



**Face to Faith**

May 2021 No.101



## Konko-sama, Thank You for Thirty Years!

The Reverend Konko Heiki became *Kyoshu* Konko-sama, the spiritual leader of Konkokyo, after the fourth *Kyoshu* Konko-sama in 1991. Rev. Konko Heiki, also known as the fifth Konko-sama, has been serving to unify our faith and praying for our organization and activities for thirty years. He has also been serving the Toritsugi Mediation in the Central Mediation Hall. Toritsugi Mediation is a rite that has been practiced and handed down from our Founder, Konko Daijin, to successive Konko-samas, in order to conserve the lineage of the Konko faith.

This year, after having served out his five-year term, the fifth Konko-sama expressed his wish to pass over the *Kyoshu* responsibility to his successor at the end of this term.

*Kyoshu* is elected through ballots cast by Head Ministers from all Konko Churches. *Kyoshu* must be a descendant of our Founder, possess the Konko surname, be a minister of Konkokyo, and capable of performing sacred

mediation. Once elected, the *Kyoshu* serves a five-year term, and there are no term limits.

The *Kyoshu* election is held so that every Head Minister is able to decide the best candidate to follow the footsteps of *Kyoshu* Konko-sama. Head

Ministers cast their votes with hopes to develop our faith and to decide who will fulfill Kami's wishes the best as revealed in the *Kyoshu*'s Toritsugi Mediation.

Unlike general elections, a successful candidate's consent is necessary. The Konkokyo organization can only accept him/her as *Kyoshu* after his/her consent.

On February 15, an election was held at Konkokyo Headquarters. The Reverend Konko Hiromichi earned the largest number of votes in this election, and he accepted the sincere request from the entire Konkokyo congregation on February 17, 2021.

On March 26, the Reverend Iwasaki Michiyo, the Chief Administrative Director of Konkokyo, expressed appreciation



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# TIMELINE

## The Reverend Konko Heiki and Konkokyo

● 1934 October 31

Born as the first son of the Reverend Konko Kagamitaro.

● 1958

Graduated from Waseda University majoring in Literature.

● 1959 June 10

Ordained as a Konko Minister.

Served at the Administrative Office of the Konkokyo Headquarters in several capacities, including Director, Central Mediation Hall Affairs Department and Deputy Director, Central Mediation Hall Affairs Division. Prior, he served in the Activities Planning Division and Outreach Division.

● 1991 January 10

*Kyoshu* Konko-sama, the Reverend Konko Kagamitaro, passed away.

○ March 27

Succeeded *Kyoshu* after accepting the request through ballots cast by Head Ministers from all Konko Churches.

○ June 10

During the Konkokyo Independence Service, he addressed the following: “As fellow members of Konkokyo, let us practice faith in our daily lives with ‘a heart to appreciate everything.’ Let us practice faith steadfastly and actualize a truly sincere way through Ikigami Konko Daijin Toritsugi Mediation. ‘Kami is Kami because of people, and people are people because of Kami. Both uphold each other through the interdependent *aiyokakeyo*

relationship.’ Let us receive blessings so that the Konkokyo organization and all churches could contribute to world peace and salvation of all mankind.”

His words seemed to have predicted the following thirty



through Toritsugi Mediation at the Central Mediation Hall. He also received the fifth Konko-sama’s final words.

“*Kyoshu* Konko-sama, for thirty years, thank you for your mediation and prayers for all the followers, all the people of the world, and for world peace and salvation of humanity. You taught us that to actualize the way of Kami, we must follow our Founder’s faith and establish a connection with Kami. At the same time, you have unified our faith, our organization, and our activities.

Having received your guidance, Konkokyo has made great progress. *Konko Daijin* was published. By-laws were newly adopted. ‘The Way of Kami and people’ was emphasized. The Grand Service Hall underwent seismic retrofitting. We express our appreciation.

After reflecting on the future of Konko faith, you expressed your decision to pass over the *Kyoshu* responsibility to a successor. With your thoughts in our minds, we held the *Kyoshu* election. Rev. Konko Hiromichi accepted the request from the entire Konkokyo congregation.

Our hearts are full of gratitude for Konko-sama’s devoted service to Toritsugi Mediation for thirty years. We would like to seek continued guidance to receive blessings. We will receive mediation from Rev. Konko Hiromichi, who will succeed you after thirty years of dedicated service. I humbly make this request on this very day.

Konko-sama, please stay strong and healthy. Please continue to pray for us with your great virtue. Thank you so much for your dedication.”

The fifth Konko-sama announced, “Dear everyone, thank you so much. Let us receive blessings, now and forever.”



years. Many people were hurt by injustice, poverty, and war. Covid-19 spread the world. Natural disasters, the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995 and the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, severely affected Japan. During these difficult times, he served as *Kyoshu* Konko-sama. He prayed for peace and salvation for those who passed away. He also prayed for post-disaster recovery.

●1998

New Konkokyo By-laws were adopted.

●2000

~100th Anniversary of Konkokyo Independence

○August



Attended the KC-NA-KMH Joint Conference celebrating a century of Konkokyo Independence. During the 100th Anniversary Service, he delivered a message. After welcoming all the attendees, he expressed his appreciation for all the dedicated efforts by ministers and members. The efforts ensure that Konko Daijin's faith could continue from generation to generation. He concluded, "I would like to take this opportunity to express my great joy to all of you, to all who are celebrating this memorable service, and to all who have been working so hard to spread our faith to non-members in the 21st Century. In this new era which values the spirit of mutual prosperity and tolerance, I would like to walk with you on the pathway towards realizing our mutual prosperities, that of Kami-sama and people, that of people and people, that of people and nature, and all of us transcending our differences in nationality, race, language, and culture. Let us help each other always, especially when we have to face much suffering and sorrow in our daily lives. Let us pray for each other as fellow members

of Konkokyo. Let us strive for a realization of world peace and let us strive for a salvation of all mankind. Finally, I pray for the steady growth and development of Konkokyo throughout America, Canada, and Hawaii, and for your happiness and prosperity."

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●2001 January

Konkokyo Declaration was created. "As humans, who are all allowed to live by the Great Universe, we accept and respect all lives as being precious, and pledge to manifest an ideal world where Kami and people, people and people, and people and all things live together through an Interdependent (*Aiyo takeyo*) relationship."

●2009 ~150th Anniversary of the Divine Call

○March

A new multi-purpose facility, "Konko North Wing," was built. This facility is used for activities, meetings, and lodgings in Konko, Japan.

○October

A service to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Divine Call and Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremony was held. To all the worshippers, Rev. Konko Heiki addressed, "Reflecting what Kami wished eagerly and what our Founder accepted sincerely, let us work together to actualize the Way of Kami and people in our daily lives."

●2012 January

After receiving Konko-sama's words, "the Way of Kami and people," we started a new Movement for the Mutual Fulfillment of Kami and people.

Konko-sama taught: "You are vertically connected to Kami, and with other people, horizontally."

With these words, Konko-sama described our relationships with Kami and people.



●2020 October 31

At the age of 86, Konko-sama limited his service due to his health condition. He expressed his wish to pass over the *Kyoshu* responsibility to his successor upon the end of his term on March 26, 2021.

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# KONKO-SAMA'S FOOTSTEPS AND HIS HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

The Reverend Konko Heiki, the fifth Konko-sama, expressed his wish to step down as *Kyoshu* Konko-sama at the end of his sixth term. As all previous Konko-samas served the role for life, this was unprecedented.

On this historic occasion, the Reverend Konko Kiyoji in a morning sermon elucidated what Konko-sama had valued during his time as *Kyoshu* and his hopes for the future. Konko-sama had described the role of *Kyoshu* as “insurmountable” and “beyond his capabilities” which he is “being allowed to practice carrying out.”

With the spiritual guidance of his father, the fourth Konko-sama, he valued the succession of Toritsugi Mediation.

As son of the fifth Konko-sama, Rev. Konko Kiyoji recounted two episodes that were particularly memorable, and both stories illuminated what Konko-sama had deeply cared about. The first story was on the handing down of faith from the Founder to Shijin-sama (the second Konko-sama) and how the fifth Konko-sama internalized Shijin-sama’s experience. Rev. Kiyoji spoke:

It was the fourth autumn season since Founder passed away. The Reverend Sato Norio inquired Shijin-sama: “Konko-sama, you have been working too hard. Are you feeling well?” Shijin-sama replied, “I did not fulfill these duties alone. Founder would come here every night after midnight for the past three years, and he would pray for all the prayers and requests that were recorded in the book for the day. This is how I was able to carry on despite my shortcomings.”

The fifth Konko-sama had once told me that he was having the same experience as Shijin-sama. I was to give a sermon on this story but did not want to be inaccurate, and

so Konko-sama kindly read my sermon in advance. He said he was moved to tears. I was surprised and hesitated for a moment, initially unsure whether I had heard him correctly. While I was very humbled by his

great presence, I knew that this was the only opportunity to clarify what part had moved him. He replied, “It was where it read, ‘Founder came every night for three years and prayed. This is how I was able to carry on despite my shortcomings.’”

Since the passing of Founder on October 10, 1883, Shijin-

sama fulfilled his role “together with Founder’s guidance and prayers,” and the fifth Konko-sama said he too had experienced the same phenomenon 130 years later. When he said he was moved to tears, it made me realize the sacredness and rigorousness of carrying on this faith as *Kyoshu*.

The fifth Konko-sama had also said, “It is this place (the mediation place in the Central Mediation Hall) that is so precious.” Perhaps it was where Konko-sama had felt most connected with his father, the fourth Konko-sama. Just as Shijin-sama had said, “Founder prayed together (with me),” perhaps the fifth Konko-sama valued the special place for he was able to pray together with his father. On thinking about what the mediation place meant for the successive Konko-samas, Rev. Konko Kiyoji shared the following story:

I recalled when the fifth Konko-sama spoke about the time he had once helped wash down his grandfather’s (the third Konko-sama’s) back when he was a university student. He said, “I noticed that the third Konko-sama’s left calf was flat. While there should be some roundness to it, there was little muscle left, and it was completely flat. I understood that this was because he had



concentrated his weight on the left side of his body to be closer to those who came for mediation.”

I had no words when I heard this story. I was just astonished to know of this unseen outcome of the third Konko-sama’s service that spanned for seven decades.

Rev. Konko Kiyoji spoke that the fifth Konko-sama discovered the truth behind the duties of Konko-sama from seeing the flattened calf muscle of the third Konko-sama. It was certainly a great testament to his complete devotion to mediation. The fifth Konko-sama had described the mediation place, a place where the faith and virtue of all preceding Konko-samas have endured, as a “precious place.” He wholeheartedly prayed for the succession of this place he called precious, and now, he passed on his duties to the next generation.

When the fifth Konko-sama was once asked what the joy of practicing faith was, he had replied, “to see children and grandchildren grow and their

faiths grow.” Rev. Konko Kiyoji remarked, “The fifth Konko-sama’s sentiment towards children, grandchildren, and the next generation and beyond in itself is his profound hope. His words of wisdom are for all people connected to this faith and those who will make connections to this faith in the future.”

Rev. Konko Kiyoji had the opportunity to ask the fifth Konko-sama in person what his hopes are as he requested to step down from his role as *Kyoshu*. He replied, “for the sake of those who will come after me.” Rev. Kiyoji said he keenly felt the fifth Konko-sama’s fervent hope and prayer for all succeeding generations of this way of faith. Rev. Kiyoji went on to further inquire what Konko-sama wishes to see ahead. After pausing for some time, he answered, “prosperity for all future generations of people.”

The fifth Konko-sama’s profound hope will continue to embrace all people connected to this faith for generations to come. Let us work for Kami with his hope in our hearts.

## The True Pathway

To commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Divine Call on November 15, 2009, the Reverend Konko Kiyoji lectured on Konko-sama’s life, faith, and prayers.

In his lecture, Rev. Konko Kiyoji spoke about the 25-meter-long pathway within Konko-sama’s residence. The pathway, which is 1.5 meters wide, made of concrete, and aligned by trees, ends when it reaches public road. He called this pathway, “The True Pathway.” He mentioned that the concrete is dark gray and upon careful inspection, one can see a narrow white line in the center.

Rev. Konko Kiyoji further explained that as Konko-sama approaches the Central Mediation Hall onto the more visible part of the True Pathway for believers, there are people awaiting his arrival and praying. As Konko-sama passes by, he enters the Central Mediation Hall. Rev. Kiyoji emphasized that this procession has never ceased, not for a single day since April 25, 1925 – the day after an extensive and unexpected fire burned down the former wooden Central Mediation Hall.



### VOICE OF THE UNIVERSE

353 - Through Konko Daijin’s toritsugi-mediation, Kami, as well as people, will be fulfilled. Kami exists because of people, and people exist because of Kami. Parents pray for their children and children pray for their parents. Like Heaven and Earth, with aiyo kakeyo, pray for one another.

(Oboegaki 13-1-7)

# The Sixth Konko-sama

## The Reverend Konko Hiromichi



At 3:43 in the morning of March 27, the Reverend Konko Hiromichi was escorted from his residence to the Central Mediation Hall. His first day as *Kyoshu* Konko-sama began when he walked through the pathway. During his 4 o'clock morning prayer at the Central Mediation Hall, he sincerely offered the *tamagushi*. After the morning prayer, the Reverend Iwasaki Michiyo, the Chief Administrative Director of Konkokyo, received Toritsugi Mediation. Our sixth Konko-sama announced, "After receiving requests from many people, I humbly accept the succession of this especially important task. As fellow members of Konkokyo, let us receive blessings, and let us work for the happiness and prosperity of the world. Thank you."

At 8:30 in the morning, all the ministers working at Konkokyo Headquarters gathered and listened to Rev. Iwasaki deliver his address. Rev. Iwasaki expressed his gratitude for the 30 years of dedicated service by the former Konko-sama. The

fifth Konko-sama valued mediation, succeeding his father.

Then, Rev. Iwasaki stated, "Following the fourth Konko-sama, the fifth Konko-sama practiced faith with a heart that appreciates everything. He prayed for world peace and salvation of all mankind. While praying for our organization, the fifth Konko-sama realized that we should communicate and form a stronger connection with Kami. Through his mediation, we were guided to the way of Kami and people. The fifth Konko-sama passed on this most important task to his successor."

Rev. Iwasaki observed the fifth Konko-sama's determination by his bold decision to step down. Rev. Iwasaki advocated that we should actualize what the previous Konko-sama taught us. Rev. Iwasaki insisted that we should also have "determination" to practice faith. He described that the fifth Konko-sama's determination came from Founder's faith.

He pointed out that our Founder's *Memoir* clearly shows Kami's "determination." Rev. Iwasaki claimed, "If we think about the established relationship between our Founder and Kami, Founder would have accepted any requests from Kami. However, Kami gave him thorough instructions.

According to Rev. Iwasaki, Kami was determined to save people. He concluded, "Kami's determination opened a pathway, and the determination of the successive Konko-samas have kept this pathway alive. Therefore, with 'determination,' let us connect and make this connection stronger with Kami."



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