

## TRAINING LAY PEOPLE

Most of the 126 million people in Japan have not heard the Gospel. There is a great need in Japan to train Christian workers to help us in the enormous task of sowing the seed and sharing the Gospel.

Japan Mission works in partnership with Osaka Christian Center College to train lay people to become more effective Christian workers. Lay people and church workers from various denominations attend courses to expand their knowledge of the Bible and learn how to reach people in their communities for Christ. This Bible college offers courses for credit on weekends and national holidays when lay people can attend.

Mr. Takahara of Japan Mission organizes and coordinates the curriculum, speakers and teachers for this program. **Pray** that the Holy Spirit would empower these students to be effective in influencing many for the Kingdom.

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## SOWING THE SEED

The Lord has led Japan Mission to use three main methods to reach the unsaved and assist the churches:

1. Literature – Japan Mission publishes a monthly evangelistic tract, which helps churches evangelize their communities. We also publish Japanese books to help seekers and Christians. We are also committed to making many thousands of Bibles available throughout Japan, China, southeast Asia and other parts of the world.

2. Evangelistic Programs – About 300 students hear the Gospel each week as our missionaries teach the Bible and conversational English. The sick and elderly are being reached through our ministry in hospitals and retirement homes. Workers also reach out through camps, cafes, choirs, schools, childcare, cooking classes, and disaster relief work.

3. Media – Japan Mission assists churches with media production, social media and the development of web content. Evangelistic and Christian educational videos, audio Bibles and message recordings are also being produced and distributed. We also remain committed to making significant investments in Christian TV and radio broadcasts, which regularly impact the masses throughout Japan with the Gospel.

**Pray** that our team of workers would continue to be effective in sharing God's love and offering hope to those without hope.



# JAPAN MISSION

CALLED TO SERVE

Jan / Feb 2020

## THE GIFT OF A NEW HEART

From his birth in 1948, Koji Tamada was in very poor health. He was often pale, moved slowly, and lacked the strength to play like the other children.

Doctors discovered that he had been born with a serious heart defect, and to make matters worse, he contracted measles and whooping cough, which caused further deterioration. He would sometimes turn blue and have difficulty breathing. No one expected him to live very long.

Despite poor health, at age seven he was enrolled in school. Due to severe colds and pneumonia, little Koji was often absent for many weeks during the winter, and keeping up with his studies was very challenging. The Lord blessed him with an unusual amount of determination, which kept him going.

In middle school, he contracted TB and was admitted to a children's ward. He spent the next fifteen years of his life lying in a hospital bed. He felt depressed and doomed to a life of confinement and suffering.

One day, while staring at the ceiling, overwhelmed by morbid thoughts of death, the monotony was broken when a stranger came to visit him. "I am Mr. Karasawa from Japan Mission. I would like to be your friend," he said.



Rev. Koji Tamada

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### INFORMATION & INQUIRIES

[www.facebook.com/japanmission.jm/](http://www.facebook.com/japanmission.jm/)

Website: [japanmission.org](http://japanmission.org)

E-mail: [jm@japanmission.org](mailto:jm@japanmission.org)

#### JAPAN

Japan Mission  
7-40 Monzen Cho  
Ikoma Nara 630-0266  
Tel: +(81) 743-73-1754  
Fax: +(81) 743-73-1681

#### AUSTRALIA - For Donations

Make checks payable to:  
*Japan Mission*  
23 Carbine Court  
Drouin VIC 3818  
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#### CANADA - For Tax Deductible Receipts

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*Society of Japan Mission of Canada for Evangelism*  
12613 Kinloch Drive, Coldstream  
BC V1B 1C1 Tel: 250-260-5967

Why someone would seek out such a miserable creature like himself he could not fathom, but this friendship was about to change his life. Koji felt that he had found someone he could honestly talk to about his constant fear of the gods and the severe punishment they had bestowed on him. He freely shared about the nightmares that he had endured and the dark thoughts that haunted him about the fear of death.

Mr. Karasawa returned each week to share wonderful messages of hope and eternal life. When he heard the incredible story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Koji wondered, "How could this be?" All the gods Koji knew seemed to be so lifeless.

The day Mr. Karasawa read Matthew 10:29-31 to him was an eye-opening experience. ***"Aren't two sparrows sold for only a penny? But not one of them falls to the ground without your Father knowing it. He even counts every hair on your head! So don't be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows"*** (NIV).

The thought that an Almighty God, who would care for the universe with His infinite love, would stoop down to pay attention to him, a mere speck of dust in the vast creation, was incredible! He found it difficult to comprehend such a marvel.

He soon surrendered his life to Christ. At 22 years of age, Koji was still a hospital patient, but there

was a different look on his face. He had the joy of the Lord in his heart! He knew that God would take care of him no matter what the circumstances.

When he confessed his sin and selfishness, begging for God's forgiveness, the Holy Spirit brought many things to mind that he had to put right. He remembered a time when he had stolen stamps from a fellow patient and could not dismiss it from his mind, so he wrote a letter to apologize.

This former patient was so impressed by the sincerity of Koji's letter that he visited him, and Koji introduced him to his Lord and Savior! Koji continued to witness to others about the wonderful miracle that God had done in his heart.

He began to realize that for every problem he faced, there was a solution in the Bible. He read about how Jesus healed the sick, and wondered why he had suffered for so long, even after he had asked Jesus to heal him.

At the age of 23, he began to see God answer his prayers for physical healing. The X-rays revealed great improvement in the condition of his lungs, and after a lengthy 2-year period of recovery, the doctors declared him free of TB! They could now perform the very complicated heart surgery that Koji so desperately needed.

In 1971, the night before his operation, Mr. Karasawa visited him and shared Deuteronomy 33:27 with him: ***"The eternal God***

***is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms"*** (NIV).

Koji looked out of the window into the sky and noticed how brightly the stars were twinkling. While looking at them, he pondered Genesis 1:1. ***"The God who created all of those stars, He will indeed be able to give me a new heart!"*** he thought to himself.

The operation was long and difficult, and when he woke up, the nurse quickly called the doctor. Koji was still on oxygen when the doctor asked him, "Do you see your hand? It is no longer pale, but full of color because your heart is now pumping blood through your system."

For the first time in his life, he had normal blood circulation. For fifteen years, he hadn't been able to walk or climb stairs and the slightest breeze would cause him to shiver. Now, many miracles seemed to happen all at once, and even water tasted better than ever!

"We've done all that we can for you and now it's up to you," the

doctor encouraged him. Koji started rehabilitation and learned to walk properly. The day he left the hospital, the workers held a party for him, and everyone was so glad to see the joy on his face.

"Up until now, because you were sick, you said, 'I can't do this and I can't do that,' but now may those words never cross your lips again!" one of the doctors said to him. "From now on always say, 'Yes, I can do it.'"

He could heartily agree with the doctor, because while in hospital he learned to believe in the enabling power of Christ. ***I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*** (Philippians 4:13).

Koji Tamada later graduated from Bible School and worked with Japan Mission for many years as a hospital evangelist.

We continue to marvel at the miracles the Lord is doing in order to provide Japan Mission with such wonderful and dedicated workers! □

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## THE FOUNTAIN OF JOY

Rev. Tamada, who was wonderfully saved through the hospital ministry, is now a part of the team of writers of the Fountain of Joy.

The Fountain of Joy is a colorful 4-page tract, which Japan Mission publishes and distributes each month. It always contains a Gospel message, a testimony of salvation and advice on family-related issues. About 24,000 of these tracts are regularly sent out to 1,000 churches, organizations and individuals throughout Japan and overseas.

One lady sent a postcard, thanking us for sending her this tract each month. She shared how her mother was encouraged by the content, which they were reading to her while she was bed-ridden in the hospital. She gave her heart to the Lord shortly before she died!