

Nomura No.88 *Center News*

**The 9th Commemorative Ceremony of the Establishment as Public Interest Incorporated Foundation, The 40th Anniversary of the Establishment as Incorporated Foundation*
**Opening of Regular Seminar Courses 2021*
**The Joy of Learning*



Mt. Jomine and winter cherry blossoms



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The 9th Commemorative Ceremony of the Establishment as Public Interest Incorporated Foundation
The 40th Anniversary of the Establishment as Incorporated Foundation

On April 1 (Thur.), Nomura Center for Lifelong Integrated Education held commemorative ceremony for the 9th anniversary of its shift to Public Interest Incorporated Foundation and the 40th anniversary of its establishment as Incorporated Foundation in 1981. The Center's Second Seminar House served as the main venue, where two Trustees living in Tokyo participated in person, linking 26 venues nationwide through the internet.

Due to the second declaration of the state of emergency in January and the social situations, including the medical care system being under pressure, the Center had decided to postpone the study meetings for the National Seminar Course participants in January and February, as well as to cancel the commemorative ceremony on March 4 for the 59th anniversary of the foundation of Nomura Center and study meetings.

Notwithstanding the situation, Director General Mrs. Yumiko Kaneko hoped that online linking might enable the celebration of the milestone occasion of the 40th anniversary as an incorporated foundation, not only with the National Course participants, but also with regional members learning in the branches and chapters. The commemoration of this anniversary, which was normally celebrated at each branch and chapter, was held for the first time as the "meeting of the whole" by means of online connections.

It proved to be a day of abounding joy, particularly as members of different regions had not seen each other for nearly four months since December of the previous year.

Director Mrs. Hideyo Kimura commenced the proceedings with a greeting. Reflecting on the first three months of the year 2021, she said "The founder stated in the Principles of Nomura Lifelong Integrated Education, 'The surface of the ocean may be disturbed by a storm, but below lays a tranquil world. Likewise, our society may be awash with new information and seemingly new values, but the older truths survive the ages, timeless and endlessly reinterpreted.'

Today we are faced with various issues, just as the ocean disturbed by powerful storms. However, the founder constructed these principles of education and left for us an organisation that upholds the principles and their ideals. Mrs. Kaneko, who succeeded the founder, teaches us that the society that we live in did not develop by itself, but is a product of our own creation; therefore, we must learn about ourselves, find in society personal themes for each of us to work on, facilitate mutual education through self-education, and truly practise these in accordance with the principles of education.

I would like to conclude my remarks by expressing my heartfelt gratitude for these principles that are given to guide us through a dark, vast ocean and for being taught that there is a tranquil world that lays at the bottom of the deep sea."

Then the participants listened to the audio recordings of "On the Occasion of the Establishment of Incorporated Foundation" by the late Founding Director General Mrs. Yoshiko Nomura in 1981, and "On the Process of the Establishment of Incorporated Foundation," in which the late Executive Director Mrs. Chikako Yoshinari delivered on April 1, 1985, reflecting on the eight years before the authorisation for the establishment was granted. The audio recordings were accompanied by a slideshow of the photos of the Founder and Executive Director with other senior members in founding period taken in 1970s and 1980s.



Nomura Center was authorised by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture as Incorporated Foundation in 1981.

In the afternoon, congratulatory remarks and words of thanks were expressed by participants of different generations, who had gathered at the linked venues all over Japan.

A member in her 90's in Gunma Prefecture: "Looking back 40 years, I was in my 50's then and was taking part in the National Course at a venue in Ranzan, Saitama Prefecture, when the news of the authorisation was brought to us. I will never forget how the whole room resounded with clapping and how excited we were. Now I am older and physically less able, but I pledge myself to continue passing on the spirit of this learning to many people and to children in particular, as long as I live."

A member in her 80's, Fukushima Prefecture: "With the Covid-19 pandemic, the gap between the rich and the poor is widening all over the world and racial discrimination is getting worse. We should strive to transform our values and to focus on the world, instead of thinking of ourselves all the time."

Finally, Mrs. Kaneko gave her concluding remarks and greeting. "The commemoration of March 4 anniversary of the foundation of the Nomura Center had to be cancelled in two consecutive years, and I am feeling the sobering weight of the 60th anniversary coming upon us next year. In preparation for



Founder Mrs. Nomura delivered the lecture to the officer of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

today's ceremonies, I read old Japanese newsletters and other information from the time of the foundation, and learned just how hard it was to establish this work. By listening to the recordings and viewing the photos with you today, I felt how tough it must have been to obtain an authorisation as incorporated foundation back in 1981, when the concept of lifelong integrated education was not well known at all. In the Japanese Newsletter No.16, it states 'Just as the progress in the founding period required maternity, the Center with its public status as incorporated foundation requires paternal discipline with its tough, robust and highly responsible characteristics in order to advance its activities.' By carefully examining these words, I came to understand that the meaning of our existence as a public organisation is being tested by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Currently we are unable to do things in the matter of course manner as we used to, just until a year ago. We are reminded of this fact every time we think of the monthly meetings we used to hold in Tokyo for National Seminar Course participants or the regional courses and study meetings that branches and chapters used to hold in each region. Under these circumstances, each one of us thought hard for solutions that would enable us to meet together and hold courses. One of the solutions we discovered was to go online for the National Seminar Course.

However, the moment we achieve one thing, we tend to assign some empirical value to the way we did it and standardise it in a manual. However, society is dynamic and constantly changing. The speed of such changes is well illustrated by the fact that as soon as Covid-19 vaccines were developed and long before the general public received them, new variants emerged for which the effectiveness of the vaccines were unknown. It makes me wonder how many important things are stifled in the process of standardisation and how many small mistakes are overlooked to lead to serious ones at national and global levels.

Recently, there were media reports on information leaks and errors in the bills submitted by the government. Many of the errors were said to be typographical mistakes, which all of us are capable of making on a daily basis. However, it has been reported that some were not just careless mistakes, but serious errors which could have led to diplomatic issues.

Putting the mistakes in society aside, we also made a mistake at the Center last year. This was partly due to reduced operations of the secretariat owing to the pandemic. All the same, the division in charge did not catch the mistake for some time and I made my apology as the head of this organisation, which was accepted by all of you with tender thoughts and warm words. Such kind responses, in turn, had sobering effects on me, reminding me of the kind of responsibility I bear.

The founder started this educational activities in the period of Japan's high economic growth with the aims of leading us to awareness of what is truly essential in life and transforming our values from those based on material things and money to those based on human beings, to the value of life. Donations were collected for the purpose of finding the volunteer spirit both in matter and mind. Home-makers totally unfamiliar with legal matters filed an application with the national government, devoting eight long years to document preparations, while raising sufficient funds. At the culmination of such arduous work, the public status of incorporated foundation was granted. While going through all these steps, our senior members committed to the mutual education with the next generation, whose awareness gradually shifted to recognise what is truly important in life. Such changes were accompanied by improvements in family life, demonstrating the verifications of their learning.

While living in contemporary society that values material things, money and obvious achievements and results, it is important to become aware of values that truly matter. Such shifts in awareness changes people, which in turn changes society little by little.

When we find that society in which we live is getting worse, we first look for its responsibility in ourselves and make whatever we find as our theme for us to work on. By carrying out our activities, we draw out from within the volunteer spirit both in matter and mind.

I am most grateful that we were able to celebrate this 40th anniversary together. It afforded us an opportunity to reflect on our history, affirm the spirit being surely transmitted and celebrate the successful shift to public interest incorporated foundation."

It was a day of commemoration that demonstrated tough challenges that come with the responsibility of serving the public interest in contemporary society and the importance of sincerity, leading every one of us to renew our determination to build our character to that end.



Below are some of the comments from participants.

A woman in her 50's in Chiba Prefecture

“This is my first time attending a commemorative ceremony. I was impressed with the Internet connection of 27 venues nationwide. I am happy for a good start of the new academic year, learning from the greeting of the Director General about developing oneself to be free from set of values on material things and money.”

A woman in her 40's in Yamanashi Prefecture

“I was delighted to see those photos for the first time and to listen to the talks, while being connected online with the rest of the country. It was moving to hear the actual voices of the grand senior members who lived the history. The sheer hard work of our senior members built the foundation. I was able to learn at the Center because my parents had learned, and my son finished in March the Division of Infant Education. I am so grateful for all the connections that made me of today possible.

A woman in her 40's in Ibaraki Prefecture

“I attended the ceremony for the first time and was impressed by the spirit of the Center. The recordings on the process of establishing an incorporated foundation impressed upon me the senior members' strong commitment to lifelong integrated education. Listening to the voice of the founder made me feel as if she were present amongst us.”

A woman in her 40's in Chiba Prefecture:

“I felt the strong sense of care for fellow human beings in the founder and early members of the founding period, which made me want to be like them. It also reminded me of what a precious thing it is that the Center is totally funded by membership fees and donations. I am so proud to be part of the Center.”

A woman in her 30's in Saitama Prefecture

“While learning about the process of establishing as incorporated foundation, I sensed their pride in the activities, a sense of mission and abounding zeal. I used to place values on material things and money. But learning at the Center helped me find the importance of the values of the heart. I would like to pass on such values to the next generation with a stronger sense of mission than now.”

A woman in her 20's in Hiroshima Prefecture

“I was able to come to this ceremony as it turned out that I did not have to go to work today. I was impressed by the elderly members making passionate comments one after another. Attending this ceremony changed my view on life.”

A man in his 50's in Tokyo

“Director General talked about her apology and taking responsibility for the mistake of a division. These days we see so many that are unwilling to take responsibility or admit their own fault. The contrast made me aware of the challenges that come with the responsibility of serving the public interest as well as the importance of handling each small matter with sincerity. Developing such qualities has become my personal theme to work on.”



Aspirations at the start of our Regular Seminar Courses 2021

This academic year marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Nomura Center for Lifelong Integrated Education.

To mark the start of 2021, Director General Mrs. Yumiko Kaneko offered her New Year's greetings, saying "What we as people living in this century have to make in our basic assumption is the importance of 'being aware of the period in time we live in', and also having an awareness of ourselves and 'who we are' as people standing upon this consciousness of the era we are living in."

Right now, humanity is facing a crossroads with regards to issues such as climate change, an increase in volcanic and earthquake activity, and decommissioning work of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant and the disposal of its contaminated water. Also, right now each and every one of us is exposed to dangers due to the Covid-19 pandemic. At our doorsteps are the issues of a rapidly aging society, so-called 8050 problems, shut-ins reaching their 50's are supported by their parents in their 80's, a rapidly unequal society through a move toward digitalization, the youth issue, unease and worries of parents with small children, and tragic incidents in which infants fall victim, among others. People of all generations are facing difficult challenges in everyday life.

Facing this critical situation, Mrs. Kaneko warned that even if we recover from the disasters and the pandemic is brought under control, if we continue unchanged with the ways we have been living and thinking, we may find ourselves on the same path again.

With Mrs. Kaneko's words of, "Society is not something created by itself, but rather society and the world are something we create" in mind, we would like to learn the "Lifelong Integrated Education as a Creator of the Future" together with all of you, so that we can create a brighter future for the next generation through mutual education with a focus on self-education to know ourselves having a perspective of how we should be as individuals who created our current society.

This year's seminar courses on Nomura Lifelong Integrated Education opened in April in line with the "Aspirations at the start of our Regular Seminar Courses" in the above. First to commence was the National Course for the Branch and Chapter leaders, which was held online, followed by some courses held at the head office in Tokyo, and regional courses held at 30 locations, following careful assessments of the infection status in each region. In this issue we report on the proceedings of the National Course and Youth Course.

National Course

Last year, the rise in Covid-19 infections made it difficult to meet for seminars in Tokyo. For the first time, the National Course was held online, linking 15 venues nationwide. Into the new year, the situation remained unpredictable and even more difficult conditions ensued. As a result, the decision was taken for the National Course to be held online in principle throughout the academic year of 2021.

Since the closing of the 2020 seminar courses in December last year, participants had been unable to meet even for an online study group. Director General Mrs. Kaneko and directors kept abreast of the situations and how members were doing in each region as reported by chiefs of branches and chapters through those in charge of seminars and regional activities. It

came to their attention that there were many regional members learning in earnest, while not yet ready to bring oneself to attend the leaders' seminar in Tokyo. Mrs. Kaneko desired to extend to such members an opportunity to deepen their learning by attending the National Course, since it was to be held online. As a result, 15 new participants and 2 repeat participants were added to the list of participants, following the confirmation of intention of each member by the regional chief.

The National Course was held on April 5 (Mon.) and 6 (Tue.) at the Center's Second Seminar House as the main venue, linking 18 venues nationwide. In total, 217 participants attended.

At the Steering Meeting held in the morning of the first day, Mrs. Kaneko commenced proceedings with a greeting. Touching upon the spread of Covid-19 and its variants, Mrs. Kaneko said "We have been highly anxious to hold this meeting safely today. Let us re-examine our conscious mind through these conditions we find ourselves in. I look forward to learning together about the viewpoints based on the principles that 'our conscious mind, body and environment are connected' and the meaning of being 'sustained by nature.'"

In the afternoon, Mrs. Michiyo Sano, in charge of seminar courses and regional activities, delivered the lecture on the first half of Part 1: Milestones to Lifelong Integrated Education, the

Principles of Nomura Lifelong Integrated Education.

Mrs. Sano said “The founder discovered ‘deficiencies in education’ and ‘a reflection of adult society’ to be the factors in tragedy of youth, which is the motive of the Nomura Lifelong Integrated Education, and worked for drastic revision of education and transformation of adult society. At the 9th commemorative ceremony of the establishment as Public Interest Incorporated Foundation, Mrs. Kaneko said that learning this principles prompted us to change our values, which is conducive to the public interest in this contemporary society that holds material goods, money, achievements and results as mainstream values. Mrs. Kaneko also said that human education required steady work with perseverance. These points stood out and stayed in my mind. When I mentioned them to Director at a later date, she responded saying ‘The founder said that education was a kind of work that was transmitted and passed down through generations. Are you aware of your own values, having been passed down from your parents?’”

My mother, who has been learning since the founding period, related her experiences to me; how she felt strongly about adults having to change, as she observed many families experiencing problems with their children, while Japan grew richer materially through the post-war economic high growth; when the founder told her ‘We are now building a foundation, therefore let us work hard for future generations,’ she felt ‘Oh yes, for that I can work hard.’ She used to work nights for the family business of running an inn, see off guests in the morning and then go out on her rounds for the educational activities; if there was something she wanted, she would pretend to herself that she had already bought it and save the money instead, so that she and her husband could have a joy of donating money for the betterment of society. The story of my mother made me realise that the volunteer spirit within me had actually been passed down from my parents. I am grateful for this and I want to grow as a person through self-transformation, so that I can also pass down this spirit to the next generation.”

On the second day, Mrs. Kaneko delivered the lecture on the second half of Part 1.

Mrs. Kaneko spoke of the significance of the question “why lifelong integrated education now?” in contemporary society. “As stated in the ‘Aspirations at the start of our Regular Seminar Courses’, the current reality of global pathological phenomena betrays how distorted the contemporary education is. Everyone must seriously consider what sort of education is called for by the era in which the global environment, the world that sustains us, is in crisis and the life of each one of us is threatened by this new virus. In this time of crisis facing a dead end, I strongly believe that we, who are learners of the essential education, the principles of Lifelong Integrated Education, must clarify what the objectives of Lifelong Integrated Education are, implement them and raise awareness in people around us.”

Mrs. Kaneko also said “We live in a machine civilisation, in which our mindset has become highly dependent on ma-

chines. We need education that develops initiatives with which to constantly examine our own motives and objectives of our actions. The issue of such human education must be prioritised over all political, economic and social considerations.”

On “Examining the objective of education—Human being as the objective of education”, Mrs. Kaneko provided detailed explanation on four main points to transform existing views on education.

Then she went on to say “The founder touched upon three deficiencies of contemporary education and taught ‘We must be aware that human beings carry an imprint of all the human experience from the distant past, as ancient as the history of humanity itself, and therefore contradictions and inconsistencies that exist between what the mind can think and what the body will do are an inescapable part of real life.’ In the steering meeting yesterday, a branch chief spoke of the death of her mother, who had been learning from the founding period, and of her own wish to carry on her mother’s virtues.

Her words brought to my mind our earlier members, who were riddled with marital, parental, financial and other issues, faced their own contradictions within based on the principles of being ‘sustained by nature’, and fought the fierce struggle within themselves to build the foundation that we are privileged to inherit today.

In my own case, being appointed as Director General brought very tough conditions on me. Yet I truly feel that this role actually drew out what I had within me all along, inheriting from my parents and beyond through my roots. In the same way, I am certain that all of you are given opportunities through this learning to know yourself from the conditions that you interact with. I believe that each one of us reaching our innermost values and dignity is the only way that leads us out of the current crisis.”

During the plenary session following the lecture, many of the comments came from new participants.

A man in his 60’s from the Okayama Branch said “Director General mentioned in her lecture the merits of mechanization on one hand, and on the other that humanity was lost and that our society held economy-centric values. I worked in Tokyo till I reached my retirement age three years ago, and my values were, by necessity as it were, economy-centric. Then I retired, moved back to my old hometown in Okayama with my wife, and started learning at the regional seminar course. Now I find that my values are in the process of transformation. We experienced various family issues, but managed somehow to get through, thanks to the relationship and advice all of you extended to me. This helped me realise that I had actually believed I was living my life solely on my own strength and how little I listened to others. I would like to work on these points as my personal themes and learn more deeply.”

A woman from the Gunma Branch in her 40’s said “I was privileged to attend the commemorative ceremony of the establishment of the Public Interest Incorporated Foundation with my grandmother on April 1. Yesterday I was able to listen to a lecture by my aunt and hear the joy that my grandmother

had in doing her educational work for future generations. I am currently helping with the inn business that my grandparents started, and I have been distressed by the contradictions in the government's way of dealing with the pandemic and in various other things. However, listening to the lecture by Mrs. Kaneko helped me realise that I was given this opportunity to learn, because of all the senior members who worked for future generations and struggled with themselves. This, in turn, led to renewed appreciation for my grandmother and a desire to face myself through conditions that surround me and learn further."

Many more hands were raised to comment, indicative of the high hopes of each participant to bring to surface their innermost values and a fine start to seminar courses.

Youth Course

The Youth Course opened on April 11 (Sun.) with 11 participants at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center. This course for students and young workers is normally held over two days with an overnight stay. Due to Covid-19 infections, however, last year's courses were either postponed or shortened to one day. For this year, following careful evaluations, it was decided to hold a one-day course.

First of all, Mr. Junichi Matsunaga, who is in charge of the Youth Division, commenced with a greeting, followed by a video presentation entitled "History of Nomura Center for Lifelong Integrated Education".

Then a lecture on Part 1: Milestones to Lifelong Integrated Education, the Principles of Nomura Lifelong Integrated Education was delivered. Mr. Matsunaga, who served as the lecturer said "When I was small, I was so shy that I found it difficult to mix with others. While at high school, I wanted to overcome this tendency and started attending a Youth Course. Through interactions with senior members and course mates over years, I was able to overcome my shyness. Then I was given an appointment as a deputy chief of the Youth Division at Headquarters, while working at the same time. Through interactions with many people in my role as a deputy, my objective and motivation shifted from overcoming shyness to discovering myself, as I learned that human beings had infinite potentials in their essence. I would like to learn and grow together with you, just as the senior members in my youth did for me."

During the discussion time in the afternoon, the participants read the "Aspirations at the start of our Regular Seminar Courses" and discussed how they felt at school/college and at home in their daily life in the pandemic.

"I used to worry a lot about my relationship with others. Now that it's hard to see people at all, I feel how precious it was to be able to have such worries. I have to check everything concerning university, including really important messages, over the internet. I'm feeling the strain of having to chase after information." "The last big event for my club activities as a junior high school student was first decided to be held online, then cancelled. There is nothing I can do but to accept it."

"We are told to enjoy our high school life. At the same time, we are told not to chat with each other. I see contradictions more often than ever." "Gradually I got so used to the life under the pandemic, which I find odd. But I am grateful to have this opportunity to talk face to face. I would also like to lend an ear to others who are worried." These were some of the thoughts and feelings expressed during the discussion, to which empathy and advices were offered in return.

With reduced opportunities to meet with friends and talk face to face, pouring out one's feelings and worries is difficult. Today's seminar reconfirmed how precious it is for youths of different age groups to meet in person and learn together. Below are some extracts of participant comments.

University student

The key point for me was learning in the lecture that the value of human beings cannot be measured by scores and evaluations. Discussions about taking initiatives and having your own axis made me reflect on my own passive university life and way of dealing with others. I would like to place more value on my sensitivity and my way of thinking and take pride in them, rather than being swayed by others.

High school student

I was able to express myself to a willing audience, which allowed me to get my bottled up feelings off my chest. At times I feel as if the Coronavirus was marring my life, but I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this course. Difficult conditions I face everyday made me appreciate how fortunate I had been to be able do things freely.

High school student

Listening to everyone helped me realise that while there are all sorts of issues in society, things that people focus on are different, depending on their age and situations they are in.



The Joy of Learning

We have been facing frequent torrential rains and forest blazes in many parts of the world caused by abnormal climate in recent years. We now realise the critical state endangering the existence of this planet is looming over our daily lives.

Here in Japan, we have torrential rain almost every year and in 2018 a serious flood by levee washout was occurred in Mabi-town, Okayama Prefecture and fifty-one casualties were reported. A member of Nomura Center resides in Mabi was devastated by this flood and the article about her experience was carried in our Japanese organ No. 427 published in December, 2020. This article is about how a person, facing the natural disaster beyond human control, scrutinise her consciousness of daily life and deepen the family bond.

Mrs. Etsuko Mizukawa,
Okayama Branch

Mabi district in Kurashiki City, where I live, in July 2018, incurred heavy damage from the West Japan Torrential Rain Disaster. I was participating in the Center's national courses in Tokyo and had only just returned to Okayama Prefecture. When the water had reached the second floor of my house, I thought I might not even make it, so I called my sister. She told me "Do what you have to do to survive." After that my husband and myself just made a desperate try to survive, and I called the police. They told me "Climb up on something all the way to the ceiling and try to keep breathing." At the last minute I remembered that there was a way to the roof through a board in the ceiling of the closet, so I and my husband opened it and we frantically went up to the roof. I called the assistant director in charge of the Okayama Branch and informed her of the situation, who then immediately let me know that she contacted the Director General and Director, which calmed me down.

I looked over at my husband next to me and said "If we die, we'll die together" and he said "We don't die yet. I'll do whatever I can to protect you." All we could do then was wait and believe that rescue would come, trying our best to hold out. After that a rescue boat passed in front of our house and were able to get on it and be rescued.

Although our lives were spared, my husband has just retired and life had begun to settle down a bit, when through this disaster we lost our house and everything we owned. We almost lost the will to live.

Two weeks after the disaster struck, our local branch chief got in touch to say, "There's a lecture being given in Okayama, would you like to come?" I told her there was no way I could. After that I got another call from her saying that the Director was very worried about how I was coping with the situation, and had passed along a message, for me to look in the bottom of my heart and examine my true feelings.

At that time we were sheltering at my older sister's house, and we couldn't sleep at night. My husband and I just kept crying and asking each other how it came to this. Every day, without much other choice, we returned to our house that was now covered in mud to clean up. I would get really annoyed at even the slightest thing, and kept arguing with my husband. It was then that I realized something deep within myself. "If I keep going like this, I won't be able to move forward. I want to change my mind-set." I told my husband that I wanted to go to the lecture meeting. He said, "I'll go with you."

When we arrived at the venue, all the branch members told us how glad they were to see us safe. They listened to our painful, difficult feelings and accepted them, which really made me feel at ease. There was a lecturer there from the Tokyo head office, and I heard that everyone was worried about us. We learned about the "View of Human Being in Nomura Lifelong Integrated Education" and realized that we had been spared the most important thing—our lives—and my husband and



Gigantic stones on the grave mound, one of the most biggest grave mound in history, in Tatetsuki old ruins of the 2nd to 3rd century, Kurashiki-city, Okayama Prefecture.

I finally found the strength to move forward. From then on, we shared our painful feelings at meetings and lectures every month, and I learned the importance of sharing my feelings openly with my husband, and to try and listen to his feelings as well. As we were both working to move forward, I thought that if I shared how hard it was on me, that my husband would take offence or feel hurt, but I tried my best and shared anyway. I said “I feel like no matter what we do, it’s meaningless now” and he replied, “I feel the same way. Nothing is interesting anymore.” I felt relieved that he had the same feelings as I did. In that way, connecting as husband and wife, we were able to stabilize our feelings, and we could revitalize our energy to go back to Mabi and start to rebuild our lives.

Starting the 2020 academic-year, I was able to take part in the national courses again. In the online lectures that started in July due to social circumstances reflecting the pandemic of Covid-19, Director General Kaneko shared that “Each person’s consciousness is what creates society. Working to correct self-centeredness is what will correct society.” In the Q&A session, I asked a question. “Even after we’d gone through the disaster and feeling grateful to still be alive, being with my husband every day gets me into arguments with him. He would say little things like ‘You need to turn your T-shirt inside out and put it in the laundry net when you wash it’, to which I always feel annoyed and think why he is so picky about everything. How can I change my consciousness about this?” Director General Kaneko then answered, “After retirement couples spend more time together, and I think you see things about your partner that you didn’t see before. With that, you have to think about what you can learn from it, and if I may, my advice is to put first priority on just one of those little comments of your husband. Making an effort to listen to what he has to say is a way of taking your own egocentrism or selfishness out of the equation.”

Looking back at when I heard that advice, I realized that I was only trying to reluctantly change my behavior to stop my husband from making annoying remarks, and that I was not

listening to what he was really trying to tell me. I understood then that his message was to handle the things we have in our life with love and care. When he had been at work, I had done the housework in my own way, but now I realized that listening to what my husband had to say was a way of removing my own egocentrism. Making that my personal challenge and actually listening to my husband in daily life, I became more relaxed. Three months later, I see myself actually doing the things my husband suggests and I’m surprised at myself.

In October 2020, I was given the role of lecturer for the Okayama regional seminar, and I looked back on the two years that have passed since the disaster. I’ve lost count of how many people I’ve been involved with, and who have thought of me, of course including people from the Center. Also, though it was a very difficult experience, when I thought about how I was able to push through, I thought about my late parents. My father faced the end of World War II at the age of 20, then he cultivated land on a mountain, built a house where there had been nothing, plowed the fields and raised my older sister and I. They survived through those harsh conditions, and I think I inherited their tough mentality. I felt a strong connection to them that way, and I’m sure they were supporting me from afar, urging me to keep going through the hard times.

I have been learning the Nomura Lifelong Integrated Education for 30 years now. Not having any children was one thing that was very hard in my life, but I continued to integrate the important message given to me that I should instead value my very being. Through a great many relationships, I was able to deepen the bond that I have with my husband since the disaster, and to have my eyes opened to how much I’m supported by things that cannot be seen, and I’m now truly thankful for all of it.

It has been almost one year since I moved back to Mabi. I’m thankful to have been introduced to this learning, to have my life, and to have an everyday routine again. I want to learn about myself from the things I encounter every day, and to continue to challenge myself to change.

