

**Face to Faith**  
**May, 2019**      **No.95**

**Newsletter of Konkokyo International Center**

**立教160**  
「神人の道」を開く

The Rikkyo Seijo, the restored Worship Hall of the Founder

**K**onko Daijin received the Divine Call when he was 46. The Divine Call started with the following words:

“Konshi Daimyojin, with the completion of this sacred staff, I will end your farming career. Please understand.”

Konko Daijin accepted this Kami’s Request which required him to drastically change his livelihood. He farmed to earn a living of his family and to support his community. However, Kami asked him to abandon his job for the sake of saving people.

Let me reflect on events in my life which led me to “accept.” For 30 years, I devoted my time to the Konkokyo Research Institute. Researching meant everything for me. I was mainly involved in analyzing Konkokyo theology, compiling “Konkokyo Kyoten,” and translating “Kyoten” to English with believers from America.

While I immersed myself in compiling “Kyoten Terminological Dictionary” after “Konkokyo Kyoten” was published in 1983, the Konkokyo Administrative Office requested me to establish and run the Konkokyo International Center (established on July 1, 1993). While leaving the “Kyoten Terminological Dictionary” unfinished, I moved to Tokyo with my wife. Setting up the Konkokyo international affair department was not an easy task. With this new department, I sought for an appropriate way to work closely with the Konkokyo Administrative Office, the Tokyo Center, the Konko Churches of North America, the Konko Missions in Hawaii, and NGO activities.

With cooperation from many people, the Konkokyo

International Center started to operate. I completed my four-year term as the Director. Handing over the position to Reverend Motoo Tanaka, the former Assistant Director, and leaving the operation to others, I wished to return as a researcher once again.

However, my next assignment was going to Adminis-

## Accepting the Divine Call on This Very Day

**By the Reverend Yoshitsugu Fukushima**



trative Office in Konko Missions in Hawaii (reorganized to Hawaii Center on November 2, 1999). Soon afterwards, I left Japan on August 1, 1997. After I served for 5 years in Hawaii, the Director of Chugoku Center requested me to become the Head Minister of Kitabori Church (Matsue, Shimane Prefecture). I was 67 years old at that time (October 31, 2002). In this way, starting at the age 58, I changed my positions three times. I had to experience with each position, and each post led to unpredictable outcomes. At each turning point, I could have refused. But, I accepted each request. The supporting factor for my decisions were remembering Konko Daijin’s consent to “Please understand”. Konko Daijin accepted the grand transformation from a farmer to a Sacred Mediator.

Konko Daijin must have had various pressure, agony and worry to accept Kami’s Request. He had to abandon his position in the village community, an adopted successor of the family, and ownerships of his fields. Despite various

obligations, Konko Daijin accepted Kami's Wish. This Konko Daijin's Acceptance made me stop doing what I wanted to do at my turning points.

The requests were made by the Konkokyo Administrative Office. However, "Everything that happens is Tenchi Kane No Kami's doing." (*Konko Daijin Oboegaki* 21-13) Konko Daijin, who accepted this request, stood in front of me to stop my selfish and self-centered decisions.

We encounter various turning points in our lives. At

that time, which index do you use? Your index or Kami's index? It is your choice. However, if you refrain from your personal desire, and you accept to live with Kami's Wish to save people, Kami's Heart appears in your heart, coordinates with Konko Daijin's Acceptance, and actualizes *Aiyo-akeyo-way*.

The Divine Call is not a single event which occurred 160 years ago. I wish many of you will encounter the Divine Call on This Very Day at your turning point.

## THE DIVINE CALL

DIVINE MESSAGE RECEIVED ON NOVEMBER 15, 1859

WITH THE COMPLETION OF THIS SACRED STAFF, I WILL END YOUR FARMING CAREER. PLEASE UNDERSTAND.

WHEN YOU ARE OUT FARMING, THE PERSON AT HOME HAS TO GO OUT AND CALL YOU WHENEVER SOMEONE COMES TO GIVE A REQUEST. AND AFTER YOU RELAY THE REQUEST, YOU HAVE TO GO BACK OUT AGAIN. YOU HAVE TO KEEP GOING IN AND OUT OF THE FIELD. THIS GIVES YOU LITTLE TIME FOR FARMING, AND THE WORSHIPPER MUST ALSO WAIT FOR YOU. BOTH YOU AND THE WORSHIPPER ARE BEING INCONVENIENCED.

WON'T YOU STOP FARMING?

WHEN YOU WERE GRAVELY ILL AT FORTY-TWO, THE DOCTOR GAVE UP HOPE. EVERYONE WORRIED ABOUT YOU. YOU PRAYED TO THE KAMIS AND BUDDHAS AND WERE BLESSED WITH COMPLETE RECOVERY. REGARD THIS EVENT AS YOUR DEATH. DISPEL ALL DESIRES AND ASSIST TENCHI KANE NO KAMI.

ALSO, YOUR WIFE SHOULD CONSIDER HERSELF A WIDOW. THIS IS BETTER THAN BEING A REAL WIDOW, AS SHE CAN STILL TALK TO YOU AND DISCUSS MATTERS. SHE SHOULD TAKE THE CHILDREN WITH HER TO DO THE FARM WORK.

THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELF WHO HAVE SINCERE FAITH IN KAMIS BUT STILL HAVE MANY PROBLEMS. HELP THESE PEOPLE BY PERFORMING *TORITSUGI* MEDIATION.

THIS WILL HELP KAMI AND SAVE PEOPLE. PEOPLE EXISTS BECAUSE OF KAMI, AND KAMI EXISTS BECAUSE OF PEOPLE. THUS, KAMI SUPPORTS PEOPLE AS KAMI'S CHILDREN, AND PEOPLE SUPPORT KAMI AS THEIR PARENT. THERE WILL BE ETERNAL PROSPERITY THROUGH *AIYO KAKEYO*, MUTUAL INTERDEPENDENCY.

**M**y mother became a Konko believer while ill with tuberculosis. When she was pregnant with me, she received this teaching at the Mediation Place: "Whatever Kami does, will be for the best." Despite the strong objection by all her worried family members for her to give birth to me, due to the danger to her own life, she did so anyway. "There are many people like yourself who have sincere faith in kamis but still have many problems. Help these people by performing *Toritsugi* (Mediation). This will help Kami and save people." (*Konko Daijin Oboegaki* 9-3) Because our Founder had accepted Kami's Request and began Sacred Mediation, I am here now. I am so grateful!

The Divine Call is the foundation of my faith. It gives me a lot of energy to lead my life, whenever I read it.

**the Reverend Kiyoko Furumoto**, Advisory Staff of KIC, Germany



# What the “Divine Call” Means to Me

There are two important parts of the “Divine Call,” to me. The first is when our Founder actually received the “Divine Call” from Kami, asking him to stop farming and dedicate his life to helping others. He received Kami’s complete trust; opening the world between Kami and humans, revealing the workings of “*Aiyo Kakeyo* (Mutual interdependence),” and realizing the importance of why we suffer, and being saved through seeking *Toritsugi* Mediation.

The second part is how I received the “Divine Call” as a minister. In order for this Konko Faith to spread, Kami’s Wish to help people with their suffering must be realized through the continued Divine Working of the Founder’s *Toritsugi* Mediation. Thus my “Divine Call” as a minister is a lifelong responsibility and commitment to continue helping people every day through my efforts in *Toritsugi* Mediation.

**the Reverend Amy Uzunoe-Chin,**  
Chief Administrative Minister of the  
Konko Churches of North America,  
USA.



We, the Konko community, humbly revere our Spiritual Leader Konko-Sama and his everyday divine work, which realizes Kami’s Wish to help all humanity – all Kami’s children. Through Sacred Mediation, those who pray have been given divine blessings. Accepting Kami’s Wish, our current Spiritual Leader and past Konko-Samas have been devoting themselves to the Way of Mediation for 160 years until today, at the Main Worship Hall. These very figures embody Kami’s Wish itself. I have nothing but appreciation for the “Divine Call” and the very life of Konko Faith since its establishment. I pray for people who suffer and are lost among the nationalism and differences in ideologies in the world – that they will share in Parent Kami’s Wish. And I pray that “world peace and salvation of humanity” will become a reality.

**the Reverend Kinya Suenaga,**  
Director of the Konkokyo Seoul  
Activity Center, South Korea



The “Divine Call” said, “Regard this event as your death. Dispel all desires and assist Tenchi Kane No Kami.” As I read this passage at a young age, I felt this was very strict. When I decided to become a Konko minister and entered the Konkokyo Seminary, this phrase made me think, “I have to give up enjoying my life.” But now I interpret this “death” as meaning, “Being reborn for a new start. Be free from everything and all the responsibilities I had to follow in society. Being nothing; I remove myself and my ego from my physical form so that Kami-Sama can use me as Kami Wishes.”

The last sentence of *Oshirase-goto Oboe-cho* (Record of Revelations), “I shall sacrifice you” also indicates “death” but also “a new beginning.” “Death” shall mean “a new start” and “new relationships.” I want to cherish, “Every day is a fresh new beginning.”

**the Reverend Koichi Konko,**  
Director of the Konkokyo Hawaii  
Center, USA



For me, the “Divine Call” instills my determination of accepting and realizing the Way of Mediation. Kami’s Wish in the “Divine Call” and our Founder’s resolve to accept it brought about the Way of Kami and people, and it has been carried on for 160 years until today.

As stated in the “Appreciation Prayer For the 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary,” “Our Founder, Konko Daijin, revered Tenchi Kane No Kami,” now, more than ever, is the time for us to faithfully realize *Konko Daijin Oboegaki* (Memoirs of Konko Daijin) and *Oshirase-goto Oboe-cho* (Record of Revelations) in our everyday lives. Then, each one of us should feel Kami-Sama whom our Founder had encountered. As we accumulate these experiences following the Founder, I think that we will be able to understand Kami’s Wish in the “Divine Call” and accept it.

**the Reverend Ryoichi Iwai,**  
Director of the Konkokyo Asuncion  
Activity Center, Paraguay





# 80 Years of Daily Prayers



By Mr. Yuzo Takada, Konko Church of Ginza, Tokyo

**H**aruko, my mother, passed away on May 21<sup>st</sup> last year at the age of 103 - and 12 days. She passed away peacefully, without any pain or suffering, surrounded by her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, in her own bed at home. Until about one month before, she went to Konko Church of Tamamizu in Osaka every day, a practice she had continued for 80 years. Until the last days, she enjoyed watching TV, reading newspapers and in the evening, having a glass of beer. It was a happy life blessed with unprecedented Divine favors.

Haruko met Konko Faith shortly after she was married to Masao, my father, when she was 23 years old. It was a lady in the neighborhood who guided her to Konko Faith. When Haruko was pregnant with her first baby (Sachiko, my eldest sister), her doctor told Haruko that she was too weak to have a baby and strongly suggested that she undergo an abortion. The lady took Haruko to Tamamizu Church and Haruko received a *Toritsugi* Mediation from Reverend Yasutaro Yukawa, the first Head Minister of Tamamizu Church. Haruko was saved through the prayers of Reverend Yasutaro Yukawa and Sachiko was born in the following year in 1939. After Sachiko, Haruko eventually gave birth to five more children. One baby boy died shortly after he was born but the surviving five children grew up and continued with Konko Faith from their parents.

My family was very poor when I was born in 1954. We lived in a tiny house, in a slum-like place connected on both sides directly with the neighbors. There was only one room downstairs and one room upstairs in the house where seven of us lived, ate and slept and where Masao did his work. The toilet was located outside and was shared by all the residents in the neighborhood. We lived in the house until I was in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. When I was a baby, my mother would carry me on her back and walk to Tamamizu Church every day

and to seek *Toritsugi* Mediation from Reverend Shigeru Yukawa, the second Head Minister of Tamamizu Church. She cleaned the toilet of the church every day to show her gratitude to Kami-Sama. On her way home, she walked to a market located far away to buy food that was left over or ready to be thrown away. That's how she fed the family and raised the children, while Masao, who graduated from elementary school and became a tailor through an apprentice system, sewed men's suits for his master from morning till late at night for a salary that was never sufficient to raise five children properly.

Both our parents only graduated from elementary school and that was a part of the reason for our poverty. Haruko had a strong desire to provide good education opportunities for her children, although it was a struggle to have enough money to buy food for the day. She longed to support her children so they could be successful in the future. This was the source of her dedication in Konko Faith and thanks to her faith as well as the tireless work of Masao, all five children received decent education. My elder brother received two doctorates, one in physics from Clarkson College of Technology in New York and one in chemistry from Kyoto University. I graduated from the University of Tokyo, the most prestigious school in Japan and got a job at Mitsui & Co., one of the best known companies in Japan. Our children also received good education and got promising jobs. We cannot thank Kami-Sama enough, as well as the Head Ministers of Tamamizu Church for the countless Divine favors given to us. At the same time, we thank our mother because our successes today were made possible because of her faith in Konko Faith and the prayers she made for 80 years on our behalf. Haruko continues to pray for us as *Mitama* ancestral spirit and is always with us.

## “VOICE OF THE UNIVERSE”

137. Kami's virtue will be with you even after death and passed down to future generations. It can be received by anyone who practices faith. The virtue of Kami is unlimited. (*Gorikai II* Matsumoto Tashichi 1)

**Round Table Discussion - "Goreichi as Sacred Grounds"**

The Konkokyo International Center (KIC) hosted a Round Table Discussion on December 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018, addressing the theme, "Goreichi as sacred grounds –its potential and the revitalization." Associate Professor Akira Nishimura from the University of Tokyo and scholar of Japanese religions and studies of memorials, was the guest speaker. Five ministers and staff from KIC participated in this discussion.

The Konkokyo Headquarters is located in the Otani area of Konkochō. Since the Meiji era, we have called this place *Goreichi*, sacred grounds. To this day, it is recognized as the religious center of the Konko Faith. Even with this holiest significance, *Goreichi* has never been given doctrinal meanings. And it is not possible to compare *Goreichi* with the holy sites of other religions or the "power spots" recently booming in Japan. It is important for *Goreichi*'s spiritual power to appeal to and draw in the curious and spiritual seeking individuals to our faith. It has the potential to open up the Konko Faith to people all over the world.



Professor Nishimura spoke on the theme of "the dynamism of the place and the memory" from the viewpoint of both his studies of revitalization in his hometown and theory of memory studies. He pointed out that in preserving the reverence and sacredness of *Goreichi*, recovery of both per-

sonal and collective memories stored away by people rooted to that place is important. These memories need to find its voice.

After Professor Nishimura's lecture, the participants discussed and shared their thoughts on how revitalization of *Gore-*

*ichi* can take place. These are some of the ideas that were discussed:

- Ways to discover or recover histories and religious or miracle stories of the residents in *Goreichi*.
- Stories of affirmation and devotion for the Founder and the memories of Konko-Samas, past and present.
- Faith stories handed down through generations and remembrances of the Founding ministers of individual churches.

KIC would like to document the many stories and narratives about *Goreichi* that have been shared by believers from generation to generation.

**Polish and Czech Website Opened**

By Mr. Eliyazar G.

Our first contact with Konkokyo was in 2015. I was reading a lot about Shinto and religions that were connected to it. In some way, I felt attracted to Konkokyo - its universal, deep and clear principles, and religious ideas were close to my own views. I contacted the Konkokyo International Center in Japan for more information and this started our spiritual path according to the Teaching of Konko-Sama. In that time we lived in Cyprus.

We have a lot of friends and relatives who live in Poland and the Czech Republic. The religious situation in these countries is not good. Traditional religions there brought disappointment in some ways to people. There is growing Atheism there and younger generations very often reject any idea of the Divine or the existence of a spiritual world. All of this has a big influence on peoples' life style and their view of the world.

We started to share the Teachings of Konko-Sama with

our friends. Some of them were touched by it and showed interest in Konkokyo. Poland is a very traditional Catholic country and any person who is not officially Catholic and confesses another religion meets problems from their family or neighbors. The Czech Republic is a very atheistic country and people practicing religion are considered not totally normal or intelligent by others. All of this motivated me to create a website about Konkokyo in Polish and in Czech language. I also translated a majority of the information and *Prayer Book* into these languages. I have a plan to translate more texts from Konkokyo and put them onto the websites. In this way, people from these countries can have access to the Konkokyo Religion and start to practice it.



Konkokyo Polska:  
<https://konkokyopolska.blogspot.com/?m=1>



Konkokyo Česká republika:  
<https://konkokyocesko.blogspot.com/?m=1>

## Announcing the 5<sup>th</sup> Konkoko International Gathering at "Goreichi", the Sacred Grounds "Back to the Day: Inspiring the future"

Konkokyo believers from around the world, including anyone interested in learning more about Konkokyo are welcome to join this grand event. Let's get together to celebrate the Konkokyo Establishment Day at the Sacred Grounds,"Goreich".



### Faith Enrichment Activities:

Guided tour of "Goreichi", Prayer service,  
Dinner party, Workshops, and  
The 160<sup>th</sup> Konkokyo Establishment Day Service

**Date:** 2019, November 14th -15th

**Place:** Konkokyo Headquarters, Okayama, Japan

### Registration Fee:

None (Includes dinner, breakfast, and lodging)

**For further information, please contact KIC.**

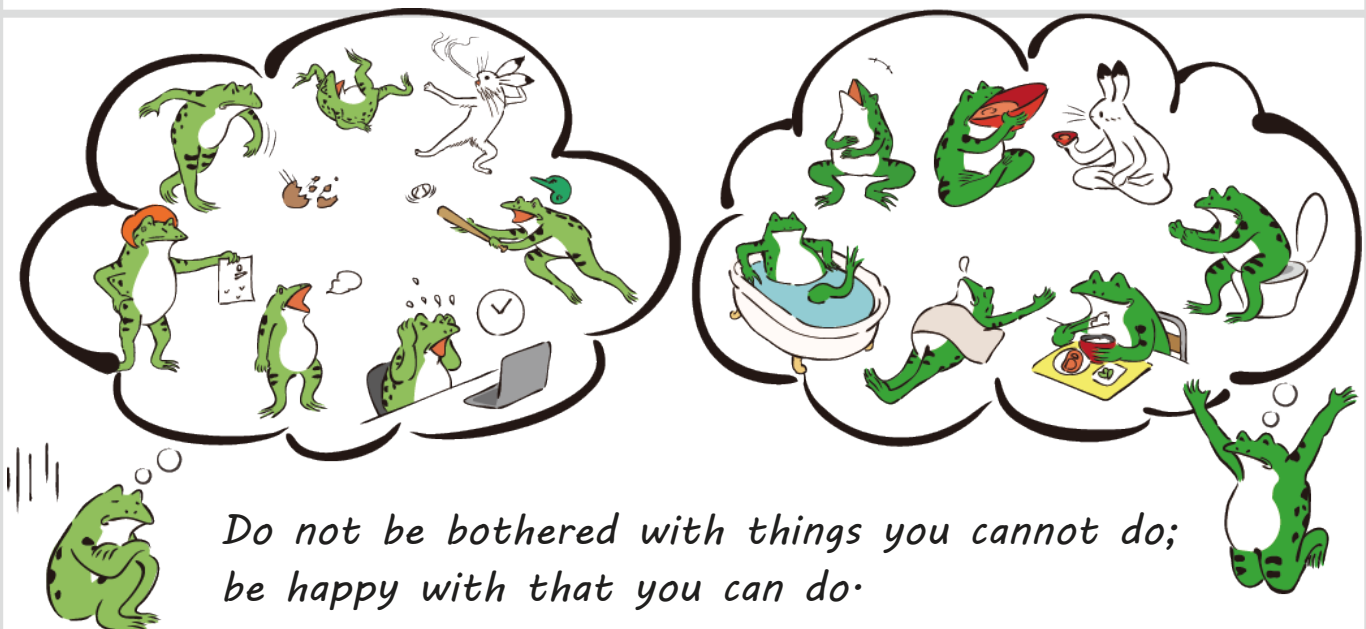
"I felt the reverence for the sacred grounds, connecting faith to its origin."

"I learned a lot by listening to and sharing stories of faith experiences with participants from other countries."

"It was absolutely a wonderful experience to pray together on this sacred grounds."

"I was very impressed with the minister speakers and believers of the faith."

"I was able to meet many people and expand my view of the world. "



### A Message from the Staff

Hello, Face to Faith's readers! How was the content of this issue? What do you think of receiving the Divine Call to you from Kami-Sama? I will do my best to understand and express Kami-Sama's message directed to me in my daily life. Even if I stumble, I still would like to keep my smile and act carefully to not release Kami-Sama. Have a good summer/winter! The next issue will be published in September. N.K



FACE TO FAITH NO. 95 VOL. 26-2 issued by

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