Mr. TAKAHIRO HIRAOKA, a teacher of English at Seikei Upper Secondary School in Tokyo, visited Concord, NH in the summer of 1985. At that time he had an opportunity to meet Mrs. Christa McAuliffe. He was very impressed with her, and followed her adventures with keen interest. Below are excerpts of his correspondence:



September 3, 1985

I love all the pictures you kindly took for me. As you point out, the one with Christa McAuliffe is so impressive. It came out so well that it will be a surprise to my students when I show it to them in January, when she goes up in orbit. I'll treasure it till the day comes.

January 25, 1986

I've been looking forward to the space flight which will take Christa McAuliffe and other crew into orbit since the beginning of the year, so, day after day, I'm very careful about the news from NASA. The day will soon come when I show that picture to my colleagues as well as to my students, which must be a great surprise to them all. I sincerely hope her adventurous flight will be a tremendous success and that she will come home with a lot of exciting information about the space travel. As a teacher, even though I live in a far away country in Asia, I'm so proud of her mission.

January 30, 1986

What a tragic accident occurred on the morning of January 28! A joyful mission of Christa McAuliffe, a proud teacher from Concord, NH, the first civilian who were to fly in the space for liaison with the students, with other six crew in orbit turned out a nightmare almost in a moment. Who on earth could predict such a horrible explosion that took the invaluable lives of the brave seven! It was indeed the greatest loss not only for the American people but for us all. How can we express our deepest sorrow and regret to have learned what happened to them just after the liftoff, which had appeared a perfect blastoff.

I was really stunned at the tragedy in my bed on the early morning (6:00 a.m.) of January 29 (Japan time), followed by wordless, oppressive moment. Truly, I couln't believe it, and still now I can't believe it - that Christa is gone. That cheerful smile of her, that challenging spirit to catch tomorrow, an energetic teacher at school and also a good wife and a good mother at home. What a perfect American lady she was! My sorrow and regret are greater and deeper all the more for that Christa McAuliffe Day that took place last August in front of the State House. Your good picture of "Takahiro and Christa" has now become a sad memory, but I dared to show it with her favorite words "Reach for the stars" to my students on the following morning to tell them that she was a distinguished teacher from Concord High School. Thank you very much for that memorable picture. I will keep it forever to remember both her name and her adventurous mind.

Finally let us share the deepest grief with you all, and please accept our condolences.

(signed) Takahiro, (Hiraoka)
Kimiko,
Mayumi,
Tetsuro,

P.S. Enclosed is a clipping from the Asahi Shinbun, a leading newspaper here, that reports the reactions after the fatal mission.

THE ASAHI SHINBUN, Tokyo, January 30, 1986

THE SPIRIT OF CHALLENGER LIVES ON

"I'll follow her" says H.S. Teacher

(N.Y. 1/29. Kubota, Special Correspondent)

If flight conditions of the space shuttle Challenger had been favorable, the lessons from space by Christa McAuliffe (37) beamed to all the children of America would have been exciting. "I shall describe the wonderful view from space", she said. But what is left behind for us now, by the one person who said those things, are now sadness and shock. However, there are other space teacher candidates who say: "I'll fly in space anytime." Her words "Reach for the Stars" will live on forever for those people who will not be stopped because of the tragedy. Mrs. McAuliffe had been selected in July of last year as first teacher in space, and this from some 11,000 applicants.

"My selection was like winning at the lottery", she said, expressing her joy at being selected from among 10 finalists. Speaking as a teacher she said:"Viewing earth from space, I want to tell the children the wonder and excitement of it. If I cannot help prepare our children for the future, I shall be disqualified as a teacher," she said. Born on September 2, 1948, she grew up in suburban Framingham. According to her father, Edward Corrigan: "Ever since she was a child she has been full of energy, the kind of person who never ceases to try to achieve her goal. Good at math, she was also active as a softball player in high school. She married Stephen McAuliffe, whom she met while she was at Framingham State College. She moved to Maryland, where she taught math and US history in high school. In 1978, having received her degree in math, she moved to Concord High School. There she taught law, economics and US history. In addition, she established a course called "American Women", in which she emphasized the role of ordinary people. "The man in the street is not inferior to the ruling classes or the politicians, and he plays an important part," she said over and over. Mrs. McAuliffe's classes always agreed with her about this. She was an enthusaistic teacher who could convey even dry subjects in a lively way.

When she was chosen as the first citizen astronaut in July of last year, her class exploded into cheers. One of her students, age 18, said: "She's perfect, she teaches in a way that makes it easy to understand things." She was 1.68 meters tall and weighed 58 kilos. She kept in shape by jogging several kilometers each day.

At the Johnson Space Center in Texas she went through over 140 hours of training. The plane used for experiencing weightlessness was nicknamed "Vomit Comet", because it causes people to feel like throwing up. However, Christa went through that like a veteran astronaut, which amazed the instructors.

She always advocated supreme effort. "If you only make the supreme effort, she said, anyone can fly in space, even an ordinary person like me. The door will be opened for a lot of people afterwards. A space station is something that is already close to reality, just like walking down the street," she said at a press conference.

Asked if she had any concerns about her son Scott (9) and her daughter (6), she said: "They'll both be watching my lesson from space." Chellenger exploded as both children were watching.

"To tell the truth, I don't want mommy to go in space. I wish she'd stay home" said Caroline on a TV interview before liftoff. These words now bring tears to all America. Meanwhile, the other finalists for teacher in space, showing their determination, say: "If we have the chance, we want to fly in space; our spirit has not changed."

At Irwin H.S. in Alabama, teacher Sophie Clifford said: "If there is another flight tomorrow, I'll apply." At Parkview H.S. in Little Rock, Arkansas, English teacher Bess Greenwell also said: "If we stopped every time tragedy strikes, there would be no America today. I'll go into space anytime."

Albert Shanker, President of the American Federation of Teachers, said, praising her: "She is the symbol of the aspirations and the optimism of all the teachers and students of America."

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マコーリフ先生
いま心の星に

シャトル惨事

挑戦の精神は永遠…
「私も続く」と高校教師

【ニューヨーク二十九日＝久保田特派員】スペースシャトル「チャレンジャー」が順調に飛行していれば、二十九日、クリスタ・マコーリフ先生（37）の宇宙からの授業が全米の子供たちを興奮させていたはずだ。「シャトルは飛行士のためだけじゃない。子どもたちの未来のためにあるのよ。すばらしい宇宙のながめを伝えるわ」と語っていた彼女が残したものは、しかし、悲しみと衝撃だけではない。「いつでも、宇宙に飛ぶ」と語る第二、第三の「宇宙の先生」候補生がいる。悲劇の前に立ち止まるだけでない人たちにとって、彼女の「星まで届け」の言葉は、生き続ける。



28日、マコーリフさんが乗ったスペースシャトル爆発の瞬間を、テレビで見た後、悲しみの表情でコンコード高校を出る教え子たち　＝AP

マコーリフさんが一万一千人の応募者の中から宇宙教師第一号として選ばれたのは昨年七月だった。

最終的に残った十人の候補者の中から全国を駆巡した喜びを、彼女は「宝くじに当たったようなものよ」と語っていた。また教師の立場から「宇宙から地球を眺めてその驚きや興奮を生徒たちに伝えてやりたい」「もし子どもたちに未来を用意してあげられないなら、教師として失格よ」と語った。

一九四八年九月二日、ボストンで生まれ、郊外のフラミンガムで育つ。

父親のエドワード・コリガン氏によると「小さいころからエネルギッシュで、目的に向かって進んでいく努力するタイプだった」という。数学が得意で、高校時代はソフトボールの選手としても活躍した。

フラミンガム・カレッジに在学中知り合ったスチーブン・マコーリフ氏と結婚、メリーランドに移って高校で数学と米国史を教え、七八年数学の学位を取ってコンコード高校に移った。

コンコード高校では法律、経済、アメリカ史を教えていた。とくに歴史では「アメリカの女性」という授業を作り、この中で、一般の人々が歴史に与えた影響を強調。いつも、「市井の人々というのは王様や政治家らに劣らず重要な役割を果たしている」と繰り返していた。

マコーリフさんの担任するクラスは、いつもまとまりが良かった。彼女が熱心に、無限に発展する科目も、いきいきと教えたからだ。だから昨年七月、彼女が市民宇宙飛行士第一号に選ばれた時には、クラス中に大歓声があがった。教え子の一人（一八）は「彼女は先生よ。とってもわかりやすく教えてくれるの」と話していた。

身長一六八㌢、体重五八㌔の恵まれた体格。毎日数キロのジョギングで鍛えた丈夫な体。テキサス州ジョンソン宇宙センターなどでの南十四時間に及ぶ厳訓練にも耐えた。無重量状態を無感覚にするための飛行機は、吐き気を催すので〝吸吐すい星〟のニックネームがあるほどだが、まるでベテラン宇宙飛行士のように平然としていた。

「チャレンジャー」はその二人の子供が見守る中で爆発した。「本当はママに宇宙に行ってほしくない」「家にいてもらいたいの」――出発前、テレビのインタビューに答えるキャロラインちゃんの言葉が、いま全米の涙をさそっている。

一方、「宇宙授業」計画でマコーリフさんとともに最終選考に残った「宇宙の先生」候補たちは衝撃と悲しみを受けながらも「もし、チャンスを与えられたら、宇宙に飛ぶ」と、変わらない意欲を見せる。

アラバマ州バーミンガムのアーウイン高校教師、ソフィー・クリフォードさんは「もし、もう一つのスペースシャトルがあす飛ぶといったら、私はすぐ応募します」と語る。アーカンソー州リトルロックのパークビュー高校の英語教師ベス・グリーンウェルさんも「悲劇が起きるたびに立ち止まっていたら、現在のような米国はなかったでしょう。私はいつでも宇宙に行きます」と決意を語る。

全米教員組合のアルバート・シャンカー会長は、マコーリフさんを「彼女は全米の教師と生徒の希望と冒険主義のシンボルである」とたたえた。

THE ASAHI SHINBUN, Tokyo

February 1, 1986

Photo caption: In Concord, NH, where Mrs. McAuliffe taught - the teacher who died in the shuttle Challenger explosion - the Stars and Stripes and a poster have been attached to the limbs of a tree. The poster says: "Christa, we love you". As students from the high school walk by, they bow their heads in sign of respect.



スペースシャトル爆発事故で死んだマコーリフさんが教えていたコンコード高校の近くでは30日、街路樹に星条旗と「クリスタ、私たちはみんなあなたが大好きだ」と書かれたポスターが結びつけられ、同校の生徒たちが通り過ぎるたびに黙とうした　＝AP

悲しみの空に七つの黒風船

マコーリフさん慰霊祭

【ニューヨーク支局三十日】スペースシャトル・チャレンジャーの爆発事故で死んだ女教師、クリスタ・マコーリフさんの追悼慰霊祭が三十日、母校マサチューセッツ州フラミンガム州立大で両親や同僚など千五百人が出席してしめやかに営まれ、悲嘆の七人の飛行士の霊を慰めようと寒風の空に七つの黒風船が悲しく放たれた。

夫のスチーブン・マコーリフ氏と二人の遺児は三十一日、ヒューストンで開かれる追悼式に参加するため姿を見せなかったが、両親のほか四人の兄妹が参列した。

同僚のチャールズ・スポサト氏は「マコーリフ先生は私たちの心の中に永遠に生き続けるでしょう。彼女は星になって輝いている」と弔辞を述べ、デュカキス・マサチューセッツ州知事は「ジョン・ケネディ大統領（当時）に続いて、もう一人の偉大な人物がマサチューセッツから消えた。マコーリフさんはケネディと並ぶわれわれの英雄である」と語った。

マコーリフさんが教職（きょうしょく）をとっていたニューハンプシャー州のコンコード高校では三十一日午後六時から追悼式が行われ、聖パウロ教会の鐘が犠牲者一人につき一分ずつ、計七分間鳴らされることになっている。

一方、ジェームズ・マッケイ・コンコード市長は三十一日を「マコーリフ追悼の日」にすると宣言した。

事故の重要から休校になっていたコンコード高校の授業は三日から再開されたが、報道陣の校内立ち入りは禁止されている。

SEVEN BLACK BALLOONS IN THE MOURNFUL AIR

The McAuliffe Memorial Service

(From our New York office)

On January 30th a memorial service was held for Christa McAuliffe (who died in the space shuttle Challenger explosion) at her alma mater, Framingham State College. Some 1500 people participated, among them her parents and colleagues. In commemoration of the seven astronauts, seven black balloons were released in the cold air. Her husband, Stephen McAuliffe, and her two children were not able to attend because they were to attend the memorial service in Houston on the 31st. But her brothers and sisters were in attendance.

A colleague, Mr. Charles Sposat (?), said: "Mrs. McAuliffe will live in our hearts forever. She has become a bright, shining star."

Massachusetts governor Dukakis said: "Like the late president John F. Kennedy, yet another public figure from Massachusetts has lost her life. Mrs. McAuliffe is also a heroine," he added.

At Concord, NH, high school, where Mrs. McAuliffe taught, a memorial service took place, starting at 6:00 p.m. on the 31st. At St. Paul's church the bells were rung seven times, once every minute. Meanwhile, James Mackay, the mayor of Concord, declared the 31st to be a "McAuliffe Day of Mourning."

At Concord high school classes were suspended because of the tragedy. The media people were banned from standing and waiting inside the school building.

FROM Mr. and Mrs. ROGER DUMONT, Brussels, Belgium:

February 2, 1986

Dear all,

Everyone here was terribly shocked by the horrible accident of Challenger. Most Belgians feel quite close to Americans, but we are particularly distressed, remembering how you met and were so proud of the Concord teacher who was a member of the team. We heard a lot about her on TV and even saw her house, one of her children and various views of the church where a service was held in memory of her. I'm sure all New Hampshire felt utterly wretched and it's going to be difficult getting over such a tragedy.

FROM Mr. SATORU NAKAJIMA, Tokyo, Japan:

February 11, 1986

The news of the Challenger explosion came as a great shock to us, too. I had not been following the progress of the space shuttle project too carefully, and the name of Mrs. McAuliffe was new and unfamiliar when you mentioned it in your letter. Now suddenly and painfully, it was branded on my mind. Death of people whom you know, whether personally or not, is always a shock, and I can well imagine how people in Concord felt at the bad news. Perhaps everyone was watching the scene of the liftoff on TV, with no premonition, of course, of that terrible disaster. I am very sorry that this tragedy came to pass, and extend my hearty sympathy to all who knew her.

A SCHOLARSHIP FROM JAPAN TO McAULIFFE'S H.S.

(The Asahi Shinbun, Tokyo)

(Feb. 21, 1986)



河野科学技術庁長官の呼びかけで、スペースシャトル・チャレンジャー爆発事故の犠牲となった女性教師、クリスタ・マコーリフさん(左=写真=)が勤務していた高校に、日本から奨学基金を贈ることになった。

河野長官は、チャレンジャーの合同追悼式に日本政府代表として出席したが、この時、いかに米国民がこの事故を悲しんでいるかを目のあたりにした。また、それを乗り越えて宇宙開発を進めることにも、日本の宇宙開発を進める者として共感「気持ちを米国民に具体的に伝えたい」と考えたのが、基金を贈ることにしたきっかけという。

早速、宇宙開発関係者や企業、教育関係者などに協力を働きかけた。

マコーリフさんの高校に 日本から奨学金

目標は十万ドル(約千八百万円)。近く米のマンスフィールド駐日大使に正式に伝えるが、できれば三月初めにも、米ニューハンプシャー州のコンコード高校に送りたい、としている。「幅広く呼びかける時間がないが、協力して下さる方があれば、科学技術庁(〒100千代田区霞が関二ノ二ノ一)長官秘書室へ」と話している。(朝日新聞)

Under the initiative of Mr. Kono, Minister of science and technology, it has been decided that a scholarship fund will be given to the school where Christa McAuliffe taught. Mrs. McAuliffe was a victim of the shuttle Challenger tragedy.

Minister Kono attended, as the representative of the Japanese government, the memorial service held for the victims of Challenger. At that time he witnesseed how deeply saddened the American people was. Also, in his capacity as the person in charge of promoting space research in Japan, he feels deep sympathy and he shares the feeling that one should go forward despite the accident. Wishing to convey his feelings in a concrete manner, he came up with the idea of a fund. He immediately started to ask for the cooperation of people involved with education and with space development enterprises.

The goal is $100,000 (approximately 18 million yen). He will soon inform US ambassador Mansfield. If conditions permit, he would like to send the money to Concord High School by early March. There is not enough time to spread the news widely, but anybody who wishes to contribute is asked to send the money to the office of the Minister's secretary (Address: Chioda-ku, Kasumigaseki 2-2-1, Tokyo 100. In care of the Minister's secretary.)