

## Asia-Pacific Region's Four-Day Education Conference in Bangkok, Thailand

Robert Kittel  
January 8, 2018



The Asia-Pacific region welcomed the New Year of 2018 with a 4-day education conference (From January 5 to 8, 2018) for 37 VIPs from eight nations during the first week of January in Bangkok, Thailand. The largest delegation was from Cambodia (13) followed by Nepal (9), then Kazakhstan (4), Taiwan (3), and two participants each from Mongolia, Tajikistan, Myanmar and Thailand.

Throughout the conference, the spirit was lively, exciting and enlightening. Before each session participants from every nation offered songs, dances or skits from their local culture. It was genuinely uplifting. On this foundation of heartistic sharing, UPF's Principles of Peace were presented in a way that participants saw how these teachings could solve fundamental social problems. Regardless of their religious heritage, be it Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian or Taoist, participants understood the universality and practicality of these principles.

Frequently, lectures were followed by an active question-and-answer sessions. Some queries included:

- How can we motivate people to live for others and not be selfish?
- How do we fill our minds with true love?
- Why is marriage important?
- Which is better a nuclear family or an extended family?
- Why can Muslims marry four wives?

Special to this ALC, the Most Ven. Dr. Sok Bunthoem, Director of Cult and Religion, Government of Cambodia, led a delegation of five Buddhist monks who attended all sessions. On the third day, Dr. Bunthoem sincerely appreciated the insights gained by understanding UPF's Principles of Peace and how it could be applied to addressing the moral dimension of HIV/AIDS prevention (rather looking at HIV/AIDS as a purely medical problem). Then he shared with the audience his program for HIV/AIDS prevention using the Buddhist precepts as educational/motivational tools.



The regional group chairman of the Asia-Pacific region, Dr. Yong Chung-sik, has strongly advised that we conclude each leadership conference with Marriage Blessing and rededication celebration—including the indemnity stick (called “holy stick”) ceremony. This has now become a tradition at each ALC and was no exception this time as four couples rededicated their unions on the third day of the conference.

VIP participants included: one deputy director of the Ministry of Education, deputy governors, mayors, university vice rectors, college principals, educators, law professors and sports men and women. At the closing session, 15 Ambassadors for Peace were appointed.

