

Fore
word**To Pray Indiscriminately**

by the Reverend Shinji Oshiro Principal of Konkoko Gakuin Seminary

If you practice faith in our Parent Kami, following the path of Konko Daijin, our Founder, for a long time, you will gradually come to realize that the way you approach Kami becomes the very way you live your life. Even when we do not sit before the Kami Altar (for praying), we still embrace a heart of gratitude, a heart to pray for others and a heart to pray earnestly to Kami in our daily life. With these hearts, we will get to live with conscience and sincerity, I believe. At first, we may pray to Kami about ourselves and our family ONLY. Many of us, however, come to pray also about other people whom we interact with, our local community and our country, as time goes by. And our prayers for these people and things are on our mind all the time, and this enables us to care about them on a constant basis.

On July 28th, 2026, a huge earthquake struck the Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan. (This is now officially called the 2026 Kumamoto Earthquake.). Severe damage was confirmed in many areas of the prefecture. The mitama spirits of those who lost their lives in the earthquake be saved, and the reconstruction of the victimized people's towns must be done, hopefully swiftly. And we, as believers of the Konko Faith, need to pray to our Parent Kami for all those people in Kumamoto, as if it were happening in OUR very community.

We all know that the Universe is alive. Because the Universe is alive, it does a lot of things. When its activities are positive for us, we usually consider them "blessings." When they are negative for us, we usually consider them "(natural) disasters." Too often, we, humans, set

boundaries on various things. But the Universe (Kami) does not have any such boundaries. When we deeply understand Konko Daijin's faith (in Kami), we gradually come to feel no boundaries between the Universe and ourselves. We also come to feel no boundaries between Kami and ourselves. This allows us to think that our body belongs to Kami and time that passes without pauses also belongs to Kami. All things that exist and all events that take place are because of Kami and Kami's workings. All things are in the Universe and each of those things is connected with one another and they respect one another as well.

Whenever I see our Spiritual Leader/Principal Mediator, I try to follow and learn from his heart, attitude and mindset. When Konko-sama sits at the

Mediation Seat, he listens to me as if he were listening to his own story. With this very sincere attitude, Konko-sama performs Toritsugi Mediation for me and even says, "Thank you very much, Konko-sama!" When he says this, he is being happy for me but to me, he looks as if he were being happy for himself. This gives me a feeling in which I exist within Konko-sama's "self." I feel embraced by Konko-sama's grand and warm heart. Because I regularly receive Konko-sama's Sacred Mediation, I am motivated to have Konko-sama on my mind and give myself training where I try to express Konko-sama's heart in my own "self." Seeking to have no boundaries in my life... this is the purpose for me to ask for and receive Toritsugi Mediation.

Konko-sama says, "Please think about how

to make all people of the world smile." These words reflect Konko-sama's heart with NO boundaries. By training ourselves, we will hopefully seek and think about what to do in order for all people to have a big smile on their faces.

When one's "self" transcends that person's frame as an individual, the heart of this person is ready to pray for all people's happiness and well-being. Too often, human nature makes us think, "As long as I am happy, and as long as I am satisfied, that's OK. Nothing else matters." This notion is paramount for most of us. However, if the above-mentioned (mental) transformation happens, this kind of selfish ideas will soon be just as important as a notion of "Well, but I want all people to be happy and content as well." And this person will soon find himself/herself being

praying for the whole world without any boundaries. He or she will also find out that he/she now has a heart to pray for true peace of the world.

Our Founder, Konko Daijin, teaches us, "Whether you are alive or dead, heaven and earth are your eternal home." We and the mitama spirits of our respective ancestors, we are all parts of the Universe. We get to feel at ease and peace by thinking that we co-exist within the Universe. Mitama spirits pray for the fulfillment of all people including those in the victimized areas. They pray with no boundaries. This month, in September, we will hold the Memorial Service. I sincerely hope that we will be able to feel a relationship between these mitamas and us, where we co-exist in the Universe and pray for one another.

Gathering of Konko Ministers' Children

A Peaceful World... It All Starts with "My" First Step Forward

An annual gathering of Konko Ministers' Children for the year 2026 was held for 3 days from August 3rd to 5th. From various parts of Japan, 19 teenagers (9 boys and 10 girls) participated.

"A Great Operation for World Peace" was this year's theme for the event. There are a couple of reasons for this: this came from what the Sixth Konko-sama said in Konkokyo's radio program on New Year's Day of this year with the title, "Wishing for World Peace." It also came from the fact that this year marks the 100th Anniversary of Konkokyo's propagation in North America and Hawaii. During these 3 days, the participants aimed to be "peacemakers," who express "world peace" in their daily life in a concrete way.



Words of Konko-sama

I cannot but thank our Parent Kami for the fact that you are here now. This is all possible because, first of all, you are connected to Konko Daijin, our dear Founder, through many, many people. It is possible also because many people, especially your parents, have been praying to Kami for your growth up to today. I am truly thankful about this.

I sincerely hope that all of you will get to have a great time with each other for these 3 days from now. You are all connected to the faith of Konko Daijin, and so I pray that you will be allowed to "play" between Heaven and Earth.

Welcome to the Sacred Grounds of Konkokyo, ladies and gentlemen!

Thank you.

On Day 1, they gave prayers at the Konko HQ Central Worship and Mediation Hall for the commencement of the gathering, which was followed by the Reverend Kazumasa Tsukamoto asking for and receiving Sacred Mediation with Konko-sama, the Spiritual Leader/Principal Mediator of the Konko Faith (Rev. Tsukamoto is the Director of the Outreach Dept. of Konkokyo HQ Administration). Everybody in the Hall got to receive Konko-sama's words. They then moved to the Yatsunami Hall and had Opening Ceremony, where the Rev. Hashimoto, the Chief Administrative Director of the Konko Faith, made opening remarks.



Following the Opening Ceremony, all of the participants were appointed "peacemaking trainees" and the participating teenagers shared the goal and objective of the event with each other. After that, they were divided into several groups and each group had an orientation period. During this period, they

decided the role of each member of their group. They also came up with each participant's nickname.

For an icebreaker, they played a game called "Nickname Hunting," where the teenage boys and girls were supposed to say "Hi!" to one another and "collect" as many nicknames of the participants as possible, introducing their nickname to each other. Many of the young people looked nervous at first but they gradually came to talk to one another with a smile and the atmosphere of the room became warm and friendly.



After that, they engaged in "dinner-making" activity. Each group made gyoza and salad.



The members of each group helped one another very well, and they enjoyed talking about school life and hobbies. Some people were good at making the shape of gyozas look

beautiful, and others were not, and they had a lot of fun talking about it. This gave them an opportunity to know each other better and more deeply. After the preparation of their own dinner, they saw off Konko-sama at 16:40 politely and graciously. Shortly after that, it was dinner time and they enjoyed what they had made in a friendly atmosphere.

The teenage participants gave an evening



prayer at "evening assembly." Since this year marks the 35th anniversary of the Fourth Konko-sama's Passing, the adolescents played a game through which they got to become familiar with the poems of the former Konko-sama. In this way, they concluded Day 1 in high spirits.

Day 2 started with "morning assembly," which was followed by their walking tour of the Replica of the Founder's Residence/Toritsugi Mediation Site, the Founder's Gravesite, the Gravesite of the Successive Konko-samas and the worship place (hiromae) of the Gakuin Seminary. A staff member of the event gave explanations about each of those sites to the participants. They also enjoyed a nice view from the top of the Yuzaki-yama Mountain. At the hiromae of the Seminary, a representative of the teenage



group received Toritsugi Mediation from the Rev. Shinji Oshiro, the Principal of the Seminary, and the Rev. Oshiro made a short sermon for the youngsters.

After the tour, they returned to the Yatsunami Hall and played tag called "Let's Grab 'World Peace!'" In this game, the participants were supposed to run around and avoid being caught by a "hunter," who was



played by a staff member. Avoiding being caught, the teenagers were also supposed to cooperate with one another and complete several tasks together. The

youngsters had a lot of fun, screaming and shouting with joy. They also seemed to have deepened their mutual friendship.

A joyful time was followed by a more serious period for "study." In this study period, the participants learned "the Konko Faith in the world." More concretely speaking, they studied the history of Konkokyo propagation outside of Japan and the wondrous workings of prayers that transcend borders and cultures. The participants also learned the English version of Tenchi Kakitsuke or the Divine Reminder.

After eating lunch, the (senior) high school students watched a lecture by the Rev. Masato Kawahatsu (Konko Propagation Hall of South San Francisco) in a form of recorded video. The Rev. Kawahatsu said the following



things in the video:

"I had an out-of-body experience when I was young, and this experience gave me a question, 'What is true happiness?' And this question gave me a motivation to enter the Konkokyo (Gakuin) Seminary. During my life at the Seminary, I realized three things.

- 1) I had a mysterious experience at the Founder's Gravesite. Through the experience, I realized a continuous state of (many creatures') lives that spans 3.8 billion years.
- 2) When I asked the Fourth Konko-sama to perform Sacred Mediation for me, and

Konko-sama taught me, "Most people pray earnestly when they go abroad, but they usually do not pray at all when they go to a nearby supermarket, for example. But this attitude is wrong. Far or near, you can't go there and do what

you want/need to do unless you receive Kami's blessing. You consider a near place and a far place separately, but to Kami, there is no difference between the two." Konko- sama's words set me free from the chains with which I had bound myself unconsciously for years. He taught me that I should let go a notion of comparing people/things.

- 3) I have a fragile body by nature and tend to become sick more often and more quickly than others. But I decided to practice a teaching, "Kami's blessings begin within Hearts grateful and caring, In harmony and joy." For this purpose, I thanked a lot and smiled a lot. By doing this, I was able to forget my own disease and got to receive overall blessings from Kami-sama.



After graduating from the Seminary, I was assigned to do goyo (serve Kami) in the United States, which was way beyond my imagination. Living in a foreign country meant



that everything was new to me and I had experienced none of them before going to America. I, however, knew that the three things I had realized during my Gakuin days would back me up, and they actually have done so for me. I have been doing one thing that I can do after another. One of the things I've been doing is to hand cards to people that I meet. On the cards, I write, for instance, "Let's say THANK YOU for a thousand times a day!" "Let's celebrate each and every day!" "Thank you for your care and consideration for me!" I find this project wonderful, and I strongly encourage each one of you to do the same thing. I want you to write down what you cherish and/or believe in on cards and give them to people around you. You don't need to do something big. Do what you can do so that you can help all people of this world smile."

After the lecture by the Rev. Kawahatsu, they had a group discussion, where they discussed what they thought about the lecture and what they wanted to do from now. During or shortly after the discussion period, the



participating teenagers followed Kawahatsu sensei's example and each of them made 5 cards, on which they wrote down what they thought was important.

After that, the group of young people politely saw off Konko-sama, hanging a Gathering banner they had made. They then had a barbeque dinner and firework time in the



southern open space of the Konko HQ Grand Ceremony Hall. Through those activities, the young adolescents had a lot of fun and their mutual friendship seems to have become even deeper.

On the morning of Day 3, some participants volunteered to "welcome" Konko-sama, waking up very early. During the morning assembly, the participants recited the Divine Reminder in both Japanese and English. After breakfast, each participant chose a poem by the Fourth Konko-sama and made so-called a "tanzaku shikishi." (Tanzaku is a tanzaku



the poem that he/she chose carefully and sincerely, cherishing the meaning/message of the poem and their own prayer for peace that they had developed through these three days.

strip of paper for writing haiku. Shikishi is a board made of paper. Here, they made a rectangle tanzaku with the thickness of shikishi.) Using colorful brush pens, each participant wrote down

Prior to the Closing Ceremony, there was a petit ceremony in which each participant was designated as a "peacemaker." The teenagers for the Gathering deserved this honor, because they had aimed to realize peace through each of the curriculums during the 3 days. The Rev. Shohei Suenaga, a Deputy Director of the Outreach Department, handed a certificate of peacemaker to each youngster. The Rev. Suenaga gave words of encouragement to each participant, so that the teenage participants would be motivated to act as "peacemakers" from now on.



In the Closing Ceremony, the representative of each grade, namely freshman, sophomore

and senior, shared their thoughts on the three-day event, which was followed by a few closing remarks of the Director of the Outreach Dept. A graduation project was carried out shortly afterwards. This was the last occasion for the seniors to take part in this gathering, and so the freshmen and sophomores had secretly prepared a group message board to each senior and the younger participants handed the shikishi filled with written messages to each graduating seniors. In return, the seniors gave oral messages to their younger friends. The participants shook hands with each other and promised to see one another again in the summer of 2027.

After lunch, they did a prayer service for closing the memorable event at the Konko HQ Central Worship Hall. The Director of the Outreach Dept. reported the end of the event to Konko-sama at the Mediation Place. All the participants left for their respective (Konko) church with a feeling of reluctance to leave,

since the gathering was so much memorable to them.

The participants shared their thoughts on the event with us: "These 3 days have become quite memorable for me." "I was so happy to come here." "Until I took part in this event, I had come to Go-hombu with no particular purposes/intentions. This time, I was able to know some details of Konkokyo and I am satisfied." "I was able to learn the Konko Faith better." "The staff of the Gathering taught us many things in a joyful way." "The lecture (of the Rev. Kawahatsu) encouraged me to live my life from now on, thanking people around me more."

The biggest/most important thing that the participating teenagers got to learn these 3 days is that peace is not an event taking place in a distant world; it is in fact something that starts with their own first step forward. Thus, each of the young men/women made a new step forward as "peacemakers."

