

# take my hand

Connecting lives across the globe  
Winter 2020-2021



Thanh preparing Vietnamese sweets for HTC

## BLESSINGS AMIDST THE PANDEMIC

The coronavirus pandemic has brought changes to life at ARI— not all of them are bad.

PAGES 4-5

## PARTICIPANT PORTRAITS

The ARI training prepares young Japanese to work with people overseas.

PAGES 8

## VOLUNTEER CONNECTION

Caitlin O'Quinn discovers friendship and calling in her two years of service.

PAGE 9

## FAREWELL

Remembering three AFARI members who helped ARI's mission come true.

PAGE 11

# Moderators for Peace

Today, the study of peace is making remarkable progress around the world. From among these studies, Tomoko Arakawa, the Director of ARI, has focused on the importance of dialogue. The word dialogue means communication, but it also implies a greater emphasis on the *process* of communication.

There is a dialogue method called “Ho Pono Pono” that originated in a village in Hawaii. In this method, when a problem arises, the group of people involved form a circle, and the elder, irrelevant to the case, moderates the discussion. A tree branch is passed around the circle by the moderating elder so that the discussion runs smoothly. There is a rule that only the person who holds the branch can speak.

Tomoko-san focuses on the importance of the moderator’s role, which requires listening deeply and leading arguments to peace. She says that such elements are crucial for a true servant leader. ARI’s five-year Peace and Reconciliation Leader Training Program with Texas Christian University includes this interactive approach: to train participants in taking turns when moderating discussions about daily issues.

Solving conflicts depends on the moderator having a mindset to empathize, regardless of his/her direct involvement, when people neglect the minutiae of emotions and details during a confrontation. Therefore, to achieve a real solution, we should aim for constructive communication and deepened mutual understanding rather than merely applying punishments.

At ARI, we are working to live this approach. In these times of COVID-19, it is essential we bring understanding, empathy, and healing to one another.



**Tomoko Arakawa**  
Director



**Kai Shinoda**  
Ecumenical Relations  
Volunteer



### FIND ARI ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

Subscribe to enjoy news about our volunteers, new events, and ARI life!  
Updating every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday



### TAKE MY HAND

Newsletter of the Asian Rural Institute, Winter 2020 - 2021 issue

**Publisher:** Masaoki Hoshino, Tomoko Arakawa

**Editors:** Kathy Froede, Thomas Fujishima, Kai Shinoda, J.B. Hoover

**Proof-reading:** Joyce Ray

**Layout and Design:** Jun Yagisawa

**Printing:** EDMS Inc.

**Overseas Distribution:** American Friends of ARI

2020 ©Asian Rural Institute



## What's Happening

### Fewer Visitors but Deeper Bonds



Each year, we accept nearly 100 people as “working visitors;” they experience ARI community life and contribute to the community. Due to the influence of COVID-19, we had to stop accepting working visitors for a few months, but we were finally able to resume the program from July 1st. We accepted only those who could stay for more than one week to set up a health observation period.

With this minimum stay requirement, we thought fewer visitors would come. However, as a result, there were many good aspects. Yes, fewer visitors came to ARI, but with extended stays, the mutual impact between visitors and the community was more significant. Visitors from universities worked or studied online and were able to stay at ARI longer. One working visitor came back to be a long-term volunteer. Many others are still in touch with the ARI community after they returned home.

By spending time together with the community, working visitors and ARI members could deepen their bonds. Although we are facing difficulties due to COVID-19, there are many things we can learn from it, and we appreciate all the encounters this year.

### From Waste to Fuel

Straight Vegetable Oil (SVO) has attracted a lot of attention among farmers who deal with agricultural machinery. SVO is one way to recycle waste oil from cooking into fuel for agricultural machinery by filtering it. It is an innovative fuel that is much easier to produce than the process-intensive bio-diesel of the past. Our school started to use SVO last year, and we have operated various machines with about 400 liters of SVO.

However, despite SVO’s convenience, there are some problems. Due to the simultaneous filtration of a large amount of waste oil, dirt accumulated in the filtration machine, causing the produced fuel to clog the fuel tank of another machine. As we receive a large amount of waste oil from the local food industry for fuel, we need to filter and unclog the oil this winter. Osamu Arakawa, the farm manager, will start cleaning the tractor’s fuel tank, and the SVO tractor will be fully operational soon.



Graduates of 2020:

- (1) Mwalimu Shehe Muzungu, Kenya
- (2) Tran Thi Bich Thanh, Vietnam
- (3) Saidath Murorunkwere, Rwanda
- (4) Joshua Ofori Suttah, Ghana
- (5) Hiroka Komatsubara, Japan
- (6) Celestine Mitsanze, Kenya
- (7) Agustinus Adil, Indonesia
- (8) Martin G. Kirigia, Kenya
- (9) Yūta Kimura, Japan
- (10) Shothayi Dozo, India



Rice Harvest on October 1

## Blessings Amidst the Pandemic

Creative adjustments carry our community through the pandemic.



Tomoko Arakawa  
Director

At ARI, we set our coronavirus countermeasures based on the Japanese government's guidelines and try our best to implement them in our lives. We modified how we conduct gatherings, classes, and observation trips. We drastically reduced the number of visitors and business trips of the staff. New visitors can join only after an "observation period." With these and other restrictions since April 2020, our community has limited its size to about forty people. (Our usual numbers are around sixty to seventy.) During a regular summer's peak season, the total number sometimes exceeds a hundred, but we kept the size small this year.

Today, the ordinary scenery at ARI is different than usual. ARI used to be filled with people of different nationalities and cultures and looked more chaotic. However, now each person can use more space and life seems more relaxed. The most significant difference is at mealtimes. A dining table that used to be occupied by eight to nine people is now occupied by only two to three. With eight or nine you some-

times cannot hear clearly what others say, but now you can talk and listen to each other very well. When the weather is good, people like to sit and eat on the outside deck enjoying the changes of nature and a comfortable breeze. That intensifies the taste of the meal and the quality of conversation even more!

Finding myself in such an environment, I imagined that this might be like what the ARI community was at its very beginning. In a more close-knit community where people's mobility is limited, they live life sincerely, keeping an intimate and trusting relationship with each other. I feel that the present situation at ARI may be embodying our central idea: "Let us make a world in which people value life and food that sustains our lives—that we may live together."

We should not forget those in deep sorrow and struggle due to this pandemic, but I affirm that God never fails us and gives us abundant blessings despite this difficult time.



# A New Curriculum Under COVID-19

When movement is restricted, opportunities are found close to home.



Yukiko Ōyanagi  
Associate Director /  
Curriculum Coordinator



With Mr. Yōhei Hamanaka (organic farmer), '13 Graduate

The 2020 Rural Leaders Training Program is going on in the midst of the extraordinary situation posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We had to change many things to make this happen. However, we see this situation not only as a “difficulty” but also filled with “new learnings.” What are those new learnings?

One of the things which we avoid as a precaution is to visit big cities where we see more infections. We canceled the usual Tokyo homestay program and did not visit Osaka for a study tour. Not only city trips, but we even canceled going to rural communities in the northern part of Japan. So instead, ARI arranged to go on study trips within our prefecture which is less affected by the pandemic. We visited Shinrin no Bokujō (a dairy farm in the forest), Manmaru Farm (an organic farm), Chus (an organic food restaurant), Donkame (a compost center), Ōhinata Marché (a local organic market) and more. Participants visited thirteen places and learned about sustainable farming, local resources utilization, social business, and networking. As a result, ARI has built stronger relationships and networks within Tochigi Prefecture, especially in our immediate local area. We staff felt that we want to continue visiting those local communities for study tours even after the pandemic.

In October we were able to conduct our Harvest Thanksgiving Celebration (HTC). Every year, 1000-1500 people visit ARI for HTC. This year, we limited the number to only 100 people (fifty for the morning, fifty for the afternoon). We secured enough space for social distancing and prepared many countermeasures. Participants took leadership, coordinating discussions, preparations, and work. Despite the small number of guests, everybody gained great learning experiences from HTC. And, of course, with all the ARI members together, we were able to celebrate and give thanks to God for the abundant harvest of crops, livestock, and our friendship.

Because of COVID-19, we had to change many things. But these changes created new opportunities: new areas of learning, deeper discussions, more leadership opportuni-

ties, etc. Participants kept their strong motivation, saying, “We already faced many difficulties to come to Japan. Anything that happens now is no problem. We are here to learn, to bring something back to our community. We have been transformed. ARI is full of precious learning opportunities which we cannot experience in any other place.”

Yes, this year we have only ten participants. But we staff members often tell them, “You are the best ten in the world.”

From the first day of their arrival until the very last moment of the Rural Leaders Training, we staff continue to challenge the participants for their transformation and learning. We believe they will continue to serve as great rural leaders who work for their community.

## FUNDRAISING

### SUPPORT ARI IN 2021

Blessings to all who remembered us in 2020. We especially appreciate your encouragement through continued support when these times may be challenging for you, too. We invited 28 participants to attend the 2021 class and earnestly hope travel restrictions will be lifted and visas approved. The future is still uncertain due to COVID-19.

The developing world has a widespread and urgent need for rural leaders. ARI prepares participants to improve food security and to address many other community needs. Through their leadership, they serve for decades into the future.

Please support ARI with prayers, an additional gift, or with automatic monthly payments. See the back cover for information.



From left to right:  
 Songu Nabieu  
 Pig farmer  
 Pig farmer  
 John Yeboah ('18)  
 Takieu Amara  
 Magnus Musa  
 John Tucker

TRAINING

## Adaptation and Growth in Kumasi

Travel restrictions forced them to stay in Ghana, now the Sierra Leonean men who couldn't attend the training have returned home—with new skills and insights.

Despite being unable to join the other participants of 2020 in Japan, the four Sierra Leonean participants, John Tucker, Songu Nabieu, Magnus Musa, and Takieu Amara, feel grateful about the experience they had with 2018 graduate, John Yeboah, in Kumasi. John Tucker called it “a blessing in disguise,” adding that it brought “great transformation not only in his life but his community of which he is very grateful to God and ARI.”

John Yeboah's training was a great learning experience for everybody, including us at ARI. He considered the program an “opportunity to make new friends, explore Christianity in him and create a good image for ARI.” Here at ARI, we reflected that our motto's spirit, “That we may live together,” can be shared in commendable ways through grace and action.

COVID-19 brought about unexpected roadblocks, and a key way in dealing with these situations was to adapt. John adapted the training that he underwent at ARI in his own way in order to share what he had learned. John's classes and practical activities managed to cover several core topics within a short time.

The training included Servant Leadership, planning, time management, coaching skills, the values of Foodlife, principles of organic farming, and livestock management.

Through these classes, John Tucker realized that, “Before going through the course, I trusted no one, I wanted to do everything, and I thought I knew everything. I wanted things to happen my way, and I did not consult [or] get other people's opinions.” Coming from varied backgrounds presented some challenges, he admits, but he learned the need for patience and humility through it. Like him, Magnus felt that he was changing and growing in “tolerance and reunionism.”

On September 11th, a little over five months since they had first landed in Ghana, our four friends returned home safely and gradually reintegrated in their communities. John commended his trainees for their perseverance and willingness to accept his training program and paying close attention to him throughout their activities, even though it was not ARI and not in Japan.

After their return, John has resumed

his busy schedule, preparing his vegetables for organic certification and organizing markets for his produce. When food security steadily rises as a global issue, COVID-19 reminds us of our rural communities' value and the need to strengthen farmers' essential work by equipping them with the ability to use locally available resources effectively. John's training has sparked a strong desire within the Sierra Leoneans to establish organic farms in consultation with their community, mobilizing resources to ensure effective teamwork. It has also created a new way of connecting and sharing ARI's lessons across vast distances.

*We appreciate John Yeboah, John Tucker, and Magnus Musa for their contributions to this article.*



Manosi Abe  
 Admissions Coordinator



PARTICIPANT PORTRAIT

## Growing Tolerance Towards Others

The ARI training prepares young Japanese to work and live overseas.

Hiroka Komatsubara majored in policy studies at university and came to ARI after graduation. ARI seemed like a good fit. Her grandfather taught her to care for nature, and she learned about international cooperation from JOCV<sup>1</sup> in junior high school. Her dream to be a JOCV member herself grew from there. However, she lacked expertise, practical work experience, and English skills to become a JOCV member right away.

While researching a place to satisfy the above, she learned about ARI and decided to visit. She was instantly convinced there was no other place in Japan where she could interact with people coming from different backgrounds and countries, and yet to be able to learn organic farming.

With many meaningful learning experiences at ARI, Hiroka thinks her tolerance has grown. At first, she was shocked to find people with a completely different sense of values and who, from her perspective, could do unbelievable things such as, not being completely punctual, working on irrelevant tasks, and even making extremely spicy food for supper. In such an environment, she learned to consider what circumstances might hide behind others' words and actions before judging.

Hiroka is enthusiastic about her next step: to become a Graduate Intern, a second-year Japanese graduate with a specific study focus. She is looking forward to the new challenges and supporting the following year's participants.

As she looks ahead to be a JOCV member, she wants to share her opinions and thoughts more accurately. After her JOCV service, she hopes to spend a lifetime sharing her knowledge and experience with others.

<sup>1</sup> Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, similar to the U.S. Peace Corps



PARTICIPANT PORTRAIT

## Determined to Serve Others

Yûta Kimura re-connects with his passions at ARI.



Yûta joined ARI as a volunteer in 2019, after leaving his previous job to pursue his future dream: to one day join the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers program.

During his previous work as a manager in the food service industry, Yûta felt uncomfortable when he had to fill multiple 45-liter garbage bags with leftover food every day. He was particularly concerned that about 80% of the fish products were imported from Africa. Learning that Africa's hunger problem is severe, his sense of responsibility grew into the ambition to go to Africa so that he could serve in JOCV's development program there.

While volunteering at ARI, Yûta successfully applied to join the JOCV team. But he soon realized that he could learn much more to prepare himself for JOCV if he first became an ARI Rural Leaders Training participant.

After several months at ARI, Yûta noticed that his attitude towards working had changed. In the past, he worked hard to increase sales, without consideration for the people he worked with, or even himself. Now Yûta believes that the experiences and knowledge he gains at ARI can be applied to all aspects of daily life. He has learned to avoid one-sided communication, to see things from different perspectives, and to value the process over the result.



Kai Shinoda  
Ecumenical Relations  
Volunteer

## GRADUATES

# Caring for the Sick: Mitsu's Letter to ARI

Report from a graduate who is a frontline hospital worker

**M**y name is Mitsumasa Arai, a 2013 graduate. I am currently working as a nurse in Kanagawa. I majored in International Culture at university. Since I was a member of the university's adventure club, I often visited rural areas in developing countries worldwide. I felt that life there was far from comfortable and that people lived an unsanitary and challenging experience. Even so, they were very hospitable, helping me when I was in trouble as a foreigner and sometimes letting me stay in their homes. I began to think about what I could do to help people in developing countries and became interested in international cooperation. I didn't have any special skills to use in international cooperation, so I decided to attend ARI.

I decided to become a nurse because a fellow participant from Nepal suffered from an athlete's foot infection. I explained to him in English how to use medicines and wash his feet every day and checked to see if he was taking care of the infection on a regular basis. At that time, I was the head of the men's dormitory, so I also took care of the residents when they caught a cold. Because of this experience I realized that I had no trouble caring for injured or sick people. After graduating from ARI, I entered nursing school, knowing that if I became a nurse I would be able to do what I wanted to do: work for people in the field of international cooperation.

Currently, I am a nurse at the Life Saving Center of St. Marianna University School of Medicine Hospital, Kanagawa. This hospital has been accepting patients with severe cases of the new coronavirus since the days of the *Diamond Princess*<sup>1</sup>. Initially, everyone thought things would soon be under control, but when the first wave hit, all the prepared beds quickly filled up, and the environment changed as we rushed



to build a negative pressure room<sup>2</sup>. Facing an unknown virus without a clear cure, we medical personnel could only guess what steps to take next. In addition, we wore medical masks, caps, gloves, and gowns, which felt like a sauna suit, when we came into contact with patients. Many staff members developed pressure ulcers on their faces or became emotionally ill from wearing medical masks for long periods. Despite our best efforts, patients were dying, and we felt empty. Yet, the number of patients continued to increase. We were exhausted both mentally and physically, fearing that we, too, would become infected. In such a situation, ARI friends encouraged me, and I remembered the starting point of my career. I realized

that what I was doing as a nurse was something worthwhile and not to be taken for granted.

In the future, I want to participate in JOCV<sup>3</sup> and Doctors Without Borders. I want to work hard and cultivate my experience while working in international cooperation, which is my dream.

<sup>1</sup> The first significant infection cluster in Japan occurred on the cruise ship *Diamond Princess*, on February 1st. Of the over 3,000 people on board, 712 were infected, 14 passed away.

<sup>2</sup> A special hospital room for patients to contain airborne contaminants.

<sup>3</sup> Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, similar to the U.S. Peace Corps



## CAMPUS

# Let the Sunshine In

New solar panels at ARI  
a step forward to energy independence

With the invaluable support from the John & Frank Sparacio Foundation, ARI is thrilled to share that we have successfully installed solar panels for electricity on our campus.

### Background

Sustainability is one of the fundamental principles that guide ARI. While we have achieved sustainability in some areas, we have more work to do in others. For example, we are 90% self-sufficient in food production, all using sustainable agriculture, but we buy nearly 80% of our energy for electricity and heating. This purchased energy's source is predominately fossil fuel, resulting in a large carbon footprint.

By installing a solar system with a capacity of 17,010 kW, we have decreased our reliance on fossil fuels by 16%, and have succeeded in reducing our carbon footprint and increasing our energy and financial sustainability. We estimate that ARI's carbon footprint will be reduced by approximately 8,263 kg-CO<sub>2</sub> annually, and will save approximately \$3,700 annually.

### Implementation

Because of the pandemic, implementation took longer than expected. The delay was due to the installation company having scheduling issues and disruptions to the components supply chain. Actual installation began on September 6 and was completed on September 30. The solar panels have been producing electricity for ARI now for a little over four months, and the system is working great!

### Incorporation into the training program

ARI will use this project as a case study for a course about global warming. Future participants will be able to monitor the electricity produced by the solar panels, providing them with an opportunity for experiential learning. In addition, the solar panel project is a key part of our long-term Sustainable Energy Plan, which is inspired by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (see the ARI's 2019 Annual Report for details).



## RECRUITMENT

### OFFICE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

As you know, ARI runs a farm as part of our Rural Leaders Training Program. However, we are much more than “just a farm,” and many kinds of work are needed to keep our training center running. Native English speakers who are willing to work in an office environment (don't worry, you will get time on the farm, too!) are much needed.

We have work in everything from data entry and email correspondence to producing and editing publications and short films, as well as writing, fundraising, and managing our social media. Now accepting applications for 2021!

Contact: [info@ari-edu.org](mailto:info@ari-edu.org)

SUPPORTER JOURNEY

# Building Bridges Between Worlds

As AFARI embarks on a new strategic direction, we are grateful for JB Hoover’s contributions as executive director.



Kathy Froede  
Ecumenical Relations

JB worked at ARI as admissions coordinator from 1993 to 2004. After moving back to the US, he worked with AFARI for fourteen years, serving as the executive director (ED) for the past ten years. During his speaking tours, he took ARI graduates to visit American supporters, making personal connections and passing on the ARI story. “Since JB led AFARI ..., I witnessed a huge change and development of AFARI in terms of shortening the distance between ARI and AFARI,” says ARI Director Tomoko Arakawa. “He nurtured the ARI spirit in AFARI and in the hearts of many North Americans.”

“After returning to the US, JB wisely spent a month each fall at ARI, listening to and working with participants and staff to enrich the sense of community,” recalls former AFARI Board member Pam Hasegawa. Some of his happiest moments were meeting new and long-time supporters, and at ARI, during his popular yearly classes about storytelling and ARI’s mission. “A significant gift he brought to the organization as executive director... was his ability to share the ARI story in meaningful and inspiring ways. These were reflections of his personal commitment to the vision and mission of ARI,” says Rev. Margret Hofmeister, AFARI Board President. Mr. J.B.H. Endô, Vice Chair of ARI’s Board of Directors, says, “More than anyone I know, JB-san was the one trying to understand the founder Takami Sensei’s

philosophy.” During Foodlife work, over lunch or supper, and far into the evening, JB could be found talking with Takami Sensei, and other community members. He was interested in listening to and learning from others and in helping others internalize the ARI spirit. During his tenure as AFARI’s ED, JB was proud to establish the Takami Scholarship Fund with the generous support of a major donor.

An active and committed trail runner, JB also participated in a marathon each year, creating the Run for Scholarship campaign, raising over \$150,000, and thereby supporting 21 participants since 2007. Beyond that, JB’s personal impact on many people’s lives over the years illustrates his qualities and achievements.

Former ARI volunteer Kay Shanks says, “I was assigned to the office where JB’s gentle leadership assisted in the functioning of this office. ... Since the ARI experience, JB has kept contact, stayed in our home when in Kansas on ARI missions, [and] allowing me to feel a part of his marathon runs to raise money so others could have the life-changing experience of living and working at ARI. For me, he was always a living example of the ARI motto – That We May Live Together.”

Thank you, JB, for your years of service and the generous heart given to ARI.



(1) JB Raring to Run the 2020 Virtual Marathon for fundraising for ARI  
(2) 1996 wearing gift from a participant from North East India  
(3) Speaking at the 40th Anniversary of ARI

## ARI COMMUNITY TAKAMI SENSEI’S FINAL REST

On December 5th, at Nishinasuno Church Cemetery, the remains of our beloved founder, Rev. Dr. Toshihiro Takami, were interred. Following his wish, his body was donated to medical research upon his death. Rev. HyungWook Ban presided over the ceremony attended by family and friends from ARI and locally.





FAREWELL

# Leaving a Legacy

In honor of three AFARI members who joined our work for justice, peace, and service.



MARJORIE JEAN TARR

We are sad to announce that, after a full life, Marjorie Jean Tarr passed away peacefully on October 3, 2020, in Northfield, MN. She was the beloved wife of the late Donald Tarr.

Marge and her family have been supporters of ARI since its founding and were among the original founders of AFARI. This decades-long and close affiliation with ARI/AFARI actually began when Don Tarr and ARI founder Toshihiro Takami were roommates at Doane College. Over the years, their friendship grew to include their families. There was such a strong bond between the families that the Tarr's consider the Takami's daughter, Kaori, as a daughter to them as well. Travel to the U.S. by the Takami's always included a stop in Northfield to visit with Don and Marge.

Marge's concern and care for her community were expressed through her volunteerism. She organized and ran a charity called Operation Hope that packed and mailed boxes of items for people in need. She cared deeply about the mission and vision of ARI and supported the organization both financially and spiritually.



FRED CLARK

In Sarasota, Florida, on August 15, 2020, Fred Clark was laid to rest after a long and well-lived life.

A career as a chemical engineer for Union Carbide took Fred and his family to Tokyo, where he met ARI founder, Toshihiro Takami, prior to the founding of ARI. Fred and his first wife, Jo, became friends with the Takami family and ARI supporters from its inception.

After retiring, Fred and Jo volunteered at ARI on several occasions. He also served on the board of AFARI from 1991 to 2005. Along with his second wife, Thelma, Fred continued to support ARI and had a keen interest in what was happening.

Fred was an intelligent and caring man who was active in the church and supported many organizations dedicated to peace, justice, and food security. He was always looking for ways to promote and support ARI, from hosting a fundraising event at his retirement community to scouting out frequent-flyer miles to help participants travel to ARI. Along with donating annually to AFARI, he gave to the recently endowed Toshihiro Takami Scholarship Fund and was part of the AFARI Legacy Circle.

In these times of upheaval and loss, people like Fred Clark offer us hope and a reminder that one person can make a lasting difference in the world.



NORIKO LAU

On September 25, 2020, Noriko Lao, ARI/AFARI supporter, "received her wings and is soaring with the Lord."

Noriko first learned of ARI when she served as the Pacific NW Conference Secretary of Global Ministries (United Methodist Church) in the US. During a conversation a few years ago with former AFARI Executive Director JB Hoover, Noriko shared with him about her connection with ARI. In her own words, "Since the March 11, 2011 earthquakes and tsunami, I helped UMCOR as a 'volunteer' consultant. I visited ARI several times and got to know Jonathan McCurley, Community Life Coordinator and UMC Missionary, and Steven Cutting, then Ecumenical Relations Coordinator. I was there for the 40th-anniversary celebration too, with UMCOR staff from NY."

Though her connection to AFARI had been more recently, she quickly became a strong supporter. She donated generously to both the "Run for a Scholarship" Fundraiser, and AFARI annual appeals.

In his message to us, her nephew Greg wrote of Noriko's "legacy of selfless service to others," concluding with this testament of her impact on her family and those whose lives she touched:

*"We will miss her deeply, but can look to her life and legacy as a model of how one person can make a big difference in the lives of so many others."*

## How to donate to ARI



### USA

U.S. citizens may make tax-deductible gifts to ARI through AFARI. Make out your check to the American Friends of ARI and send it to:

**American Friends of the  
Asian Rural Institute, Inc.**  
2028 E Ben White Blvd #240-9000  
Austin TX 78741-6931

or donate online through AFARI at

<http://afari.net/>

or automatic monthly payments by credit card or bank's bill pay service

### Canada

Canadian citizens can make a tax-deductible donation to the United Church of Canada to support ARI. Cheques payable to the UCC should be sent to:

**United Church of Canada**  
Church in Mission Unit  
3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 200  
Toronto, Ontario M8X 2Y4  
Attn: Pat Elson

(Please designate "ARI" on the cheque.)

## American Friends of the Asian Rural Institute, Inc.

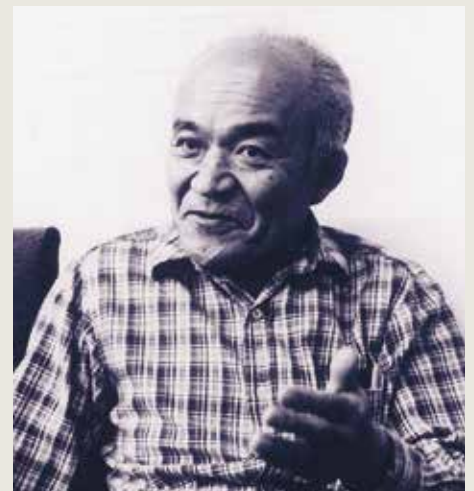
2028 E Ben White Blvd Ste #240-9000  
Austin TX 78741-6931

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

# Takami's Talk

"We are standing at a turning point.  
Our common task is to turn ourselves—our fate—  
for the better by simply cherishing life and food  
in our daily living and keeping close touch  
with the rhythm of nature."

Rev. Dr. Toshihiro Takami



Throughout 2020, the coronavirus was a significant part of the year. It was undoubtedly a turning point for many humans. Many were unavoidably thrown into harsh situations, and in the midst of it all, many saw unexpected opportunities and possibilities. ARI faced the same challenges, beginning with more than half of the overseas participants unable to come for the Rural Leaders Training Program due to country closures and travel restrictions.

But that is why we were also able to reaffirm the value of the people next to us—the warmth of caring for and being thought of by others. We were also able to experience the necessity of maintaining food self-sufficiency while household food security was significantly damaged worldwide regardless of rich or poor. We are reassured that our program's focus for the participants is on the right path.

It is not easy to tolerate a sudden and immense change of environment. However, Dr. Takami's words of encouragement tell us that if we sincerely care for people, food, and nature, all will be well, even when we are suddenly caught in a difficult situation.

Kai Shinoda  
Ecumenical Relations  
Volunteer



That We May Live Together

**address** Tochigi-ken, Nasushiobara-shi  
Tsukinokizawa 442-1  
329-2703 JAPAN

**email** info@ari-edu.org  
**tel** 0287-36-3111  
**fax** 0287-37-5833

**website** www.ari-edu.org  
**Facebook** Asian Rural Institute  
**Instagram** @asian\_rural\_institute