



Co-sponsored by Asian Conference of Religions for Peace (ACRP), and Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC)

## Afghanistan Peace-Action Lecture Meeting

### <A Representative of Local NGO Shared His Life-Risking Peace Actions>

ACRP Tokyo office and JVC jointly held the "Afghanistan Peace Action Lecture meeting – pursuing peace by the power of dialogue" on November 20th, 2019 in Tokyo. We invited Mr. Sabirullah Memlawal, the representative of Afghanistan local NGO called "Your Voice Organization", and he shared the peace action and his life story. Fifty-seven participants of religious people, NGOs and citizens listened to his lecture and life-story.

This meeting was initiated by the visit of Ms. Maki Kato, an officer in charge of the Afghanistan project of JVC, to the ACRP office last April. She passionately talked about what is going on in Afghanistan, and about Mr. Sabirullah, who disparately takes peace actions in the conflict area. We were moved by the genuine feeling of Ms. Kato, who loves Afghanistan as if it were her home country, and loves all people living there. We fostered our wishes for sharing the story with as many people as possible. Also, we genuinely want many Japanese people to know the present situation of Afghanistan by listening directly to Mr. Sabirullah's talk and story, and we decided to hold this lecture meeting.

In the first part of the program, he spoke about his determination that he would have to cut off the cycle of hatred through listening to the children saying, "I want to be a soldier." "I want to revenge for my father.", etc. in the daily armed conflicts.



Kuz Kunar region is one of the most politically stable areas in Afghanistan, and many people visited there to listen to the successful example of peace actions as it was known as a role model of peace. Peace action project promotes peace activities extensively by spreading the importance of problem-solving in the non-violence way through making



and distributing the small handbook to schools and hospitals. He also said that they are endeavoring to stabilize the security of each region through peace education by inviting people who live around Kuz Kunar.

He also mentioned that the role of a mother is critical by referring to the importance of family education.

We moved to the lounge next to the meeting room at the second session of the program. All the participants freely sat on the sofa or chairs and listened to the latter half of his life story in an at-home atmosphere. He looked back on his life that he took refuge in Pakistan at his young age due to the internal conflict, and the process of joining the JVC's activities by an offer of his friend, even once he decided to be a soldier and had spent a life by holding a gun.



At the beginning, he only worked as a driver, and he gradually lessened the will of "peace by arms" by nurturing peaceful wishes such as yearn for peace cultivated through the interactions with JVC staff, the words of Mr. Taniyama, then representative of JVC and officer in charge of Afghanistan project, "You also have a role to play for peace in Afghanistan.", and by witnessing the sincere attitude of solving the problems through dialogue between JVC staff members and American army officers for protecting Afghan citizens.

Based on these experiences, he realized family education could play a critical role in fostering peace in children's minds. He shared his conviction that thinking about peace between parent and child since childhood will eventually lead to the conflict resolution and stabilization of the region, by pointing out that people need to learn at the early childhood at home the importance of peace and compassionate mind for others.

As a final message, he said, "I believe each of us has a doable role to play in the same issue. I am truly relieved by the fact that people in Japan always think of and support us."

We could spend valuable time together. It's so rare to listen to the authentic voice from a local Afghan. In contrast, we can watch the reality of Afghanistan through



the internet or TV broadcast, which often broadcasts only selected information. He shared the same wish and idea as we Japanese have, namely wish for peace and the importance of making peace at home. We could find out the many common points as residents in the same international society and learn the strength of saying "No" to whatever seems wrong.



The lecture meeting verified that the possibility of peace generated by "Dialogue" is not nil, and it is an effective means.

Mr. Sabirullah also mentioned, "Everyone wishes for peace. Peace is sustainable and can grow." We all wish for peace. Let us move forward hand in hand toward realizing peace.

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