ministers in Hawaii reconcile with their parents to end periods of rebellion and lead them to that profession. Also, as Konko members, my wife Wanda and I had become familiar with the practice of periodically offering flowers and prayers at the family gravesites of my mother and mother-in-law. So I began to think of an "ohaka mairi" at my grandparents' and uncles' grave in Los Angeles as a series of prescribed activities to promote peace between Dad and his deceased relatives interred in California. Of course, I could have prayed to them and offered flowers, etc., at home,

but thought that our journey to Los Angeles would be more meaningful. Thus, Konko teachings not only provided the rationale for my visit to LA, but also the ritual methods for attaining my aspiration.

Through specific individuals, Kamisama also provided additional guidance in planning the pilgrimage. Aki Tamashiro, as a tour company employee and our daughter-in-law, conscientiously organized the itinerary, first to Las Vegas and then to Los Angeles, culminating in the deferential visit to the Evergreen Cemetery. She had thoughtfully reserved comfortable accommodations at the



Kyoto Grand Hotel, just around the corner from Little Tokyo. Looking at the stylish interior decorations of the establishment and enjoying the sumptuous dishes from the small, busy restaurants nearby reminded Wanda and me of the Tamashiro relatives and their birthplaces in Okinawa, Japan. Two other places assumed an aura of reverence: the "Go For Broke" monument and the Japanese American National Museum, both in Little Tokyo. Inscribed on the huge black stone edifice of the former were the names of all Nisei and Kibei servicemen in the US armed forces during World War II. I was happy and proud to discover that the monument's software at the appropriate website correctly linked Dad's name with the 1399th Construction Battalion based at Schofield Barracks on Oahu. Within walking distance of this memorial we met the Museum guide who introduced us to the many artifacts organized to highlight the sufferings of our ethnic group due to the massive internment soon after the Pearl Harbor attack. For example, the well-informed docent (who had also been interned) first showed us an authentic wooden dwelling for two families, carefully transported from a relocation center. Its accurate reassembly--without partitions between rooms--dramatized the lack of privacy between and within families. Also, studying the map of the relocation camps on display, I wondered why my father's oldest brother, wife, and children were removed from southern California to faraway Louisiana instead to a closer destination. These sacred sites on our pilgrim's journey deepened my appreciation for my ex-

tended family, and I began to see them as martyrs who sacrificed for all Japanese Americans as well as for the patriotic ideals of the nation. What would have happened if they had not dared to come as immigrants to the US? What if they had somehow resisted the country's call to military service or the president's executive order to abandon their homes and businesses?

Although our daughter-in-law should be credited with the convenient location of our hotel so close to meaningful displays of ethnic history, even what she could not have planned, turned out to be wonderfully accessible thanks to Kamisama's blessings. She could not possibly have known (neither did we) that the Konko Church of Los Angeles was located on the same street as the hotel only 15 minutes distance by taxi. Divine arrangement also provided that after a 5 minutes effort from the church (which was closed to our initial visit) we were received into the mortuary office for directions as to the desired tombstone. As if Kamisama had not already done enough to conserve our energy in the summer heat, during this visit in 2009, we found the gravestone among many others after only a two-minute search.

Our entrance had been only the second time in about fifty years that I had entered this memorial park and much had changed since then to make me feel more somber and reverential. As a college student, I remembered how green and spacious the surroundings had been, but in 2009, rectangular and sculpted stone markers crowded together standing in long, never-ending rows almost all with Japanese surnames. Here, many years ago, I prayed for my deceased grandparents without understanding the true meaning of death. Now that feeling of mortality seemed much more intense having observed Dad, the World War II veteran, decline and die so quickly. Furthermore, his oldest brother who had been one of the Issei leaders at his relocation camp and who had affectionately ushered me here a half century ago was now so silently entombed beneath this large black stone. As I told Wanda about Dad's alienating encounter with his father, I felt the words choke in my throat without knowing why.

After leaving Evergreen cemetery and returning to the LA Church we enthusiastically re-united with a Konko sensei, who drove us back to the five-foot stone monument for my third visit. Coincidentally, he enjoyed a positive relationship not only with us, but with all of the significant places on our tour. He was friendly Rev. Alfred Tsuyuki, head minister of the Konko Church of LA whom I had met many years before at a church convention in Hawaii. Because I was not able to remember or to find out from relatives where my grandparents were buried before we left Honolulu, I phoned Reverend Tsuyuki who suggested the mortuary near his church, though he said a half dozen others existed for Issei and Nisei within the city. The Reverend also told me that he had participated in the grand opening of the hotel where we had planned to stay. Moreover, he would soon officiate at the ceremony for the annual celebration of Nisei week at the Japanese American National Museum in Little Tokyo. Despite his busy schedule, when we arrived at his church, he dutifully wrote the names of my deceased family members in his notebook, efficiently trimmed tamagushi branches as offerings to Kamisama, and quickly drove us back to the grave to perform a short service, kneeling, chanting, and reverently praying before the colorful flower offering we had brought. Then, he walked a short distance to perform "mairi" at his father's grave, a reassuring act for me since doing so would proba-

bly help him remember to pray for my ancestors nearby on future occasions. To conclude this list of fortunate occurrences, Wanda remembered that his father and my uncle had known each other many years ago—a friendship reported to us by his mother when we had first met.

A few months after returning to Hawaii, while writing this article, I discovered by accident a very old photograph in my parents' collection that hinted at Dad's true relationship with his father. If I had not taken the pilgrimage I might have even thrown it away. It shows three individuals, one was my Dad's father, whose face I recognize from a second photo as well as a young man standing next to him—probably my father's oldest brother (After his parents' died, he took their ashes to bury near his residence in Los Angeles). The third person was a little boy who is probably Dad although I cannot be certain.

Furthermore, it is intriguing for other reasons. Why is my Uncle, dressed in a suit complete with white shirt and tie? Moreover, as he stands next to his seated father, he seems to be wearing a pocket watch with gold chain, probably a status symbol of adulthood similar to his father's. Perhaps, he is about to go on a life-changing trip, possibly to make his home in Los Angeles. Equally as intriguing is the facial expression and body position of the little boy. He resembles the son of a samurai wearing a hakama with a look of determination, almost a pout on his face, as well as a right hand and arm slightly tensed as if to bulge muscles not yet formed. Had he just been scolded by his dad and told to "shape up?" Finally, the photo shows a protective father sitting on an intricately carved chair with the younger son nestled between his legs. However, instead of the older male grasping each arm rest with a firm hand to emphasize his relationship to expensive furniture, this mustachioed happy individual is leaning forward slightly towards his son with his hands comfortably placed on the boy's shoulder. Was my positive interpretation of this photograph a valid indication of what now exists between them in the afterlife?

My thesis is that reconciliation within a family may be possible with the assistance of the Konko faith. I wish I could say with certainty that Dad has come to terms with his somewhat troubled past because of my efforts, my daughter-in-law's, and Reverend Tsuyuki's as well as divine guidance from Kamisama. The truth is that I simply do not know. I would like to think that the photo that suddenly appeared as I thumbed through the stack of much more recent pictures was an affirmative sign of forgiveness and reunion. Furthermore, I do feel less guilty about ignoring his emotional needs while he was alive and will continue to pray for him and Mom every day before my altar at home. I realize, however, that it would have been better to have confronted these difficulties while he was alive rather than waiting until after he died. More significantly, I should come to see Dad's shortcomings as probably my own character flaws and irrational fears so I can learn to confront these in daily life as did the Founder. Not only the negative aspects, but also the positive features, I should learn to reflect upon--this means more personal experiences with Japanese American history and of more recent revival, with Okinawan studies throughout the world. Finally, I believe that my relationship with my brother is much better because I have paid more attention to my deceased parents within our aiyo kakeyo relationships.

Remembering the Mission's Founder and Renewing Faith: 80th Anniversary of the Konko Mission of Hilo

Sharyn Y. Hirata
Hilo

Blue sky, fluffy white clouds, and a light mist of rain. After several typically rainy Hilo days, it appeared that Kami-Sama smiled on the little church at the end of Huapala Lane in Hilo on the occasion of the Konko Mission of Hilo's 80th anniversary of its founding.

Renovated in anticipation of this occasion, the Hilo *kyokai* was a scene of enthusiastic activity, as 35 attendees from Japan and representatives from other churches from around the state, joined the Hilo congregation to observe this anniversary. The service was led by head officiant, Reverent Yoshiteru Takahashi of Karasuma Kyokai of Kyoto, Japan, and assisted by Reverends Makio Nagai of Hilo; Tetsuro Yasutake of Waipahu; Yasuhiro Yano of Wahiawa, Hisayo Yasutake and Roy Yasutake of Wailuku, Maui; and Koichi Konko of Honolulu. Also participating in the celebration event were Reverends Naritsugu Matsuyama of Okayama-chubu; Yomisu Oya, Director of Konkokyo Hawaii Center; Edna Yano of Wahiawa, and Yoshie Nagai of Hilo. The strong combined voices of both Japan participants and the participants from around the state of Hawaii made for fervent prayers during the service.

The anniversary celebration, in particular, honored and acknowledged the dedication and sacrifice of the Konko Mission of Hilo's founder, Reverend Yoshifusa Nishida, and his wife Reverend Fuji Nishida, second head minister of the *kyokai*. A history of the founder chronicled his arrival in Hilo in 1929, and recounted his perseverance as he established the Hilo church at its first location in Puueo, a residential area less than a mile from Hilo. Guest ministers described Reverend Nishida's strong faith as he waited patiently at the *okekkai*, often forgoing meals, even though at first no one came to the church. His dedication and commitment, however, eventually saw the beginnings of a group of believers who began to come to the church.

Later, in the early 1930's after his wife, Reverend Fuji Nishida joined him in Hawaii, Reverend Nishida relocated the original church to a new site in Hilo, on Piopio Street. The church, originally a residence, was situated in a pleasant neighborhood and was surrounded by a small lawn bordered by a neatly trimmed hedge. This neighborhood would later be one of the areas damaged by the 1960 tsunami that inundated Hilo.

In 1934, realizing that the small Piopio church could not accommodate the growing number of members in the congregation that wished to attend services, Reverend Nishida acquired a property at the end of a narrow lane off Kilauea Avenue in Hilo. Construction for the new church began in 1940, and this 80th anniversary celebration was held at this same church. Generations of believers have contributed to the maintenance of the church to the present.

An anecdote about the Hilo church was shared during the celebration, that testified to the divine blessing of the church. During World War II, Hilo observed mandatory blackouts at night and military police monitored residents to ensure that

everyone complied with this mandate. The Konko Mission of Hilo, however, was subject to military investigation due to a rumor that circulated in the community about a strange light that emanated from the church at night. Although it was clear that the Nishida family carefully observed the blackout mandate every night, the inside of the church itself was brightly lit. This miraculous situation was named *Goshin-bi* or sacred divine light by the neighbors and became widely known by many others in the community.

As a consequence of the suspicions about Japanese leaders in Hawaii during the war, Reverend Nishida was sent to several United States mainland internment camps as a prisoner-of-war over four years. In December 1945 as the war ended, he was sent back to Japan, where he continued to serve Konkokyo for the next six years. During his absence, Reverend Nishida's wife, Reverend Fuji Nishida maintained the church as a ministerial assistant, as she cared for their ten children. One can only imagine the difficulties and challenges that the Reverend Fuji Nishida and the family endured during this time – all the while, working hard for the head minister's return to Hawaii. Finally, Reverend Nishida returned to the Konko Mission of Hilo to continue his ministry until his passing in 1981.

In 1964, Reverend Yoshie Yamanaka arrived from Japan to assist the Head Minister, and later married Reverend Makio Nagai, who began his service in Hilo in 1977. After Reverend Yoshifusa Nishida's death, Reverend Fuji Nishida, was ordained as the second Head Minister of Konko Mission of Hilo, and she served in this position until her death in 1992, after which Reverend Nagai was ordained as the third Head Minister of the church to the present time.

In his keynote sermon, guest speaker Reverend Shinji Yamada of the Konkokyo International Center (KIC) also spoke of the dedication and faithful service of the current ministers, the Reverends Makio and Yoshie Nagai. He described how they have ensured that the *kyokai* would always be open and available to anyone who came to the church, and how they have maintained regular services and prayers at the church even when there were no others in attendance. In this way, both Reverends Nagai have continued the tradition of dedication that was established by Reverend Nishida to the present day. Just as he did, the current ministers continue to dedicate themselves to saving people and supporting their faith practice.

Reverend Yamada also related in his sermon an amazing story about an English lady who developed and grew in Konkokyo faith, even though there are no Konkokyo churches in England and no other believers in her area that could support her faith. At the heart of this lady's belief in and discovery of Kami-sama was the idea that "Konkokyo is genuine!" Through the establishment of an internet website in English that provides information and outreach about Konkokyo, this lady continues to practice and to grow her faith in Kami-sama.

The second element that brings people to Konkokyo is the blessings of the faith. When these are examined, one readily recognizes their simplicity and clarity. Because the Founder was an ordinary farmer, his words connect with people's everyday lives through examples and explanations based on common life experiences. The Founder said,

“Practicing faith is not especially difficult. When you get up in the morning, give thanks and pray for a good day, as if you are talking to your parents. When you go out, inform Kami that you are leaving. And when you return home, give thanks for returning home safely. Also, before going to sleep, give thanks for that day. This is practicing faith. (VU167)”

Reverend Yamada reminded everyone that the third element, the Konkyo Teachings, are intended to save people from excessive worry and negativity; rather, they are positive and serve to empower people, without any regard for gender, age, nationality, race, or other religions.

An example of the Teaching that brings people to Konkokyo is its purity. Konkokyo is not focused on money, and blessings are never premised on the monetary contributions to the religion. Kami is unconditional in offering to save people and to bestow blessings on them. We understand that faith in Konkokyo is to see the countless blessings that are given to all of us and that life itself is a blessing. Because Kami constantly embraces and supports us, we can pray to Kami no matter where we are or what our situations may be.

The fourth element Reverend Yamada described that brings people to the faith is the nature of Konko believers themselves. Even when confronted with problems and concerns, Konko believers attract others by their example of a positive outlook of life and appreciation of Kami's teachings and blessings. Konko believers wholeheartedly relate to others with kindness, following Kami's instruction that we should all help others, that we should pray for the relief of others' suffering, and that we should contribute to building a peaceful world. All of these responses by Konko believers attract others to this religion.

Finally, Reverend Yamada pointed out that the celebration and observance of the 150 year anniversary of Konkokyo and the 80 year anniversary of the Konko Mission of Hilo validate their genuine-ness. In both of these celebrations of longevity, we see the continuation and sustaining of faith through generations of believers who carry on with the four elements Reverend Yamada described.

After the formal service and program, attendees moved to the hall on the ground floor of the church, and enjoyed a delicious buffet lunch, featuring many local dishes and topped by a colorful array of desserts. A local trio entertained the audience with contemporary Hawaiian songs and “oldies and goodies” music. A spirited and spontaneous swing dance performed by two of the Japanese ministers highlighted the overall atmosphere of camaraderie and harmony.

Indeed, among the celebrants of the Konko Mission of Hilo's anniversary event, one could see generations of believers who reflected the four elements. Joyfully, several members of the Nishida family – children of the Mission's founder --, long-time members of the congregation, and even former members who now lived on other islands were present to show their appreciation for Konkokyo and the Konko Mission of Hilo. Many reminisced about earlier memories of attending the *kyokai*, when the congregation sat on tatamis rather than chairs, about faithful believers who prayed at the church every day, and treasured memories of the past ministers. The 80th anniversary celebration was organized by a core committee of the Hilo church's congregation, headed by Mr. and Mrs. George Greenhouse, Mr. Ronald Inoue, Mr. Masa Nishida (son of Reverend Yoshifusa Nishida), and advised by Reverends Makio and Yoshie Nagai. Several others also contributed to the successful event. This group was also responsible for the extensive renovation work on the church in preparation for the anniversary event, as well as coordinating improvement work by professionals. Their work included re-flooring the church's main room, repairing and repainting the interior of the church and church hall, as well as renovating the church sign and grounds.

The 80th anniversary of the Konko Mission of Hilo's founding marked an opportunity for all to look back on the church's history, to honor the past and current ministers of the church, and to reflect on the meaning of Konko faith that extends to a promising future.

2010 KCNA/KMC JOINT CONFERENCE

"SPIRITUAL INVESTMENT"

Place: Camp Erdman

Date: 8/13~ 8/15, 2010

Time: Check-in from 2:30 p.m.

Guests: Rev. Mitsutoshi Horio
(Hita Church)

Rev. Todd Takahashi
(Honolulu Church)

Fees: Adults: \$135

Kamaina rate and student
subsidy are available, and Age
3 and under are free of charge.
Neighbor Island participants
may receive up to \$100 airfare

Konko Mission of Wahiawa 70th Anniversary

Date: Sunday, March 14, 2010

Theme: “Appreciation” 感謝

Service: Wahiawa Church

Reception: Dot's in Wahiawa

It is an early notice, but please reserve
this date for this year. We all hope you
can join us for this joyous celebration.
If you can make it, please contact us at
621-6667. Please RSVP by
January 14, 2010 as reception
seats will be reserved.



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).

2010 KMH Activity Plan

1. KCNA/KMH Joint Conference
2. Youth Camp
3. Young Adult Seminar
4. Family Camp
5. Kauai Gathering
6. Faith Enrichment Meeting
7. Ministers' Gathering
8. Strategic Planning Committee
9. Support for Volunteer Activity
10. Konkokyo Movie on TV
11. The Publishing of our newsletter *Malamalama*

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