

Sign of Growing Relationship Between Japanese and Korean Churches

Under the above headline, the Korean Christian News published the following report on the visit of Kyodan representatives to the Korean Methodist Church in Seoul, Korea.

'Bishop Shin Kyoung Ha, president of the Bishop's Council of the Korean Methodist Church, held an interview with representatives of the Kyodan in Japan on June 8 at the Korean Hotel, thus promoting exchange between Japanese and Korean Christian Churches. The various churches in Taiwan, Japan, and Korea gather periodically, and various representatives of the Kyodan who had participated in the Northeast Asia Church Mission Conference, where the churches share their vision about mission, came especially to visit the Korean Methodist Church to broaden their interaction with them.

'In 1967, three Christian churches in Korea established an agreement with the Kyodan and have promoted continual, reciprocal exchange. This agreement was revised in 1992, and the Kyodan continued to engage in ongoing exchanges with the Presbyterian churches in Korea but has not been able to actualize exchanges with the Korean Methodist Church.

'During his meeting with Kyodan representatives on June 8, KMC's President of the Council of Bishops Shin Kyoung Ha took steps to improve that relationship and to develop reciprocal interchange. He is planning to attend the Kyodan General Assembly this fall and then to invite representatives from the Kyodan to the Korean Methodist Church's Assembly in October, intending for this reciprocal exchange to be the starting point for expanded interaction.

'The representatives of the Kyodan who visited this time were Kyodan General Secretary Naito Tomeyuki; Katsuyama Ken'ichiro, pastor of Takeoka Church in the Chiba Subdistrict of Tokyo District; Kishi Norihide, pastor of Chiba Honcho Church in Chiba Subdistrict of Tokyo District; and Takada Kazuhiko, pastor of Tachikawa Church in West Tokyo District." (Tr. RT)



Korean Methodist Church's Council of Bishops President Shin Kyoung Ha (front row, second from left) welcomed Kyodan visitors, including Kyodan General Secretary Naito Tomeyuki (front row, second from right).

Recalling the visit, General Secretary Naito made the following entry in his diary.

"On June 8, I made an official visit as Kyodan General Secretary to the Korean Methodist Church in Seoul, Korea. In 1967, the Kyodan joined in a mission covenant to promote exchange with three Korean churches: the Presbyterian Church of Korea, the Korean Methodist Church, and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea. In 1992 the covenant was revised, with the aim of adapting to a new era and striving to improve cooperation further. However, as compared to interaction with the Presbyterian Church of Korea and the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, fellowship with the Korean Methodist Church had come to a standstill in recent years. Therefore, the Kyodan needed to work toward improved relations and broader opportunities for fellowship.

'On that very evening, in the plaza in front of Seoul's city hall, there was a large-scale candlelight demonstration mostly attended by Korean youth. On their placards were slogans protesting the importation of American beef and sharp criticism of the current government's anti-American policies. The shouting of the thousands of protesters echoed among the buildings in a noisy uproar. I think that the juxtaposition of this candlelight demonstration and the meeting with the Korean Methodist Church's President of Bishops will always remain firmly etched in my memory." (Tr. TVB)

Executive Council Votes to Admonish Pastor, Abolish Mission Commission

The Executive Council of the 35th Kyodan General Assembly period met for the 5th time, July 14-15, in the Kyodan conference room. The main issues addressed at the previous meeting, namely the "recommendation for a minister to resign" and his "admonition," were carried forward to this meeting, and the debate was vigorous indeed. Before the vote was taken, four council members walked out in protest, deepening the division further. Likewise, there was strong debate concerning the proposal now being drafted for presentation to the upcoming Kyodan General Assembly this fall to change the Kyodan structure radically through a revision of its bylaws. With only three months to go until the assembly, it is uncertain what will happen.

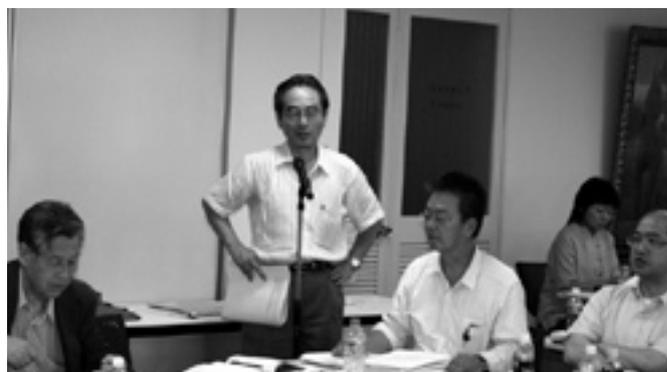
The following two articles taken from *Shinpo (The Kyodan Times)* summarize these two points.

I. Resolution to "Pursue the Admonition" Passes: Debate is Hot Concerning the Legal Basis and Appropriateness of the Procedures

As the second day of deliberations came to an end, the "Petition to Carry Out Admonitions Against Kitamura Jiro" was passed. This means that the matter will be taken up by the Commission on the Ministry, which will determine what actions will be taken against him.

Based on the decisions of the third meeting of the Executive Council in October 2007, Kyodan Moderator Yamakita Nobuhisa sent a formal letter to Pastor Kitamura stating that if he did not immediately cease from offering communion to unbaptized persons, he would be asked to resign as a minister of the Kyodan. Since Kitamura did not respond to this letter of admonition, a new resolution was passed at the next meeting in February, to the effect that if he continued this practice without the consensus of the Kyodan as a whole, the Executive Council would be forced to follow through with its admonition. He was asked to respond by June 20, 2008.

As Kitamura did not abide by this request, a formal admonition was passed on the basis that his continued offering of communion to unbaptized persons was in violation of the first and second articles of the Kyodan Constitution and brought disorder to the church. During the debate swirling around this issue, council member Umezaki Koji expressed his dissent, stating that the Executive Council could not itself be the plaintive in this dispute, and following Moderator Yamakita's response, Umezaki walked out, stating, "I cannot be a part of this illegitimate discussion, as you have not spelled out the legal basis for this in the bylaws." Council member Matsubara Shigeo likewise walked out after expressing his opposition to the proceedings.



Kitamura Jiro, a delegate from Kanagawa, presenting his philosophy of mission

Council member Mukai Mareo expressed his opposition by posing this question: "You say that offering communion to unbaptized persons is not permissible, but where is this stated in the Kyodan Constitution and Bylaws? The Kyodan is based on local church autonomy, and there are also examples of churches in other countries where this is practiced." Ushiroku Toshiya claimed that the procedure under consideration was outside the stipulations of the Kyodan Constitution and Bylaws, and expressed doubts that the motion should have even been introduced. Likewise, since such an indictment and admonition require a two-thirds majority of council members to pass, he urged caution. Others also expressed their opposition, including Saito Jin'ichi, who likewise left the room, followed by others who walked out as the roll was called.

Those who supported the admonition were led by Moderator Yamakita, who stressed that the regulations for church membership in the Kyodan Constitution and Bylaws clearly included baptism as a prerequisite, and so the very concept of unbaptized persons receiving communion was inconsequential. Likewise, since unbaptized persons cannot participate in a local church's annual assembly, they would be left in limbo. Council member Sasaki Michio chastised those who walked out, saying, "This debate requires us to all be on the same playing field. I want these illegitimate actions to stop." He further stated that since it is the role of the Commission on Ministry to carry out an admonition and it is the Kyodan General Assembly that handles matters pertaining to the administration of communion, it is only natural for the moderator to bring to attention any practices in this regard that causes discord.

In response to one lay member's remark that this "is not a matter of life and death or one that involves human rights," another lay member countered that the matter is of "supreme importance to the laity, since it relates directly to our walk of faith." The exit of the several council members caused the session to be extended for 15 minutes. When the final vote

was tallied, 16 of the 19 remaining council members had voted in favor of the measure.

II. Elimination of the Commission on Mission Proposed

On the second day of the meeting, after revision of church regulations related the Board of Publications was dealt with, the following issues were also discussed:

1. Revision of the Regulations on the Research Institute on the Mission of the Church,
2. Dissolution of the Commission on Mission and Revision of related Bylaws,
3. Revision of the Regulations Concerning Ministerial Qualifications,
4. Application Process for Recognition as a Minister Under Special Appointment, etc., and
5. Cooperative Mission Covenants with the Presbyterian Church USA and the Reformed Church of America.

As the proposals on revision of the regulations of the Research Institute on the Mission of the Church and the dissolution of the Commission on Mission and revision of related bylaws overlapped, they were discussed simultaneously. Moderator Yamakita presented both proposals on the basis of the report of the Special Committee on Church Structure. The proposed revision of church regulations on the Research Institute on the Mission of the Church is intended to clarify both the original purpose for establishing the institute and its present role. The moderator explained that part 1 of Article 41 of the Bylaws and Articles 3 and 8 of the regulations on the Research Institute on the Mission of the Church have not been adhered to since the time of the Kyodan's internal struggles. Thus, clarifying the role of the Research Institute will result in the clarification of the overlapping activities under the jurisdiction of the Commission on Mission, which supports a proposal to eliminate the research institute.

Other reasons cited for the proposal include the fact that while the research institute rethinks such things as basic mission strategies and basic social action policies, it is the committees under the Commission on Mission that actually do the work, so the committees under the Commission on Mission could not do overall basic strategy planning. Therefore, the proposal is to abolish the Commission on Mission and have its committees on evangelism, education, and society become separate commissions. Various bylaw changes will be necessary. There were 17 votes in favor of adopting the changes in the regulations on the research institute. Likewise, the same number approved presenting to the General Assembly this fall the proposed changes in the bylaws that would abolish the Commission on Mission.



Miyamoto Yoshihiro, chair of the Committee on Research Institute on the Mission of the church, giving some idea of his point

The regulations on the Research Institute on the Mission of the Church can be revised by the Executive Council, but abolishment of the Commission on Mission involves changes in the bylaws, which requires the consensus of the Kyodan General Assembly. Council members opposed to the proposal stated that bylaw changes should be dealt with first, before revision of regulations on the research institute. On the other hand, the following quotes were representative of those in support of the proposal: "The research institute has not operated according to the purposes of its inception." "Because evangelism was placed under the Commission on Mission, evangelism has stagnated." "This is representative of the face of the Kyodan to come."

Other proposals that were approved included sending aid to churches that suffered typhoon damage, resolutions relating to the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Protestant Christianity in Japan, and revision of Article 4 of the ministerial qualifications. (Tr. TB)

Katsuyama Ken'ichiro
Executive Secretary

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Note: The names of Japanese persons are listed in traditional order, with last names first.

Japan Representatives Visit Retired Missionaries in the USA



An impressive meeting with the 40 missionaries at Pilgrim Place in Claremont, California

Since the fall of 2007, the Kyodan's Commission on Ecumenical Ministries has been planning a "Thank-you Tour" to visit retired U.S. missionaries who had served in Japan, as a prelude to the 2009 celebration of the 150th anniversary of the beginning of (Protestant) evangelism in Japan. It was thought that this milestone should not be approached without expressing gratitude to the missionaries who labored to bring salvation to the Japanese people as well as to the churches that sent and supported them. Also, with JNAC (Japan-North American Commission on Cooperative Mission) having been dissolved a few years ago and the Council of Cooperative Mission having been dissolved last year, the Kyodan is searching for new ways to continue its relationships with the churches in North America.

At first commission members groped in the dark for some sense of direction, knowing both the time limit for organizing a tour and the numbers and geographical distribution of the missionaries to be visited. It seemed like a nearly impossible task. However, with the patient and persistent negotiations Commission on Ecumenical Ministries staff members and the loving and passionate support of the retired missionaries in each location, each obstacle was overcome. When the April 14-23 schedule was set the plan became a reality, and everyone was deeply grateful.

In spite of the rather sudden invitation and the inconvenient timing at the start of the new church year, 17 people agreed to join the tour. This was the first such tour ever organized by the Kyodan, but participation was not limited to representatives of the Kyodan. Representatives of the Japan Christian Social Work League and of the Christian School Council on Cooperative Mission also participated because the work of missionaries extended to these areas as well.

After leaving Japan the group went first to Claremont, California to visit Pilgrim Place, a resident community for retired church workers, and held a reunion with 40 retired missionaries to Japan. This was a truly rich time

of fellowship. During the discussion, many penetrating questions about the Japanese church and the world of the church were raised. Those of us from Japan were encouraged and stimulated by the continuing deep concern and prayers of the missionaries.

We also expressed our gratitude and deep appreciation that during the over 60 years since the end of World War II, the churches of North America sent 1,700 missionaries and several hundred million dollars to support Christian work in Japan. Especially we remember that 700 missionaries came to Japan soon after the war to bear the burden of helping us in our hour of need. Now, however, only 60 missionaries are scattered and isolated throughout the country, and we face the urgent task of adapting to this changed situation.

From Claremont we divided into two subgroups. Group A went to Holland, Michigan. Group B traveled to Pleasantville, Tennessee and to Asheville and Black Mountain in North Carolina. As deep fellowship with the retired missionaries continued, their heartfelt gratitude and detailed concern was more and more evident.

Through this journey I became not only more grateful for the 30 or 40 years of service and the evangelistic spirit with which these missionaries faced many difficulties and overcame many obstacles but also came to see that the true way to show gratitude to the missionaries is to commit ourselves again to evangelizing our nation. Through witnessing how the missionaries, even now, are continuing in service I was taught that there really is no retirement from mission. I will never forget the image of these missionaries, with tears in their eyes, saying their parting words: "Greetings to the people of the church in Japan!" (Tr. GM)

Yamakita Nobuhisa, moderator
Kyodan General Assembly
Shinto no Tomo (Believers' Friend)

Details of the Visit to Retired Missionaries

Kyodan Moderator Yamakita and Group A's seven other members visited Holland, Michigan, April 18-22. (Holland is the home place of the Dutch Reformed Church, the present Reformed Church in America, which sent the first missionaries to Japan 150 years ago.) The Hesselinks and the Magees guided them to churches, schools, and social institutions. After a dinner on April 19, the visitors from Japan presented a wall hanging with the words *kansha* (gratitude) to each of 20 retired missionaries. Then, Gordon Laman gave a speech entitled "A sketch of the History of Mission in Japan." On April 21 the group visited the office of the Reformed Church in America in nearby Grand Rapids, where they were warmly welcomed by General Secretary Michelson and other executives who discussed the Kyodan-RCA Partnership-in-Mission Agreement that will be formalized at the Kyodan General Assembly in October.

Group B's eight other members and I visited Pleasant Hill, Tennessee, April 17-19. Richard and Martha Lammers arranged for us to stay with host families for two nights at Uplands Retirement Village, which is surrounded by a beautiful forest and has a United Church of Christ local church in the center. On April 18 we hosted a luncheon and time of acknowledgement for about ten retired missionaries and exchanged information and opinions about Japan, ourselves, and missionaries. In the evening we were invited to World-wide Welcome Event where retired missionaries to various parts of the world gathered in various ethnic costumes to enjoy buffet of ethnic foods, conversations, speeches and performances. It was impressive that Janet (Jan) Landis, "our" Japan missionary performed ventriloquism in *mompe*, a kind of old Japanese kimono. Fukaya Matsuo, a president of Miyagi Gakuin, delivered a speech about the Christian schools in Japan, and I gave greetings on behalf of the Kyodan.

We left Pleasant Hill on April 19 in a chartered van driven by a cousin of Sarah Oba, currently a missionary in Japan, who kindly arranged for this bus tour. Without this driver, our visits to two other retirement communities would have been very difficult. Later that day we arrived at Brooks-Howell Home in Ashville, North Carolina, a retirement community for retirees of the Women's Division and the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. To our delight, the eight retired missionaries waiting for us all spoke fluent Japanese, so we interacted with them in Japanese for over two hours, worshipping and enjoying the reunion as well as thanking them for their life-long service in Japan. Fusako Krummel was the key retired missionary who made this visit possible.

Our last visit was to Montreat, North Carolina, April 19-21, about a half hour ride from Ashville. At a nearby restaurant, we ate dinner with 12 retired Presbyterian Church (USA) missionaries during where I acknowledged the great work of these missionaries in Japan. That very day, April 19, Clare Baldwin reached his 88th birthday, and we celebrated

by singing 'Happy Birthday'. On April 20 we attended worship services at Montreat Presbyterian Church and Black Mountain Presbyterian Church, during which I expressed gratitude to these congregations on behalf of the Kyodan. After having a buffet dinner, courtesy of the missionaries, we were guided by Annie Brady to Highland Farms Retirement Community where she lives. Afterwards, we were invited for tea at the home of Lardner and Molly Moore where we were blessed by their warm Christian fellowship.

We were greatly blessed by this tour, rejoicing at personal reunions with the missionaries we love and sensing their unexpected welcome, concern, and joy as well. In addition, we were strengthened in our dedication to evangelism by these experiences. We thank God and all of them for these blessings.

Ito Mizuo, member
Commission on Ecumenical Ministries

Note: Letters have been received from some of the retired missionaries, expressing appreciation for the visit of the Kyodan representatives.

"Youth Mission 2008" Event (Cont'd. from p.6)

members, and all the participants. After the retreat, each of the German members stayed with a host family and had fellowship at the church, then participated in a study tour of Hiroshima and Kyoto together. Hopefully, they had an opportunity to think about the peace of God, especially while they were visiting Hiroshima.

Although the participants might have had various impressions, we have expanded the horizon of our own views through this exchange program. With the increasing globalization of our world recently, we share common problems, such as environmental issues, on a global scale. By participating in this program, we have come to realize that we have great possibilities for our common future, despite the problems mentioned above. It is our wish that hope and *koinonia* will be fostered by this program. We sincerely express our gratitude to God, who made this program possible; to those who worked on our behalf, to those who helped us through earnest prayers and generous offerings; and to Jesus Christ, who makes us respect our differences and unites us all into one Church.

Abe Rintaro and Hamada Makito, seminarians
Tokyo Union Theological Seminary

Kyodan Women's Federation Hosts Japan-Germany "Youth Mission 2008" Event

Youth Mission 2008 with the Berlin-Brandenburg Evangelical Church the 5th Germany and Japan Youth Exchange was held in Japan, Aug. 12-22. The Steering Committee of the National Federation of Kyodan Women's Societies (NFKWS) planned and hosted the program. Pastor Ute Feuerstack headed the German delegation. The three-day retreat convened at Ashino-ko Camping Village in Hakone, Aug. 13-15., with 14 German participants, including 9 youth, and 26 Japanese participants, including 12 young people. The theme of the retreat was "Faithfully Administering God's Grace (I Peter 4:10)." We discussed environmental issues, something many people throughout the world have become more concerned about today. Abe Rintaro and Hamda Makito, seminarians at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, led the event for the entire three days.

On the first day, Pastor Ute Feuerstack preached during the opening service for the retreat. Following the service, we introduced ourselves to one another and had tea together. Afterwards, Pastor Yatsuka Kiyoshi from Aki Church led a Bible study, during which we read chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis and meditated on this text. The members from Germany cooked German food for dinner. After enjoying our meal, we had time for cultural exchange. Japanese participants introduced Japanese culture, Japanese songs with sign language, calligraphy, and *origami* (paper-folding), and explained the situation of the church in Japan. The visitors from Germany actively participated in this cultural exchange program and were especially interested in paper-folding.

On the second day, Abe Rintaro preached the sermon at the morning worship service. We separated into three groups prayer, worship, and skit and each group made preparations for the closing service on the third day. This time, Japanese members made somen, a traditional kind of noodle in Japan, for lunch. The group from Germany liked somen more than we expected. We had outdoor activities in the afternoon. After dinner, the German participants introduced German culture to us. They performed a skit of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs and also presented a special "circus" for us. The Japanese participants were impressed by the German performers' entertainment skills. We also enjoyed games together.

On the final day, Nishinosono Michiko, pastor of Kambara Church, preached at the closing worship service. Each of the three groups formed on the second day played a special role in this service. The prayer group offered the invocation after the first hymn and led a special prayer after the sermon; the skit group performed a play based on Genesis and explained the significance of the creation story; and the worship group sang Taize hymns. Pastor Feuerstack closed the service with a blessing and expressed her gratitude to those who had worked on the exchange program this year and to those who had prayed for us. She also thanked the host families, the staff

(Cont'd. on p.5, Col.2)

Nine-day PCT-Kyodan "Youth Mission 2008" Held in Japan

The event "Under the Lord's Blessing, Youth Mission 2008," was successfully held July 31-Aug. 8 by Kyodan's Committee on Education. There was good fellowship between the seven young people from the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and the Japanese youth who participated.

The program began with a reception on July 31, and the next day, on Aug. 1, we had the opening service. Afterwards we strolled through Harajuku, the youth district of Tokyo. It was fun making *gyoza* (Chinese dumplings) for dinner with young people who are members of the Student Christian Fellowship. An evening lecture was given on "Japan's Christianity and Yokohama" as preparation for the following day's study trip to Yokohama. After a meditation session, everyone enjoyed a dance party. SCF members presented *yukata* (a kind of summer kimono) to the visitors. On Aug. 2, we visited the Yokohama churches referred to in the lecture given the previous night. That evening, the youth from Taiwan headed to the churches assigned to be their hosts, where they observed Sunday morning worship on Aug. 3.

On Aug. 4, we traveled to Osaka via the Shinkansen (bullet train) in the morning, and spent the day sightseeing in Osaka. We moved on to the Mt. Rokko YMCA, where the conference was held, Aug. 5-7. Under the theme of "Walking Together with Our Lord," we talked about God and about ourselves. At the end of the conference, we prepared a candlelight service using our own forms of worship, including holding hands in a circle, sharing testimonies, and engaging in a drama based on the Bible all to the praise of God. At the end of the conference on Aug. 7 we went to Nara, where we enjoyed the sights of this traditional city. The closing worship of Youth Mission 2008 was held at Nara Takabatake Church. We had a good time with the youth from Osaka District. We all enjoyed Nara cuisine. Then, on Aug. 8, we sent off the visitors to Taiwan from Kansai International Airport.

Although only five Japanese youth participated in the whole schedule of the event, the group from Taiwan had many encounters with Japanese young people. We also received a warm welcome from a great many others. The Japanese youth were impressed by the faith of the youth from Taiwan, and the nine-day program was a precious and memorable event for them. We experienced the fact that we are brothers/sisters sharing a common faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. I would like to report with much gratitude that our Lord was with us, protecting our health and encouraging our fellowship throughout those nine days.

The next session of the Youth Mission of the Kyodan and the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan is scheduled to take place in Taiwan in 2010. May God continue to bless our Youth Mission program in the future. (Tr. HL)

Sato Tomoko, member
Youth Mission 2008 Committee

Japanese Hymns Now Appearing in English Hymnals

by Tim Boyle, missionary
Buraku Liberation Center, Osaka

Japanese Hymns in English is the title of a book I ran across that was written by Pauline Smith McAlpine in 1975. It contains her translations of 50 hymns written by Japanese Christians, along with short biographies of the composers of the hymns. Few of these hymns have been known in the West, but in recent hymnals of several mainline denominations, some now appear. Likewise, two specialized hymnals focusing on Asian hymns contain numerous translated Japanese hymns. The following website gives a complete listing of the hymnals that contain particular hymns: <http://homepage3.nifty.com/dikaio/CMstudy/English/resources/j-hymn.htm>

I want to highlight a hymn that is often confused with the hymn described in another article on Japanese hymns in this KNL issue, since both begin with the words "Gariraya no Kaze" (Winds of Galilee). The other "Gariraya no Kaze" hymn was composed by Yuki Ko, the "Charles Wesley" of Japanese hymn writers. In fact, Yuki's 10 hymns in the new *Hymnal 21* is second only to Wesley's 15, unless the 24 hymns attributed to the Kyodan's Hymnal Revision Committee are counted.

First, a brief biography of Yuki Ko: Born in 1896 in Tottori Prefecture, he was educated at Kwansei Gakuin University in Nishinomiya. In 1921, he was installed as the pastor of Tokyo Futaba Independent Church, the predecessor of the Kyodan's Higashi Nakano Church. He also was a lecturer at Aoyama Gakuin University and a member of the Board of the Christian School of Music. He passed away in 1985.

Yuki's version of the "Galilean breezes" is set to "Missionary Hymn," a Lowell Mason tune that in English hymnals is usually associated with "From Greenland's Icy Mountains." While McAlpine includes her translation of this popular hymn, it does not appear in any standard English hymnal, most likely because it is not associated with a Japanese melody.

Another of Yuki's best-known hymns, however, now appears in several English hymnals, including the New Century Hymnal published by United Church of Christ (UCC). "In A Lowly Manger Born" (also known by the title "Behold the Man") is set to a tune known as "Mabune" (Japanese for "manger"), written by Abe Seigi in 1930.

1. In a lowly manger born,
Humble life begun in scorn;

Under Joseph's watchful eye,
Jesus grew as you and I;
Knew the suffering of the weak.
Knew the patience of the meek,
Hungered as but poor folk can;
This is he. Behold the man!

2. Visiting the lone and lost,
Steadying the tempest tossed,
Giving of himself in love,
Calling minds to things above.
Sinners gladly hear his call;
Publicans before him fall,
For in him new life began;
This is he. Behold the man!

3. Then to rescue you and me,
Jesus died upon the tree.
See in him God's love revealed;
By his Passion we are healed.
Now he lives in glory bright,
Lives again in Pow'r and might;
Come and take the path he trod,
Son of Mary, Son of God.

The UCC's *New Century Hymnal* contains four other Japanese hymns, while the United Methodist Hymnal and the Presbyterian Hymnal each contain three. Interestingly, the Japanese hymn that appears most often in English language hymnals is to a tune called "Tokyo." It appears in eight hymnals, with three slightly different translations, but all close to "Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather." Yet, it must not be sung very often in Japanese churches because to use a musical phrase, it does not "ring a bell" with me.

The next most common hymn appears in four hymnals and is one I am very familiar with, as it is frequently sung in Japanese churches. "Mikotoba Kudasai" appears in the United Methodist hymnal as "Send Your Word, O Lord," while in the UCC hymnal the first line is, "Make a Gift of Your Holy Word."

These few Japanese hymns that are included in English language hymnals are a good beginning. I can think of several other beautiful Japanese hymns that would be excellent additions. Hopefully, some of them will find their way into our various hymnals, along with hymns from other cultures as well.

Desire to Teach Faith to Children Inspires Japanese Hymnist

It has been eleven years since the Kyodan's new *Hymnal 21* was compiled and published by the Kyodan's Hymnal Committee. Included in this hymnal are a number of hymns by Japanese composers. We would like to share with you how the words of one of the hymns, "In Old Galilee when Sweet Breezes Blew" (No. 57 in *Hymnal 21*), were written by Befu Nobuo (1913-2003).

Befu Nobuo was born in 1913 in Kochi Prefecture. In 1934 he attended an evangelistic service at Yokohama Shiro Church. He was soon baptized and began working with the church school teachers. In addition, he became a member of the newly-formed Christian Association for Children's Stories, giving time and effort to writing Christian stories and sermons for children, and composing hymns.

The father of four children, Befu was a middle school science teacher, a Sunday School teacher, and as an author of children's literature he found meaning in writing children's hymns as a way of conveying truth to the younger generation. Befu said: "In the future I want to continue to write children's hymns that can be understood, enjoyed, and from which children can grasp God's grace and love. However, it is only through God's power and grace that I can hope and trust that my poor, unskilled poetry can be used to nurture the faith of children." It was out of this earnest desire on the part of Befu his earnest desire to convey God's word to children that "In Old Galilee when Sweet Breezes Blew" was born.

Every summer at the St. Mary's Campsite in Ichinomiya-machi, a summer retreat was held for middle and senior high school students in Chiba Prefecture, in which Befu participated as a leader. The theme of the 1973 summer retreat was "The Bible." On the last day of the retreat, each of the participants wrote their impressions of what they had experienced. Befu sat down at a slightly elevated area beside a lake where there was a pleasant breeze. He thought of the middle and senior high school students, and prayed that he might be able to convey the blessings of the Bible to the students. There was a cool breeze, and on the highest point of the campsite was a replica of the crucifixion.

1. In old Galilee, when sweet breezes blew o'er the lake,
Where he spoke to crowds when they came to hear,
Those words of grace that gave them promise;
Oh speak to me now, and let me hear those words of grace.
2. On that stormy day, when waves billowed high on the lake,
His disciples feared till he spoke to them,
Those words of power that gave them courage;
Oh speak to me now, and let me hear those words of power.
3. On that cross he hung, to die for the sins of the world,
From Golgotha's shame he called out in pain,
Those saving words of hope to sinners;
Oh speak to me now, and let me hear those saving words.
4. On that eventide two friends for Emmaus were bound,
Recognized him not till he spoke again,
Those words of life to his disciples;
Oh speak to me now, and let me hear those words of life.

(Translation taken from *Sound the Bamboo*, the Christian Conference of Asia Hymnal published in 2000)

This earnest prayer, which 60-year-old Befu was striving to convey to teenagers, is now loved and sung by many people as "my own prayer," transcending generations, denominations, and nationalities. (Tr. WK)

"Befu Nobuo, 'In Old Galilee When Sweet Breezes Blew'"

From *Shinto no Tomo (Believers' Friend)*

Summarized by Nishio Misao, member

KNL Editorial Committee