

Symphony of Peace Prayers 2016

Highlights from Fuji Sanctuary



THE TWELFTH ANNUAL Symphony of Peace Prayers was celebrated at Fuji Sanctuary on May 15, 2016. It was a warm, bright morning as some 7,000 participants and over 100 guests gathered in the outdoor Prayer Field to send prayers of peace and love to all humanity, creating a world of oneness within the beautiful diversity of faiths and cultures.

Following the 2015 SOPP, at which the Fuji Declaration was inaugurated in a grand ceremony, this year's event marked the first anniversary of the Fuji Declaration by celebrating the Soul of WoMen Global Campaign, an initiative of the Fuji Declaration calling on women and men worldwide to activate the divine feminine, in ourselves and in our societies, for a more balanced world. More information about this campaign is available at fujideclaration.org/soulofwomen.

Opening remarks by Masami Saionji



In her welcoming address, Byakko Chairperson Masami Saionji emphasized the value and importance of the continuing support for the SOPP both in Japan and around the world. She took the time to thank a great number of individuals around the world who have played leading roles in supporting and growing the SOPP over the years. These included past and present prayer leaders and guests at Fuji Sanctuary, along with the many people who have been organizing SOPP events all across the globe since 2008, and many longtime SOPP supporters. As Mrs. Saionji read out their names, a slideshow of photos

from past SOPP events including many of these individuals was shown on the live internet broadcast.

Following this, Mrs. Saionji spoke about the importance of each individual's choices and decisions in determining the future of our world, and about this year's theme of reawakening the divine feminine:

The existence of each individual is important, and at the same time, we each have great responsibility. Will each and every member of humanity choose divinity, or will humanity remain attached to the unstable reality of materialistic living? If we trust in divinity and pray, such prayers will directly connect us to our inner divine spark, and from that moment, we will awaken to divine life itself, and we will be able to experience true self-healing, calm, happiness, and freedom... At a time when humanity is ready to take a step forward to realize their divine spark, the energy of feminine wisdom is most important. What is needed is cooperation between men and women by facing issues together as members of humanity. It is to draw out the divinity within each other. The first step toward a new future is an accumulation of tiny steps made by each individual.

Divinity IN with Calm Breathing

Next, a large group of presenters moved through the Prayer Field and performed a slow-moving choreography using Japanese folding fans with light-filled words written on them. They then performed the Divinity *IN* with Calm Breathing, a prayer without words that is attuned through the breath to the universal source, calling forth the inner divinity of each and every human being.

Praying with the Religions of the World

Prayer leaders from seven world faiths – Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Shintoism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Hinduism – led participants in peace prayers from their respective traditions, followed by a prayer from Byakko Shinko Kai, led by Chairperson Masami Saionji. Each prayer leader offered a prayer on their own first, and then invited all participants to join in praying a shorter prayer or mantra. Participants listened intently, and earnestly lent their voices to these diverse prayers for peace. This simple act of religious and spiritual leaders praying the prayers of other faiths, joined in unison by all participants, sends a powerful message of tolerance and harmony.



Mr. Mark N. Zion
(Judaism)



Mr. Humayun A. Mughal
(Islam–Sufism)



Fr. Franco Sottocornola
(Christianity–Catholicism)



Mr. Noritomo Nishiyama
(Shintoism)



Mr. Honnen Nakamura
(Buddhism)



Mr. Sada Anand Singh
Khalsa (Sikhism)



Ms. Kiran Bali
(Hinduism)

Celebrating Soul of WoMen

This year's ceremony included a special program to celebrate the Soul of WoMen Global Campaign. An international group of ten visionary women and men who participated in the Soul of WoMen Global Network Gathering, which had taken place in Tokyo two days earlier, were introduced on stage by Mr. Hiroo Saionji, President of the



Goi Peace Foundation and initiator of the Fuji Declaration. Through their discussion, these leaders have contributed to deepening the campaign, and they have all pledged to promote it in their work. Each of them shared a brief message with the SOPP participants.

Next, Mr. James Twyman, an author, speaker, musician, and peacemaker from the United States, took the stage. Mr. Twyman was

part of the Soul of WoMen Global Network Gathering, and on his website he promoted a World Synchronized Meditation on the date of the SOPP, with the purpose of activating the divine feminine. After addressing participants on the power of prayer and meditation, Mr. Twyman began a two-minute meditation, inviting participants to focus on a balance between the feminine and masculine,

and to feel the energy that was generated. At the end of two minutes, Mr. Twyman performed his original song entitled “May Peace Prevail on Earth,” and then performed the song “We Are All Shining Divine Sparks,” which was introduced at the 2015 SOPP ceremony. Participants were invited to join in singing both songs.

After the names of this year’s distinguished guests were read aloud, Masami Saionji read on stage a message from well-known Japanese *manga* artist Ms. Suzue Miuchi. In her message, Ms. Miuchi offered her own perspective on the power and importance of prayer for world peace, and expressed her support for the SOPP and all prayer activities at Fuji Sanctuary.



Prayers for Peace in Each Country



Flag bearers carrying the flags of 193 nations and an Earth Flag representing ‘all other regions of the world’ proceeded through the Prayer Field, accompanied by original music composed by Mr. Kenichi Yamamoto. The prayers began with the sound of a bell and the prayer *May Peace Prevail on Earth*. Then, one by one, each nation’s flag was presented on stage, as participants prayed, *May peace be in (name of country)* in the country’s national language(s), sending waves of light

and love to the people in each country and region, with a wish for all humanity to live in peace and harmony as soon as possible.

Closing

In her closing remarks, Byakko Deputy Chairperson Yuka Saionji reiterated Masami Saionji’s gratitude for each individual who has been supporting and sustaining the SOPP through their dedication and prayers, and spoke about the power of the divine feminine in helping bring peace to the world:



Now, more than ever, the love, healing, and forgiveness of the feminine is needed—for all humanity, and all living things. Through this healing and forgiveness, our prejudices and fixed ideas will start to melt away. Like an ice cube melting in a ray of sun, the energy of the divine feminine and divine masculine coming into balance will create melting in the dark situations around the world. And from there, the pure intention of humanity—the love that embraces all pain, darkness, and shadow, and the power to see our true

self and express our divine spark—will start to shine forth. This work needs to be done by both individuals and the collective, so that we shine light in the darkest places and embrace the shadows in the bright places, both within ourselves and outside of us.

To close the ceremony, the flags of the world were again carried out into the Prayer Field and lifted high in the air, as participants gave enthusiastic applause, a powerful symbol of the whole world united as one.

A video recording of the entire ceremony can be viewed online at: bit.ly/SOPP2016

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