



September, 2020 No.99

On July 1 2020, the Fifth Konko Sama named the Reverend Michiyo Iwasaki as Chief Administrative Director of the Konkokyo Organization. The following is based on Rev. Iwasaki's statement on his vision and hopes for Konkokyo during his four-year tenure.



Follow Konko Daijin's faith to write our own "faith story"

For a long time, our societies have justified our science-driven approaches for the sake of modernization. While this brought material wealth, we have compromised the environment. Today, we live in a changed world, and the invisible corona virus disease will be with us for some time. We no longer have the control we had before, and we must embrace a new lifestyle. The Covid-19 crisis presents an opportune time to reflect on our relationship with Kami, a transcendental being that is also not visible and beyond our own powers.

How can Kami and us humans connect, and what do we connect on? There is no better model than our founder, Konko Daijin, the first person that established the strongest connection to Kami. It was when our founder became critically ill when he came to realize and embrace Kami's existence. His life was spared, and communicating and accommodating to Kami became daily practice as he sought for Kami's perspective and reflected on his own thoughts and actions. This renewal of life, or the "Way of Kami and People," became our founder's faith.

The year 2023 marks the 140th anniversary of the passing of our founder Konko Daijin and the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Tenchi Kakitsuke divine reminder. When a Japanese government mandate forced our founder to remove the altar, Kami asked our founder to write and share the divine reminder to those who wished to visit the altar. This was Kami's message -- a message we continue to receive today to connect with Kami. To facilitate our communication with Kami, we also receive Toritsugi mediation. As we approach our founder's 140th anniversary, let us revisit his faith to strengthen our own faith.

Our vision for the Konkokyo Organization is to understand Konko Daijin's faith journey, make our own connections to Kami, and write our own faith story. It is our hope for all people to find joy and happiness in their lives through personal transformation. To do so, my cabinet and I propose the following direction:

1. Communicate with Kami

To connect and make this connection stronger with Kami, we need to communicate with Kami. Upon receiving Kami's revelation regarding his ancestors on 24 December 1858, our founder wrote, "I suffered without being aware of my irreverences toward Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama. And now, Tenchi Kane No Kami-Sama was giving me this thankful revelation." Our founder came to know that Kami communicates to teach, and so he continued this dialogue with Kami. If we too start this dialogue, Kami will surely answer us. Receiving mediation would also assist us in opening our communication with Kami.

The Japanese dramatist Oriza Hirata once said that in a debate, one will lose if at the end of the debate his/her

opinion differs from the beginning, but in a dialogue, the goal is not achieved unless our opinions are changed in the end. Our founder's dialogue with Kami changed his way of life and enriched his life.

2. Direct our hearts to the workings of the Hiromae

Our churches have undertaken various activities and functions to assist in the understanding of Konkokyo. However, just as our founder and generations of Konko-Samas have valued the Hiromae, we wish to further underscore the importance of the Hiromae. The Hiromae is a sacred place that connects Kami's world and the human world. While our scientific-driven approaches have perhaps reduced our notions of transcendency and matters beyond our control, let us once again shed light on the workings of the Hiromae, a

sacred place where we turn our hearts to Kami. Let us revive our Hiromae and continue to pass the legacy of the faith of our respective churches.

3. Finalize the Aiyo-kakeyo Movement

Aiyo-kakeyo has become a movement. Through vari-

ous workshops, conferences, and faith training opportunities, we have shared how our lives have changed through our encounters with Kami. These are our faith stories. Let us now reflect on our faith stories and align them to our founder's faith to finalize the Aiyo-kakeyo movement.

Having Konko Daijin be Born Throughout the World

Rev. Masanori Takeuchi, Head Minister of Konko Church of Chicago, U.S.A

I would like to introduce Mr. Massimo Claus to all of you. He is 56 years old and living with his wife, Laura, in a rural Italian town surrounded by trees. He has been a monk for many years and helped many people. Thanks to that, he thinks that Kami-Sama has led him to Konkokyo.

I received his e-mail for the first time on June 8 last year. He introduced himself and said, "I learned through the Konkokyo that every hindrance would be a chance to improve and deepen our faith. It took me many years to understand this. Now, my deepest desire is to dedicate myself to the practice and study of Konkokyo and to introduce people to this wonderful path. There is an immense need of Kami-Sama both in Italy and in the world."

Since then, we have exchanged our e-mail messages almost once every other day. Then after a month he stopped e-mailing me. I did not know why he stopped his communication with me, but I continued to send him my sermons of our monthly services. Subsequently, I received his e-mail again on Dec. 19. He wrote:

"Please forgive my long absence. Laura and I have lived through a very sad time. After the first loss, the following week we lost someone else and this left us feeling very dejected. Moreover, I suffered a serious problem with my leg. I am now able to walk normally again only since a few days ago.

I tried to perceive all this as a huge opportunity of faith development, but I still feel a deep suffering inside. My encounter with the Konkokyo has radically changed my way of thinking and living, but when I experienced what happened over the summer, I lost my way.

Your latest e-mail relieved me from my suffering and has made me see Kami-Sama again. Thanks for your presence and your sermons, which were very important for me. I would like to comprehend Kami-Sama's will better."

From there his motivation to seek the true way of Konkokyo has been on fire. He purely asked for guidance and has

been increasingly fascinated by Konkokyo.

While the Coronavirus was explosively spreading in Italy, we exchanged e-mails as follows:

My words:

"New Coronavirus hit severely in Italy. Our Founder deepened his faith and faced as sincerely as possible Konji, who was feared as the most evil deity in those days, and turned Konjin into Tenchi Kane No Kami, the most benevolent deity. As such, I am praying as hard as possible that I regard this Coronavirus with awe and humility, and cover it with my Wagakokoro -- my peaceful and joyful heart -- as it turns into the light of Wagakokoro."

Mr. Massimo's words:

"The Coronavirus has been killing many people in Italy. Since the beginning, I have considered the Coronavirus as a message from Kami-Sama. I call the Covid-19 a 'Teacher'.

Many people ask me how I can have such a heart. I reply with the words of Tenchi Kakituske, Divine Reminder's. I realized that being human-centered does not help people to understand the possibility that Coronavirus is teaching us. In this moment, people feel like they need a help that is greater than themselves. Konkokyo can show them this help."

Our Founder received the following revelation on Oct. 14, 1882:

"Those who have faith should not worry about the unexpected. There will be unexpected illnesses not only in summer, but also in winter. No one is aware of the blessings of Heaven and Earth, which enable people to live. Kami shall have people become aware of the blessings of Heaven and Earth by having Konko Daijin be born throughout the world where the sun shines, in every country, without exception." (Oboecho22-1.2)

Mr. Massimo Claus is now devoting himself to praying to Kami-Sama and deepening his faith in such a way that I hope Kami-Sama leads him to become someone like Konko Daijin in Italy.



"Konkokyo makes you see life as a big chance of growing, and it teaches you to live your life like a gift from Kami-Sama."

Mr. Massimo Claus, Italy

I met Konkokyo by chance after many years of research, which led me to study and practice Nichiren, Shingon and Pure Land Buddhism, Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, Protestantism, Sufism and Taoism. My research seemed to have no end and my heart seemed to get lost among the various interpretations. I have always felt inside the need to meet God, but at every step I only found a little piece of Him. I believed in and looked for a God that seemed only to be in my mind and in my heart. Just when I decided to give up this research, I met Konkokyo.

Before meeting Konkokyo, Kami-Sama made me journey a long way. Kami-Sama made me have the experience of being in charge of a big responsibility, making me a leader for many people in my country.

Along my path, I met many expressions of God, but each time I felt I still had to keep searching. The Christian interpretation of God, in which God punishes those who do not listen to or follow His teachings, distanced myself from Christianity. Buddhism focused on the human being and it led me to know myself and my limits more deeply. Eventually, I opened my heart to Kami-Sama. The day I met Konkokyo I was born again, because I understood that any happening we experience is for our good, and it is not a penance by a vengeful God punishing us for our sins. Konkokyo makes me see life as a big opportunity to grow, and it teaches us to live our life as a gift from Kami-Sama.

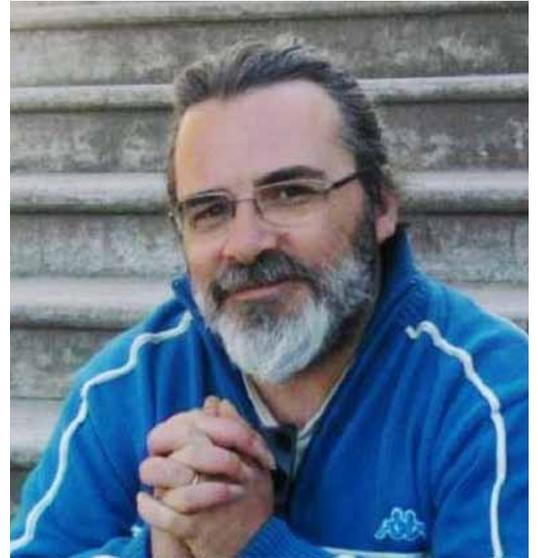
I have prayed so much to find a path centered on Kami-Sama and not on the human being, a way that reflected my way of living and believing in Kami-Sama. Konko Daijin's teachings helped me to understand how to endure my suffering by seeing through another lens. In this way, I found the strength to love my life. Through Konko Daijin's words, I met Kami-Sama and understood how much I need Kami-Sama. Since then I have become a little boy again and I found the necessary humility to put my life in Kami-Sama's hands.

Divine Reminder, Tenchi Kakitsuke, is the treasure map each one of us looks for and would like to find in his or her life. Every time it speaks to you with new words which, in that precise moment, help you to live and to practice faith. My wife Laura Silvestri and I have had the great opportunity from Kami-Sama to translate Voice of the Universe in Italian, because there are no Konko churches in Italy and we think people need to meet Kami-Sama. Through my faith, I pray that Kami-Sama helps people to become interested in Konko Daijin's words so that Kami-Sama can enter their hearts and free them from their sufferings.



Konkokyo has the ability to make your heart rest, putting you in the right condition to receive the Divine blessings you need in order to keep living and practicing your faith. I don't know whether Kami-Sama chose me to become the Italian Konko Daijin or not, but I know that every day I practice faith with all my strength in order to live my relationship with Kami-Sama with a single heart.

Thanks to Rev. Soichiro Otsubo (Founding minister of Konko Church of Airaku, a parent minister of Rev. Masanori Takeuchi) and the help of Rev. Masanori Takeuchi, my fathers in faith, I try to live my life by focusing on what I have and I have had, so I hope I can share my experience with those people in my country who feel solitude in their hearts by not knowing that Kami-Sama only waits us to reach out towards Him to help us live our lives happily.



The Launch of A New Konko Administration

A new Konkokyo Administration Office was appointed by our Spiritual Leader, Rev. Heiki Konko, on July 1st.

Chief Administrative Officer:

Rev. Michiyo Iwasaki,

General Affairs Department Director:

Rev. Shozo Yamamoto,

Propagation Department Director:

Rev. Masaki Ishiguro,

Worship Hall Department Director:

Rev. Hiromichi Konko,

Other Administrative Directors:

Rev. Yomisu Oya,

Rev. Yoshinobu Mori,

Rev. Hiroshi Takebe,



For Konko Daijin to be Reborn *Rev. Yomisu Oya, Director of the KIC*

Starting July 1 2020, I was appointed as one of the directors of Konkoyo Organization in Honbu (headquarters). This new role involves assisting the work of the Konkokyo International Center (KIC) as Director.

I began my Konko faith at the Konko Church of Portland and became a minister in 1984. Since then, my strong desire has been making the Toritsugi mediation alive in the United States. During my time in Honbu, I was involved in translating Gorikai I, II, III, Oboegaki (Memoirs of Konko Daijin), and Oboecho (Record of Revelations). Konko Daijin's teachings and revelations amazed and inspired me to further my faith. I thought, "Yes!" when I found this Konko Daijin's teaching: "I was the first to receive such divine blessings. You can all receive divine blessings in the same way." (GI: Tokunaga Kenji 2-3)

In 1992, I moved to Sacramento, California with my family to succeed the head minister position of the Konko Church of Sacramento. In the past, I have had the honor of serving as Chief Administrative Minister of the Konko Churches of North America (KCNA) from 2001 to 2004 and Director of the Konkoyo Hawaii Center (Konko Missions of Hawaii) from 2009 to 2015.

Together with the KIC staff, I hope to create a good community and help save many in need. I have been in Konko, Japan since July 6 with the hardworking Reverend Iwasaki, his new cabinet, and all the staff here. I am impressed with their work in assisting Konko Sama's Mediation. I am so grateful for this opportunity to serve when change is needed to meet the challenges of our time.

I will do my best!

Notice of Cancellation of the 2020 Konko International Gathering

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, we regretfully announce the cancellation of the International Gathering on November 14-15, 2020.



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Konkokyo International Center

E-mail: kic@konkokyo.or.jp Tel: +81-(0)3-3818-3701 Fax: +81-(0)3-3818-3793 Twitter: @konkokyo_kic

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KIC1993>

2-17-11 Hongo, Bunkyo-ku,
Tokyo 113-0033 JAPAN

URL: <http://www.konkokyo.or.jp/eng/kic/>