

The Fifth Konko-Sama

Inauguration Ceremony of Kyoshu Konko-Sama

Konkokyo Headquarters held an Election for the Spiritual Leader of the Konko Faith (aka. Kyoshu Konko-Sama) on February 15, 2016. Most people in the Konkokyo community hoped that the present Fifth Konko-Sama would continue to unify the whole congregation and that they could continue to serve Kami, our Divine Parent, under his prayers and Sacred Mediation. After receiving the largest number of votes to win the election, the Fifth Konko-Sama kindly and sincerely accepted the wish of the entire Konkokyo community to enter his sixth (five-year) term as the Spiritual Leader. On June 12, 2016, we held the Inauguration Ceremony, following the Commemorative Ceremony of the Independence of the Konkokyo Organization. The Fifth Konko-Sama presented the following statement:

“For the last 25 years, I have been allowed to serve as the Spiritual Leader of the Konko Faith after I succeeded the

former Fourth Konko-Sama. At this time, it has been decided that I will continue to serve in this important position. Just as we have persevered over the past 25 years, I sincerely pray that we will continue to work hard from now on too, in order for us to realize the ‘Way of Kami and People’ in each of our daily lives. Realizing the ‘Way of Kami and People’ is important because this Way makes it possible for Kami and people to be mutually fulfilled. By achieving this goal, we will also hopefully contribute to ‘world peace and the salvation of humanity’. I would like to pray to our Divine Parent especially earnestly for the peace of mind of the people who died from the 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake. My prayer is also directed towards those who were victimized in the massive quake. I pray that those people will successfully reconstruct their devastated town. Thank you very much.”

The Launch of A New Konko Administration



On July 1st, 2016, the Reverend Yoshinori Nishikawa was officially appointed as the Chief Administrative Director by the Fifth Konko-Sama and a new Konko Administrative Cabinet was formed. The Reverend Yoshio Miura was appointed as the Director of the General Affairs Department, the Reverend Mikao Tabuchi as the Director of the Church Affairs Department, the Reverend Yumi Asano as the Director of the Outreach Department and the Reverend Terunobu Yamashita as the Director of the Financial Affairs Department.

Upon assuming the position, the Reverend Nishikawa

remarked, “Today, we are surrounded by a very severe environment and, when witnessing various incidents and accidents, we are often made to see how seriously and terribly many people of this world are suffering now. These terrible events depict the presence of those who forget the grand favors and blessings that the Universe and our Divine Parent bring to them. I would also like to refer to the 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake that broke out the other day. Many people suffered due to this earthquake and they are forced to live in very difficult situations. In the midst of such severe adversity, the Reverend Heiki Konko sincerely accepted

the wish of the entire Konkokyo community and entered his sixth term as the Spiritual Leader of the Konko Faith, Kyoshu. I am certain that we all need to receive Kyoshu Konko-Sama’s prayers and Sacred Mediation more than ever, visibly realize the ‘Way of Kami and people’ in our lives at home and in society, and by doing so also hopefully contribute to the welfare of our society as the Konkokyo Organization, local churches, ministers, ministers’ assistants (*hokyo*) and believers. I am praying to resolve that all the activities of the Konkokyo Organization will evolve and prosper from now on.”

My experiences of Goreichi and KIC

Reported by Reverend Olivia Nikolaidis, Konko Church of Toronto



Last year, I was given the opportunity to train in Japan for the completion of my ordainment as a Konkokyo minister. I was able to travel to many places, including KIC (Konkokyo International Center), but I spent the most time in Konko Town in the *Goreichi* (Sacred Grounds).

Goreichi is a very powerful place.

I’d like to describe it as ethereal. Unlike anywhere else I’ve been, it is a place you feel both Heaven and Earth as a whole. The spiritual energy permeated through everything there, casting a serene peace over the entire grounds. It is clear in its subtle beauty, from the sun rising over the Grand Worship Hall to the full moon illuminating the Founder’s grave, the sound of the leaves in the wind, and the cries of the heron, the songs of the birds at sunrise, the cicadas at dusk, and the crickets at night. Everything within *Goreichi* reflects the laws of nature and harmony of the entire Universe. I feel anyone, regardless of their faith, can feel its sacredness.

The spiritual feeling at *Goreichi* is something I can never forget, and is incomparable to anywhere else I’ve visited. I’ve experienced a similar energy at many Konko churches, but being there at *Goreichi* is like being immersed in this energy. It is the difference between clasping your hands through a river versus swimming in the deep blue ocean. I will never forget the feeling.

I had many memorable, personal experiences at the sacred grounds. I felt the strong spiritual energy at many places I call power spots, around *Goreichi*. I also had the most unforgettable experiences, just living there in Konko Town. I made lifelong friendships with many and connected

with them at a deep level, despite not being able to communicate perfectly. We were able to connect by the heart. I found this a very powerful thing I haven’t yet experienced elsewhere. I can never forget the bonds that grew, with the many people that I came in contact with, and often I am so moved to realize it.

Another place that made a huge impact on me was KIC located in Tokyo. The feeling there is very friendly and positive. Tokyo itself, in contrast to Konko Town, is a very energetic city with so much happening at once – many thoughts, emotions, feelings, and experiences intertwining and intermingling simultaneously – a powerful crossroads. Exploring the city, I could feel the hopes, dreams, and desires of the people, not only of the Japanese, but people from around the world. That’s why I feel it’s the perfect location for KIC, where the focus on the global Konkokyo faith community is at its the core. The energy between the city and the office was harmonious, and thus is a very pleasant working environment. I learned so much while at KIC, spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually, and probably the most by listening to everyone’s stories and experiences. Everyone was so kind, and I was also able to complete much of my *goyo* (sacred tasks) with the generous help of people there. I am so grateful to have been able to work together with them.

Overall, my experiences both at *Goreichi*, KIC, and the other locations around Japan impacted me powerfully and I am so thankful to have been able to experience such an amazing journey and adventure – to feel the strong spiritual energy and meet such wonderful people. Undoubtedly, it helped me as a person, to mature and also my faith as well, which I felt it grow exponentially.

A Visit to Hawaii and North America, Following the Path of Konkokyo



Reverend Michie Kimura

Reverend Michie Kimura, Konko Church of Sako, visited Hawaii and North America from April 9 to 27, 2016. Konko Church of Sako is located in Tokushima Prefecture of the Shikoku Region. She gave sermons for grand ceremonies at churches. In Hawaii, she served as a lecturer for young Konkokyo believers. During the visit, she stayed at believers' homes and at churches. She deepened the friendship with local people.

We, KIC, invited Reverend Kimura to our office in Tokyo. We asked her to report what she had experienced in Hawaii and North America.

After speaking with her, we believe Kami-Sama saw her faith and sent her to Hawaii and North America. Thank you very much, Reverend Kimura.

KIC: Tell us how you received the opportunity to go to Hawaii and North America.

In November last year, a group of Hawaiian believers wanted to follow the footsteps of the Founder by experiencing the *Shikoku pilgrimage*. As a representative of the young ministers in *Shikoku*, I was in charge of welcoming them. We shared a wonderful time. One of the things we did included watching the *Awa Odori* performance together. (*Awa Odori* is a traditional folk dance in Tokushima district). I was then invited to Hawaii and North America.

KIC: What did you do after you were invited and until the day of departure?

Since I had never been abroad, I was a bit concerned with my English and for any cultural differences I may encounter. Moreover, my mission was to give sermons at the grand ceremonies. The sermons must satisfy everyone. This added a lot of pressure on me. At such a time, one minister said, "You are so lucky!" Another minister said, "All is arranged by Kami-Sama." Thanks to these words, I became optimistic. I thought, "I should enjoy this special opportunity with a sincere gratitude. Through me, Kami-



Sama wants to teach something to the people there. I will serve the best that I can for His message to be conveyed." At the airport, my host family (a husband and a wife), put a lei around my neck. They hugged me and said, "Welcome, Reverend Kimura." That action got rid of my anxiety. They lightened my heart instantly.

KIC: What were your first impressions of Konkokyo in Hawaii and North America?

Early in the morning at churches, ministers offered their prayers while wishing salvation for many people. The mediation at *Okekikai* (Mediation Seat) actively connected Kami-Sama's wishes to believers. They seemed to realize their faith in their daily lives. Also, I was moved to see the attitudes that the believers had. The believers tried to deepen the faith by internally asking, "What can I do now?" I was also impressed that there were no boundaries between ministers and believers in the *naorai* feast after the grand ceremony. All the people there enjoyed the feast. In this Sacred Way, Konko churches connect Kami-Sama, Konko-Sama and people. Hawaii and North America also practice in this way as well. Witnessing that there are Konko-Sama's worship halls overseas, I was very moved.

KIC: Please give the readers one last message.

When I was invited for the sacred service, I was bent on bringing religious benefits to the overseas believers. However, I was given more than what I had brought. I was warmly welcome, and people took great care of me. I returned home with many favors and prayers. All the people and events that I encountered during this visit will be my treasures.

New Intern Welcomed!

The KIC's internship program began on May 12. Reverend Yu Iwasaki (Konko Church of Shizuoka) is now training at KIC. He shared some of his thoughts for his stay with us:

“Almost four months have passed since I began my training at KIC. As

I experienced this training, attending lectures, taking part in social activities, translating and so forth, I began to develop a new awareness. For example, when I translated ‘Tenchi Kane No Kami’ into English, I pondered for the first time about which pronoun would be more appropriate – ‘she’ or ‘he’. Through the KIC training, I began to have a new sense of values that broadened my horizons. I also realized the im-

portance of studying to expand my scope of understanding.

Studying is not only learning and acquiring skills or knowledge; it is also being prepared to accept unfamiliar people by interacting with them. I realized that I should consider different viewpoints. By asking myself with Konko faith, ‘Why did the problems happen?’ or ‘How can I help others?’, I can pray for troubled people more whole-heartedly. I think that it is more important to ‘study with Konko faith’ than to ‘study about Konko faith’. Understanding this should manifest the Way of mutual fulfillment.

The training of KIC is the best learning place for me because I can interact with others from all over the world. I truly enjoy this training and feel thankful, resolving to never forget this feeling. I would like to study more intensely with others to practice my faith and to fulfill the duty of the Way.”

Come Join the Konkokyo Gathering in London 2016 !

Prayer Service & Casual Discussion

Date: October 23

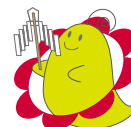
Place: To Be Determined

All are welcome to participate in the gathering. Please contact KIC for further information.

**Back to the Day : inspiring the future****Welcoming the Konko International Gathering 2016 at "Goreichi"**

Believers from all over the world and those who are interested in Konkokyo are welcome to join in.

Let's get together to celebrate the Konkokyo Establishment Day at the Sacred Place "Goreichi".



+Realize the roots of our life.

+Feel the spirituality of "Goreichi".

+Deepen our mutual understanding.

Faith Enrichment Activities:

Guided tour of "Goreichi", Prayer Services, Party, Workshop, and Konkokyo Establishment Day Service

Date: November 14th 13:00-15th 12:00

Place: Konkokyo Headquarters, Okayama, Japan

For further information, please contact KIC.

Please check Facebook page;

<https://www.facebook.com/koncele/>



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