

KONKO REVIEW

News from the Konko Churches in North America

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“FINDING FAITH IN KONKO TOWN”

BY MS. CARLY YOSHIDA-BUTRYN

*In Front of the Main Worship Hall in Hombu
(Photo courtesy of the Author)*



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FINDING FAITH IN KONKO TOWN by Ms. Carly Yoshida-Butryn



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Photos courtesy of the author

As I stepped off the train at Konko station, there was a chill in the air and the sun was starting to rise. It was almost 6am, and I was jet-lagged and exhausted after spending over 15 hours flying from Toronto to Japan the day before. But as I looked around me through sleep-crusted eyes, I started to feel revived. A canopy of white flags with red mons hung on the platform above me, and the taxis waiting outside carried the mon on their roofs. The Konko faith was everywhere, and I felt a sense of peace and calm—like I was coming home—even though it was my first time there.

I was traveling with my mother and a tour group from the San Francisco church led by Rev. Masato Kawahatsu. It was my first trip to Japan, and I was excited, nervous, and ready to explore. Our journey kicked off with attending the tai sai in Hombu for the 150th anniversary of the founding of Konkokyo. We arrived hours early for the service so that we could have the chance to do toritsugi with Konko Sama. After spending the previous night in Okayama, being in Konko felt like being in another world. Neon lights, speeding cars, and tall buildings were replaced with narrow streets, open fields, and quiet calm.

But a few hours later, the streets were filled with people and the shops

had opened their doors. Hundreds of people were streaming into the town for the service, crowding stores looking for the perfect *omiyage* and catching up with old friends.

As I sat down in the grand ceremony hall, I took a moment to look around at the size of the crowd surrounding me. Hundreds of Konko believers filled the seats, and their voices rang out loud and strong when we recited each prayer, especially the Tenchi Kakitsuke. I felt so proud to be a Konko believer yet also so humbled in my faith. It was the first time I ever truly thought about how many Konko believers there are around the world and how many people pray to Kami all the time. Even though our religion is so small compared to others, I am still one of thousands of believers. While I was overjoyed to be praying with so many people, I was overwhelmed and felt incredibly unimportant, especially sitting among so many ministers.

I had never been surrounded by so many Konko believers in my life, and my faith by comparison felt inadequate and weak. It disheartened me to think that I might never have that same amount of trust in Kami, and I started to wonder if Kami really heard me among all those other prayers.



Konko Station on Taisai Day



Inside the Service Hall



Konko Sama during the Worship Service

Thankfully my mom and I planned to come back here for four days after the rest of our tour group went back to the U.S., and it was a chance for me to reconnect with my faith.

On an average day in Konko, there is a quiet hum to the daily business that goes on—the rumble of car engines, the clack of feet across the concrete paths, the murmur of voices carrying conversations in low tones. But the early morning has a reverent, warm silence to it as I found out when I attended *odemashi* one morning.

I hugged my jacket tight around me and stared up at the sky, still pitch black and filled with stars. 3:30 am in Konko Town. As my mom and I approached the hiromae, we saw about a dozen people lining the far left pathway where Konko Sama was due to approach for his daily procession. I stood awkwardly to the side, unsure of which way to look and how to stand. More people started to filter in slowly, speaking in whispers.

The soft click of geta crept into my ears, and I saw two senseis walking down to Konko Sama's house to meet him. It wasn't long until we heard the click of the geta again, this time getting louder and louder as they got closer to the hiromae. Everyone along the path bowed as the senseis approached with Konko Sama, their way illuminated by one small lamp. I tried to keep my head bowed, but I couldn't help but look up a few times to steal a glance at the procession. Clothed only in black kimonos while I shivered in my three-layer ensemble, they walked assuredly into the church. I stared after them in awe. It was difficult enough for me and my mom to drag

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ourselves out of bed that morning, and we only had to do it once. I couldn't imagine what it was like to do it every day.

Afterwards everyone went inside for the service, which was a much smaller affair than the tai sai. Almost everyone, even the Bachans, sat *seiza*, giving the service a more intimate and personal feel. Even though the service was in Japanese and I couldn't understand a word, I could feel the power of everyone's prayers in that room, and I felt connected to my faith and less like one small speck in the Konkokyo universe. In those moments while I sat *seiza* that morning, learning to pray more single-heartedly and strengthening my faith felt achievable. I looked around at the other believers, and I didn't feel intimidated anymore. I felt inspired by their faith and trust in Kami.

Omiyage—*Gifts or souvenirs.*

Odemashi—*Konko Sama's early procession to the hiromae.*

Seiza—*Formal style of sitting with your legs underneath you.*



Carly and her mother in Konko Town

I said goodbye to Konko town in the same way I greeted it: at the crack of dawn. As my mother and I ran to catch our train, I was sad to say goodbye to the place that had taught me so much about my faith and myself. I left an inspired woman, ready to take the lessons I had learned and bring them home to help strengthen my faith. But I felt comforted knowing that my spiritual home away from home would be there for future generations and me, whenever I decide to return again, with its mon flags flying proudly in the wind.



KCNA Attendees at Special Presentation in Hombu (photo from Rev. J. Tolosa)

NYC FAITH GATHERING from Rev. Joanne Tolosa

Rev. Joanne Tolosa conducted the second New York Konko Faith Gatherings on October 30 and 31, 2009. She met with 6 adults and 1 baby on Friday, and 4 people (3 of whom she met for the first time) on Saturday for the Prayer Service

Following the sermon, the group watched and discussed “Konko Sama: Tales of Toritsugi Mediation,” among other Konko Faith topics. It was refreshing to see the younger attendees (age 22 & 26) express much enthusiasm for reading and reciting from the English Prayer Book, and desire to learn more Konko Faith terminology in English to share the Faith with people of New York.

Thank you to **Ms. Saomi Okamoto** for being our New York coordinator!

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TENCHI KAKITSUKE: A NEW TRANSLATION by Dr. Eri Yasuhara



Dr. Eri Yasuhara is a believer at the Konko Church of Gardena.

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This article was originally published in the July 2009 issue of Face to Faith, the newsletter of the Konkoko International Center.

When Alan Matsui called me from Konko headquarters in Japan last September about the KCNA Material Resource Committee re-translating the *Tenchi Kakitsuke* or “Divine Reminder,” I groaned inwardly. “Not again!” I thought to myself, for we had been struggling with this for a long time. We both understood the *Tenchi Kakitsuke* to be a foundational document of our Faith, a direct revelation from the Divine Parent *Tenchi Kane no Kami* to our Founder; they were words that contained the “essence” of the Faith.

We knew of its historical importance, too; namely, that during a difficult time of suppression by the Meiji government, when the Founder had to close the worship hall and believers could not see or talk to him, this revelation—written down by the Founder, copied and distributed to believers—constituted a lifeline. It was a “reminder” of Kami’s unchanging love and way to continue receiving blessings. So, we were both aware of the importance of *Tenchi Kakitsuke*; we were just frustrated by our sense that the existing English translation didn’t adequately convey all this profundity and importance. I had an additional difficulty: I didn’t think the original Japanese did, either. So over the years, our discussions of *Tenchi Kakitsuke* ended in frustration.

As I listened to Alan, though, I felt his new sense of urgency coupled with a

determination to succeed at any cost. There must have been a “spirit” moving him and pulling me in the same direction, for I found myself working on the project almost in spite of myself. Looking back now, I am amazed at what we were able to accomplish in a short amount of time. Over the course of just 4-5 weeks, with as many as a dozen ministers participating in internet-based conference calls that connected Japan, Hawaii, and North America, we hammered out a new translation of the *Tenchi Kakitsuke*. We were able to come up with an English version that, while still imperfect, took us a giant step closer to the goal of conveying more of the depths of the revealed words. And in the process, I also gained a greater appreciation of the original Japanese.

I will not go into all the details of how and why we chose the words and arranged them the way we did, but I truly believe that the new version is richer, more thought-provoking, and reverberates with some of the deeper meanings of *Tenchi Kakitsuke*. Here are a few highlights.

In re-situating the two names with which the document begins (*Tenchi Kane No Kami* and *Ikigami Konko Daijin*), we tried to “restore” the primacy of *Tenchi Kane No Kami*, our Divine Parent, and clearly indicate the mediator role of *Ikigami Konko Daijin*, who is positioned between *Tenchi Kane No Kami* and us.

In the “message” portion of *Tenchi Kakitsuke*, we made explicit the nuances implied in the original, nuances that are more accessible to those who can comprehend the original Japanese writing. For instance, in the first line *isshin ni negae*, we made explicit both the “surface” meaning of *isshin ni* (“wholeheartedly”) and an implied meaning in the *kanji* characters that are used: 一心 meaning “one heart,” or “a heart that is one with Kami.”

In the next line, we teased out the many meanings implicit in *wagakokoro*, “one’s own heart,” but also “a heart (*kokoro*) that has *wa* (harmony, caring) and *ga* (joy, gratitude for the day of celebration).” Looking at the last line, we see that the original has a verb that is different from the first line, but both are rendered “pray” in the existing translation: *negae* “make a request; ask; pray” and *tanomei* “rely on, depend upon, place your trust in.” So we used two different English expressions as well, to try to convey the different meanings.

As a scholar of Japanese classical literature who has done many translations of poems into English, I am painfully aware that no translation is ever perfect, and this “*Tenchi Kakitsuke Refresh*” is no exception. Perhaps my biggest regret is that, in teasing out the additional nuances of *wagakokoro*, “hearts full of *wa* and *ga*,” we may have under-emphasized the force of the *waga* in this phrase, meaning “one’s own heart, our own hearts.” I can only hope that in a few years, another translation or “refresh” will be attempted, and an even better version will result. In the meantime, I hope that this new version will spark soul-searching and discussion among believers and lead to a renewal of faith. It certainly did for me.



Tenchi Kane No Kami

~ Divine Parent of the Universe ~

Ikigami Konko Daijin

~ Divine Mediator ~

Pray sincerely,
With all your heart.
Be one with Kami.

Kami’s blessings begin within
Hearts grateful and caring,
In harmony and joy.

Look to Kami always,
Now and forever.
On this very day, pray.



*Altar Version of the new
Tenchi Kakitsuke*

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Believers' Registration

We encourage every believer to register with KCNA each year. (There is no qualification required; if you consider yourself a believer, then you're a believer.) Please fill out the form for yourself and every believer in your household then mail it to KCNA.

Your registration will help us keep track of the number of believers (and demographics) and ensure an up to date mailing list. For those already on the mailing list, this registration form will also be included in your annual mailing package.

If you wish, you can include a donation to KCNA with your registration form. They are an important source of funding for supporting KCNA activities and we thank you for your continued support.

Konko Grams

Konko Grams are announcements or advertisements you can place in each Konko Review issue. In addition to holiday greetings, we welcome anniversaries, births, weddings, and business ads as well.

On the reverse side of the Registration Form is a size comparison for the various spaces available. If you're interested in ordering one, please contact the KCNA office or the KR Editor at konkoreview@konkofaith.org for more information. **Season's Greetings orders will be due no later than December 29, 2009.**

All Konkogram donations will go to supporting the KCNA general fund.

<u>Suggested Donations and Size of Spaces:</u>	Quarter Page:	3.5" wide by 4" high	\$ 30.00
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Konko Churches of North America

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South S.F. Prop. Hall

Konko Churches of North America

Statement of Purpose

The Konko Churches of North America is an association of the Konko Churches in the continental United States and Canada established as a supportive organization to further the Toritsugi Mediation of each member church. It provides common facilities for and encourages, promotes, cultivates, and stimulates both private and public worship in accordance with the discipline of the Konko Faith.

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KCNA CHURCH NEWS

Portland

by Rev. Lisa Uzunoe

Thank you Kami as we were able to hold a wonderful Service for our ancestors and Rev. Hirayama's 40th Anniversary on Sept. 6. **Rev. Michie Uzunoe** said **Rev. Bunjiro Hirayama** (leader of the faith gatherings in Tacoma and founder of the Portland Church) was always a modest man who didn't bring attention to himself or put himself before others. She felt this was true for his anniversary service as well, for usually she feels compelled to honor spirits with grandeur for their anniversary services, but not this time. She felt he didn't wish to take away our focus and energy for the 150th Anniversary of the Faith. Rev. Hirayama was truly a humble person whose life was devoted to faith. Thank you Rev. Hirayama.

This year our church was given the honor of officiating the annual Japanese Women's Association Memorial Service on Sept. 12. They hold these services to appreciate the women who have brought honor, dignity and respect to the Japanese women here in Oregon, and devoted their lives to the equal treatment and opportunities for future generations.

9/13-Senior Appreciation Luncheon. "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach," and so it seem to be true with Seniors! On a beautiful Sunday, we were able to treat our seniors to a sukiyaki and nabe lunch!

Thank you to everyone who came to help with the church clean up on Sept. 27!! Where it is impossible to do alone, "many hands make light work!" The inside is sparkling and the outside bushes and pathways are neatly trimmed and tidy. Thank you

also to believers who brought pastries, baking pumpkin cake and brownies for treats!

Our deepest appreciation to Kami for allowing us a smooth and meaningful Portland Grand Ceremony and Konko Faith's 150th Anniversary Celebration service in bright beautiful weather on Oct. 5. We were able to acknowledge the people who have brought this Faith over the span of 150 years, over the ocean, and through many endeavors, to us here today. After the representative Sacred Branch offering, all attendees were invited to offer their prayers and appreciation to Kami and our predecessors with brilliant flowers. This "vibrance" as our speaker **Rev. Dick Dusek** pointed out, is life given to us by Kami, and is amplified when joined together as the bouquet we created in offering. Thank you **Revs. Michihiro Yuasa & Rev. Dusek** for making the long drive to help officiate the service. Special thanks also to **Mr. & Mrs. Shigeo Kuroye** for venturing all the way to the Shasta Mountains to find beautiful Matsutake mushrooms for offerings. Thank you also to everyone who brought food to celebrate and enjoy together!

The Sunday school kids enjoyed scavenger hunting in their Halloween costumes, "zoo boo" prizes, and especially watching the very active animals at the Oregon Zoo on October 31. Thank You Kami for holding back the rain until the very end!

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Lancaster

by Rev. Toshio Ota

Iris Ota had a high fever for a few days and was diagnosed as pneumonia after x-ray result at the hospital on August 18. After taking *goshinmai* and lots of prayer and care from **Rev. Yoshiko Ota** plus antibiotic medicine and two weeks of rest, she has recovered completely.

On Sept 5, Labor Day, Yoshiko-sensei had a sharp stomach pain unexpectedly while was riding with Toshio-sensei on the freeway near Whittier. The pain was so severe that she was barely able to talk but received *goshinmai* (sacred rice) immediately. Since it was close to KCWRH, she requested to go church instead of ER at nearby hospital. Even though we knew that both Revs. Igawa were out at that time (because we had plans to visit later that evening), we went to church. Fortunately, the front door was unlocked with air conditioning running. Later, we found out that they always lock the door when they leave church for security reasons. By the time Revs. Igawa came back from shopping, Yoshiko-sensei's pain was still severe, but the pain lasted about an hour and half and pain went away slowly, and later she was able to have meal together

even though she was still uncomfortable. She could not understand why it happened. To make a long story short, Yoshiko sensei visited her doctor, and was told that she had "duct stone," a stone causing pain as it moved from liver to intestine through a small tube. She was very thankful that she has received divine favor without going to a hospital and any other complications. Thank you to Revs. Igawa's strong prayers.

Rev. Mako Lim, a daughter of Revs. Ota, started working at Disneyland Resort in Anaheim again starting Sept 6. It was her wish and desire to go back to work there since she had job there before she moved to New Jersey a several years ago.

Revs. Ota attended the 9/11 Memorial and Unity Service that was held in the City of Palmdale (south of Lancaster). The event was sponsored by Antelope Valley Interfaith Council and about 200 people attended. We met many representatives from different religious organizations and city councils, including the Mayor of Palmdale (photo). It was an impressive annual event, and we were very fortunate to attend this ceremony for the first time through our local friend. Later, the AV Interfaith Council president asked Revs. Ota to become members and introduce Konko Faith. We believe that this will be a big step forward for KPH Lancaster in the community

Revs. Ota attended Autumn Memorial Service at KC Gardena on 9/13, and at KC WRH on 9/20. At KCWRH service, Yoshiko sensei gave a sermon sharing an experience she has received from her mother as a *mitama*.



With the Palmdale Mayor at the 9/11 Memorial Service
(photo courtesy of Rev. T. Ota)

South S.F.

by Rev. Masato Kawahatsu

The Grand Ceremony and Grand Opening of the South San Francisco Propagation Hall will be held on November 29 and led by **Rev. Masato Kawahatsu**.

Services will be held every Sunday at 10:00am, with an Outreach Meeting afterwards. A Monthly Appreciation Service will be held on the last Sunday of each month.

A Yard Sale Fundraiser will be held on November 21 at KC San Francisco.

Rev. Kawahatsu and his family led a tour to Japan during the 150th Anniversary Services at Hombu in October. (*see KCSF news for more details*) He was also honored to give a speech at the Konko Church of Karasuma's Grand Ceremony while in Japan.



At the Founder's Gravesite in Hombu

(photo courtesy of Rev. J. Tolosa)

Whittier

by Mrs. Kazuko Fong

On September 9, the 21st Memorial Anniversary Service for the Late **Mr. Haru Yamauchi** was held.

Also on the same day, **Kazuko** and **Chris Fong** celebrated their 10th Wedding Anniversary. Congratulations!

On September 12, **Miss Miki Maya** of the Konko Church of Tsurugaoka (Kyoto) came to visit KCWRH for the first time. She is attending Chapman University nearby and hopes to visit often.

On September 13, **Revs. Kiyoshi** and **Wakiko Igawa** participated in the Fall Memorial Service at KC Gardena. **Mrs. Katsuko Omura** also attended.

WRH's Fall Memorial Service was held on September 20, with the church clean-up on the day before, and Rev. Wakiko's birthday the next.

On September 26, Revs. Igawa visited the Japanese Keiro Retirement Home to participate in an entertainment night of singing and dance.

The next day, Rev. Kiyoshi officiated a 5 year anniversary service for *Kokuso-ryu Shigin Kai*. He had also performed their opening service.

On October 21, Rev. Kiyoshi officiated a mitama service for the *Yamaguchi Kenjinkai*.

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Gardena

by Mr. Craig Hashimoto

The Pre-Autumn Memorial Service Church Cleanup was done on Sept 6 in preparation for the following Sunday's event.

The late **Rev. Shiro Takeda's** Gravesite Service was held on Sept 12 at Rose Hills Cemetery.

Our main Autumn Memorial Service was held on Sept 13.

The Gardena Church members visited the Terminal Island Japanese Community Memorial in the Port of Los Angeles on Sept 20. The film: *The Lost Village of Terminal Island* was viewed after the service was held. This was a documentary about the American-born Nisei who spent their childhood on this prosperous fishing community prior to the break out of World War II.

On October 11, the annual garage sale was held and a morning service was held before the fundraiser. Sales and traffic were a bit down this year, but overall the garage sale was a success.

Rev. Sadako Takeda celebrated her birthday on October 16.



Church Members visiting Terminal Island



Setting up for the Garage Sale

Fresno

by Ms. Suzanne Okazaki

Rev & Mrs Masaru Okazaki attended the Autumn Memorial Service at the San Francisco Church on Sept 20. They also spent time visiting the Senior Living Group and Senior Health Care Center in Burlingame.

On Sept 27th we held our Autumn Memorial Service in conjunction with the Monthly Appreciation Service. We also celebrated **Mr. Harry K. Nagata's** special 88th birthday with a cake and happy birthday song. We pray for his continuing good health and happiness.

Los Angeles

by Mr. Roy Nishida

On September 6, the Monthly and back-to-school services were performed by HM Tsuyuki.

On September 20, the *Mitama* Service was by HM Tsuyuki.

On September 27, the late HM **Rev. Taichi Tsuyuki's** graveside memorial service was held by HM **Rev. Alfred Tsuyuki** at Evergreen Cemetery and then the Autumn *Mitama* Service was performed back at the church with HM Tsuyuki Sensei officiating before a 50+ congregation. After the services all enjoyed the

customary *Naorai* luncheon by potluck and **Akira Sato-san's** delicious chow mein.

On October 4, the Monthly Service was held with HM officiating.

On October 18, the *Mitama* Service was with Sensei Tsuyuki. This day was also the fourth and last fundraising for this year at the church. Pancake breakfasts were served and the year's second rummage sale was held. Thanks to *Kami's* blessings and everyone's support and *goyo* another successful annual event was had at the church.

San Diego

by Ms. Jennifer Tashiro

A monthly service was held by church members on October 4.

On October 6, **Mrs. Kimiyo Spies** and **Ms. Vivian Spies** went to Japan to attend the 150th Anniversary Ceremony at Konko Headquarters. They returned safely on October 19.

On November 1, Kimiyo and Vivian Spies attended

the Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremony and Dedication of the Chicago church. Congratulations to the Chicago church!

On November 8, **Rev. Rod Hashimoto** came from Vancouver to officiate and speak at the Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremony. We enjoyed a delicious potluck luncheon afterwards.

Toronto

by Ms. Jennifer Shimoda

Dianne and Carly Yoshida, Toshiko and Takashi Kishii and Takashi's fiance **Tomomi** attended the 150th Anniversary in Japan. Carly also wrote an article about her experience there (*see cover story*).

On October 25, we held our Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremony. **Jean Kawahatsu** from Sacramento was visiting Toronto and was able to join us.

On November 1, Kishii Sensei, Toshiko Sensei, **Kay Morishita, Bob Tanaka, Rosa Kimoto** and **Stephanie Laite** drove to Chicago to attend Chicago's Church Opening. Stephanie performed the Kibimai and Toshiko Sensei played the koto. Kishii Sensei was the MC.

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San Francisco *by Rev. Joanne Tolosa*

We welcomed **Mr. Masato Tanaka**, eldest son of **Rev. & Mrs. Motoo Tanaka**, Head Minister of the Konko Church of Ozaki, visiting for a week during Sept 15. Masato was told he took his first steps in 1973, while living here with his parents, when his father worked for the Konko Churches of North America.

Thank you to the 60 people who joined us for our Fall Memorial Service and to honor 21 senior members and guests present at the Senior Appreciation Luncheon on Sept 20. We also want to thank our guest speakers, **Rev. Byron Ishiwata** in English, who expressed a nice tribute to **the late Mr. George Kayano** & Japanese speaker, **Rev. Masato Kawahatsu** who gave an enthusiastic speech. Thank you, **Alan Matsui**, for presenting the slideshows. KCSF slideshow pictures were taken by **Rev. Joanne Tolosa**.



Senior Appreciation Luncheon - Group Photo

The Hawaiian Luau & Concert Fundraiser for Konko Propagation Hall of So. San Francisco was on Sept 26. Thank you to everyone for all your help and participation to make it the 3rd year for this fun, suc-

Photos courtesy of Rev. Tolosa

cessful fundraiser organized by **Rev. & Mrs. Masato Kawahatsu**, **Rev. Rodney Yano** and the Outreach Committee members.

About 15 of us went to Kokoro Senior Assisted Living following the Monthly Service on Sept 27 to entertain the residents through “Jan Ken Po” & balloon volleyball games and singing a Konko song in English and Japanese. Rev. Rodney led us in this opportunity to show our appreciation and give back to the community. We enjoyed ourselves with the residents, as well as having dessert back at church following our visit.

Through our Divine Parent of the Universe’s blessing of good weather, after three weeks, Jeff Ferreira’s Roofing & Gutters have been allowed to complete their task in replacing the roof tiles, removing the dry rot and cleaning the gutters. We thank all the groups and our congregation for their patience during this construction period. We also want to thank **Mr. Eiji Ayabe**, **Mr. Hiroshi Fukuda**, **Mr. Kinya Matsuno** and **Mr. Alan Matsui** for their active involvement overseeing this project to its fruition.



Roof Replacement in progress

As head minister, Rev. Joanne Tolosa represented KCSF at the October 10 Ikigami Konko Daijin Grand Ceremony in Okayama in conjunction with the 150th Anniversary of the Konko Faith. Rev. Kiyoji Konko (2nd son of Konko Sama) gave us an enlightening lecture prior to the ceremony.

She also assisted Rev. Masato Kawahatsu with the Japan tour group (total of 14 people) he led from 10/8-16. During the tour, we traced the faith steps of the late **Rev. Yoshiaki Fukuda** by visiting KC Minamimuro, where Rev. Fukuda sought Mediation from the late **Rev. Kumaichi Matsuda** to overcome his tuberculosis; KC Koishikawa, where he trained after graduating from the Konko Seminary; and KC Tokyo, where Rev. Fukuda was mentored by the late **Rev. Tokusaburo Hata** before establishing KC San Francisco. It was a very enjoyable and meaningful trip for everyone. Thank you, Rev. Kawahatsu!

Congratulations to the families of our two newest members!

Ko Suzuki – baby boy born to **Shunsuke & Keiko Suzuki** on September 14, 2009

Diego Sei Fukuda – baby boy born on October 26, 2009 to **David & Hiromi Fukuda** and big brothers **Alessio & Renzo**.

Best wishes to **Lezlie Kimura** and **Dennis Szeto** upon their marriage officiated by Rev. Joanne at the Cliff House in San Francisco on October 1. Lezlie is a granddaughter of the late **Rev. Hiromichi Kimura**, former Head Minister of the Sacramento Church, and we pray for his continued spiritual guidance and protection of the newlyweds.



Tour Group at KC Minamimuro



Wedding Ceremony Photo of Lezlie & Dennis

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THE DIVINE CALL AND THE DIVINE REMINDER by Rev. Masanori Takeuchi



Rev. Masanori Takeuchi
is the Head Minister at the
Konko Church of Chicago

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*This article was written
before attending the 2009
Annual Conference as the
Japanese Keynote Speaker
and it contains some of the
ideas he was to share.*

I was asked to be a guest speaker for the Japanese Group at the conference. Since the Konko Faith is celebrating the 150th Anniversary of our founder receiving the Divine Call this year, the title of my speech will be, “The Divine Call and the Divine Reminder.” I’d like to share the main idea of my speech with you in today’s sermon.

The Divine Call expressed Kami’s ardent wishes to our founder: “Regard this event as your death. Give up all other desires and assist Tenchi Kane No Kami, Divine Parent of the Universe.”

Kami then requested him to help many people who were troubled by performing Divine Mediation. The Divine Parent of the Universe poured out feelings in revealing an ideal world of mutual fulfillment between Kami and people, “Man exists because of Kami and Kami exists because of man. There will be eternal prosperity through mutual fulfillment.”

In this revelation, Kami entrusted Konko Daijin with the responsibility of delivering this Divine Principle to the whole world. This is the founding essence of the Konko Faith’s beginnings.

Then what kind of faith do we need to have to achieve this world of mutual fulfillment? We need to find out what kind of faith Kami wanted Konko Daijin to have as his core throughout life in this world to be ready for the next.

The Konko Faith has what are called “the treasures” of the religious world. They are two books written by Konko Daijin himself. In them he wrote about his journey of faith from birth to a mere twenty days before he died. In all religious history, there have been no founders who wrote their whole lives autobiographically. Individually these works are named: “Memoirs of Konko Daijin” and “Record of Revelations.” In them the Founder wrote honestly and very frankly about his life’s journey of faith.

He wrote the first half of his life in the “Memoirs.” He tells of the many difficulties he came across such as the so-called ‘Seven Killings of Konjin.’ This was a time in which he lost several members of his family as well as a number of oxen, a prized possession to a farmer. Of this period he wrote, “I stood by helpless. I lived with this constant frustration and futility.”

Then at the age 42 he himself was stricken with a critical illness. He recovered from it, he writes, through his sincere faith. This was a critical turning point. For in this crisis he encountered the Kami directly helping him for the first time. In the “Memoirs” he described this moment with great awe and gratitude by drawing a circle. He wrote, “As I write these words I am filled with deep emotion, and Kami responded encouragingly, ‘Konko Daijin, these deep

emotions are not only your own. If I, Tenchi Kane No Kami, were a poet, I would express these emotions through poetry. However, I am incapable of doing so. I am overjoyed, and even overcome with emotion to see how man has been able to be saved and how Kami has been able to be comprehended by human.”

Konko Daijin realized for the first time that this Divine Being would help people by the way they faced and cooperated with Kami. That's when Konko Daijin started to seek Kami's real wishes for his life with all his heart.

Two years later, his younger brother Shigeemon Kandori became out of control. He claimed Konjin had possessed him. Shigeemon asked Konko Daijin to build a new house for Konjin. Konko Daijin agreed, “I will.”

Now, when a crazy person asks you to build a new house for them, would you do it; even if they're your brother or sister? Konko Daijin was doing his best to seek Kami's will in everything that happened to him and so he agreed. Later, Kami was most pleased with this moment, calling it, “Kami's first request.”

From that time on, Konko Daijin heard Kami's voices speak to him directly. The following two years many miraculous things happened around him. His relations to Kami grew closer to closer. Then in 1859 he received the Divine Call to quit his farming and mediate people with Kami full time.

But this was not the end of his faith development. Kami continued to test the Founder with many challenges to deepen his faith. In these tests Konko Daijin had to throw away even traditional “common sense”

and ideas in order to trust Kami completely. He conscientiously sought to deepen his faith by accepting everything that happened to him as Kami's doing.

The Japanese system of the government changed completely in 1868 with the beginning of the Meiji era. In following six years, Konko Daijin faced the most critical period of his faith. He was ordered by the government to remove the altar fixtures and stop mediating between people and Kami. Alone, by himself, he prayed and prayed to Kami. He asked that without him or a place to worship, how there were any ways for people to achieve the mutual fulfillment between themselves and Kami. In reply, he received the revelation of the Divine Reminder.

I have studied Konko Daijin's faith through these two Divine Books for years. I believe they prove how Kami brought Konko Daijin step-by-step directly to the revelation of this Divine Reminder. I am convinced, as are many others, that it is the the Konko Religion's ultimate affirmation of faith. The Divine Reminder (*Tenchi Kakitsuke*) most clearly declares Kami's intention for our lives in this world we live in.

Here are the words of the Divine Reminder:

*Divine Parent of the Universe
Divine Mediator*

*Pray sincerely,
With all your heart,
Be one with Kami.*

Kami's blessings begin within

*Hearts grateful and caring,
In harmony and joy.*

*Look to Kami always,
Now and forever.
On this very day, pray.*

KONKO REVIEW

It is the most important to achieve the faith spirit of this Divine Reminder in order to repay Konko Daijin's successors for their tireless efforts to defend this faith to it to us.

From then on Konko Daijin had put this Divine Reminder into practice. He deepened his grateful & caring heart full of harmony & joy, no matter what happened and regardless of how difficult it might be. Before his death in 1883, he ultimately reached a level of faith which prompted him to record in his Sacred Treasures, "Kami revealed, 'If you attach a new candle to one that is becoming shorter, the flame will become brighter and last longer. Within this example I will have you understand your future. Your five children will be prosperous. I will enable them to build pavilions and cathedrals in the future. Set your mind at rest about everything concerning your children.'"

We all come across many difficulties every day of our daily lives. There are a bewildering number of different ways of dealing with them.

But the Divine Reminder is a steadfast compass that shows the way to receive divine blessings and attain human fulfillment. Like Konko Daijin we must use it to accept all these problems as Kami's doing. Through them we have a whetstone to polish the gem of grateful and caring hearts.

That is why our Founder taught us, "On this very day pray with a single heart. Divine blessings are within your own grateful and caring heart full of harmony and joy.

"Living out this statement daily in our lives, the glory of Kami will appear and true world peace will be attained."

It is through a demonstration of Kami's glory by our faith and lives that we can attain the complete happiness the world so desperately needs. This can be the foundation on which to bring about true harmony in our homes and genuine peace in the world.

In faith, and to that end; I would like to do my best to deepen peace and joy in my heart awake or asleep to reveal Kami's workings each and every moment. I want to be a living witness to the words, "Opening the Way within my peaceful, joyful heart." This I pray solemnly.

UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR for November & December 2009

NOVEMBER 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
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29	30					
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Schedule of Events

No events scheduled in Nov.**DECEMBER 2009**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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		1	2	3	4	5 <i>HOD</i>
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6 <i>MBR</i>	7	8	9	10	11	12
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
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27	28	29	30	31		
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Schedule of Events

December 5

- **House of Delegates Meeting in San Francisco**

December 6

- **Ministry Board of Review Meeting in San Francisco**

KONKO REVIEW

CONTACT INFORMATION for Administrative Offices

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

KCNA Office	c/o 1909 Bush Street San Francisco, CA 94115	800-719-KCNA	kcnaoffice@konkofaith.org
KMH Office	1744 Liliha St, Suite 304 Honolulu, HI 96817	808-536-9078	kmhcenter@hawaiiantel.net

NEWS from Administrative Office

As mentioned in the previous issue, a Yahoo! Group has been set up since January to facilitate discussion among HOD Delegates throughout the year. Topics include a request for Sunday School materials and for suggestions in revising the new Children's Alphabet Book. All delegates are expected to enroll in order to stay updated and share progress with their congregations. Contact the Office if you need help registering.

As always, any comments or suggestions about the new print or online versions can be sent to the editor at konkoreview@konkofaith.org

KR 35-2, 35-3 (enhanced), 35-4 (enhanced)

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www.konkofaith.org/kr-archive.html

CONTACT INFORMATION for Local Churches & Propagation Halls

CHURCHES

Chicago	6447 N. Albany Avenue Chicago, IL 60645	773-465-5406	masanoritakeuchi@sbcglobal.net
Fresno	936 Kern Street Fresno, CA 93706	559-266-2762	revmokazaki@aol.com
Gardena	15722 S. Normandie Ave. Gardena, CA 90247	310-327-3349	tenchinoko@sbcglobal.net
Los Angeles	2924 E. 1st Street Los Angeles, CA 90033	323-268-6980	-
Portland	1330 S.E. 92nd Avenue Portland, OR 97216	503-256-4201	muzunoe@hotmail.com
Sacramento	2006 6th Street Sacramento, CA 95818	916-498-1233	yomisu@gmail.com
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Vancouver, Canada	5319 Sherbrooke Street Vancouver, BC V5W 3M3	604-876-7365	vancouver@konkofaith.org
Whittier-Rose Hill	11513 Sierra Sky Drive Whittier, CA 60601	562-699-5019	krwrh@hotmail.com

PROPAGATION HALLS

Lancaster	2543 West Avenue K-7 Lancaster, CA 93536	661-949-0057	otatoshio@hotmail.com
South San Francisco	387 Grand Avenue South SF, CA 94080	415-517-5563	konkosf2@sbcglobal.net



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EDITOR'S CORNER

Season's Greetings to you and yours from the Editor's Corner of the *Konko Review*!

This year, we celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the founding of Konkokyo, specifically, the time that the Founder received the Divine Call.

In this issue, we have three articles looking at it from different perspectives:

The cover story by Carly Yoshida describes her first trip to Hombu and the epiphanies she had while worshipping with others there;

Rev. Masanori Takeuchi's article chronicles how the history and circumstances in the Founder's life leading up to the Divine Call influence his outlook on life; and,

Dr. Eri Yasuhara provides insight on her involvement in the "Tenchi Kakitsuke refresh" Project and the potential for a better understanding of its deeper meaning.

The diversity of these articles shows how this momentous occasion from 150 years ago can and does affect our faith *right now*. The actions that the Founder took in response to the Divine Call still motivate and inspire believers even today, and that's something that we should all contemplate and appreciate.

If you have any topics, ideas, or stories you'd like to share, I'd love to hear them too. In the meantime, enjoy reading 35-6!

Send your comments about this issue to Ed. at
konkoreview@konkofaith.org

