

The Dilemma of Japanese-American Society — A Case Study of Konkōkyō in North America —

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It was not long after he graduated from the University of Tokyo and became a minister of Konkōkyō that Fukuda Yoshiaki landed in San Francisco in November 1930, his heart set on being a missionary in the United States. At the time the missionary work of Konkōkyō in the United States had just begun. The preparations for missionary work had not yet been organized, and only two or three churches had been established. Fukuda proved to be an important figure in the missionary work of Konkōkyō in the United States. He had come in contact with Konkōkyō as a youth due to some personal adversity, and as a result eventually became a convert.

Fukuda was born in Yoshino-gun, Nara Prefecture, in 1898. Of his ten brothers and sisters, five died at an early age. He himself caught pulmonary tuberculosis right after graduating from middle school, and lived a life of daily struggle with his disease. At the age of eighteen, after spending a half year receiving tuberculin injections, Fukuda was given a clean bill of health by his doctors. However, he still did not feel his best, and he went for convalescence to a hot spring near Nachi in the Kii district. During this trip one of his fellow lodgers, a former military man, told him of "a God who can bring back to life even the dead." As a result he paid a visit to the Konkōkyō Minami-muro Church. He was nineteen years old at the time.

This encounter with Konkōkyō was purely by chance. His distress was serious, but the answers to his troubles did not necessarily have to come from Konkōkyō. In fact, while he was recovering from his illness he had once entered a Christian church. However, he heard the pastor say that "The church is not a place to heal your physical sickness. Your disease

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won't be healed even if you come wandering into church with a pale face." Fukuda felt that these words were directed cynically at himself, and he quickly left. He himself said later that "if I had been gently comforted at that time, I might be a Christian pastor." Such was his earnest psychological state at the time.

In any case, Fukuda became a diligent Konkōkyō believer out of sheer desperation. According to Fukuda's recollection, at first he was only imitating the role of a faithful believer. He heard many stories about people who were miraculously cured of incurable diseases, and he attempted to imitate the actions of such people. He would wake up at 4 o'clock every morning and pray to God [*gokinen* 御祈念]. He would clean the church before and after *gokinen*. He ate his meals feeling full of gratitude. He never left any food on his plate. He rode on his bicycle from his home to the church, a distance of seven *ri* (about 17 miles or 27.5 kilometers). After about a month of such activity, he completely recovered his health.

Once cured, Fukuda drifted away from the church. However, six years later in 1924, after being accepted as a student in the Sociology Department of the University of Tokyo, he fell ill with pleurisy, and his body became progressively weaker. At the time he was reading the work of Karl Marx on capitalism, and the Communist Manifesto of Engels, and had become an ardent atheist. It was the influence of his mother that drew him back to the world of religion. At her urging he regained his faith, and then once again recovered his health.

In December of 1926, his impending graduation from university on his mind, and worried considerably about his future plans, Fukuda attended the monthly *tsukinami-sai* at the Koishikawa Church. He had decided that if any words of advice struck him during the sermon, he would accept them as the "word of God."

The reading of the divine word for that evening was, "A metal staff will bend, and trees or bamboo will break; but it's easy if you have God for your staff." These words made a deep impression on his troubled mind, and he decided then and there that he would become a minister for Konkōkyō.

Through this circuitous route Fukuda became a Konkōkyō minister. What most directly influenced him to decide to become a missionary in North America, however, was his meeting with Kandori Toshitsugu, a missionary with the Los Angeles Church, and Hideshima Rikimatsu, of the Seattle Church. He met both of them while they were in retreat at the Konkōkyō headquarters in Okayama, and they encouraged Fukuda to consider becoming a missionary in the United States. These were the events that led to Fukuda's arrival in San Francisco and the start of a fruitful career.

The Early Period of Overseas Mission Work

A major catalyst for the commencement of an organized missionary effort by Konkōkyō in North America and the Hawaiian islands was the visit to these areas in 1926 of Kitashima Kokichi, at the time the head director of the Konko Youth Group. During his visit groups of believers were officially organized into Shindōkai 真道会 [Associations of the true way] in Seattle, Tacoma, Los Angeles, and Honolulu. Prior to this there had been autonomous groups set up in those areas by believers who had joined Konkōkyō while they were still in Japan. By the middle of the 1910s there were already two groups of Konkōkyō members in Seattle, set up by two separate individuals [see MATSUI 1981, pp. 8–10].

Kitashima's observations during this visit were later compiled and published as *Inori no tabi* いのりの旅 [A journey of prayer; KITASHIMA 1927]. Kitashima was not involved only in the missionary work of Konkōkyō; he was also keen to know more about the situation of the Japanese immigrants and their daily lives. When he stayed in a hotel he sought to discover the differences between a hotel managed by a person of Japanese ancestry and a hotel managed by a Caucasian American. It seemed to him that in general the hotels managed by Japanese immigrants were untidy. Comparing their life styles, it seemed to him that the life style of Caucasian Americans was composed and relaxed, while that of the Japanese immigrants was restless and fidgety. At least this was the way he perceived it. On the other hand, he thought, if one considers that these immigrants arrived on these shores less than thirty years before with nothing but the clothes on their backs, there was still hope for the future.

Kitashima also diligently observed the activities of other religions. He writes that he took a look into a Christian church and was impressed by how everyone was singing hymns so joyously. However, it seems he was not overwhelmingly impressed by any specific religion, nor is there any indication in his diaries that he experienced any sort of "culture shock."

Observing conditions in these areas was only a part of Kitashima's journey – he also gave many lectures, and seemed to gain a considerable amount of self-confidence as a result. Through his lectures, he wrote, about forty to fifty new converts were added to the ranks of the faithful. He also wrote that, although most of the Japanese-Americans considered themselves Christian or Buddhist, most of them had only a nominal affiliation, and few showed a strong faith in either God or the Buddha. He concluded that the religious market was still open for development.

The last chapter of *Inori no tabi*, a "report on observations made while visiting the United States," gives a good outline of the distribution of Konkōkyō members in Hawaii and North America at this time. According to this report, fewer than fifty Konkōkyō people on the mainland

U.S. were believers from the time they were still in Japan. Kitashima lists fifteen in Los Angeles, ten in Seattle, and few each in Tacoma, San Francisco, Fresno, and other cities. There were eighteen members in Hawaii – most of them in and around Honolulu.

Three Shindōkai were established in North America as a result of Kitashima's three-month visit. In a short time, eight churches were established in the three West Coast states of Washington, Oregon, and California. The first church was established in 1928, in the city of Seattle, where there already was a large Japanese-American population. Another church was established the following year in Tacoma, Washington, and a third one the next year in Los Angeles.

In 1930 immigration from Japan was totally prohibited, and the social climate in California turned against Japanese Americans. At the same time, Japanese religious organizations, especially Buddhist organizations, took on an increasingly important function as community centers and places for the confirmation of Japanese-American identity. In other words, Japanese Americans could gather at these churches to gain knowledge about Japan, exchange information, and deepen personal relationships.

A large number of Buddhist organizations already existed at this time. According to a report by the Honganji-ha of the Jōdo Shinshū (KAIGAI KAICYŌ YŌRAN KANKŌ IINKAI 1974), by 1930 there were already thirty-seven established Buddhist churches affiliated with the Honganji branch alone. Often, however, a search for faith was not the reason people associated with these organizations. On the other hand, neither was it merely a matter of seeking connections for funerals and memorial services for the ancestors, the pattern found so frequently in Japan. Many were searching for a place of emotional or spiritual refuge. The Buddhist churches functioned as places where members of the Japanese-American community could find emotional and spiritual support.

If the Buddhist churches already provided such a function, a religious organization that began new missionary activities had to provide a different function. What measures did Fukuda take to respond to this situation? On the evening he arrived in San Francisco, Fukuda already began his healing practices. To a woman who had suffered from sinus problems for over ten years he said, "This way (Konkōkyō) is not a way to heal physical diseases. It is a way to heal the heart. However, if the heart is healed, physical diseases will also be relieved." With this explanation, he applied a piece of sacred rice (*goshinmai* 御神米; purified rice wrapped in paper as a talisman) on her nose. Fukuda had received two thousand *goshinmai* from one of his ministers in the Tokyo Church, who had told him, "The way will be established before you run out of these *goshinmai*."

The woman with sinus problems was soon liberated from her discomfort, as if the long-standing trouble had never existed. The astonished

woman then brought her daughter, who had suffered for two months from an accumulation of pus in a wound, to seek healing. This problem was also brought to a happy end in a short while. The woman's husband was also healed of a hernia. After a string of such "favours" (*okage*), the whole family became dedicated believers in Konkōkyō. Fukuda gradually increased membership through such missionary activities. The two thousand *goshinmai* he had brought from Japan were gone in about a year and three months, reflecting the intensity of his efforts.

Healing was one of Fukuda's most powerful tools. Some who became members as a result of the direct benefit received through such "favours" (*okage*), came to venerate Fukuda himself, who possessed a kind of charisma associated with a religious founder. Such charismatic missionaries are sometimes called "mini-founders."

Another reason besides Fukuda's personal charisma for the relatively smooth establishment of his organization of believers was the role played by long-term members of Konkōkyō among the Japanese immigrants. It seems that Fukuda did not modify his activities to adapt to those who were more accustomed to the American lifestyle or ways of thinking. There is a section in Fukuda's memoirs, *Sōkō fukyō no kaiko* 桑港布教の回顧 [Recollections of missionary work in San Francisco], serialized in the North American Konkōkyō journal *Tenchi no megumi* 天地の恵み [The blessings of heaven and earth, 1955], that allows us to speculate about the situation at that time.

Fukuda writes disapprovingly that, while Japanese Americans usually use the honorific *-sama* suffix when addressing their school teachers, or Buddhist priests or pastors, on occasion they use a more familiar form of address, or when drunk even address them by their last names without any honorifics (*yobisute*). He comments that this is because of the fact that the United States is a country of freedom and equality where even the president is referred to as "Mr. Roosevelt" or "Hello, Franklin." He attributed this practice to "the colonial atmosphere, where propriety is easily corrupted" (*reigi no midare yasui shokuminchi kibun*). However, Fukuda's group included a dedicated woman member originally from Fukuoka Prefecture. She knew the correct attitude that people should have toward their minister. She always addressed Fukuda as "sensei," and eventually all of the people came to address him in that way. This is only one episode among many, but it is of great significance. Near the center of the organization formed around the new minister there were those who realized the proper form to be taken in a religious organization, and this made it easier for the minister to carry out his activities.

Fukuda writes that the early period of missionary work was a series of privations and hardship. In terms of the expansion of the group, however, it can only be called a smooth progression. By March 1931, the year after Fukuda arrived in the United States, the San Francisco

Church was established. The number of believers continued to increase, and the Church was unable to accommodate all the participants at the monthly festivals (*tsukinami-sai*), with the crowd overflowing into the halls, dining room, and even the kitchen. The celebration in November marking the first anniversary of the commencement of missionary work was attended by about four hundred people.

Explaining the Healing of Disease

Scholars who do research on Japanese New Religions explain their success in terms of a “theory of poverty, disease, and conflict” (*hin-byō-sō riron* 貧病争理論). They say that the motive for converting to a religion, especially a New Religion, is to gain some tangible worldly benefit or solve a problem, such as poverty, disease, or an undesirable human relationship. Recently scholars have realized that this theory must be modified. For example, now that Japanese society has become economically affluent, the tendency to join a religion in order to solve some economic problem is on the decline. On the other hand, there are some cases of people joining a religious organization in search of entertainment or “play,” or a way to spend their leisure time and fill their spiritual emptiness. Even so, relief from disease is still a major motive for people to approach a religion.

Nevertheless, the crux of the problem is not so much the healing of disease itself, but rather the meaning that the activity of healing carries and how this is explained by the religious leader. If the core of the problem exists only in the techniques of healing disease, the development of modern medicine should result in a decline in the number of people who are involved in religion. However, the facts show that this is not the case. The question of where healing through modern medical techniques and healing through faith differ, and what they have in common, is as yet unanswered. In this section I shall examine the explanation given by the missionary himself with regard to the healing of disease.

Fukuda himself experienced healing of disease through faith during his youth. The process at that time was not simple or easy. His disease was healed, but he did not become a devout believer as a result. There was no simple relationship between the healing of disease and the deepening of faith. It can be expected that one who has experienced such a complicated process himself would be sensitive to the subtle psychology of converts who entered the faith through the healing of disease, and when he performed activities related to the healing of disease.

Volume 8 of *Tenchi no megumi* contains accounts of the personal experiences of believers and is an apt source for examining this question. One personal account entitled “On account of an eye disease that doctors gave up on” (*Isha ni mihanasareta ganbyō no okage*) is by a certain

Mr. K, a member of the San Francisco Church. Mr. K often had dreams of an older brother who had died more than ten years earlier, after which he would suffer from chest pains. It happened that he had a friend who was a member of Konkōkyō, who recommended that he perform a memorial service (*mitama-matsuri* みたま祭). As soon as he had an ancestral rite (*senzo-matsuri* 先祖祭) performed by the Konko Church, he stopped dreaming of his brother and his chest pains went away. However, that was the extent of his contact with the Church.

About six months later, however, his chest pains returned and he asked Fukuda to perform some prayers (*gokinēn*). When K asked if he would be healed if he converted, Fukuda answered that God had patiently waited and guided this man a long time in order to lead him to faith. Fukuda also said, "If you dedicate yourself to your family business, your disease will gradually heal." K followed Fukuda's advice and worked hard, patiently enduring his suffering, and eventually he was healed. However, this time his left eye became swollen and extremely painful. His doctor suggested that he return to Japan for treatment, but instead he visited the Konko Church once again and asked if his eye could be healed. Fukuda answered that the kind of faith that questions whether or not healing will take place is not sufficient, and that he must be determined and believe that the eye will be healed.

At that time the pain went away for a while. Every time the pain returned K's faith would waver. This cycle repeated itself over time until K was able to have a feeling of gratitude even when he felt pain, and eventually recovered to the point where he could work every day in good spirits and in good health. Fukuda explained these attacks of suffering even though one has converted and has faith by referring to the discipline of *kendō*. God severely tests those who have the potential and ability to grow and achieve much, explained Fukuda.

According to Fukuda, disease is one way God shows his solicitousness (*kizukase* 気づかせ) toward human beings, and is a kind of training, a form of love toward human beings. This interpretation is not a patented monopoly of Fukuda, but it is an explanation commonly found among the New Religions of Japan. This theme is often repeated by missionaries at appropriate times in appropriate ways to members or possible converts.

Konkōkyō during World War II

War between Japan and China broke out in July 1937. Tensions in Japan were felt also among Japanese Americans in California. Patriotic monetary donations and "condolence packages" for Japanese soldiers were sent to the headquarters in Japan from U.S. Konko Churches. It is understandable that such a patriotic atmosphere would prevail among first-generation immigrants who still had a clear sense of their Japanese

identity, but this sort of nationalist feeling must also have caused some dissension for pastors, a tension between nationalism vs. universalism.

Volume 10 of *Tenchi no megumi* opens with a homily by Fukuda on “catastrophic times and the faith of our way” (*hijōjikyoku to wagamichi no shinjin*). Konkōkyō headquarters in Japan had sent out instructions that the churches should continue to teach “faith as usual” (*heizei no tōri no shinjin de yoroshii*), and Fukuda attempted to explain the meaning of this instruction. There were some who said that the church should advocate the spirit of “selfless patriotic service” (*messhi-hōkō* 滅私奉公), and the church should not perform prayers for healing individual disease or the solution of household problems, but Fukuda disagreed.

He did not advocate a complete separation between faith and national problems. But he claimed that “a healthy family is made up of healthy individuals, and the foundation for a nation is made firm through the gathering together of solid families.” There should be nothing to prevent them from serving individual needs by healing diseases. The good of the nation is served by building up strong bodies. In Fukuda’s mind, human relationships spread out from individuals to families, and then from families to the wider nation and society. He did not go beyond that, however; his ideal did not reach the international level. Even though the community of his followers included some who were not of Japanese ancestry, confronted with the war between Japan and China, Fukuda’s nationalistic tendencies came to the fore.

With the opening of war between Japan and the United States, all first-generation Japanese Americans in the United States and Hawaii, who were marked by the FBI as suspicious, were arrested and interrogated, and all but a few were detained. In addition, the following year (1942), all people of Japanese ancestry living in the primary military zone of the West Coast were without exception forced to “relocate” to detention centers. This policy had not been prepared for with advanced planning, and it was not easy to move over 110,000 people in one fell swoop. People were ordered to move to temporary local detention centers, then later divided among ten detention centers. The temporary detention centers included renovated race tracks, with atrocious facilities and conditions. The long-term camps were not called detention centers but “War Relocation Centers” (WRC). From eight to twenty thousand Japanese-Americans were detained in each WRC.

The experience of living in detention centers during the war was one of emotional humiliation for Japanese Americans. Economically, they were forced into a situation in which they were in effect robbed of all their possessions, and some suffered substantial financial losses. How did Konkōkyō ministers face this forced detention?

The day of the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Fukuda was attending the memorial service for the Konkōkyō founder at the San

Jose Church, and he was arrested immediately after the service. Ten days later he was transferred to Missoula in Montana, where he underwent interrogation. Fukuda had sent "condolence packages" to Japanese soldiers; he had written patriotic, pro-Japanese articles concerning the Sino-Japanese war; he had had contact with the Japanese navy. The FBI was aware of all of these activities. It was decided that Fukuda should be interned, and he was transferred from Missoula to a camp in San Antonio, Texas, in April 1942. One month later he was transferred to a camp in Roseburg. In July 1943 he was transferred again to a camp in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and then again in February 1944 to a family camp in Crystal City, where he stayed until the end of the war. However, he was not released until 1947, because he was deemed to be a "strong pro-Japanese" sympathizer.

Konkōkyō ministers other than Fukuda who became internees at the breakout of the war included Hirayama Bunjirō of the Portland Church, Hideshima Rikimatsu of the Seattle Church, Tsuyuki Taiichi of the Los Angeles Church, and Gotō Isao of the Sawtelle (California) mission. Many regular members of Konkōkyō were also detained.

Though transferred from camp to camp, Fukuda took this opportunity to continue his missionary activities. At Roseburg he led a worship service every morning from 5:30 a.m. and lectured three times a week. Almost a thousand people are estimated to have attended his celebration of the autumn festival. After his transfer to Santa Fe, he continued to sponsor the morning worship services and lecture meetings. Almost all of the internees at the Santa Fe camp were reported to have attended these meetings.

The detention camp at Tule Lake Segregation Center is famous as the place where the most pro-Japanese internees were detained. Protest strikes occurred frequently. Marvin OPLER (1950) records that two Konkōkyō ministers were involved in missionary activity at this camp: Yasumura Yasukichi, head of the Sacramento Church, and Gotō Isao, who was active in the Los Angeles Church. Meetings were held regularly, and tatami mats were placed in the meeting room. Devout believers would assemble from 4:00 every Sunday morning and remain until 5:00 in the afternoon. There were also some evening meetings. According to Opler's observations, the activities of Konkōkyō consisted mostly of spiritual inspiration and did not involve much in the way of guidance in daily living, social activities, or intellectual stimulation.

The number of members, including children, came to about fifty. Most of these were first-generation Japanese Americans, and if there were any second-generation returnees (children of Japanese immigrants who had spent some time in Japan), they participated only as transitory observers. The second-generation Japanese Americans were all children who had been brought to the meetings by their parents.

Opler observes that a point of difference between the Konkōkyō and the Buddhist and Christian groups was that the latter two had active youth programs.

The religious activities of Konkōkyō thus continued in one form or another during the period of detention in the camps. At least the people were afforded a place to maintain their faith and religious practices. Sometimes, too, new converts were made to Konkōkyō. It seems that the situation even proved favorable for a missionary like Fukuda, with his strong personality and charisma.

Mission Work after the War

After the end of World War II and the return of the Japanese Americans from the detention camps to their former homes, the activities of the Konkōkyō churches were resumed with the idea of returning to the pre-war state. Konkōkyō ministers who participated in missionary activities after the war can be divided into three major types. The first is those who had been involved in missionary work from before the war (Type A), the second is those who came to the United States from Japan after the war (Type B), and the third is the "second-generation" ministers, that is, the second-generation Japanese Americans who were born and raised in the United States and followed their parents in becoming Konkōkyō ministers (Type C).

Type B ministers began arriving soon after after the passage of the McCarran-Walter Act (the new Immigration and Nationality Act) of 1952. Six new ministers arrived between 1952 and 1956, and many more arrived in subsequent years, for a total of twenty by 1980. The first six to arrive eventually stayed in the United States, but of those who arrived after 1960, more than half returned to Japan after a short stay. Though few in number, some children of ministers who had come to the United States before the war studied at the Konkōkyō school in Okayama and were certified as ministers.

Fukuda Yoshiaki passed away in December of 1957 at the age of fifty-nine, two years after he had been naturalized as an American citizen. His death occurred just as the North American Konkōkyō church was moving from a period of renewal into a period of transition. Japanese-U.S. relations had entered a new phase, and the Japanese-American community was beginning to get back on its feet. It was also a period when the second-generation Japanese Americans were taking over from first-generation immigrants. The birth rate for this second generation was greatest when immigrants were being called to the U.S. from Japan in large numbers, and at the time of World War II the largest number of these people were in the age group between seventeen and twenty-one years old. That is, most of the second-generation Japanese Ameri-

cans were still in their youth at the time of the war. Fifteen years later, however, this generation was in their thirties, and increasingly playing a central role in Japanese-American society. The Konkōkyō had to take into account their presence, as well as the second-generation Japanese Americans who had spent some time in Japan and then returned to the United States.

TYPE A

Tsuyuki Taiichi of the Los Angeles Church was a native of Shizuoka Prefecture. He went to the United States in 1936 and first served in the San Francisco Church, then was transferred to the Los Angeles Church in February of 1940. He had come to the United States at the request of Fukuda, so it can be assumed that he received instructions from Fukuda on how to conduct missionary work in the United States. After his experience as an internee in the detention camps, Tsuyuki became the head of the Los Angeles Church in 1949. He continues there to this day, involved in activities centered on Konkōkyō ceremonies. Before the war, many Shinto organizations such as the North American Daijingu Headquarters 北米大神宮本院, the U.S. Shinto Church 米国神道教会, the Izumo Taisha North American Church 出雲大社北米教会, and Inari Shrines 稲荷神社, existed on the West Coast, but all of these had disappeared during the war. Shrine Shinto was to some extent restored in Hawaii, but it disappeared completely on the U.S. mainland. This left a gap in the social need for *jichinsai* 地鎮祭 (ground-breaking ceremonies), *rakuseishiki* 落成式 (ceremonies marking the completion of a building), various purifications (*o-harai*), and weddings. It happens that the costume of the Konkōkyō minister is very similar to that of a Shinto priest. In fact, a person without specialized knowledge could not distinguish between the two. Also, the atmosphere of ceremonial performances before the altar is quite similar. It is not surprising that Konkōkyō ministers were asked to substitute for the former functions of a Shinto priest. Japanese Americans would have been unaware that there was a "substitution." Most made no distinction between Shinto priests and Konkōkyō ministers.

Tsuyuki did not take a negative attitude toward this development. Rather, he looked upon it as an opportunity to come into contact with people and as another way to carry on his missionary work. He referred to the ceremonies that he conducted as "community service," and prepared a list of such services.

TYPE B

Matsui Fumio of the San Francisco Church was born in Iwakuni City in

1921. He grew up in a family that had been members of Konkōkyō from the time of his great-grandfather, and Konkōkyō ministers from the time of his grandfather. Immediately after graduating from Waseda University he was drafted and entered a naval academy. Released from military service because of illness, he began working at a munitions plant in Iwakuni. He worked here until the end of the war, and his various wartime experiences led him to consider questions of religious faith.

In 1947 Matsui entered Konkōkyō Academy. He graduated six months later and began working at Konkōkyō headquarters, lecturing at the academy for four years. In 1950 he received a visit at the academy from a certain member of the San Jose Konko Church. When he heard about the conditions of Konkōkyō in the United States he decided to become a missionary there. Arriving at the San Francisco Church in 1952, he began missionary activities as well as taking on administrative tasks for the central Konkōkyō North American office located in the San Francisco Church. Four years later he moved to Seattle, also helping out in the Portland church, and sometimes did work in Tacoma. He also crossed the border to carry out missionary activities in Vancouver. Missionary work had been carried out even before the war in Vancouver, but the lack of organization left few converts. In addition, many Japanese Canadians had moved to Toronto during the war, and the Japanese immigrant population in general had declined. Missionary work during those days entailed considerable economic hardship. Matsui would often have to purchase only a one-way bus fare to his destination and rely on contributions from believers to pay for his return ticket.

The main objects of this missionary activity were first-generation Japanese immigrants and second-generation Japanese Americans who had returned after spending some time in Japan. Their return was inevitable, since after the war there was a strong tendency among second-generation Japanese Americans to withdraw from Japanese society. In Vancouver the people who gathered at the Konkōkyō church consisted mostly of those who had immigrated from Japan after the war. Thus, even though the period after the war was considered one of rebuilding, the tendency as far as numbers was concerned was toward a decline in membership. Even so, by the end of the 1950s there were fifty families associated with the Seattle Church.

Missionary work continued in the northern part of the West Coast as believers from before the war regathered and a few new members from among the Japanese-American population were added. Fukuda Yoshiaki of the San Francisco Church died in 1957; his wife, Shinko, took over as director of the church after his death, but she passed away in 1974. Matsui, who had been connected with the missionary activities

of the San Francisco Church since the latter part of the 1960s, assumed the office of church director at this time.

Matsui and other ministers who arrived in the United States after the war continued to direct their missionary efforts at Japanese-Americans. This followed the example set by Fukuda. Both Okazaki Masaru of the Fresno Church and Kimura Hiromichi of the Sacramento Church came to the San Francisco Church in 1956 at the urging of Fukuda. The primary goal of Konkōkyō during the so-called period of rebuilding immediately after the war was to reestablish its foundation within Japanese-American society. The new arrivals from Japan after the war also followed this strategy.

Nevertheless, some ministers also decided to carry on missionary activities beyond ethnic boundaries. Despite the current realities, they believed that in some way Konkōkyō was a universal religion. This belief contributed to a growing tension in daily activities. The greatest obstacle to their efforts to missionize among non-Japanese Americans, to strive to realize their aspiration for a universal religion, was the state of the church itself. Their realization of this fact caused their distress to deepen even further. I will return to and explain this theme later.

TYPE C

The attitudes of second-generation immigrant children who are raised in America, even children of a Konkōkyō minister, are mostly that of Americans. The idea that a child should follow in his father's footsteps is not accepted as an unquestioned assumption. Fukuda himself had six sons (one died in the detention camps), but none became a Konkōkyō minister. As of 1981 there were only two second-generation ministers, one at the Los Angeles Church (the son of Tsuyuki Taiichi), and the other at the San Jose Church (the daughter of Yamada Asatarō, the first director of the same church).

Mention should be made of Ishiwata Haruko of the San Jose Church. Her father, Yamada Asatarō, was an immigrant from Hiroshima. He had become a member of Konkōkyō, inspired during the visit of Katashima Kokichi to Seattle. He went to Japan in 1928 to study at the Konkōkyō Academy and became a certified minister. Around 1930 he went to Vancouver for missionary activities, where he remained until just before the church was formally established. At that time Canadian immigration laws allowed missionaries to stay in the country for some years, but it was very difficult to obtain permanent residency. Yamada, unaware of these limitations, built a church when the number of believers increased to a certain point, and meant to move to and live in Vancouver, but he was denied entrance. He was discouraged, but with the support of

Fukuda he began missionary work in San Jose in 1932. The present church was purchased at that time.

Ishiwata Haruko was born in 1917. She remembers that the atmosphere of the church during her youth was full of life. Everyone was a devout believer and very active, so she herself always looked forward to the church meetings. War broke out while she was crossing from the United States to Japan, so she became a trainee at the Kōjimachi Church in Tokyo to help out at the church. She was married there and took her husband's name, Ishiwata. In 1950 she returned to the United States around the time that the Korean War broke out. Her father died in 1952, and her mother took over his position; however, her heart was not strong, and she could not be as active as she wanted. It was then that Ishiwata took the examination to become a Konkōkyō minister, and began her church activities in that role in 1958. She was educated in the United States, but since she had lived in Japan for an extended period of time, she was bilingual.

San Jose had a relatively large Japanese-American population, with rather strong social ties. These local conditions led to some restrictions on her activity from the very beginning. It was all she could do to take care of the members continuing from her mother's time. Since she was about the average age of other second-generation Japanese Americans, she shared their general feelings, and this must have caused her further frustration.

Tsuyuki Ōhisa is the other second-generation minister, but his age is nearer that of third-generation Japanese Americans. The fact that in 1971 there were discussions to prepare an English translation of Konkōkyō scriptures was surely influenced by the presence of people like Tsuyuki within Konkōkyō. During his college days he had experienced an emotional slump, which in order to overcome he began on his own to translate *Konkō daijin* 金光大神, the biography of the founder of Konkōkyō, into English. It happened that at the same time a project, by non-Konkōkyō members, to translate the same text, was also under way. Tsuyuki joined this group. This project later underwent some changes and eventually was carried out by Konkōkyō members. Tsuyuki and his younger brother expended considerable effort in the project. A partial translation of *Konkō daijin* was completed in 1981. Since 1975 the same group has published an English-language magazine called *Konko Review*. Tsuyuki is also involved heavily in the editing of this magazine.

The children of first-generation ministers often play a leadership role in the running of the Konkōkyō organization even if they do not become ministers. Some no longer have any contact with the church, but many are strongly influenced by the fact that their parents were Konkōkyō ministers. Thus, Fukuda's sons play a leadership role among the

members of the San Francisco Church; even though they have not become ministers, they have not rejected their ties with Konkōkyō.

The Konkōkyō Church in the Eyes of the Members

I have examined Konkōkyō from the perspective of the ministers, and examined their efforts at missionary work. I shall now examine the church from the perspective of its members. What kind of place is the Konkōkyō church, and what are its functions as sought by the members?

Let us examine the results of a survey conducted in the summer of 1981 among members of Konkōkyō living on the mainland of the United States.¹ The survey contained questions on the member's age, sex, racial background; on the process that led to membership; on the religious conditions of the member's family; on the member's opinions concerning Konkōkyō teachings; and on the member's relationship, if any, with religions other than Konkōkyō. The following conclusions were drawn from the results of this survey:

1. All members are Japanese Americans. There were some (9%) whose mother or father was not Japanese American, but the rest had both parents of Japanese descent.
2. Many (more than one out of three) had strong cultural ties to Japan, such as having lived there for a while before returning to the U.S., or having immigrated to the U.S. after the war.
3. About 60% became members through their parents' influence. There has been a recent increase in the number of families for whom Konkōkyō is the "family religion."
4. There is very little interest in other religions, nor do the members know much about other religions.
5. Many of the members feel an affinity toward Konkōkyō because its teachings are not too severe, it is easy to practice, and it is closely bound up with daily life.
6. Many members see one of the important roles of the church as a "community center."

It may not be possible to make sweeping generalizations about the members of Konkōkyō in North America as a whole from the results of this survey. However, since the number of respondents represented

¹ This survey was conducted with the cooperation of the North America Konkōkyō organization. A total of over five hundred copies were sent to all the families on the official list of members kept by the North America Konkōkyō organization, and were also passed out during the summer seminars of the Konkōkyō youth association. One hundred and forty-six responses were received.

10% of all the members, and the responses were received from the relatively devout members, to a certain extent it is possible to infer the tendencies of the group as a whole.

Of those surveyed, one peak for new membership was reached in the mid-1930s, with another peak forming soon after the end of the war. The first peak came soon after the commencement of missionary work. Some people had been members from the time they were still in Japan and renewed their membership when a church was established in their area in the United States. Most of the present members, however, joined Konkōkyō for the first time in the United States. The number of new members right after the end of the war reflects the reconstruction of Japanese-American society at this time.

Many of those who became members through the activity of early missionaries such as Fukuda Yoshiaki have the experience of joining the religion as a matter of personal choice, and not as a result of inheriting it from their parents. However, recently the organization is beginning to become "established," and many members think of Konkōkyō as the religion of their family. Besides being their "family religion," the church also provides a place where similar families can gather together and share similar interests. For this reason it must remain "a church for Japanese Americans," and in fact Konkōkyō in the United States today does exist for the sake of Japanese Americans. In this sense there is no difference between the function of Konkōkyō and the American Buddhist churches. When missionary work began, some believers joined Konkōkyō because it provided a function not available in Buddhist churches, but the members today do not seem to expect any such unique function.

In a sense this is a problem for the missionaries. After Fukuda there has been no charismatic "mini-founder" among the missionaries, no missionary with a strong personality that would draw a new type of member. The implications of this situation is that once a religious organization becomes established, if it becomes fixed in its ways, this becomes a major force in determining the future course and conditions of the organization. When facilities are built and furnished as the place of gathering for members, the gathering of people there to meet and talk with friends and acquaintances will become one of its most pleasant functions. For many members this will become one of the major reasons for attending church. This tendency has become stronger and stronger in the Konkōkyō churches after the war.

When one of the major functions of the church is as a place of relaxation and of meeting friends, it is quite understandable that members might not welcome new or "different" people to the church. In this case "different" means those of a different racial or cultural background. According to the director of the Fresno Church, where there is a relatively

large group of Japanese Americans, there used to be a person of Hispanic background who was about to become a convert. However, the Japanese-American members of the church did not take kindly to the idea of having a person of that background in the church, and the person was excluded from membership. Since then the director of the church has abandoned missionary work among non-Japanese Americans.

If a person of different racial or cultural background approaches the church, the missionary becomes wary. From the perspective of mission work the inclusion of people from other cultural backgrounds should be a stimulus to the church. However, the average church member wants a church where he or she can relax. This is an understandable desire that cannot be denied. It can even be argued that the church should put primary consideration on the wishes of those members who have cooperated with the church from the time of its foundation.

The fact that older Japanese Americans have a certain type of discriminatory attitude is not limited to San Francisco. The Konkōkyō mission in San Diego was established in 1980, and its young minister is struggling. His wife is Caucasian, and probably as a result some of the members of the mission are also Caucasian. He is committed to gain converts among non-Japanese Americans, but even he admits that it is beyond his powers to conduct missionary activities among the Hispanic and Black population. One group targeted for missionary work, this man said, are people of international marriages, but this does not extend to the international marriages of so-called "war brides." The reason, he explained, was that wives of international marriages do not want to be confused with the "war brides."

It is not easy to carry on missionary work in the face of discrimination among one's church members. If one attempts to promote missionary work among non-Japanese Americans, the most likely result is that the church will split along the lines of division that already exist in the minds of current members.

Even if the missionary holds dear the ideal taught by the founder and attempts to approach this ideal, the reality of missionary work involves responding realistically to the concrete problems presented by his all-too-human church members. The case of Konkōkyō in North America shows that this all-too-obvious fact is one of the major problems besetting the missionary. A community of believers is like a living organism. In some cases it consumes the missionary. The intimacy of human relations between the minister and members in Konkōkyō can, on the one hand, emerge as a source of strength resulting from the cohesion of a minister and the group of believers surrounding him/her. On the other hand, it can also form a wall that shuts out a new type of caller. In the case of North America, this tendency has formed a barricade against missionary activity directed toward non-Japanese Americans.

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