

Interview of Hitoe Hiraki, CARP LA President

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The Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles chapter in Los Angeles (CARP LA) was established a year ago, and Hitoe Hiraki, a 22-year-old junior at Pasadena City College, has been its president for the past year. This is her last semester there before transferring to California State University, and she's ending her term as CARP LA president by organizing an epic cultural exchange trip to Japan from May 25 – June 6. We took some time to speak with Hitoe and ask her some questions about her hopes for this trip, and how she plans for this exchange to leave a legacy at CARP in LA.

How did you get involved with CARP?

My mother is one of the leaders of the local Kodan group, an association of Japanese couples of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), and she went on campus everyday to meet students who were interested in learning about the Divine Principle. She eventually asked me if I'd be interested in starting a CARP club at my campus so that her guests could have a community where they could gather and study the Divine Principle. My mother was a part of CARP in her homeland of Japan, and now we wanted to create CARP here in America.

The vision of CARP LA is to create a positive environment and inspire students to grow themselves and help others. We created a calendar of events for the semester based on this vision. Each week, a board member chose one Unification Principle and gave a short talk on it. Afterwards, we did a pair-share and discussion based on the content from the talk.

We look at all our activities as training and practice for ourselves and how to live for the sake of others.



What inspired you to organize an exchange trip to CARP Japan?

We informed the members of our CARP chapter about how global CARP is, sharing how there are chapters all over the world including in Japan and Korea. Most of the CARP members met us through Kodan and are interested in Japanese culture. Some students take Japanese language classes and have learned about the culture, and so they are very much interested in experiencing the culture of Japan. We had the idea to organize this trip as a CARP activity, not just to go there as a vacation, but also to make it meaningful by connecting with our sister organization, CARP Japan. We want to see what we can learn from them. We want the students in CARP LA to apply and experience the Divine Principle in their lives, not just read content from a book but really put it into practice. CARP members will have a chance to talk to people in Japan, and although that might be challenging at first because of the language barrier, we think it will be a good experience.

Why do you think this exchange to Japan is important?

I think it's important because it's an opportunity to exchange information and find out more about different CARP chapters outside of the United States. It's important to learn from CARP Japan so that we can bring their best practices back to the United States and use them to improve CARP here. It's also a great opportunity for all of us as CARP America to connect more deeply to each other while we are in Japan.



What are you most looking forward to on this trip?

I am most excited about meeting the CARP members in Japan. We will be visiting CARP centers in Tokyo and Kyoto. It heard that those are the only two large CARP centers in Japan.

I have been hearing many stories about CARP Japan from my mother. They used to organize outreach activities and teach Divine Principle. I am looking forward to learning more about outreach.

I think it's also really exciting to have the opportunity for Americans and Japanese to work together. Many times, I felt like we in America are not so connected to Korea and Japan, where there is an active CARP presence. Japanese CARP members are very serious and strict about fulfilling their objectives. Americans are also serious about their goals, but they also think that it's important to have fun and bond together. When these two different cultures come together, we will create something really great. This initiative started on a local level and has been expanding to the national level, and now even CARP members in Korea are joining us!