



For God gave us a spirit not of fear
but of power and love and self-control.
2 Timothy 1:7



祈enzler

Japan Newsletter #7

Julian und Karolina want to reach students and staff at Japan's universities with God's good news of love and forgiveness, and disciple and accompany them in following Jesus.

Dear family and friends,

22-08-2022

The graduation of our language school is approaching rapidly. Now it is only four weeks until we will have our graduation ceremony on September 16, and shortly thereafter will begin our first two and a half years of ministry in Kitami in eastern Hokkaido. In between, we will have another week of OMF orientation right after graduation, where we will participate in several workshops with experienced Japan missionaries and a class on OMF internals.

A little bit of Japanese

We have already explained the Japanese character in the title of our letter several years ago in a newsletter at the very beginning of our way into mission. But since new readers of our letters have joined us over time, we want to look at this character again.

Its basic meaning is "prayer" and it is also used in the Japanese word for prayer (*inori*):

祈り

Praying in Japanese can be a bit tricky because usually very polite language is used. But there are also some simple expressions:

神様、*kamisama* (God)

あなたを賛美します。

anata o sanbi shimasu

(I worship you. / I praise you.)

感謝します。

kansha shimasu

(I am thankful. / I thank you.)

Moving preparations

In the last week of September our move is planned. Despite searching already for a long time, we have not found a suitable apartment in Kitami yet. The apartments we have seen so far are either very small, very far from the church and the universities, making them difficult for students to reach on foot, or they are in wooden houses that get freezing cold in the winter and unbearably hot in the summer.

However, we are sure that the Lord will give the perfect home for us in due time, as He has always done until now. Please pray with us to our Heavenly Father that it will happen this way and that this apartment will become a place of peace where many people will come to know God.

We are also very thankful that after a long time of back and forth we are now allowed to have a car which we will need for our ministry in Kitami. Some missionary friends of ours are moving to another part of Japan this month, where they do not need their car. And so they have given it to us for a small sum.

Obon

These days, like every summer, Obon (お盆) is celebrated in Japan. It is one of the three important festive seasons in Japan, along with New Year and Golden Week, and takes place in different parts of Japan at different times. It is believed that during this Buddhist festival, which originated in China, the spirits of the deceased return to the world of the living and visit their relatives. It is there-



Bon Odori participants dance after sunset around a festively decorated tower with drummers and other musicians.

fore a part of ancestor worship which is widespread in Japan. Many families prepare their homes for the arrival of the ancestors, for example, by setting up a cucumber horse and an eggplant cow.

These small sculptures express the wish that the ancestral spirits come quickly as on the back of a horse, but leave slowly as on the back of a cow. In



addition, many Japanese visit their family graves during this time, and there are public dance events (so-called Bon Odori) to entertain the ancestors during their visit through dance and music.

Many Japanese today are not even aware of the spiritual dimension of this festival, and celebrate it just as many people in Europe or America celebrate Christmas. At the same time, it also shows how deeply ancestor and spirit worship is embedded in Japanese culture, and how difficult it is for many Japanese to understand that they do not have to fear and serve spirits, and that God is the only one worthy of worship.

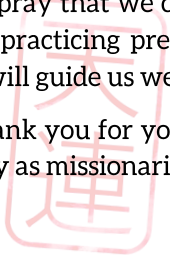
The last weeks of our language school

As we approach the end of our time in language school, we look back with gratitude on a time of learning and immersion in a whole new world of expressing thoughts and writing down language. Since we were able to do some preliminary work while waiting for our visas, the whole time of language learning was, thank God, not as difficult for us as it was for others who started from scratch.

We had many nice hours with our teachers and language partners, and quite a few spiritual conversations, for which our teachers were always very grateful. We were also able to make many contacts with other missionaries in Japan inside and outside OMF, and are excited to see how we will work together in God's kingdom in Japan in the future.

Please pray that we can still make good use of the last few weeks of language school practicing preparing sermons and Bible studies in Japanese, and that Jesus will guide us well through this relocation process.

We thank you for your prayers and support, and for accompanying us on our journey as missionaries in Japan!



Julian & Karolina

Upcoming events:

- 2022-----
- 16-9 Graduation language school
 - 26-9 Moving to Kitami
 - 26-10 Start of ministry in Kitami

This is how you can support mission in Asia:

- Order our prayer letter (write us an email).
- Become a prayer partner: [Link](#)
- Become part of an OMF team of volunteers close to you: [Link](#)
- Do a short term mission trip with OMF Serve Asia: [Link](#)
- Or does God call you to Asia as a long-term missionary? [Link](#)
- Invite OMF to your church.

Pray for Japan: [Link](#)

Please pray for the Japanese Christians who are caught during the time of Obon between family obligations, their own desire to remember ancestors, and knowing the truth that spirit worship is wrong. Please pray for wisdom in dealing lovingly with family members and for new ways to remember the deceased in purity and a God honoring way.

Please check out our Telegram channel for photos, videos and stories. (No Telegram account needed)



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