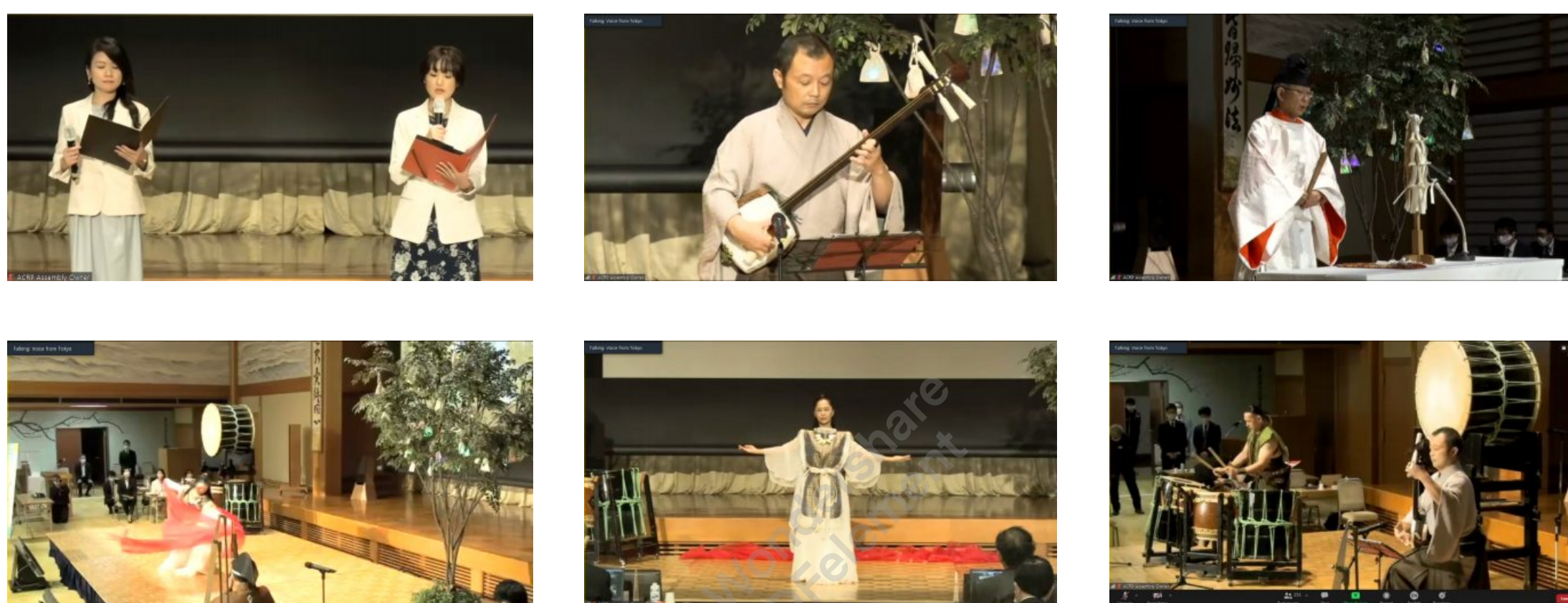




DAY 1 | MAIN ASSEMBLY

Sound the Gong of Peace in Asia at the Opening of ACRP 9th Assembly

Around 300 youth, women and senior religious leaders from 22 countries in Asia-Pacific region participated in the opening of the ACRP 9th General Assembly with the theme “Asian Communities in Action: Moving towards an Inclusive, Healthy, Prosperous, Peaceful Asia” on October 19, 2021. An assembly during the time of pandemic, the convocation is a combination of limited face-to-face gathering at the Horin-Kaku Guest Hall of Rissho Kosei-kai in Tokyo Japan, and the virtual participation of most of the delegates.



The pandemic of COVID-19 has presented unprecedented negative impacts globally. This assembly, the first of its kind as a virtual gathering in the history of ACRP, demonstrates the unity of the different religious traditions in Asia, in the words of **Rev. Dr. Nobuhiro Nemoto**, the *RfP Asia Secretary General*, “to encourage and promote Asia’s many and very diverse religious communities to move toward inclusive Asia where there is no ethnic exclusion, which is free of social vulnerability, social stigma, gender discrimination, and hate speech.” In this mission, Religions for Peace Asia, should ensure that “No one is left behind,” he emphasized.

In solidarity with the suffering victims of the pandemic and all forms of injustices, violence and abuses, the assembly opened with *Okiyome no Mai*, a traditional practice of spiritual healing for the world performed by **Ms. Masako Izumo**. This was followed by interfaith prayer led by **Rev. Mitsuo Miyake** (Japan), **Rev. Fr. Carlos Reyes** (Philippines) and the Quranic recitation of **Ms. Huma Kashif** (Pakistan).

Prof. Dr. Din Syamsuddin, *ACRP Moderator and President of Religions for Peace Indonesia*, describes this assembly as the moment of change for ACRP. He emphasized the importance of the word 'action'. He exclaimed that the members of ACRP should be action-oriented and problem solvers. For him, “The General Assembly is a venue for all of us leaders to engage in dialogue to discuss problems of our own countries. I hope this will be a great movement of peace for our regions.”

Such renewal first takes place in the spirit of sincere gratitude. “I would like to thank everyone for making this happen” was the message of **Rev. Nichiko Niwano**, *President of Rissho Kosei-kai and Co-President of Religions for Peace Asia*. His expression of heartfelt gratitude to all the participants, the organizers, and to all the religious leaders rings the bell of peace and compassion in Asia. He reminded the congregation that the primary focus of this assembly is to foster the dignity of life, prevent human trafficking, reconcile conflicts, develop the environment and advance the youth leaders.



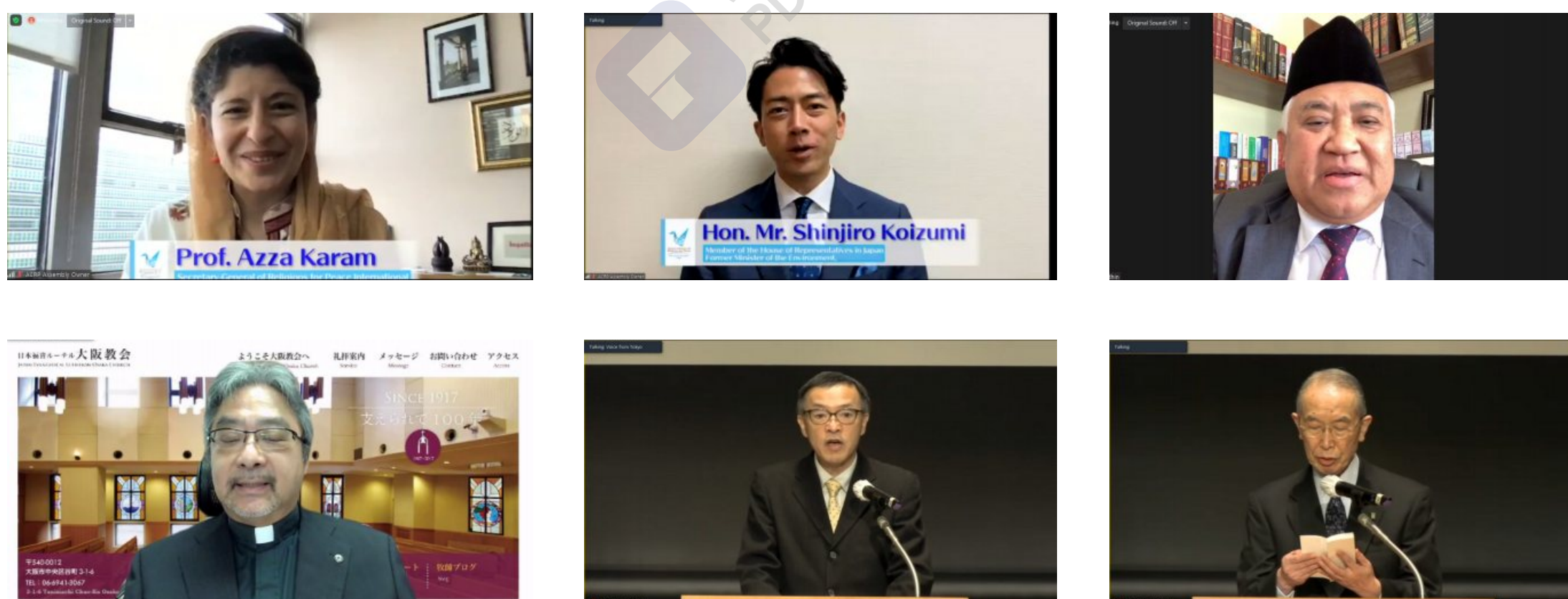
Prof. Dr. Azza Karam, Secretary General of Religions for Peace International, recognizes Religions for Peace Asia as the “critical building block, instructor and mentor to Religions for Peace International.” The assembly as a celebration of unity of the different religions is the greatest example of religious communities coming together to serve the people, particularly the vulnerable communities.

In responding to the immense challenge that awaits Religions for Peace Asia, **Rev. George Oshiba**, the Chairperson of the Japanese Association of Religious Organizations, reminded everyone that prayer is the unique element of multi-religious common action. He said, “I hope we will continually pray and work together with love and mercy for the people.” He ended his congratulatory remarks by wishing the ACRP General Assembly to be fruitful and to be productive.

In his congratulatory remarks, **Hon. Mr. Shinjiro Koizumi**, Former Minister of the Environment of the Government of Japan, calls on the religious leaders to put into action their essential and significant roles in addressing climate change and other social concerns. He emphasized the need for collaboration. “Politics and religion can lead people to happiness. We must work together to achieve (overcoming climate change),” he said.

The fruits of the youth and women pre-assembly meetings were also reported at the opening ceremony. In his report, **Dr. Renz Argao**, newly elected moderator of APIYN, said that they will “embark on projects and programs that focus on protecting the environment, fostering peace and security, promoting education and dignity of life, fighting human trafficking, and advancing youth leadership in youth representation. **Rev. Elga Sarapung**, the newly elected Chair of the APWoFN, stated that “It is important to provide opportunities and trust that are balanced between both women and men in the role of organizing and improving the direction of development to attain peace for all.”

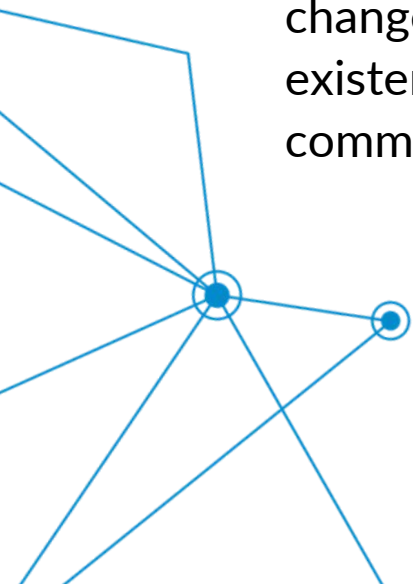
The opening ceremony concluded by echoing the message of peace through art with the dramatic and heart pounding performance of **Mr. Toen Hibiki** who played the Japanese drum and **Mr. Nobuto Yamanaka** with his shamisen, a three-stringed musical instrument.



Change of life-style, the role of religions

Prof. Shinichi Takemura, the keynote speaker, is an inventor of “Tangible Earth,” a professor at Kyoto University of Art and Design and the Director of Earth Literacy Program (NPO). His talk is a detailed and informative presentation about the co-evolution of human beings and earth in the anthropocene. Using his 3-dimensional technology, Prof. Takemura showed his projections of global warming, the factors contributing to it, and the impact on earth our common home.

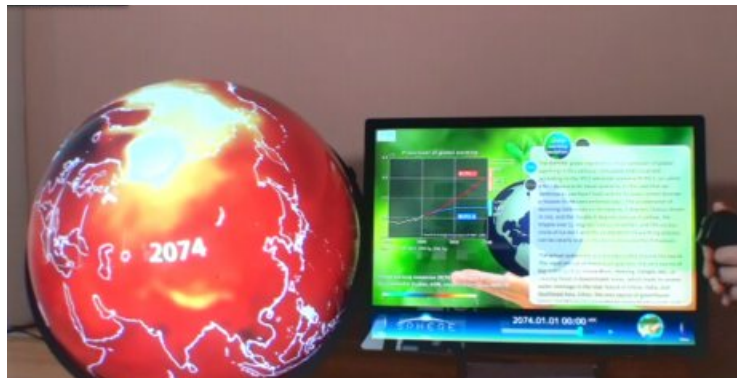
Interestingly, according to him, the best way to address the climate emergency and avert the destruction of the earth is the change of life-style. The way we live today is based on systems and structures that threaten not only human life but the existence of the earth. He then challenged the Asian religious leaders to do their role of promoting a good life in their local communities by inculcating a simple life-style and the culture of rejuvenating the environment.





Asian Conference of Religions for Peace Religions for Peace

Asian Conference of Religions for Peace 9th General Assembly Tokyo

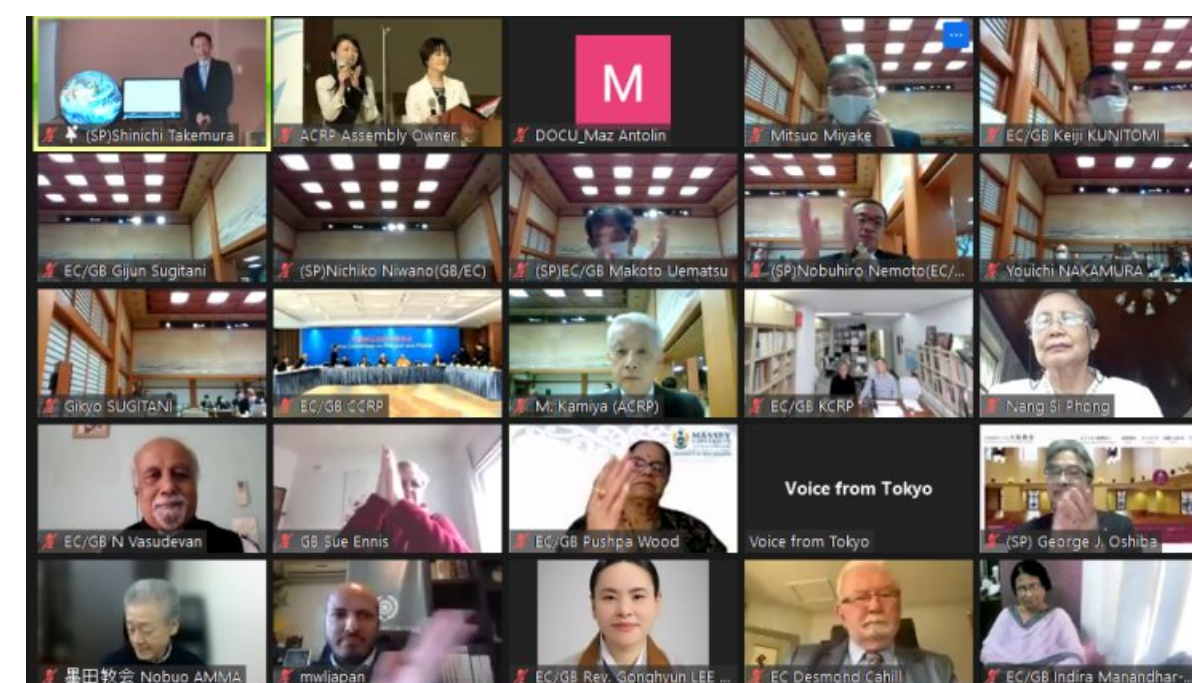
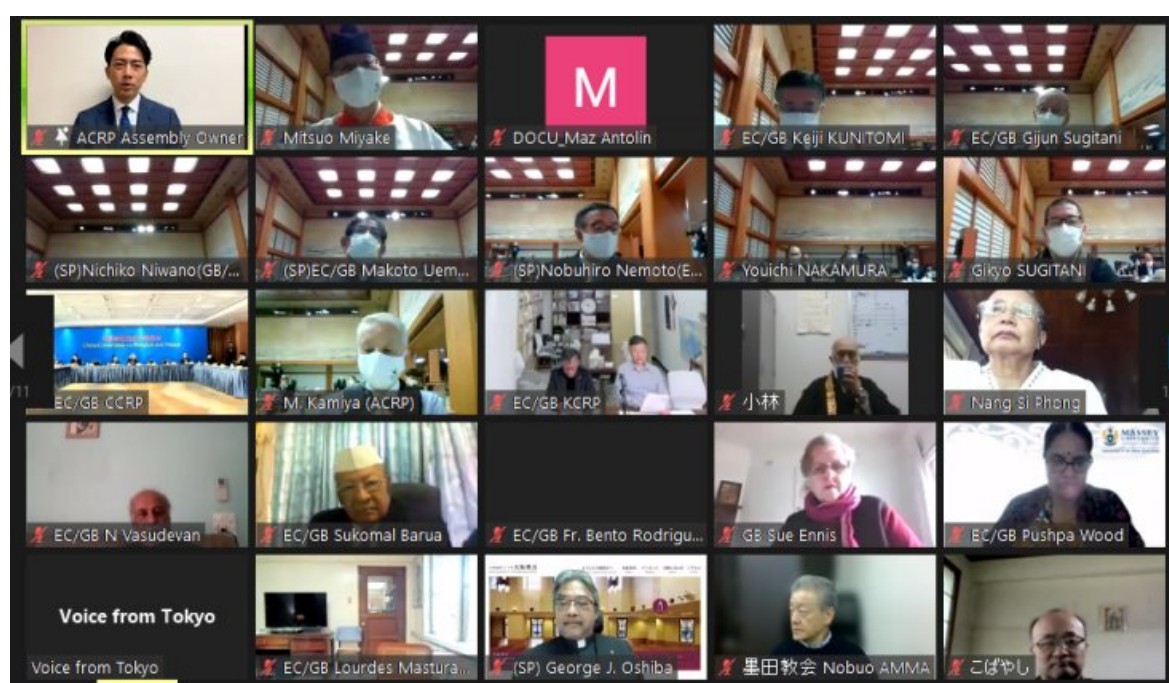


Action Oriented Constitution

Since its foundation in 1976 in Singapore, this assembly has taken a historic decision to make the organization relevant and more responsive to the needs and concerns of Asian people. This is concretely manifested in its approval of a new Religions for Peace Asia Constitution that will guide and direct ACRP for the years to come. **Prof. Desmond Cahill**, *Deputy Moderator of ACRP and the Chairperson of the Assembly Structure Committee*, said that the unique aspect of the new constitution is that it makes ACRP an action-oriented and responsive multireligious organization.

Timor Leste as 22nd ACRP Chapter

The *Religions for Peace Asia* leaders accepted the interim admission of *Religions for Peace Timor Leste*. *RfP Timor Leste* is the 22nd member chapter of ACRP. It is the smallest country in Asia comprising around 1.3 million population with a majority professing Christianity. It is expected that negotiation will continue and it is hoped that they will become a full member in a year.



WWW.RFPASIA.ORG