

Our Spiritual Leader, Reverend Heiki Konko

The Reverend Heiki Konko Reinaugurated as the Spritual Leader (*Kyoshu*)

An election was held on February 15, 2011 naming Reverend Heiki Konko, the current Spiritual Leader, as Leader-elect of Konkokyo.

The Constitution of Konkokyo stipulates that every five years, *Kyoshu* (the Spiritual Leader of Konkokyo) should be chosen out of Konkokyo ministers who are descendents of the Founder and have the surname of Konko. The most suitable religious successor of the Founder, who leads and unifies all of Konkokyo's faith and activities, is elected by all the Head Ministers with voting rights. The election result is validated with the consent of the electee.

After the election results were determined, Reverend Mitsutoshi Sato, the Chief Administrative Director of Konkokyo asked Reverend Konko for his acceptance and approval, to which Reverend Konko replied, "I accept it." With this acceptance, Reverend Konko assumes his fifth term of devotion from March 27 of this year.

Reverend Sato reflected on Reverend Konko's acceptance of his election as Spiritual Leader.

"We call it 'election of Spiritual Leader.' However, this truly means 'a petition for a recommendee by election to accept the service of Spiritual Leader.' This is not an ordinary election where electees take their offices as a matter of course. In our case, on behalf of all the Konkokyo believers, Head Ministers express their wishes in the form of election. Thus, our election result represents our collective hope with which we make a petition. Once the electee consents, only then is our 'petition' fulfilled.

"In making our petition, we should never fail to ask ourselves and clearly identify the kind of prayer and mental attitude we have. In other words, each of us must comprehend

the virtues and teachings of Konko-Sama. Consolidating our faith and the foundation of the Konkokyo organization are prerequisite to making the petition. Without such preparations on our part, the 'petition' could merely be a superficial election.

"For the Founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin, and the successive Konko-Samas, their lives and ways of living are substantiated by their strong will to achieve their service as Spiritual Leaders, as well as by their fervent prayers and sense of mission.

"Taking this opportunity, let us further consider and understand the virtues and significance of Konko-Sama's service. Every Konkokyo believer must think deeply about the Toritsugi Mediation in the Main Worship Hall of the Headquarters and the significance of how each Spiritual Leader unifies all of the Konkokyo's faith and activities in his own way. By so doing, we take a strong step forward as the whole Konkokyo Community."

The inauguration ceremony will be held on June 12, after the Konkokyo Independent Service is conducted.

The Reverend Heiki Konko: He was born in Okayama prefecture, Japan, on October 31, 1934. He graduated from Waseda University in 1958, with a major in Western philosophy. He entered Konkokyo Seminary and was ordained a minister in June 1959. He was inaugurated as the Spiritual Leader of Konkokyo on March 27, 1991, after the fourth Konko-Sama passed away.

Introducing New Facilities and Renewing Another



Open Site Yatsunami Hall

Kofukan Faith Training Hall

From 2008 to 2011, Konkokyo Headquarters ordered seismic retrofitting of some buildings and construction of new facilities so that everyone visiting can stay safe and warm. Let's introduce them to you.

Konko Kita (North) Wing

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To commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Konkokyo Establishment, Konko North Wing was constructed, and completed in March 2008. It consists of wooden Japanese-style buildings – “Open Site Yatsunami Hall” and “Kofukan Faith Training Hall.” In Yatsunami Hall, there are two conference rooms, one with both *tatami* and wood flooring; the other, just wood flooring. These rooms are used as: a rest area for believers, for training workshops, lectures,

and wedding ceremonies. “Kofukan” is a training center and dormitory that can accommodate up to 150 people. It has Japanese and Western-style rooms, including twin rooms with private baths. Wireless internet access is available at the Yatsunami Hall. Some users’ impressions were: “I am happy because for so long, I had looked forward to this type of facility to be made,” and “The facilities are so good that I had a comfortable stay.”



Kofukan entrance



Kofukan entrance hall



Kofukan training room



Kofukan dormitory



Kofukan dormitory



Kofukan dormitory



Yatsunami Hall, conference room



Seismic Retrofitting of the Grand Service Hall

The Grand Service Hall is used for services and events. When the Grand Services and other large ceremonies are held five times a year, believers gather here from all over the world. It was completed in 1959 and can hold 15,000 people.

The building met the seismic standards at the time of construction. However, several years ago, it was rechecked and determined that the Grand Service Hall needed seismic retrofitting to meet today’s current standards to withstand an earthquake. Placing highest priority on human life, Konkokyo Headquarters decided to repair the Grand Service Hall as quickly as possible.



Seismic retrofitting commenced on August 2008 and was completed in January 2011. At the same time, audio equipment, lighting, worn-out stages for the chorus and ritual music performers were upgraded, and a new restroom facility for the disabled was built on the south side of the Grand Service Hall. The building was also

remodeled in order for people to be evacuated safely and smoothly in the event of any disaster, not just earthquakes.

Pictures of Konko North Wing and the Grand Service Hall can be accessed on

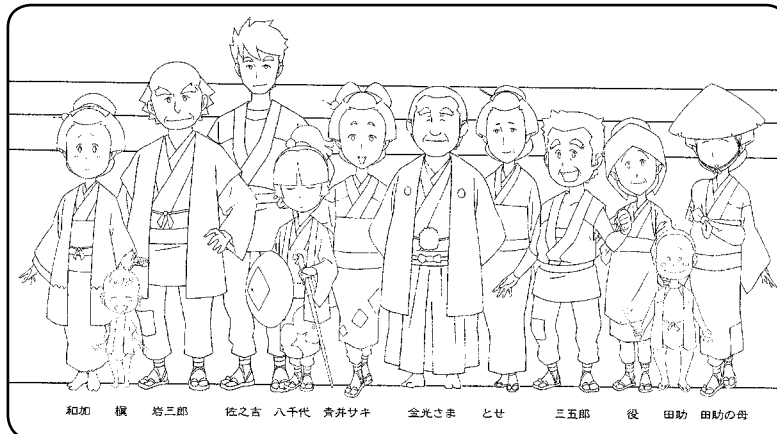
http://k-i-c.sakura.ne.jp/blog_eng_2/tb.php?ID=17

News on the new DVD of “Konko-Sama — Tales of Toritsugi Mediation”

Have you watched the anime, “Konko-Sama — Tales of Toritsugi Mediation” yet? The anime was produced to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Konko Faith. “Tales of Toritsugi Mediation” consists of two

stories: the first entitled “A Kind and Good heart” and the second “A Whole Heart and Feelings of Gratitude.” By watching these stories, you can begin to understand the faith, mediation and teachings of the Founder Ikigami Konko Daijin.

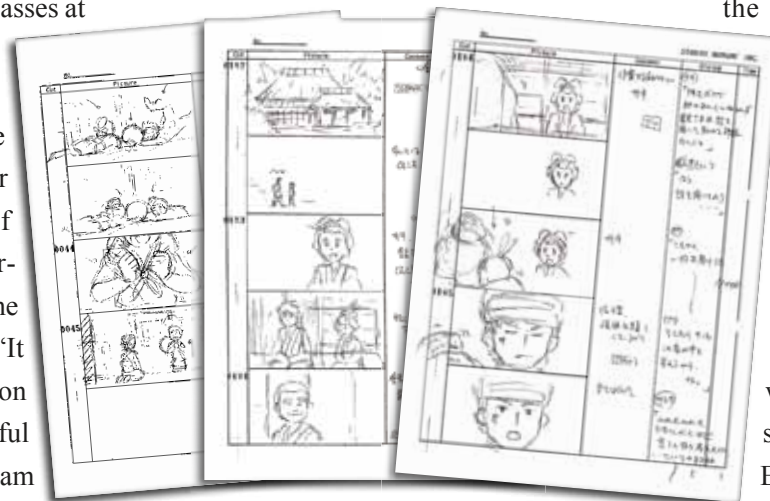
Since its first introduction, presentations of the anime have been shown at various different locations including believer’s homes, faith enrichment gatherings, religious education classes at Konkokyo-related schools and at the Konkokyo Prison Chaplains’s activities. The anime has been popular and has received a lot of positive feedback. Favourable comments such as “The characters are friendly,” “It does not force any values on us, but tells us of the peaceful hearts of the villagers,” “I am looking forward to a second version!” and “I would like to gift this anime to my grandchild” have been received from those who have watched it. In addition to the original Japanese anime, there is an English language version available as well, which has proved useful in introducing the Konko Faith in foreign countries. So far, the Konkokyo International Center (KIC) has held



All Characters

screenings in London and Sydney.

The Head Administrative Office of Konkokyo has decided to commission and produce a sequel to the first anime, since it has been established that anime could be used as a very efficient method to pass on the faith of the Founder. The second anime is also expected to be used as a tool to develop, enrich and nurture communication between young people and their parents. The anime is



storyboards

also hoped to be useful in assisting the succession of faith by handing down the Way of faith to young generation.

In the second anime, Masaki Watanabe (who was also director of the first) continues as director but also as executive producer. The script was written by Yasuyuki Harafuji and Character Design and Animation Direction is

by Hajime Maruo. The content of the anime is based on the teachings and oral materials found in *Konkokyo Kyoten*, Sacred Scriptures of Konkokyo, and *Konko Daijin*, a biography of the Founder. The aim of the anime is to simply express the impressions of disciples

when encountering the Founder and his teachings. Its other purpose is to show the way of receiving divine blessings, occasionally presented with a humorous approach. The second anime includes the story of two disciples, Kunieda Sangoro and Sunami Sanokichi.

The script, character design, art setting, storyboard, original drawing and checking of historical authenticity have already been completed. Currently, the editing and English script

translation are in progress. Then soon afterwards, the post-recording (by dubbing artists) and final editing will then lead into the final phase of the anime’s production.

The pair of animés which are almost 30 minutes long will both be recorded on a single DVD. Japanese and English versions will be available and the release date is anticipated to be this September. Don’t miss it!

If you are interested in the first anime “Konko-Sama — Tales of Toritsugi Mediation”, please feel free to contact KIC to obtain a copy. Please note that the Portuguese subtitled version of the anime is also now complete and available.

Young People Opened Their Eyes to The World

Heartful Trade Project (HTP) held a study tour to Thailand from February 4 to 10. HTP is a fair-trade project based on Konko Faith. Three university students, a high school student, and a Konkokyo minister joined this tour. They visited HTP's counterparts in northern Thailand.

Baan Thoh Fan Project Maetam Group, one of these counterparts, is a project producing and selling handicrafts. The group recently observed its 15th anniversary since it started in order to protect young women in agricultural villages from human-trafficking. Its products are embroidered by the women of the Yao tribe, one of the minority hill-tribes. The project has provided them with a precious opportunity to earn cash.

At the anniversary ceremony, staff members of Baan Thoh Fan expressed their appreciation for the continuous support from Japanese people, and stated, "Because we have

been loved by Japanese people like this, now, we strongly wish to love and support other less fortunate people". One of

the HTP staff said, "I don't think that we supported one-sidedly. We have been supported and encouraged by Thai people, who did their best in spite of their cruel hardships."

Young participants who joined the study-tour for the first time opened their eyes to a new world said, "I felt that people could live because of the others supporting them" and "I am so glad to have this relationship with these people. I would like to link with others and become helpful to them."



Participants with Yao villagers

INFORMATIONS

Massive Earthquake and Tsunami Hit Japan

On March 11 at 2:46pm JST a massive 9.0-magnitude earthquake occurred near the northeastern coast of Japan, creating extremely destructive tsunami waves which hit Japan just minutes after the earthquake.

We would like to express our deepest condolences to the victims who passed away and pray for the quick reconstruction of the area and recovering of those suffering.

There are not any damages to ministers and families of affected churches, however, Headquarters is still in the middle of checking the situation of the believers in the surrounding area.

Also, Konkokyo Head Administrative Office and Konkko Churches of North America (KCNA) have commenced collecting Donations. To donate online please visit <http://www.konkofaith.org/index.html>

Konkokyo European Gatherings 2011

The dates and locations of these gatherings have yet to be determined. If you, or someone you know, are interested in attending either gathering or wish to learn more please contact KIC. KIC will send information to potential participants by mail or e-mail as it becomes available.

New Director of Seoul Activity Center

Reverend Kinya Suenaga was appointed as the Director of the Konkokyo Seoul Activity Center upon Reverend Kazumasa Tsukamoto's retirement from the position on January 1, 2011.

Faith Life Sketch 1



by Tama Hyoroku

