

August Monthly Service

Good morning everyone! Thank you very much for attending our monthly service for August, 2023. I hope you are all in good health & excellent spirits.

An Atomic Bomb was dropped in Hiroshima, Japan on this day 78 years ago; that is, on August 6, 1945. It was the first time in human history. More than 100,000 people were instantly killed. It was the greatest tragedy brought on by force in human history.

Our founder received the following revelation on Nov. 24, 1880:

Right now, the world is human-centered. All things are done by people's own power, and many people are going against my teachings. Those who do as I say shall become a kami. Long ago, it was a Kami-centered world. Now it is a human-centered world.

Because of this, I shall teach people to return to a Kami-centered world. Difficulty and suffering are caused by people's own hearts. Whether or not they can live in a peaceful world also depends on their own hearts.

For thousands of years, whereby all things have been done by people's own power and the powerful have dominated the powerless, human history has never changed. That is the main way wars have been started throughout human history. The tools humans use for war have evolved to an extraordinary degree. The human heart, however, has not evolved an iota; nor do many even realize that it has not. Kami said that there was a *Kami-centered world* long ago and wishes for humans to return to it. Kami wishes to end this cycle of power-versus-power human history, and eagerly wishes to establish an era of *Wagakokoro* (peaceful joyful heart), whereby Divinity & humanity can meet together in prayer, rejoice together in gratitude & delight together in mutual satisfaction. Long ago existed a Kami-centered world. Why can't we establish an advanced Kami-centered world, that would be "The *Wagakokoro* era." The *Wagakokoro* era is not just a dream. We can achieve it with strong determination. During this morning's prayer service I couldn't help but pray for true world peace and establishing the *Wagakokoro* era. I also prayed that we all would become people whose prayers at any time would directly reach Kami.

Today in this service, we also prayed for students to improve themselves in all aspects of their academic achievement. Our founder prayed for young people to have good health & education. He had said, *Young people should work hard to become smart & become able to remember what they learned.*

Young people are the treasures of the world. It is vitally important for the upcoming generation to perfect themselves physically, mentally & spiritually in order to be of great service to the world. I truly feel once they are introduced to it, young Americans want to know the Konko Faith. There are many religions in the world. They can sense some important message in our faith among these religions. We should be

open to them whenever they want to contact us – through email, phone-calls, visits or any other way. I want to do anything I can to show them what I know about our faith and what I have experienced about Tenchi Kane No Kami & how Kami functions. I hope young Americans come to learn our faith sincerely. I do feel the way to real happiness is found in this faith. And I pray each of them would become a light to the world.

Do you know of the Parliament of the World's Religions? It is the world's oldest, largest, and most inclusive gathering of global interfaith movements. The Parliament was incorporated in 1988 to carry out a tradition and legacy that dates back to the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, where the historic first convening of the World's Parliament of Religions created a global platform for the engagement of religions from the *east* and *west*.

The 9th Parliament will be held in Chicago for the first time in 30 years from August 14th to the 18th. At this 2023 Chicago Parliament more than 10,000 participants, from more than 200 diverse religious and spiritual traditions, and people of goodwill from more than 80 nations are expected to gather for seeking answers for justice, peace, and sustainability in this world.

To my surprise, I was asked to give a blessing at the Opening Ceremony on Aug. 14th. What a great honor! I'm humbled. Now I know I will be the ninth person to give a blessing. I will recite my prayer of blessing as follows:

2023 Parliament of World Religions

Through the everlasting spirit of our Founder, Ikigami Konko Daijin

To Tenchi Kane No Kami, Divine Parent of the Universe

We gratefully come today with humble hearts, full of joy, to celebrate the 2023 Parliament of the World's Religions here in Chicago. More than 200 religious groups from more than 80 nations gather here to find out the ideal characteristic harmony of religions to unite the human race in faith for the future.

With Your gentle guidance, help us see more perfectly Your Way of the Universe. Then lead us to coexist harmoniously with the beautiful nature that surrounds us. We ask that in all our works & in all humility, we may become an example in Your Way of achieving true world peace & prosperity for all humankind. For the sake of the human race & the world, let us pray for all people to have a heart like that of the universe, to change this world into a more Kami-fulfilling world. Let us live a life full of gratitude, in harmony with the universe.

The Konko Faith is the way of a peaceful and joyful heart as the Divine Reminder indicates. It seeks to establish an era of peaceful and joyful hearts of people, "The Wagakokoro era" in this world. Our founder, Konko Daijin taught us, "If people believe every moment in the teaching, 'On this very day pray with a single heart. Divine blessings are within your peaceful and joyful heart,' the glory of Kami will appear and true world peace will be attainable."

In order to accomplish peace and justice throughout the world Kami's glory should first appear. Kami's arrangements or workings definitely need to be the foundation.

Let us pray for this world. Let us work hard for this world. Let us strive for a world that is filled with the peaceful and joyful hearts of all people. May this earth we love so much, become a place where divinity and humanity will meet together in prayer, rejoice together in gratitude and delight together in mutual satisfaction.

May the 2023 Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago have great success!"

I was also invited to participate in a ceremonial signing of the Global Ethic during the Global Ethic General Assembly from 1 to 3 on August 14th. I would be one of only twenty-five religious leaders receiving this invitation. It is such a great honor.

All the people & all religions have done their best to seek a way to reach true world peace and real prosperity for humankind. I believe the Konkokyo has a clear vision for this. The Konko Faith is the way of a peaceful and joyful heart. It seeks to establish an era of peaceful and joyful hearts of people, which is *The Wagakokoro Era* in this world. Konko Daijin has taught,

***If people lose their belief in the teaching,
'On this very day pray with a single heart. Divine
blessings are within your own peaceful and joyful heart,'
the world will be in turmoil and the glory of Kami will be gone.***

In other words, when people truly believe every moment as, *'On this very day pray with a single heart. Divine blessings are within your own peaceful and joyful heart,'* the glory of Kami shall appear and true world peace will be attainable.

In order to accomplish peace and justice throughout the world, Kami's glory should first appear. Kami's arrangements or workings definitely need to be the foundation. The world at present is a reflection of the hearts of self-interested human beings. The more we choose to develop our peaceful and joyful hearts, then the more we are blessed, and the more the hearts of the entire human family will deepen toward

the peaceful and joyful heart of the world, until finally, through Kami's arrangements, true world peace & human happiness may be manifested.

I pray to do my best to be of great service to Kami and humanity in Chicago. And, in order to help me do that, it is vitally important that I deepen my peaceful joyful heart toward an unbreakable spirit through respecting everything that happens as faith training, whatever it is, and no matter how difficult it might be.

Would you join me in my quest for the *Wagakokoro Era*? May it start within me!

Let us pray for true world peace and happiness throughout the human race.