



July, 2013

No.77



Altar of UK Gathering (2013)

# Realizing the Konkoko Faith of the World

Tracing 20 years of KIC's Work



10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Konkokyo of Korea (2010)



15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Konkokyo of Paraguay (2010)



Participants of UK Gathering (2013)

**K**onkokyo International Center (KIC) was established in July of 1993. This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding. At its creation, the Tsuda Cabinet of Konkokyo established, with its fundamental vision of conveying both the teachings and the salvation of Konkokyo to the people of the world, a basic policy “to create Konkokyo for the world and humanity”. KIC’s establishment was a symbolic event which was expected to promote the concept of “Konkokyo for the world and humanity”.

Today there are Konko Churches in North America, Hawaii and Brazil. Before the end of the World War II, Konko Churches were already established in Manchuria, the Korean peninsula and Taiwan. Propagation worldwide was

made possible by the many founding and succeeding ministers, members, and churches overseas. For the first time, the Administrative organization set up this special department for world propagation, an important milestone in the history of Konkokyo.

Since the establishment of KIC we have been involved with various activities, in conjunction with the Konko Churches of North America, Konko Missions in Hawaii, Konkokyo Brazil Churches Association, as well as other believers in the world. The following is an overview of activities initiated:

## 1. Konkokyo Activity Centers

In response to a request made by Japanese immigrant believers, Konkokyo Asuncion Activity Center, a branch of KIC, was established in Paraguay. And on the other side of the globe, a

minister was dispatched from Konkokyo Headquarters to start propagating the faith in Korea, and an association for local believers was established. Then, Konkokyo Headquarters established the Konkokyo Seoul Activity Center. These activity centers play a key role in the propagation movement in each country. Native born ministers have been moving ahead with activities connected with local interests and needs there.

## 2. Gathering for Outreach

KIC has been working energetically to propagate the faith in countries where no Konko Church has been established. An example of its effort is the Konko Faith Gathering, held in England, Germany, France, Malaysia and Australia. In these countries, KIC has made efforts in networking with overseas believers.



Page-a-Day Calendar in Spanish

Historically, propagation of Konkokyo has been centered on the Japanese people, but now more effort is being spent to introduce the Konko Faith to include people who are not Japanese, and that effort has been successful. These are the new believers of the Konko Faith. The European Conferences held in 2001 and later, in 2010, reflect the viability of the growing Konkokyo community in the region. In addition, in 2010, a *Kibigaku* concert was held, in collaboration with London University.

### 3. Internet Outreach

The power and influence of the Internet have been evident over the past twenty years. Konkokyo outreach is also carried out, using the internet. For example, KIC sends news and information of Konkokyo to people worldwide, through both the English homepage of Headquarters and the bilingual homepage of KIC. We have occasionally been contacted by people who have seen these websites but are not served by a Konko Church in their region.

### 4. Creating and Drawing up the Teaching materials for Propagation

KIC has been fully committed to producing materials for propagation. For one, *Sacred Scripture of Konkokyo* and *Prayer Book* and other materials have been translated into foreign languages. Also, *Shine from Within*, a guide book of Konkokyo, has been published. Through these media, Konkokyo has been able to extend its teaching overseas. In addition, bilingual ani-



Round Table Discussion (2011)

mated videos and a page-a-day calendar with our Founder's teachings each day, were developed. In this way, Konkokyo has been able to reach multicultural communities.

### 5. Round Table Discussion and Workshop on the Doctrine

KIC has periodically held Round Table Discussions, inviting scholars or experts. KIC has also held workshops to deepen understanding of the doctrines, involving Konkokyo believers and ministers who have deep insights or academic experiences. There, we have discussed many topics in depth and tried to clarify the doctrine. Particularly we have worked harder on the problems of "modernization". Today, modern values have been producing such big issues as cross cultural confrontation and environmental destruction in the world. Under these circumstances, we have pointed out that through the Founder's faith, we can question modern values and find alternative ways to create a brighter future.

### 6. NGO Activity

In the first ten years, KIC has been putting a great deal of effort in educational support for farming villages in Cambodia. This activity, the "one-yen-one-meal movement", aspires to donate one yen for every meal to help feed the malnourished children of Cambodia. Although this seems to be a simple act of just giving alms, through this activity, Konkokyo has encountered the actual hardships happening in the



NGO Activity in Cambodia (2003)



Workshop for Overseas Trainee (2012)

world and has come to understand the world structure producing such hardships. This activity has been taken over by Konkokyo Peace Activity Center.

### 7. Personnel Training

One of KIC's major activities is the training of ministers and other personnel to prepare them to support and promote world propagation. KIC has had trainees from Hawaii, mainland USA, Canada, Paraguay, Brazil, and Korea. KIC has been offering them the opportunity to study Konkokyo's doctrines and learn about its organizations and activities. Since its inception in 2006, many young ministers have gone through the internship program to train, with the intention of propagating the faith to countries worldwide.

These are just some of the various activities carried on in the past twenty years by the KIC. KIC's activities, which consist mainly of propagation, research and study, and personnel training, will certainly be poised on the stage of the earth with a world view as its scope. This clearly aims at conveying Konkokyo teachings to the world and bringing happiness and peace to the people of the world.



## Pray Sincerely with All Your heart

By Michelle Miyatake-Kuruma (Konko Church of Los Angeles)



### Introduction:

“Pray sincerely with all your heart” is a valuable message spread to many generations of families through the Konko Faith. Kami has blessed me with so many gifts that I am extremely thankful. My spiritual foundation began when I was very young with Kami’s love and faith grounded and integrated into my daily life. During these early years, being raised a Miyatake meant seeing the world through a lens of a wide camera which revealed a world full of possibilities. I was raised as a member of a historic Japanese-American church that supported the Japanese community and was also considered a safe haven for many after WWII. These Japanese cultural roots were something that affected my heart and strengthened my resolve in honoring and participating in my culture.

### Dear Founder:

Thank you for the valuable opportunity to learn about the Japanese arts such as *Nihon Buyo* (Japanese dance), Japanese language school, tea ceremony, and other activities held in Little Tokyo in Los Angeles, California. As taking pictures was a family tradition that began with my grandfather, Toyo Miyatake, who impacted the Japanese community and is an important contributor to our country’s history, I thank you Kami for providing me with a loving and historic family.

Thank you for the gift of my Tea Ceremony (*Ocha*) sensei, Setsu Okawa (*Obachama*), for teaching me about grace,

intention, and the spirit of Kami in simple daily gestures. I spent every Saturday observing, listening, and actively finding peace with the tea ceremony elements. This is when I learned to meditate and listen to Kami with a pure heart of faith. From the faith gained through Kami, I am eternally thankful for the spiritual backbone acquired from twenty-five years of actively participating in all levels of church life and additional global and religious studies.

Three years ago I met Jubilee Tsuyuki, who introduced me to the Konko Faith, the beginning of a new path. Thank you for introducing me to the Konko faith stories and literature. *Voice of the Universe, Gorikai I, II, and III* along with FTI (Faith Training Institute) has added to my life. The FTI experience in Seattle consecrated into my heart and mind that the Konko Faith was the place for me. I always dreamed of going to Japan and while in Seattle, it felt like I was actually in Japan because of the delicious traditional meals, prayers in Church, and unique Japanese customs that made me feel at home. Thank you for the gift of Reverend Amy Chin-Uzunoe, who impacted my life by her living example of dedication to Kami and the Konko Faith.

Dear Founder, I am thankful for the opportunity to travel to Japan for the 130<sup>th</sup> year celebration. I seek to continue to learn and grow through the teachings and bi-weekly sermons. Day by day, every day, earnestly and reverently let us pray. Dearest Kami, thank you for the opportunity to be face-to-face with your blessings.

## Change in KIC Directorship

Reverend Shinji Yamada retired from the position of the Director of the KIC on June 30. On July 1 Reverend Kaneo Kondo, the Director of Outreach Department II, has taken over the position.



## Announcement for the 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Grand Service and Workshop

This year marks the 130<sup>th</sup> year since our Founder, Konko Daijin, passed away in 1883. This Anniversary will be celebrated with four Grand Service dates at our Headquarters on October 3, 6, 10, and 13, 2013.

Also, a workshop for overseas believers will be held from the afternoon of October 2 to the end of the Grand Service on October 3 and it includes lectures and group discussions. Let’s develop our faith on this special occasion!

# Director of Outreach Dept. II Visits South America

*We presently have seven churches and a propagation hall in Brazil, and the Konkokyo Asuncion Activity Center, a branch of Konkokyo International Center, in Paraguay. Reverend Kaneo Kondo, the director of Outreach Department II; along with Reverend Koji Toshimitsu, its deputy director; Reverend Akio Tomida, an editorial staff of Konko Shimbun Newsletter; and Reverend Nobuhiro Kusuki, a staff member of KIC, visited South America from May 16 to 31. They had talks with local ministers and believers, and attended an open lecture meeting in Paraguay and a South American Believers' Conference in Brazil.*

The Konkokyo lecture meeting was opened at ten in the morning of May 19 (Sunday) at the Club-house for People from Kochi Prefecture in Asuncion. First Reverend Kusuki of KIC introduced the activities of Konkokyo, including how our Spiritual Leader Konko-Sama conducts his daily services, and showed the proceedings of the service at the Headquarters using videos. Most participants watched for the first time how a Grand Service is performed and the sight of Mediation, which has been continued for more than 150 consecutive years since the time of the Founder. Those believers who had never seen the Headquarters or Konko Churches remarked that they were glad to have had learned how Konkokyo is practiced in Japan.

Then Reverend Kondo presented a lecture titled "The world blessed by Kami-Sama," in which he said:

"People living in this modern world are troubled, losing their mind over personal relations, their possessions and money, and forget really important things such as blessing from Heaven and Earth and Kami-Sama's Work. In order to realize the Way of Kami and People in such a world, we must first of all notice the presence of the Parent Kami of the Universe who supports our lives. And, developing our belief based on the gratitude toward His work and continuously practicing faith to receive His grace, we will begin to see a new



Lecture by Reverend Kondo



Participants having a lunch in Asuncion



Workshop in Asuncion

world of relief we have never dreamed of. The wish of Tenchi Kane No Kami and the Founder, that everyone be saved by receiving blessings, has extended over Paraguayan people, too. I hope you join the 'Faith Movement: Let Us Live a Mutually Fulfilled Life with Kami,' and make your own relationship with Kami deep and firm enough to receive blessings."

Later at the question-and-answer session, the participants inquired about matters such as: "What does Konko mean?" "The traditional ritual uses

two claps during prayer. Why four times for Konkokyo prayer?" "Do you have any original scriptures?" "Are the ceremonies and ceremonial robes the same as those of Shinto?" Afterwards the participants had lunch together at the same hall. About seventy people joined the meeting.

After the meeting Reverend Hiromichi Maehara, a local minister, said, "I am very glad that Paraguayan believers and non-believers could watch how Konko-Sama is daily serving as the spiritual leader and how magnificently our Grand Service is performed. I admire Reverend Kondo's lecture because he conveyed the merits of believing Konkokyo very vividly." Reverend Ryoichi Iwai, the director of the Konkokyo Asuncion Activity Center, told that the Konkokyo lecture meeting showed him what part of Konkokyo interested non-believers, which would help thereafter his propagation activities in Paraguay, and that he was going to hold mutual promotion meetings with Paraguayan believers, picking up Reverend Kondo's lecture as a subject, to develop a better understanding of Konkokyo belief.

The South American Believers' Conference took place from May 25 to 26 at the Birigui Church in Brazil. Many people gathered from the churches in Brazil, some people chartering buses for the travel.

On the first day Reverend Carlos Martins, an associate minister of the

Butanta Church, gave a memorial lecture titled “Let Us Live a Mutually Fulfilled Life with Kami — What Konkokyo is.” He made a presentation on “What a religion Konkokyo is like,” “What the Founder was like,” and “What the Goal of Konkokyo is,” while projecting pictures and texts on a screen. His talk interested the audience and sometimes drew laughter. After the lecture, the picture “Divine Favor Depends upon Your Own Heart” with Portuguese superimposition was screened. The audience sincerely appreciated the impressive film depicting the life of the Founder. A young male believer gave his impression that, through Reverend Martins’ lecture and the filmed Founder’s life, the dotted information on Konkokyo in his mind was finally integrated into a line, which was very moving.

That evening a Konko festival took place in celebration of 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founder. The road traffic in front of the Birigui Church was suspended and the participants enjoyed *churrasco* (brazilian BBQ) and picnic lunches prepared by believers, and drum music and *yosakoi-soran* dances performed by young people. They also enjoyed *bon*-dances and folk dances together. About 300 young and old people enjoyed the Konko festival till late at night.

The next day Tenchi Kane No Kami Grand Service was served commemorating the 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founder with Reverend Tateo Suenaga, the Head Minister of Birigui Church, as officiant minister. After that Reverend Koji Toshimitsu, Deputy Director of Outreach Dept. II, expressed his impression of the conference and two believers of the Birigui Church talked about their religious experiences. After having lunch together, the participants left for home. A man who had come



Lecture by Reverend Martins



Film showing



Konko festival



Tenchi Kane No Kami Grand Service



Speech of Reverend Suenaga



Konko Church of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

to pray after a twenty years absence reported that, having communicated with Konkokyo believers, he realized his mind was seeking Kami-Sama. He hoped this kind of conference would be held more frequently. About 200 people participated the conference.

Reverend Suenaga, the chief organizer of the South America Believers’ Conference, said, “I tended to first pray for the peace and prosperity of Brazil, but, through this conference, I was given the opportunity to join in our Spiritual Leader’s Wish for a true peace and the well-being of all people in the world. Preparing for the meeting was hard work, but I am very thankful that all the programs have been completed without a hitch. I strongly hope, following Kami-Sama’s blessing that has made this meeting a great success, South American believers will continue to be favored by Kami-Sama, taking our Founder for a model believer.”

In the afternoon a South American minister meeting took place, where local ministers and those from Japan talked about the prospect for further propagation in South America. The attendees confirmed that the Konkokyo Brazil Churches Association, the Outreach Dept. II and KIC would tackle together agendas for the future such as developing local ministers and improving teaching materials in Portuguese.

During their stay in Brazil, the visitors from Japan visited six churches and a propagation hall to learn each church’s history and activities and to talk with local ministers and believers. Since a Headquarters’ department director’s visit there was for the first time in twenty-four years, they were heartily welcomed by local believers and deepened friendship afresh. Needless to say, their visit this time to South America has marked a great step toward the development of Konkokyo

## Believers from Brazil and Paraguay visit our Headquarters

On April 10-11, 2013, thirteen people from the Sao Paulo Church and Asuncion Activity Center visited Konkokyo Headquarters. They attended the Tenchi Kane No Kami Grand Service and also participated in a workshop where Reverend Shozo Yamamoto, the Director of Outreach Department I, gave a speech about the importance of realizing the divine blessings we haven't noticed yet as well as those we have already received. This awareness leads to a joyful life of appreciation where we become able to pray for, help, and guide one another with a compassionate heart of Kami.

During the discussion afterwards, one of the attendees said, "It has been twenty years since I last visited Headquarters and I was able to meet my old friend by chance today.



Throughout this trip, I have really felt divine blessings within many occurrences."

Another attendee said, "Twelve or thirteen years ago, I learned about the Konko Faith at my father's funeral. Since then, the teachings I've received have helped my spiritual growth."

Another attendee said, "I used to go to a missionary school where I learned about sin, and I had a negative view towards religion. After learning about Konkokyo, my view changed step-by-step for the better, and now I practice this faith daily."

After the discussion, the group attended a welcome party held by staff members at Headquarters. The next day, they welcomed our Spiritual Leader's procession to the Main Worship Hall and attended the morning prayer service before returning home.

## KIC Welcomes New Staff Member



Ms. Tomoko Teramoto (Konko Church of Akikawajiri, Hiroshima), whose maiden name is Hayashi, worked at KIC during its first twelve

years before leaving to give birth a child. She has since returned to KIC after having her second child and said "Although it's only a part time job, I'm glad to come back to work at KIC and I will do my best."

## New Intern Welcomed!

Reverend Masato Tanaka (Konko Church of Osaki, Tokyo) is the tenth trainee in the KIC Internship Program. As the latest intern here, he shared his aspirations for his term which started on May 10:

"I think life is just like a cruise. I've just graduated from the Konkokyo Seminary this April and I'm so glad to have an opportunity to intern here at KIC. I appreciate all the different kinds of experiences I've had to this point, such as working in an office, living in Australia, working on cruise ships as a personal trainer & massage therapist, volunteering in Kesennuma (an affected area of the Great Earthquake), and more. They do not seem related to each other, but now I've found they connect like a chain because if even one part was missing, I wouldn't be here now. I feel Kami-Sama has been staying with me throughout and gave me this new opportunity.

"Reverend Robert Giulietti (from Seattle, USA) was also a Headquarters trainee and my roommate when I was

in Konkokyo Seminary. We talked about many things and I found that I wanted to be helpful to people all over the world.

"Helping others is actually helping ourselves. Helping each other is Kami-Sama's wish. This is what I've discovered and now I'd really like to be a helpful person for others. There are so many problems in the world and I strongly feel that we have to do something now to fulfill Kami-Sama's wishes!

"I believe the Konko Faith will help more people in this world and this internship at KIC is going to expand my horizons. I can learn so much and this is a great opportunity to discover for myself what the Founder's teachings actually mean. It will be difficult though, so I need all your help! I look forward to seeing you all!"

We're looking forward to his development through the Internship Program.

