

Asian Leadership Conference: Providing Vision and Leadership for Peace

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Bangkok, Thailand -- The Asian Leadership Conference (ALC) convened August 24-27, 2017 on the theme, "Providing Vision and Leadership for Nation-Building and Peace." The ALC focused on educating parliamentarians on UPF's Principles of Peace and their roles and responsibilities as members of the national IAPP chapters throughout Asia.

ALC's goal is to provide this education to all office-bearers and core IAPP members before the Asian IAPP Assembly later this year. Nearly half of the 40 ALC participants were parliamentarians or members of the National Assembly and represented seven nations in Asia, including:

- Bangladesh: Eight participants with six MPs
- Bhutan: Three participants with a royal princess and one MP
- Cambodia: Seven participants with two members of the National Assembly
- India: Four participants with two MPs
- Mongolia: Five participants
- Nepal: Six participants, all MPs
- Philippines: Seven participants with one former MP

The presentations focused on introducing the essence of the UPF core principles of peace, however, the lecturers also showed how these principles can be implemented in the personal lives of the participants as well as in their areas of public responsibility. This practical approach was sincerely appreciated by everyone.

The presentation by Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, regional co-chair, IAPP-Asia, on "IAPP's Contribution to Peace," deeply impressed fellow lawmakers and instilled a sense of hope that IAPP's worldwide foundation may contribute towards resolving many of the world's most pressing problems. Dr. Chung Sik Yong, chair, UPF-Asia, gave two interactive presentations, which were interesting and informative.

The following reflections during the Closing Session convey the heart and spirit of the ALC and its impact on the participants:

Prof. Md. Nurul Islam Milon, Member of Parliament, Bangladesh -- I am very happy to attend this conference. I learned many things from here and how we can proceed to build a peaceful world in a peaceful way... Actually, there were many practical matters, which we do not always practice. If we can practice (them) in our life, then we can succeed, we can become real men (and women) and we can prepare ourselves to walk a peaceful way. We can start to build a peaceful world. It starts in our family. This is most practical. Finally, I want to say, this conference is very essential for a leader, any person from any country who believes in his society, family and country. We will be able to overcome the obstacles and many conflicts in the world.

Dr. Joy B. Bendoy, president, Fervent Academy, Inc., Philippines -- It is a great honor and privilege to be joining you in this ALC. This is my first time (to attend). I was so encouraged, inspired and blessed to hear the presentations of how Rev. Moon (has) impacted the world through pure love, true love and promoting peace. I was impacted from the first day I listened to our speakers of how you and I, coming from different religious backgrounds, can really work together... The good thing is, as we listen and try to apply these divine universal principles, we can work together as human beings to love one another. There is a saying, "You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving." Living for the sake of others are very powerful words... Love is not true love until it is given away. I want to pass this on to my country, the Philippines... I would like to thank you for attending, with my wife, this wonderful, amazing conference. True love is living for the sake of others.

H.E. Phat Poevseang, senior advisor to the National Assembly, Cambodia -- After being here for two days, I am really interested in this conference. I learned many things, but today is a new lesson for me. This is important for me and I will try to practice it. It starts from myself, my family, my community, my nation and even to the world. I appreciate strongly the presentation of Dr. Chung Sik Yong. The strategy to love your enemy, I never thought about that, but it is actually very suitable and possible. I would like to congratulate you for this conference.

Hon. Sindhu Jalesa Budhathoki, member of parliament, Nepal -- I would like to give thanks to my fellow parliamentarians and to others. It is a great honor to have the chance to be here for this ALC. I am really grateful to the UPF Founders who gave us this principle of living for the sake of others. My heart was really moved and I also became the follower of the founders, Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Mrs. Hak Ja Han Moon. It is very fruitful what I have learned; it is very meaningful for my life. Through Dr. Robert Kittel, I learned how we are able to bring together all the religions and unite into one. This was very impressive. The four kinds of love learned in the family impressed me very much and how responsibility and love come together. Dr. Yong gave the presentation on "Attributes of True Love." My heart was really moved and I became tearful... True love is always sacrificial love. Mrs. Ursula McLackland (Secretary General, UPF-Asia) gave the presentation on the need to build a family-friendly culture in our societies. It is very important for us parliamentarians to write bills and put these things in our laws. Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal gave a very good report about the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP)... I wish the principle thoughts of the Founders can spread all over the world. I am ready to support this. True Love can go beyond humanity and even beyond the world. This is very important education and these teachings should be in the textbooks in schools and colleges. We will try our best to bring them to the Ministry and Departments of Education. I feel I was reborn through this conference and I'd like to sing one song in dedication of this conference.

H.E. Ashi Khendum Dorji, Princess of Bhutan -- I am privileged to be here at this august gathering. Many thanks to Dr. Yong and H.E. Ek Nath Dhakal. Without him I would not be here. It has been a very informative and interesting session and I go away very impressed. Although I am a descendent of the Royal Families of Bhutan, Tibet and Sikkim, I am not royal even though the current King is my nephew. The Royal family in Bhutan is limited to the King, his wife and children. I was asked to speak about Gross National Happiness (GNH). This was a vision and dream of the first King of Bhutan. When everyone was focused on GDP, per capita income, growth and development, trying to bring their countries to the forefront of development as fast as possible, exploiting, creating wealth and opportunity for everyone, His Majesty said rather than GDP I'm interested in the Gross National Happiness of my people. It was a very simple statement, but it evolved into a development paradigm whereby His Majesty actually put into action his thoughts of putting his people first, their needs and their happiness rather than hurdling onto development activities that may harm them in the long-run. The four pillars of GNH are:

1. Sustainable and equitable social and economic development
2. Conservation of the environment
3. Preservation and promotion of culture
4. Good governance

This has been so successful that the United Nations held a happiness conference. During this time they adopted a resolution that March 20 of every year would be observed as International Day of Happiness. So from 2013 onward, it is observed all over the world. In keeping with the theme of the conference Bhutanese people do strive as much as possible towards helping each other... Every Bhutanese wakes up with the thought that we should help someone else and try to be a better person. We are not perfect, but this is the thought that parents instill in their children. To be a good person is not so much about strictly adhering to your religion; it is more about your action... It is about mindfulness, thinking, 'If there is an opportunity to help someone, I should take it, rather than turn away and do my own thing.' I will take back what I've learned from here and share it with my countrymen and parliamentarians.