

Education and the Spirit of Hospitality

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At the beginning of each academic year, we look again at the founding principles of our school, to ensure that we are still operating according to the fundamentals established in 1889. These are the principles that make Kwansei Gakuin unique, and are the basis for our mission.

Usually, we remember the founding fathers of our school; people like W.R. Lambuth, Y. Yoshioka, and C.J.L. Bates who served as teachers and administrators of the young Kwansei Gakuin. However, the wives of the founding fathers were not stay-at-home people who worked only to keep a comfortable home for their families. The North American women were just as active as their spouses in teaching at various schools, churches, and in their homes. Through it all, they worked hard to nurture their own families, as well as to provide a warm welcome for anyone who visited them. As Kwansei Gakuin became established in Kobe, the teachers and their families who lived on campus became important role models and adopted families for the resident students.

Living among these non-Japanese missionaries on campus was the Yoshioka family. Reverend Yoshioka became the chancellor of Kwansei Gakuin after the departure of the founder, W.R. Lambuth, just two years after the establishment of the school. Under Reverend Yoshioka's leadership over the next twenty-four years, Kwansei Gakuin survived anti-Christian opposition and many financial problems to become a well-respected institution in the community. Supporting Reverend Yoshioka throughout this time, was Mrs. Hatsune Yoshioka, his wife. Mrs. Yoshioka was one of the first graduates of Kwassui Jogakko a mission school in Nagasaki. Before marrying Reverend

Yoshioka, she had moved to Kobe to participate in the Christian church projects which had just begun there. Even after her marriage, Mrs. Yoshioka continued to be involved. For example, during the year 1891, she visited 313 houses, held 105 prayer and Bible study meetings, and worked with poverty-stricken children. She also opened her home to the students of Kwansei Gakuin who became like a second family. In contrast to the welcome provided by Western families who lived on campus, Mrs. Yoshioka ' s hospitality was nostalgic to the boys and young men who studied there. Many of these students had to live away from their own homes, so the warm atmosphere of the Yoshioka family must have been a critical element in the success of their education.

Three years ago, the Christian Center was rebuilt, and the new building, next to Lambuth Chapel, now houses, not only the Christian Center, but the offices for the School of Theology, the Institute for Human Rights Research, and the Research Center for Christianity and Culture. Many student groups also have club activity rooms there. This building was named the Yoshioka Memorial Hall, and I would like to think that through its many activities, Kwansei Gakuin students today can find a welcoming place where they can gather, practice for musical performances, and participate in various academic events in a more relaxed environment. I hope that this spirit of hospitality which was reflected in the Yoshioka home in KG ' s early years, is still alive at the Yoshioka Memorial Hall, and that it will spread the spirit of welcome and openness throughout our school.

(Chancellor)