

JOHREI

divine light of salvation

Mokichi Okada



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Society of Johrei

The Society of Johrei
131 Komatsubara Kitamachi, Kita-ku,
Kyoto, Japan
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The Society of Johrei
Printed in Japan
ISBN 4-915605-00-0

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The character [*Hikari*] on the page following the frontispiece stands for divine light. Drawn by Mr. Okada, it appears on the seal his followers wear. (See p. 120.)

Photos courtesy of Mr. Shigehisa Yamasaki (frontispiece), Rev. Minoru Nakahashi (p. 116), and Prof. Hiroshi Hasegawa (p. 225).

Preface

THE Society of Johrei was organized in 1971 by the followers of the great religious leader, Mokichi Okada (1882–1955), who were closest to him. It is supported by member churches in Japan, Korea, and Brazil, and is dedicated solely to transmitting Mr. Okada's teaching throughout the world. Through the power lent to him by God, Mr. Okada saved hundreds of thousands of people from spiritual and physical suffering, in many cases from certain death, and led them to unshakable faith in our Lord the Creator. Although he passed away more than a quarter-century ago, his teachings continue to guide every aspect of our lives; and Johrei, the divine healing power that he brought to us, has been demonstrated to be effective in curing even the most serious of modern—as well as old—diseases. Members of our affiliated churches practice it daily to help the sick overcome their afflictions and to restore health in spirit and body.

Literally, Johrei means “purifying the spirit”; it is divine light transmitted to heal sickness or affliction, to

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strengthen and restore. Channeled through the palm of its administrator and accompanied by prayers, Johrei does not involve any therapeutic touch or laying on of hands. Unlike most other types of healing, spiritual or otherwise, Johrei can be administered by almost anyone, including lay believers.

This volume contains the essence of Mr. Okada's teaching on the theory and practice of Johrei. It is a description of the broad physical applications of Johrei as an art of healing, and it is also an introduction to a religious doctrine that gives Johrei meaning far beyond the level of simple faith healing. Above all, we hope this work illuminates the nature of Johrei as a divine gift and an intrinsic part of God's plan for the salvation of mankind.

The author's message is based on a series of revelations and inspirations that came to him during the last thirty years of his life, which were substantiated and elaborated through meditation, application, and experience. Mr. Okada wished all people to share his knowledge of Johrei and his understanding of God's will for man. That wish provided the original motivation for us to prepare this English version of his work, and it remained our main concern through the years required to complete it.

The present volume is a translation of selected passages from Mr. Okada's major works, including an unfinished manuscript entitled "Birth of the New Civilization." He was an unusually prolific writer as well as an untiring preacher; his writing and the transcripts of his sermons

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fill many volumes and cover almost every area of human life and endeavor. The passages translated here represent only a very small part of the totality of his work, but together they constitute a clear, comprehensive, and definitive statement on Johrei and Paradise on Earth.

To his followers, Mr. Okada personified divine love. His guidance has enabled them not only to overcome the sin of disbelief, but to learn of God's plan for salvation and to live blessed and joyous lives. It is our work as his disciples to make his teachings and the revelation he received available in English, eventually in other languages as well, so that many, many more people of all creeds, nationalities, and races will be able to share the manifold joys of repenting and returning to the path of God. Our purpose in publishing this volume is *not* to make converts to the particular tenets Mr. Okada expounded, and thereby expand our church organization; we wish only to make others aware of the power of Johrei and its provenance from faith in God. If one has that faith, Johrei becomes a universal vehicle for spiritual joy and physical strength that brings his life closer to the kingdom of God.

The task of translating the Japanese text into clear, coherent English proved to be unexpectedly difficult. It involved research, much discussion about meaning, writing and rewriting many times over. Early in the process we learned that literal translation does not necessarily convey the meaning of the original text accurately. In fact, word-for-word rendering often creates gross distortions and does no justice to the original text

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or to the author. Apart from the inherent differences between Japanese and Western patterns of thought, difficulties also arise from the heavy imprint of the particular historical and cultural milieu in which the text was prepared. For those reasons, it was especially important that we give priority to the intent of the author, the meaning he wished to convey, rather than to the letter of the original text.

Part 1 through part 3 are translations of Mr. Okada's original writing. The rest of the volume, including the introduction, was written by Ichiro Nakamura and Teruyuki Tada, the editors. Part 1 consists of two chapters where the author's religious ideas are presented. They are very important for an understanding of the spiritual premises of Johrei. Part 2, also two chapters, explains the theory of Johrei as an art of healing, suggesting how it might help to humanize medical science and direct it onto the path of genuine progress.

Mr. Okada was an outstanding *waka* poet and composed a total of more than four thousand of these 31-syllable verses. He chose several hundred of them for his followers to recite during services. Their content varies, but generally they express thanks to God, give praises for His creation, petition divine blessings, or respond to God's call for repentance. We have translated a selection of these verses for inclusion in part 3 to give some idea of the kind of prayers offered each day by the church members. Mr. Okada also stressed that if a prayer is sincere, and if there is a genuine wish for God's help, He welcomes prayers from anyone, anytime, in

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whatever words come most easily. In practicing Johrei one should pray as he expresses himself best, in his own language and in terms of his own religious experience.

Presented in part 4 are three articles prepared by the editors to describe the salient aspects of the life and thought of the author. A brief biography of Mr. Okada is followed by a bibliographical essay, which introduces his major writings. The third article, written by Ichiro Nakamura, is a short commentary on some of the key concepts in Mr. Okada's thought. We have chosen nine terms that are of special importance but are not fully explained in the main text, chiefly because the author assumed that no explanation was needed.

The two articles appearing as appendices A and B are research reports, one on Johrei and the other on nature farming, a method of cultivation designed to produce pure foodstuffs that Mr. Okada encouraged and directly promoted. Both are interim reports based on scientific studies conducted to date. It is hoped that they will be of special interest to scientists, particularly in the fields of medicine, dietetics, and agronomy.

In planning this volume, we were given encouragement and help by many individuals, within and outside our organization. Cardinal Arns, Archbishop of São Paulo, kindly granted us an audience in 1977 and enlightened us on the meaning of post-Vatican II ecumenicism and the importance of prayer in faith. Dr. Hajime Nakamura, professor emeritus of the University of Tokyo and Buddhist scholar of international renown, gave us invaluable advice on the most effective

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ways to communicate Eastern thinking to the Western intellectual community. The late Dr. Charles H. Dodd, joint director of the *New English Bible*, kindly imparted to us through correspondence his profound thoughts on biblical translation. Fr. Joseph Roggendorf, professor of comparative philosophy and culture at Sophia University in Tokyo until his recent death, was also a source of great inspiration and encouragement to the editors. We thank them all for their support in our endeavor.

While preparing the English manuscript for this volume, we consulted a number of theologians, specialists in the science of religion, members of the Catholic and Protestant clergy, as well as physicians, surgeons, and agricultural scientists. We are particularly indebted to Professor Richard Friedli, director of the Institute for Religious Studies, University of Fribourg, Switzerland, and his colleagues, including Dr. Anand Nayak and Fr. Paul Ihara, for their reading of the draft manuscript and their innumerable suggestions concerning basic theological issues. We have benefited greatly, furthermore, from the extensive knowledge of philosophy and theology that Dr. David F. Casey, a scholar of comparative culture, shared with us.

Among the many medical scientists who offered critical comments on the manuscript, we would like to express our special gratitude to Dr. Hiroshi Takita, chief, Department of Thoracic Surgery & Oncology, Roswell Park Memorial Institute, Buffalo, New York, and his colleague, Dr. Salvador Harguindey. Their candid opinions and penetrating observations were invaluable to us.

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In the field of agricultural science, Dr. Hiroshi Hasegawa, professor emeritus of Kyoto University, has exercised skillful leadership for the past ten years in an extensive research project on nonfertilized fields. Without the cooperation of Professor Hasegawa and his colleagues at Kinki University in Higashi Osaka, it would have been impossible to complete the report on nature farming.

We owe our sincere thanks to many other individuals, including Dr. Hatsuo Nakamura, professor emeritus of Keio University, Mr. Yasuhiro Ōsaki, attorney-at-law, Mr. Shigehisa Yamasaki, specialist in art history, Mr. Frederick I. Scott, Jr., formerly editor of the *American Laboratory* and *International Laboratory*, Mr. Tsutomu Kano, editor of *The Japan Interpreter*, and Ms. Patricia Murray, executive editor of the same journal of social and political ideas published in Tokyo. Mr. Yoshiji Komiyama, senior managing director of the Komiyama Printing Company, and Ms. Susie Agoston, illustrator and book designer, were of great service throughout the production stages. The professional advice and technical assistance of all these individuals have made this volume what it is. Despite all the help we received from specialists in many fields, however, we, the editors, assume full responsibility for the content. Any or all errors of fact or interpretation, all stylistic or grammatical infidelities herein should be attributed to ourselves.

The publication of this work would not have been possible without the enduring support and encouragement of our church members. We would like to take

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the opportunity to express our most sincere appreciation of their help and steadfast cooperation. We are particularly grateful to Rev. Suzuko Nagashima of the Tokyo Reimei Church, Rev. Bok-soo Chung of the Mesia Kyohwe in Pusan, Rev. Minoru Nakahashi of the Templo Messiânico Universal, and Rev. Minoru Fujii of the Comunidade Messiânico Universal, both in São Paulo.

Finally, with sadness, we must mention the irreplaceable contribution made by the late Rev. Kenji Tatsumi, who, as secretary-general of our Society, devoted himself for years to this monumental project until his death in 1979 at the age of fifty. Rev. Tatsumi was a survivor of Hiroshima, and Johrei gave him the strength to carry on his mission for a remarkable thirty-five years after the atomic blast in 1945. In his deep faith in God, he was truly exemplary among the many disciples of Mr. Okada. A man of brilliant scholarly capability who was trained at the University of Tokyo, he abandoned a highly promising academic career midstream and turned all his time and energy to disseminating his mentor's teaching. His superb knowledge of English and his deep understanding of and keen insight into Mr. Okada's thought constituted an invaluable asset in our endeavor. Rev. Tatsumi was a man of faith who inspired us all.

Ichiro Nakamura
Teruyuki Tada

Introduction

MORE than one thousand people daily throng our two churches in São Paulo to receive Johrei. They come from rural and urban areas and from all walks of life. Among them are professionals and factory workers, people with Ph.Ds and those with only primary school education, men and women, young and old. Their social and ethnic backgrounds vary widely, but most interesting, almost all of them are Christians. Despite their commitment to faith in Jesus Christ, they do not seem to feel any internal conflict between their professed faith and their dedication to our church. Most of them attend mass regularly at their local Catholic churches, while they continue to practice Johrei and study the teachings of Mokichi Okada. Significantly, the congregation recites the Lord's Prayer at the daily services held in our churches in Brazil.

Many of the Brazilian members were suffering from incurable diseases or were under extreme emotional or psychological strain when they first came to our church for healing by Johrei. There, they witnessed extraor-

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dinary things happening before their own eyes; the instances of healing that took place among them were miracles. This direct experience with divine healing has been the most convincing proof that God is here with us, rather than “up there” someplace beyond our reach. The charisma of Johrei has enabled them to see and feel for themselves the working of God’s mercy and power.

Our Christian members say that since they began to receive Johrei, somehow they feel God closer to them. Although they still see themselves as sinful and very imperfect, they are no longer held back by fear of Him as they once were. Well aware that He is not God of retribution but of love, they now have a genuine sense of awe that draws them ever nearer to Him. Some say that their new attitude has made them more devout as Christians than they have ever been.

Monotheism

The attitude of the members in South America in no way runs counter to the basic teachings of Mr. Okada. He believed that all great religions are manifestations of God’s love and of His will to save man. He made it clear that although it may differ in doctrine, ritual, and organization, each religion in its own way performs the sacred task of guiding people to good and encouraging repentance.

For that reason Mr. Okada neither prohibited nor discouraged his followers from taking serious interest in or even embracing any one of the great religions.