

ACRP National Chapter Report

JAPAN:

Bearing in mind ACRP's Vision, *The religious communities in Asia and the Pacific cooperate effectively for Peace*; and ACRP's Mission, *RfP Asia (ACRP) advances common action among religious communities in Asian and the Pacific for Peace*;

Being mindful ACRP's Principles: 1) respect religious differences; 2) act on deeply held and widely shared values; 3) preserve the identity of each religious communities; 4) honor the different ways religious communities are organized; and 5) link local, national and regional structures; and 6) collaborate with Religions for Peace International;

The ACRP Chapter of Japan presents to the ACRP Executive Committee its National Chapter Report throughout 2017.

General review of all the programs, projects and activities carried out throughout 2017

Religions for Peace Japan has been actively involved in the domestic and international important issues through inter-religious network and in cooperation with other sectors.

In 2017, *Religions for Peace* Japan advanced our projects in following categories:

- I. Networking
- II. Advocacy
- III. Peace Education and Ethical Education
- IV. Humanitarian Contribution
- V. Women's Committee
- VI. Youth Committee
- VII. Publicity
- VIII. Management

Also, 6 taskforce groups ---1) Reconstruction Support for the East Japan earthquake, 2) Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, 3) Climate Change, 4) Reconciliation Education, 5) Refugee Issues and 6) Reconstruction Support for Kumamoto Earthquake----which were established and renewed within *Religions for Peace* Japan in 2017 and consist of affiliate members, promoted their mission projects in each area.

Specific descriptions of programs / projects / activities implemented throughout the year

1. Program #1 *Engaging in building partnership (object 3 of SAP)*
 - **China-Japan Religious Leader's Meeting-**
 - August 25-30, 2017 in China
 - Upon the agreement between China Committee on Religion and Peace (CCRP) and RfP Japan, "1st Exchange

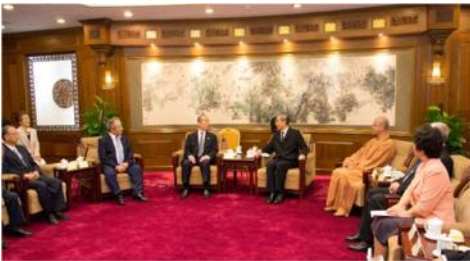
Program between Religious Leaders of China and Japan” was organized. The delegation of 27 from RfP Japan visited Beijing and Yunnan Province, China from August 25-30 of 2017. This program aims to strengthen friendly exchanges and partnership, and to deepen mutual trust for encouraging neighborly relations of both countries. We agreed in July 2015 to continue the program of visiting each country in 5 years span. At this time, the RfP Japan’s delegation visited Yunnan Province where coexists many ethnic groups with unique culture and religions. After learning religious communities of China, the symposium was held in Beijing. The theme was “Prospects of Chinese and Japanese religious exchanges and cooperation between CCRP & RfP Japan”.

-Visited religious facilities and communities (Yunnan province Buddhism Association, Catholic church, Lijiang Ancient Town, Beijing White Cloud Temple (Taoism), August 25-30

-Held the symposium in Beijing, August 29

-Visited National Committee of Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, August 29

-Visited The State Administration for Religious Affairs of China, August 29



2. Program#2 *Engaging in the promotion for peace (object 1 of SAP)*

-21st Youth Summer Camp

- August 25-27, 2017 at *Nakayama Shingo Sho Shu* (traditional Buddhist) in Saga prefecture

-Theme: Supporting Each Other –Sacred Action Go for Ambitious-

-The purpose is to deepened mutual understanding and trust, to learn about religions and peace and to think about peace activities by dialogue and cooperation.

-32 youths from 6 different religious organizations participated



3. Program#3 *Engaging in the promotion for peace (object 1 of SAP)*

-IPCR International Seminar on Northeast Asia

- July 7-9, 2017 at Novotel Ambassador, Busan, Korea

- Some 65 religious leaders, scholars of religion, and representatives of civic groups from Japan, China, and South Korea attended. It has held a seminar every year since 2009 on the basic theme of "Building a Peace Community in East Asia."

-Main Theme: Challenges for building peace community in Northeast Asia-

-Session I: Dialogue among Different Religions

-Session II: Searching for the Root of Prejudice and Discrimination

-Session III: Ways to Promote Peace on the Korean Peninsula

-Special Session on Youth:



4. Program#4 *Engaging in building partnership (object 3 of SAP)*

-13th Korea and Japan Youth Exchange Program

- February 5-8 2018 in Kyoto and Nara, Japan

-The purpose is that Korea and Japan religious youths, who religiously and regionally close each other, construct truly friendship, recognize the role as religious youths for world peace, and make opportunity to educate youth members in order that they can contribute to world peace.

-Theme: Supporting Each Other –Creative Bridges for Peace in Asia-

-34 youths with 6 different religious backgrounds from Korea and 38 youth with 6 different religious organizations from Japan. During the program, they visited Kenninji Buddhist temple, Kiyomizudera Buddhist temple in Kyoto and Todaiji Buddhist temple and Catholic Nara Church to experience Japanese religious traditions and cultures. Moreover, they organized a workshop for peace with the theme; "Think about 'Others'"

-Comments: "I understood the kindness of people by interacting with other country's youth in person. It was different impression about the country from media." "We could understand each other without knowing the languages." "I would like to share the outcomes from this exchange to families and friends."



5. Program #5 *Engaging in the promotion for peace (object 1 of SAP)*

- International Signature Campaign in Support of the Appeal of the Hibakusha for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

-May 29, 2017 at Kiyomizudera Buddhist temple in Kyoto (the campaign continues to 2020)

-Taskforce group for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons started its support on the campaign on May 29, 2017 at Kiyomizudera Temple in



Kyoto. Before the activity, at the launching ceremony was held. Ven. Seihan Mori, the Chief Priest of Kiyomizudera Temple, welcomed and said "As one of the religious leader, I would like to work on abolition of nuclear weapons which bring disasters for human." Then after the few words from Rev. Yoshinobu Miyake, the Superior General of Konko Church of Izu, Mr. Shuichi Kido, secretary-general of Nihon Hidankyo, or the Japan Confederation of A- and H-bomb Sufferers Organizations appealed Hibakusha's wishes and stated that Hibakusha are promoting this campaign with their last mighty effort "not to create another Hibakusha again!" Campaign participants collected about 290 signatures within one hour.

6. Program #6 *Engaging in the promotion for peace (object 1 of SAP)*

-RfP Japan Welcomes Adoption of the Text of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by the United Nations

-July 14, 2017

-In response to the adoption of the final draft of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in the United Nations, New York, on July 7, RfP Japan issued a statement on July 14, in which Ven. Gijun Sugitani,



its chair and a supreme advisor to the Tendai Buddhist denomination, indicated support of the treaty. For years, RfP Japan has continued to help promote various activities leading to the adoption of the treaty, including support for the March 2017 publication of the *Nuclear Ban Treaty Negotiation Handbook*, a project by Religions for Peace International and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), an international NGO. In the statement, RfP Japan emphasized the importance of supporting prohibition on the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as stated in Article 1 of the treaty. RfP Japan also referred to the importance of the treaty preamble mentioning the suffering caused to *hibakusha*, as well as those affected by the testing of nuclear weapons.

7. Program #7 *Engaging in the promotion for peace and building partnership (object 1&3 of SAP)*

-Laos and Vietnam Delegates to Japan

-May 17-18, 2017 in Tokyo

-A joint delegation of seven religious leaders and government officials from Vietnam and Laos visited Japan to deepen their understanding of interreligious cooperation and peace activities through interaction with members of the Diet (Japan's parliament) and the leaders of RfP Japan. RfP International has worked with religious leaders and government officials in each country to encourage the building of a platform to promote interreligious cooperation in their respective countries. During such interactions, the idea emerged that religious leaders and government officials should learn more about interreligious cooperation directly from Japan, which RfP Japan supported.

-On May 15, 7 delegates conferred with members of the Diet who belong to RfP Japan's social meeting group. Then delegation met with some 30 members of RfP Japan.



8. Program #8 *Engaging in the promotion for peace (object 1 of SAP)*

-Peace University Symposium and Memorial Ceremony for Dr. Yoshiaki Sanada

-March 9, 2018 at Tenri University in Nara prefecture

-Theme: What is Dialogue with Others? Striving for the Realization of Peaceful Societies.

-Participated by 200

-Before the program started, memorial ceremony for Dr. Yoshiaki Sanada was convened. Dr. Sanada has contributed to RfP since WCRPII, and served as the director of Peace Research institute of RfP Japan from 2004 to 2016, and passed away last November.

-Keynote speech was given by President Noriaki Nagao, the president of Tenri University. He mentioned the conflicts in today's world seems more serious than ever, and signified a sense of danger that it might become a seemingly endless war. He also stated that mutual understanding and tenacious dialogue in order to reduce hostility and to build peace, and Japanese religious leaders can serve as intercede position in a neutral setting.

-Panel discussion between Prof. Hiromasa Mase (Professor Emeritus at Keio University), Prof. Kathy Matsui (Professor at Seisen Univeristy) and President Nagao was held coordinated by Ven. Ryumyo Yamazaki (Director of Peace Research Institute of RfP Japan).



9. Program#9 *Engaging in conflict resolution and reconciliation (object 2 of SAP)*

-Seminar of Training Facilitators for Peace and Reconciliation

-July 2017 to November 2018 (8 course in total)

-This seminar aims to provide a place for multi-religious communities and social actors to equip them with knowledge and skills of peacebuilding and conflict transformation through dialogue and non-violence means. In cooperation with various actors through networks of Religions for Peace, the seminar contains lectures and field works to learn from the fields of peacebuilding and reconciliation and practice dialogue with various communities

-1st Seminar (July 29-30, 2017): "Understanding Multi-culture and Diversity"

-2nd Seminar (Sep. 16-17, 2017): "Changing perspectives- Peacebuilding Through Restorative Justice and Dialogue-"

-3rd Seminar (Dec. 2-3, 2017): "Active Listening"

-4th Seminar (Feb. 10-11, 2018): "Welcoming the Other –Mediation for Reconciliation"



10. Project #1 *Engaging in the promotion for peace (object 1 of SAP)*

-Support Project for Syrian Refugee Students

-From March 2017 to present (5 year project)

-This project aims to welcome Syrian refugees as students with collaborative work with Japanese language schools or colleges, and lead them to further education or employment for constructing sustainable resettlement support system.

- RfP Japan, partnering with the Japan Association for Refugees - JAR, welcomed 6 Syrian refugees in 2017.



11. Project#2 *Engaging in the promotion for peace (object 1 of SAP)*

-Afforestation Project

-May 2017 to March 2020

-Aims to regenerate a forest and raise awareness of youth cooperated with Saitama prefecture's government and Tokorozawa city hall.

- Climate Change Taskforce has concluded an agreement with "Protecting Group of Greenery Area around Horiguchi Tenman Shrine", and been working on "WCRP Reforestation Project of Integrated Life" since April 2017. Target area of the project is 10,000 square meters located in Tokorozawa city, Saitama. Wishing various animals and plants would foster life, we named this area "WCRP Forest of Integrated Life".

-The 1st Tree Planting Ceremony was held on February 24, 2018

- 353 volunteers and staff in total participated to the project so far.



12. Project#3 *Engaging in the promotion for peace (object 1 of SAP)*

-Guidebook to Prepare for the Disasters: How to Welcome Children with Developmental Disabilities

-After 2 years of conception and editing period, Women’s Committee of RfP Japan published a “Guidebook to prepare for the disasters: How to Welcome Children with Developmental Disabilities”. This guidebook will help both religious facilities/communities and people concerned to learn what to prepare in daily bases and in case of emergency.



-Publishing event will be held on April 25, 2018 at Catholic Kawaramachi Church in Kyoto.

13. Project #4 *Engaging in the promotion for peace (object 1 of SAP)*

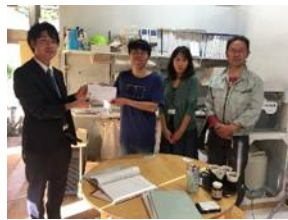
-Fukushima Community Project

-April 2017 to March 2018

- After 7 years from the great disaster, Fukushima’s reconstruction is still at the difficult situation.

-The role of religious leaders is staying present to vulnerable. Our goal is to support someone who lives in a place that government cannot reach out. Through this project, we can catch the real voices and challenges of Fukushima.

-The recipients in 2017 were 60. This project now is known widely to supporting communities or organization of Fukushima. It has been helping local people which governmental agencies cannot reach to. This is the project not only to support but also to encourage people’s independence of building communities. Moreover, direct communication made it possible to support them face-to-face and to know the reality. This project was published in the local newspapers and increasingly prevalent.



14. Project #5 *Engaging in the promotion for peace (object 1 of SAP)*

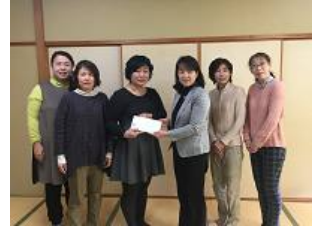
- Ouen (support) Project for Kumamoto

-From March 2017 to present

-When the Kumamoto earthquake occurred in April of 2016, there were not enough supports for people who need special care especially for people with physical challenges, elders, children, pregnant and mothers with infants. Not only emergency cares, but there are still in middle of a serious situation.

RfP Japan’s “Ouen Project for Kumamoto” reach out people who need special cares in terms of self-help and mutual assistance, and we hope it would improve welfare in their communities through this financial support.

- The total recipients of 2017 were 16.



15. Project #6 *Engaging in the promotion for peace (object 1 of SAP)*

-Radio Program "Half-time of Heart"

-From November 12 2016 to present

-This program aimed to send message to people who try to survive after the earthquake occurred in April 2016, and to stay present with them.

-Speakers are religious leaders, people who engage in support after the disaster, and people who need special care and support to share their stories. 37speakers were on the program from November 2016 to present.



Implementation of Strategic Action Plan (SAP)

1. Which programs/projects/activities is your chapter interested in engaging to achieve intended outcome and objective?

N/A

2. What kind(s) of assistance does your chapter wish to receive from the Secretariat for your chapter to implement the stated program/project/activity? (except financial assistance for a moment)

N/A

3. Forward looking suggestions and recommendations for the next stage of SAP

N/A

Overall comments and suggestions

Empty box for overall comments and suggestions.