



Tohoku Dream Camp, Keep on Smiling

October, 2012

No.74

Since the Great East Japan Earthquake, the children in Tohoku (northeastern) district haven't had many open areas to play freely or engage in sports activities. Their neighborhoods were washed away by the tsunami caused by the earthquake, and open spaces have been used for temporary housing for those who lost their homes. Konkokyo has been supporting the recovery efforts in this disaster area. One aspect of its support was the summer camp that the Konkokyo Michinoku Volunteer Group organized. Konkokyo Tohoku District invited children from Kesenuma, Miyagi, a prefecture that was most severely damaged, to their annual camp. Children of Konkokyo church members as well as non-members were invited to participate in the event. It was held from July 27 to 29. The Tohoku Dream Camp was held at the Tozukamori Forest Park in Hanamaki, Iwate Prefecture. Eighty children and adult leaders participated in this camp organized by the Konkokyo Tokyo Metropolitan Supporting Organization for Volunteers of Disaster and the Konkokyo Fogel Association.

Programs were created for children of all ages: The Egg Brigade for children below the third grade, Nest Brigade for children from third to sixth grade, and Junior Brigade for junior high school students. The children of Egg Brigade enjoyed many activities in the athletic facilities, and also did craft work and explored nature around the campsite. The Nest Brigade went hiking to the Miyazawa Kenji Memorial Hall,

and the Junior Brigade went up to the observatory to marvel at the stars and sunrise. The camp was filled with children's laughter.



At first, the children were a bit apprehensive because many of them didn't know each other. However, as the days progressed and they worked, played and stayed together, they built friendships and began enjoying themselves. The barriers between church members and nonmembers disappeared after a while. At the end

of three days, when asked if they enjoyed the camp, many replied, "I don't want to go home." "I want to play more with my new friends." I hope that they will maintain their good friendships even after they return home.

I was a leader of the Egg Brigade. The children interacted with each other happily. That was a pleasant surprise to me because I thought that their traumatic experiences might have had a more negative impact on them in their emotional state and behavior. Therefore, I was surprised to hear a parent say, "My child looks really happy now." I began to think that they were happy because they weren't usually able to play as much as they needed to, under the conditions that they now lived. The camp helped many children who were suffering greatly within.

It is still a long road to the return to normalcy in the devastated area. I will continue to pray that the children in the disaster area will be able to live happily and cheerfully.



Reported by Reverend Masako Fujimura

New Cabinet Organized



Reverend Toshimasa Okanari was newly appointed to Chief Administrative Director by our Spiritual Leader on July 25. His Cabinet members are Reverend Hiroshi Fukuda as Director of General Affairs Department of Konkokyo; Rever-

end Hidenobu Yasutake as Director of Church Affairs Department; Reverend Shozo Yamamoto as Director of Outreach Department 1; Reverend Kaneo Kondo as Director of Outreach Department 2; and Reverend Terunobu Yamashita as Director of Financial Affairs Department.

Reverend Okanari declared at his inauguration, "The fundamental problems of human beings are affected by today's situation. The problem is that the close and warm relationships that

individuals have had with the Universe, a connection that has served to sustain their lives, have been lost. The loss of appreciation for the Universe, reflected in the selfish and human-centered way of living, has been a consequence of this change in perspective. I believe that the way to fulfillment in modern society will be realized when we realize that everyone is Kami's child and when we seek the way of mutual fulfillment between Kami and people. Now I strongly hope that every one of us, as we become one with all the believers, will work on the faith movement so that we welcome the 130th Anniversary of the Founder fruitfully, and the enrichment we gain through the anniversary develops the work of churches, administration, and the entire Konkokyo community."

Konkokyo Faith Gatherings Held in Germany and Britain

To support local Konkokyo believers and spread our Way among potential believers, the Konkokyo International Center (KIC) has been holding faith gatherings in areas where there are no Konko churches. Reverend Yukie Morimoto, the Deputy Director of KIC, visited Germany and Britain from June 7 to 19. A resident minister in Germany, Reverend Kiyoko Furumoto, supported Reverend Morimoto through both gatherings. Reverend Stephanie Laite (Toronto Church, Canada) joined them in Britain.

The gatherings in Berlin were held on June 9 and 10 at the Tang Long Hotel, while the gathering in London was held at the Imperial Hotel on June 16. Each gathering included a service, a sermon, faith talks and discussions.

Reverend Furumoto officiated the bilingual service in Berlin. She also gave a sermon in German after the

service, where she talked about the relationship between Tenchi Kane No Kami, Heaven and Earth, and people. Toritsugi Mediation Cards were distributed among the participants where they were able to write down their appreciation, apologies and wishes, and then offer them to the altar.

In London, Reverend Morimoto officiated the service with Reverend Laite's support. Reverend Laite gave a sermon in English about the basic doctrines of Konkokyo and how to practice faith based on "The Konko Faith: Our Creed" document from Konko Churches of North America. Reverend Morimoto also gave a sermon in Japanese in which she said "Kami is always with us and keeps an eye on us. If you have any problems, Kami will give you blessings when you pray." After the ser-



mons, the participants had an informal discussion about their journeys.

After the gatherings, in Berlin, Reverends Morimoto and Furumoto joined an activity helping the homeless. They also offered the "Prayer for Peace" at a Christian church that was built upon the land where the Berlin Wall once stood. In London, they had a "Mama's party" which allowed mothers to talk about their faith and share experiences about their children. This party was a new experiment for KIC and it went very well!

Overall, both gatherings were a huge success. Thank you to everyone who came out and joined us!

Philosophy on Life, Faith on Life #4

Lectured by Reverend Yoshitsugu Fukushima

The following is a summary of a chapter from his book *Inochi no Shiso, Inochi no Shinko*.



How Human Beings Should Live

Konko Daijin described our society or this world as *nin-yo* or “human-centered.” This is a world in which human beings live their lives relying on what they think is their own strength, and where their own conveniences and desires determine their activities. In other words, they forget or exclude Kami, and thus, act against Heaven and Earth, and consequently incur various sufferings. The opposite of being human-centered is to be *kami-yo* or “Kami-centered.”

Kami reveals that a human-centered world leads to a chaotic world. Konko Daijin wrote about this revelation which can be found in *Oboe-cho* 16-3 and states, “An earthquake struck on February 6 at around six in the evening. Kami-Sama said, ‘I, Tenchi Kane No Kami, am disturbed. The world is chaotic.’” Physically sensing the tremor caused Konko Daijin to understand how much Kami was disturbed by the chaotic world. Therefore, using a natural phenomenon and the chaos of the human world as figurative, he revealed the shortcomings of a human-centered relationship between people and Kami or Heaven and Earth.

Another message from Kami, written on June 25, 1880 (*Oboe-cho* 24-5-3), states, “All people, regardless of age or profession, act irreverently toward Heaven and Earth. Living things, even animals and birds, are suffering from this irreverence and are reacting against them. I, Tenchi Kane No Kami, shall teach people living in this Universe how to apologize for their irreverence. There is nothing we can do for those who go against the teachings of the toritsugi mediator, Ikigami Konko

Daijin.” The human-centered way of people living between Heaven and Earth, or more simply, their irreverent attitude towards Kami would influence all creatures, which in turn would affect the human world. It makes life more difficult and disastrous. Kami conveyed to Konko Daijin how people can renew themselves, and thereafter, Konko Daijin could reveal this to all people through mediation. However, Kami can do little for those who continue to pursue a human-centered life.

Kami expects us to live a life as revealed in Konko Daijin’s teachings, but there are times when Kami’s providence is not fully conveyed through Konko Daijin’s words. This was a concern for Kami and may be a reason the message of “I, Tenchi Kane No Kami, am disturbed,” was provided. Despite this cautionary message, people ignore, dismiss or do not take the caution seriously, which creates a problem in our way of living. It prevents our ability to awaken spiritually.

Human beings have conducted themselves and acted freely, based on a human-centered set of wishes and conveniences. The most important role of Konko Daijin, as Kami’s messenger, was and continues to be, to refocus our perspective towards a Kami-centered view instead of a human-centered one. In order to fulfill this role, Konko Daijin continues to convey the relationship between Heaven and Earth and human beings, using words and figurative expressions to assist people’s understanding. We believers have to prepare our minds to realize the true meanings of life from the profound words provided by Konko Daijin.

*In Konkokyo scripture (KYOTEN), both solar and lunar calendars are used. The dates used in this article represent the solar calendar only.

From Kyoten

Early in the morning on November 24 (December 25), Kami-Sama revealed, “Right now the world is human-centered. All things are done by people’s own power, and many people are going against my teachings. Those who do as I say shall become a kami. Long ago, it was a kami-centered world. Now it is a human-centered world. Because of this, I shall teach people to return to a kami-centered world. Difficulties and suffering are caused by people’s own hearts. Whether or not they can live in a peaceful world also depends on their own hearts.” (*Oboe-cho* 24-25)

Three Konkokyo Trainees from Abroad Now in Japan

Three overseas trainees are working on their faith training at Konkokyo Headquarters now. Mr. Robert Giulietti (USA), Mr. Lee Kab No (Korea), and Mr. Carlos Frederico Hasselmann Martins (Brazil) are striving to grow in the Konko Faith and told us about their aspirations towards this goal.



Mr. Robert Giulietti

To revisit my initial aspirations, in order to develop into a minister and practice faith in the United States, I believed that I needed to develop the “Heart of Kami” and learn how to speak the Japanese language. I still believe that these are very important for me to continue to develop. After spending two and a half months at Konkokyo Headquarters, I understand that maintaining a connection

with Headquarters will be important for myself and other believers in the West. I was able to establish many relationships with the community in Konko. However, maintaining these relationships will become difficult upon my return to Seattle. I will rely on technology and above all, Kami, to help me continue to stay close to Headquarters in the future.



Mr. Lee Kab No

Three years ago, in a conversation with Reverend Tsukamoto (a former Director of the Konkokyo Seoul Activity Center), I said “I want to be a social worker and to bring up young Konkokyo followers.”

The current Director, Reverend Kinya Suenaga, takes part in my volunteer organization’s activities and we work together devotedly. Through meetings and volunteer

activities with him, we understand each other without any preconceived ideas and prejudices. He also helped me by sharing his faith and our founder’s stories.

In Aug. 2012, I became a social worker at last. Now I want to make my promise with Reverend Tsukamoto come true by taking part in study and training during this time to learn to live a life of Konko Faith.



Mr. Carlos Frederico Hasselmann Martins

This is the fourth time I have visited Japan. It is a country that always impresses me with its culture and history. I came from Brazil, which is a relatively new country with just over 500 years history. I want to develop my own knowledge about Konkokyo, and learn about its history and the

Founder, during my stay.

I believe that Kami actually speaks in all languages and touches the heart of each one of us in a different way. It is like the land gives plenty things, if it is properly planted, cared for, and fertilized.

These trainees have a strong desire to develop their own faith. We hope their experiences during this time will be a great help for their future and the future of Konko Churches throughout the world as well.

Konkokyo Gathering in Australia 2012

We, Konkokyo International Center (KIC), invite you to our Faith Gathering. We hope to meet you at any or all of the following events. For further information, don’t hesitate to contact us!

Prayer Service & Casual Discussion, Faith Enrichment Workshop

Date : December 1 & 2 Location : Sydney



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