

Face to Faith

October, 2010

No.66

Konko Churches of North America (KCNA) & Konko Missions in Hawaii (KMH)

Hold Joint Conference in Hawaii



From August 13 (Friday) to 15 (Sunday), 2010, the 7th KCNA-KMH Joint Conference was held at the YMCA Camp H.R. Erdman in Waialua on Oahu, Hawaii. 122 people gathered from continental USA, Canada, Hawaii, and Japan.

The joint conference of KCNA and KMH began in 1980, and has been held in every five years since. The venue is chosen alternately in the North America or Hawaii. The goals of this conference were creating an

opportunity for Konko Faith to be conveyed in English to younger and future generations, and providing an opportunity for believers of churches scattered throughout the region to meet and share religious experiences. The theme of the 2010 Conference was "Spiritual Investment." The participants were helped "to understand 'Spiritual Investment' during this conference," and "to assess how each participant has been practicing faith and moving forward with his/her own faith."

Day One (August 13)

At 4 p.m. the opening ceremony was conducted by KMH's ministers. During the ceremony all the participants chanted the Joint Conference Prayer, which had been specially prepared for the 2010 conference. Then the hosting organization, KMH, presented leis to welcome guest speaker Reverend Mitsutoshi Horio and his wife, ministers from Canada, continental USA and other Hawaiian islands, and participants from Japan.



Opening Ceremony

greeting the participants in English, he talked about the true faith illustrated by several specific examples. Reverend Horio pointed out the importance of practicing faith in our real daily lives. This, he said, means to practice the principles of *Jitsui* (thorough and sincere consideration), *Teinei* (conscious and civil conduct), as well as *Shojiki* (honesty) which were taught by the third Konko-Sama. These three words convey concepts of thinking thoroughly and sincerely, acting considerately, and always being honest. The lecture translated into English was very impressive. Reverend Horio's assertion, "The purpose of faith is not merely

to ask for Kami's blessings but to improve ourselves so as to be deserving of receiving Kami's trust" deeply affected the participants. Reverend Horio also said that everyone is given a part of Kami's soul. When the given soul works, the person is an *ikigami* (living kami), whose heart is refined through gratitude toward all that they have received. Lastly, he implored the participants by saying, "Dear believers, let's practice such faith which could be a model to the world and handed down to the future generations." The lecture was followed by earnest responses. Some participants asked him to tell about the goal of faith in more detail; others asked about the appropriateness of praying for blessings.



Rev. Horio



Day Two (August 14)

From 9 a.m. a lecture titled “Keys to the Vaults of the Universe” was presented by Reverend



Rev. Takahashi

Todd Takahashi from Konko Mission of Honolulu. It was an interactive session in which Reverend Takahashi distributed to the audience questions in a handout and participants

reflected on their responses to the questions. The participants joyfully but seriously considered the questions prepared by Reverend Takahashi. In order to point out the importance of Mediation, he also talked about his own experiences. At the end he asked, “Do you tell the plain truth when you ask your minister for the Mediation at the Mediation Seat?” Then he recom-

mended that the participants, if they wished, could ask for Mediation at a different, more private room.

During the conference, short sermons were given by ministers before each meal.

The participants enjoyed the mealtime opportunity to meet and converse with others.

In the afternoon participants chose to join such activities as the



Youth Group

Dole Tour (pine-apple farm tour), hiking, Faith Enrichment Session with guest speakers, and swimming – activities that were greatly enjoyed and appreciated by the participants.

At 7:30 p.m. a Saturday Night Live event featured groups of Youth, Young



Family Camp Group

Adults, Family Camp, KMH participants performing songs, skits, and quizzes, all of which were related to the theme of this conference.

The audience cheered and applauded because each

performance was well planned to demonstrate the group’s talents. Then the venue was



Young Adults Group

moved outside for a camp fire. Hot dogs and marsh-



KMH participants Group

mallows roasted over an open fire, all the more delicious as they were enjoyed under a sky full of stars!

Day Three (August 15)

From 10 a.m. the participants were divided into eight English-speaking groups and a Japanese-speaking group for a Brain Writing session focused on “Spiritual Investment.” In the session, the members in each group took turns writing responses to three ideas or questions. Each group’s ideas were inspired by the preceding groups’ ideas helped to deepen thoughts about spiri-



Brain Writing

tual investments. The finished sheets of all groups were posted and the participants read each other’s results with great interest. At the end, every-

body was given a time to write a letter to himself/herself now and to himself/herself five years ahead. Since the letter format included several subjects related to the conference everybody wrote down his/her opinions and feelings,



Closing Ceremony

reflecting on the three-day conference and imagining what he/she would be like five years later. These letters are intended to be delivered to senders at the 2015 Joint Conference in North America.

After lunch, participants cleaned

cabins where they stayed, packed their belongings, and headed back home. Young participants appeared to be reluctant to part from their new friends,

most likely because this conference provided opportunities for rich experiences. Reverend Edna Yano, the chairperson of the conference said, “In the course of the three-day conference, I hope that most of us were able to understand even a little of what Spiritual Investment is all about, and I pray that it will contribute in furthering our faith in Kami.”



Rev. Yano

a short story based on the faith of Konkokyo

Can You Grasp Your Wife's Pain?

Since October 6, two years ago, Yoshiko (then sixty-five years old) lost the use of her right hand due to numbness and pain. Her husband Akira even remembered the date because it occurred on the day of the Western Tottori Prefecture Earthquake. Actually, from August of that year Yoshiko's numbness was severe, yet she managed to get through her household chores.

On the day of the earthquake, there was a clicking sound, together with very strong tremors. Yoshiko was startled and thought, "I have to turn off the gas, and..." Suddenly her body stiffened and she could not move her right hand, once the tension subsided. Afterwards, she could not sleep at night because of the back pain and numbness.

When the doctor examined Yoshiko at the hospital, she was told, "You hurt your spine, but it is not so serious. Let's wait and see." However, for Yoshiko, the pain was unbearable.

Now, a big problem emerged. Who will do the housework? Naturally it fell on Akira. He declared to Yoshiko, "Yes. I'll do it. You don't have to anymore. Just leave it to me!"

However, ten days passed, and then on the twentieth day Akira got tired of the chores. He felt some resentment and thought, "This is hard work. How long do I have to keep on doing it?" That morning, feeling as he did, Akira sat in front of the altar and prayed, "Why isn't my wife getting better? Is her faith lacking?" At that time, Akira heard a voice in his heart say, "Even at night your wife cannot sleep and cries with pain. Can you grasp her suffering?"

Akira realized, "Oh, that's right. It must be hardest on Yoshiko. I thought only about myself and lost sight of her pain." He apologized to Kami, "I am sorry. What an arrogant person I am, despite saying I follow the Konko Faith! Please forgive me."

Later, Akira said to Yoshiko, "I was

thoughtless. From now on I will think of your pain as my own. I will do whatever I can." In actuality he cannot feel her physical pain. Those are just empty words unless he walks in her shoes. So he tried to have sympathy for her pain. Moreover, he drew her pain close to his heart and prayed to relieve not only her physical pain, but her emotional pain, as well. Akira feels that between he and his wife, the kindling of a "mutually fulfilling" relationship (*Aiyo kakeyo*) has been born.

Through this situation, Akira realized that Kami urges him to understand Kami's wishes and the pain of others.

In time, Yoshiko received divine blessings. She gradually recovered and could do things most people her age could do. Akira still makes an effort to do as much as he can, together with his wife.

This story is from the Konko Shimbun
Dated September 15, 2002.



"A New Minister in Korea"

Reverend Kinya Suenaga has recently been sent to the Konkokyo Seoul Activity Center in Korea to perform missionary work and he shared some of his aspirations about it with us.

"When I asked our Spiritual Leader, Konko-Sama, for Mediation about being dispatched to Korea, he gave me a teaching: *All people are children of Kami. There is no one who does not belong.*

Therefore, along with Konko-Sama, I will put my best efforts into praying during my time in Korea. I will be meeting people who live in a different culture and struggling to convey teachings to them in their language. I look forward to finding the essence of the Founder's teachings (some of which are still unclear to me) through this intercultural missionary work. I will do my best to be helpful in this Korean propagation which has continued thanks to the prayers of many people, including Konko-Sama, local ministers and believers, and the ministers sent before me by Headquarters."

"Face to Faith" Now Available Through E-mail

The Konkokyo International Center is beginning to distribute its "Face to Faith" newsletter via e-mail!

If you would like to receive it through e-mail instead of post, please contact us at kic@konkokyo.or.jp.

KIC Director Shares Podium with an International Volunteer at Peace Gathering in Kyoto

World War II ended for Japan during the summer, and it is during this time of year that we should reaffirm the preciousness of peace. In the Konkokyo community, there are numerous faith-based peace gatherings held in the Tokyo area, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Kyoto, Yamaguchi and other parts of Japan. At these gatherings, believers reflect on the preciousness of life and renew their prayers for a world where all the people live happily.

On July 25, a peace gathering was held at the Miyako Messe in Kyoto City, organized by the Konkokyo East-Kinki Block. Reverend Shinji Yamada, Director of Konkokyo International Center, participated in the gathering, along with Ms. Mari Nyota. Ms. Nyota is an NGO worker, who has been working in Northern Thailand for the past twenty years to combat human trafficking and care for the victims of such trafficking.

In her portion of the presentation, Ms. Nyota described the reality of human trafficking between Thailand and Japan and her activities caring for the victims. She said, “Many Japanese believe there is no human trafficking in Japan. However, Japan is one of the major importers of trafficked women. Deceived by false promises, many Thai women are brought to Japan and forced to work as prostitutes in slave-like conditions. Many of them experience mental and physical disorders. Even after returning to Thailand, they suffer from social and health problems. In cases where a woman may have a child with a Japanese husband or partner, such children tend to have problems regarding a loss of nationality, discrimination, and education.”

Reverend Yamada added, “Behind this background of human trafficking is the economic disparity between nations or individuals. We need to reflect on our lifestyle which promotes this disparity. One positive way to do so is to support fair-trade practices.” He then introduced The Heartful Trade Project, a fair-trade program implemented



Ms. Nyota (leftside) and Rev. Yamada by Konkokyo believers in which Reverend Yamada is a participant.

Ms. Nyota quoted our Founder, who said, “Konko Daijin teaches the way for the prosperity of your descendants and family.” For her, this teaching is not only about one’s own family, but reveals the Founder’s desires to realize the humanity of all the people in the world and their descendants. This teaching and her interpretation led Ms. Nyota to move to Thailand. Ms. Nyota concluded by asking the audience to think about how the Founder would feel if he were in this present world, and how we can realize a world where all the people live together.

Reverend Yamada concluded his portion of the talk by citing an 1868 revelation by the Founder which states, “Make and put up a banner saying, ‘May there be peace throughout the world, prosperity in all countries, and safety for all people.’ and pray daily.” Reverend Yamada believes this revelation gives us the task of praying for peace in the world and actualizing happiness for all people.

Let’s introduce Konkokyo to our family, friends, and colleagues through the “Face to Faith” newsletter! Please let us know their address and KIC will send a newsletter to them.



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