



Monthly Newsletter of
Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light

HWPL NEWS



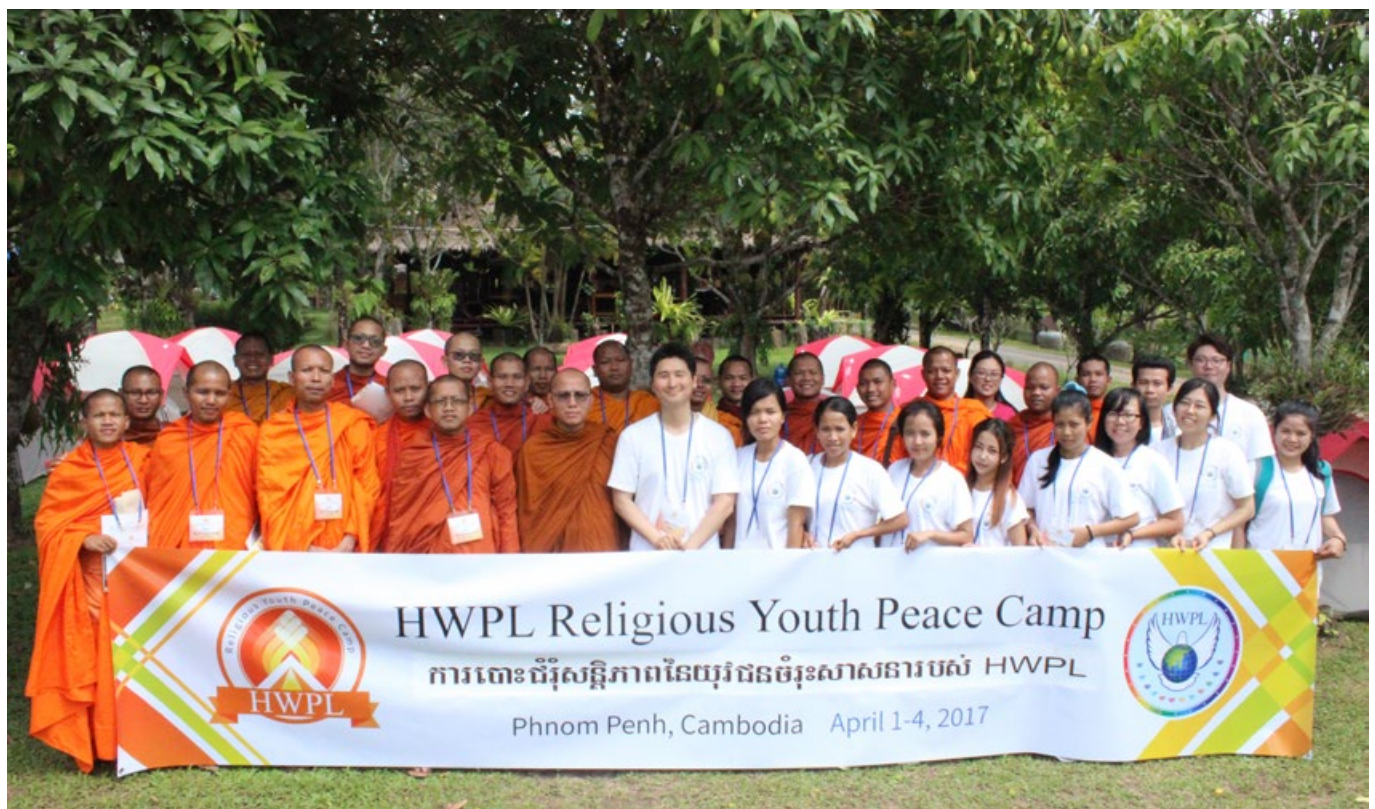
- 2017 HWPL Religious Youth Peace Camp in the Kingdom of Cambodia
- Buddhist Monks "Peace be upon you" (As-salamu alaykum) in Mosque
- No Mine! Want Peace! : International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action
- Insider's Story in 1st Annual Commemoration of Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War: Why I participate in the work of peace

2017 HWPL Religious Youth Peace Camp in the Kingdom of Cambodia

The Killing Fields is the place where one of the most fatal tragedies of human history occurred within the 20th century. However, from this history involving so much suffering and sadness, an earnest peace movement has sprouted. Over the course of four days, starting at the Wat Ounalom temple in Phnom Penh, and travelling all the way to the Al-Serkal Mosque, the HWPL Religious Youth Peace Camp was held.

The participants of the camp numbered over 30 youths and included HWPL youth volunteers, who hoped to gain deeper insights in the timely role of youth in peacebuilding, Cambodian students, and Buddhist monks from various temples across Cambodia.

These young peacekeepers took their first step together towards the ultimate goal of peace in Cambodia and future global peace through in-depth and sincere discussions and dialogues regarding religion, history, and culture, thus transcending the boundaries and barriers between them.



Day 1 ***World Religions***

The first day of the camp was held at the Wat Ounalom temple. The participants learned about world religions, including Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Sikhism, based on the background, history, and status of dispersion of each doctrine. By experiencing the different teachings of various faiths and seeing related visual materials, participants were able to embrace the reality that they are just different, but those differences don't mean they are wrong.

Day 2 ***Causes of Religious Conflicts & Disputes***

Discussions were held on the topics of “the reason why man pursues religion” and “what religion can do for humanity”. Everyone in the camp agreed that any forms of war, violence, and killing should not be allowed in order to preserve the foundational creed of religion and that all conflicts, especially those concerning religion, must be solved through dialogue.

Day 3 ***Resolution to Religious Conflicts & Disputes and the Religious Community's Role for Peace***

The purpose was to seek solutions for religious conflicts as well as to reaffirm the crucial role that each religious community plays.

Transcending religions, participants were able to deeply understand cultural and historical aspects of each other's country and customs through the introduction to and exchange of cultures between Korea and Cambodia.

As HWPL offers a new approach to inter-religious communication in the area of religion, the Religious Youth Peace Camp in Cambodia was a platform for youth to study peaceful conflict solutions and reaffirm their roles concerning the spiritual values necessary for humanity to build a peaceful community and world.



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- 1 The Wat Ounalom temple
- 2 The Al-Serkal Mosque
- 3 Kampong Seila (Picnic Resort)

Buddhist Monks "Peace be upon you" (As-salamu alaykum) in Mosque

To the religious community in Cambodia this peace camp held a special meaning and significance, since the venue of the camp on Day 2 provided for the participants, who came from different religious backgrounds, was an Islamic mosque, which is the main place for Muslims to practice their sacred religious acts. In fact, it was held at the Al-serkal Mosque, which is the hub of mosques in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. So, this is an unprecedented historic event since the mosque was opened in order for the camp to promote peace and communication through a mutual understanding of different religions. It was the result of continuous communication that led to this agreement between Islam and Buddhism in Cambodia.



Om Pothnita, one of the Buddhist participants, said, "When I visited the mosque, at first I felt scared and uncomfortable. I was afraid of doing something wrong. (However) my perspective of religion completely changed. I think religion is fundamental in creating peace."

An Rosman is a university student in Phnom Penh who visited the Al-Serkal Mosque for prayer and decided to participate in the camp after he found out about it. He said that he always felt that it was necessary to learn about different religions, so the fact that peace and religion were the two words highlighted as the theme of the camp made him join in the discussion. When asked about the resolution of religious conflicts around the world, he emphasized, "The best solution first is correct and authentic education about each religion. The other solution is time. We have to accept that we need time (to solve the issues)".

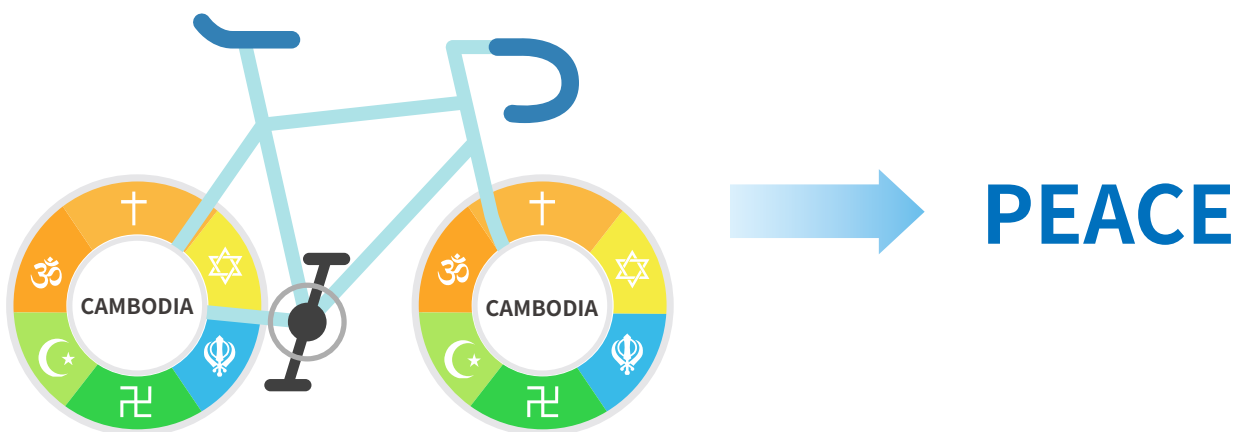


In the lecture on the history of religious conflicts the participants actively discussed the causes of such conflicts. They reached a common understanding that religious conflicts, to a large degree, stem from the differences in religious doctrine and ideology.

A young Buddhist monk Ven. Rithea Eang mentioned, "Cambodia is making an effort to understand the identity of each religion. But it is a valuable thing and grateful that we can gather in this mosque for the camp."

An organizer from HWPL highlighted that many of the wars around the globe are "caused by religious disputes". "By understanding the history of conflict and pain in Cambodia that also seriously affected religious people, I came to think that cessation of religious conflict can lead to cessation of wars in the globe. Rather than looking at different religions based on our prejudice, I hope we seek the true meaning of religion and resolution for peace. In that sense, this camp is significant in the provision of communication among different backgrounds to understand each other", he added.

Due to its tradition and achievements in dialogues and cooperation in the society, Cambodia shows its potential to play a role as the hub of harmonization in the religious world. The spirit of peaceful coexistence that accepts differences in the Cambodian community does not discriminate based on religious differences. The future of a peaceful world rests on religions that must lead humanity at the forefront of peacebuilding efforts.



No Mine! Want Peace! : International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action



The movie “Land of Mine”, selected as a nominee for the Best Foreign Language Film category at the 89th Academy Awards (the Oscars), depicts the tragic, true story of young German soldiers who were imprisoned after World War II and ordered to remove 45,000 mines in Denmark with their bare hands. Although the entire length of the Skallingen Peninsula, located on the west coast of Denmark, is only 7 kilometers, its strategic importance for military operations caused this area to become a minefield. Despite the efforts of mine clearance after the war, the task was incomplete and damages to civilians continued. It was reported that all mines were finally removed in 2010 thanks to private mine clearance organizations.



In order to assist states that face risks to the lives of citizens and challenges in development hindered by the remains of mines and explosive substances as a result of war, the United Nations designates every April 4th as the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.

40% of Casualties from Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) are Children.

The 50 years of conflict between the Government of Colombia and the FARC came to an end, but many critical tasks remain. One of them is resolving the landmine issue. In Colombia, over 10,000 casualties have been reported and many sufferings have occurred due to the landmines since 1990. An institution exclusively for mine clearance was organized, but there are many mysteries concerning where and how many mines were laid during the civil war.

In the case of Cambodia, millions of mines were planted around the entire border during its civil war. For this reason, the already poverty-stricken local community lost its livelihood due to the ensuing loss of lives and destruction of farmland. The only solution left for the people that would allow them to live proper lives was to remove all UXO from their lands.

The Vietnam War left another inerasable scar in Southeast Asian countries, including Laos and Cambodia, so people often use the term Indochina War to implicate its widespread impact. From 1964 to 1973, a total of 2 million tons of explosives were dropped over a span of 580,000 bombings. This means bomb-dropping was conducted every day, an average of one every 8 minutes, for a total of 9 years. About 30% of those bombs remain active, yet unexploded, in many parts of Cambodia and Laos to this day.



Currently Cambodia takes the lead in mine clearance at a national level, and the cooperation between the Government of Cambodia and international NGOs sheds light on the process of making a “mine-free peace village” where the residents can live without fear.

Article 1&2 of the DPCW Addresses the "Prohibition of the Threat of Use of Force" & "War Potential"



The pains of war and the use of weapons and violence never fade away with ease. It is future generations who take on the burden of this sorrow and painful wound. The best legacy we can leave for them is peace without pain and sadness. The means to guarantee a world of peace can stem from the regulation of the use of force and weapons for the purpose of the destruction of life. HWPL’s “Legislate Peace” Campaign asks for the cooperation of states, civil society, and international institutions for a global peace initiative based on international law as the foundation of a peaceful order.

Insider's Story in the 1st Annual Commemoration of Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War: Why I participate in the work of peace

“We can certainly do this and leave a true legacy of peace for future generations.”

The 1st Annual Commemoration of the DPCW on 14 March 2017 at the Coex Grand Ballroom, Seoul, South Korea reminded participants of becoming one in heart to promote peace, which is the cherished duty given to global citizens living in this era.

At the forefront of carrying out the movement to promote the principles inscribed in the DPCW are HWPL members from around the world, many of whom come from circumstances where they directly experienced the atrocities of armed conflicts and war. Memories of these pains and sufferings that they once wanted to erase became the driving force behind their passionate desire to put forth their best efforts towards promoting peace.

When asked about the significance of the event, Favour Anyacho, a 23 year-old youth from Nigeria said, “the event really can portray everything that can bring solution to the conflict.” He came from Nigeria where he has faced direct confrontations with the war that is currently devastating the country.

He summarized the ongoing war in his country as “the war that is mostly caused by religion, the Islam and Christian part.” At the conference, he sincerely resonated with the message delivered by Chairman Lee and other keynote speakers that religion should fulfill its true role in the peace-building process.

There are more common threads than differences which connect these HWPL members together in joining the work of peace. Marc Liborius, a 40 year-old gentleman from Germany, also works diligently for peace with HWPL. His indirect experience with war came from watching the news and listening to his grandfather's story of World War II.



Though he always had in his mind a strong desire for peace, he says it remained merely as a wish until he saw that “through this movement [by HWPL], all these different people from different cultures come together to work for peace.” He encourages all family members of peace reading this news to:



Favour speaks his experience growing up in a country torn by war and armed conflicts.

“

Put all our efforts together and all our strength and abilities from all the different countries and backgrounds we can certainly do this and leave a true legacy of peace for future generations.

”

Karoll Becerra is a 25 year-old student from Colombia studying in the Republic of Korea. She was deeply moved to hear the speeches because it made her think about her country, “where there is guerilla [warfare] and there are many conflicts and corruptions”. From the bottom of her heart, she said:



Karoll shyly puts up her fist to enliven the spirits of the family members of peace.

“

I want to put this message to my country as well, because I really want Colombians to change their minds and change their hearts as well so there can be peace and union in the country.

”

Throughout the interview, she emphasized changing our heart and the attitude we once had towards peace, which is often pessimistic and discouraging after facing the harsh reality. She encouraged the family members of peace, saying that “this work has to be the work of everyone, so if everyone is working on the same path with the same mindset of having peace in the world then we can all do it together.”

Within a single year, the "Legislate Peace" Campaign under HWPL has seen tremendous results in raising awareness of peace building activities, empowering youth and women to join the work of peace and educating the public concerning the value of life and peace, all in collaboration with civil society actors, the press and media, government officials, and religious leaders around the world. It brought the world a step closer towards establishing the principle of international law for peace through the introduction of a UN resolution based on the DPCW.

2017 HWPL 5.25 Peace Event

"Legislate Peace" Campaign for the Adoption of a UN resolution based on the DPCW

The upcoming global peace campaign on 25 May will be held in major cities around the world with diverse cultural activities and characteristics to raise a common voice for the cessation of war, peaceful conflict resolution, and world peace.

This annual event is to commemorate the first major campaign held by HWPL through peace walks in various cities, which are meant to generate support for the proposal of a UN resolution based on the DPCW and raise awareness for the establishment of peace initiatives in accordance with the principle of peaceful coexistence. Part of this campaign includes “making a world of peace” to encourage civil participation in support for people in areas of conflict.

In association with 300 civil society organizations in 80 countries, citizens have participated in peace walks on the same day of on 25 May since 2013. Last year, 700,000 citizens from 170 countries signed their signatures of support for the Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War (DPCW) to be introduced in the United Nations as an official resolution and adopted by states to facilitate national policies for peace in their societies.



Round-Table Discussion Seeking Mutual Understanding Inside of Scriptures

Religious leaders actively participating in the World Alliance of Religions' Peace (WARP) Office discussions transcend differences between each faith and study each scripture to establish the common standard which religion must pursue in the modern world. This commonly established standard is peace and within the given subject they learn, analyze, and understand each other's belief system based purely on the scriptures, without prejudice, in order to enlighten the public.

This interfaith peace dialogue, which began from the leaders of various faiths, has suggested the role of religious people in the implementation of peaceful conflict solutions within both religious and secular societies. We often overlook what religious texts really teach us and this may cloud our vision and prevent us from seeing the common, core values of each faith, leading to obstacles and barriers to peace. The round-table discussion that realizes peace through the mutual understanding between faiths based on the key messages of the religious texts continues to be held in many places around the world.

"To get together and talk to each other, to share knowledge and understanding, to make a world full of peace and justice in the future"



HWPL Canada Toronto WARP Office
Grand Ayatollah Reza Hosseini Nassab, Imam Mahdi Islamic Center



"There are several destinations according to the interpretation of the worshipers, but in the end the destination of the religions is one."

HWPL Kuwait Kuwait City WARP Office
Imam Montaser Ahmad, Al Falah Islamic Academy

"You try to give them a clear understanding. It's good for me and it's also hopefully good for everyone else who hears."



HWPL South Africa Cape Town WARP Office
Guru Medhavi Das, Cape Town ISCKON



"Trustworthy scriptures should provide information about the root cause of evil."

HWPL Jamaica Portmore WARP Office
Pastor Colin Gyles, Philadelphia Fellowship Church

"Spreading of peace movement and teachings of religions to the world."



HWPL Canada Ottawa WARP Office
Monk Saloeurm Savath, Ottawa Bodhikaram Temple



"We need a wider way of thinking to understand each other's different perspectives"

HWPL Sri Lanka Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte WARP Office
Prof. Pahalawattage Don Premasiri, Emeritus Professor of the University of Peradeniya, Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies

Companion of HWPL: Nazeeb Ibraheem from FRCN Radio Nigeria

Nigeria is in dire need of healing as the Boko Haram insurgency has been constantly continuing and the local and international media continues to be filled with stories of attacks, bombings, violence, and victims in the country. The rise of this group has forced more than 2.6 million people to flee from their homes across Nigeria, Cameroon, and Chad, more than half of whom have been children.

Amid the horrific situations in the country, however, there are rising efforts to spread the news of peace throughout the nation. Nazeeb Sulayman Ibraheem, Program Manager of FRCN Radio Nigeria, Africa's largest radio network, is a member of the HWPL Publicity Ambassadors who has been actively delivering the message of peace to create an environment of peacebuilding.



Companion of HWPL: Nazeeb Ibraheem from FRCN Radio Nigeria

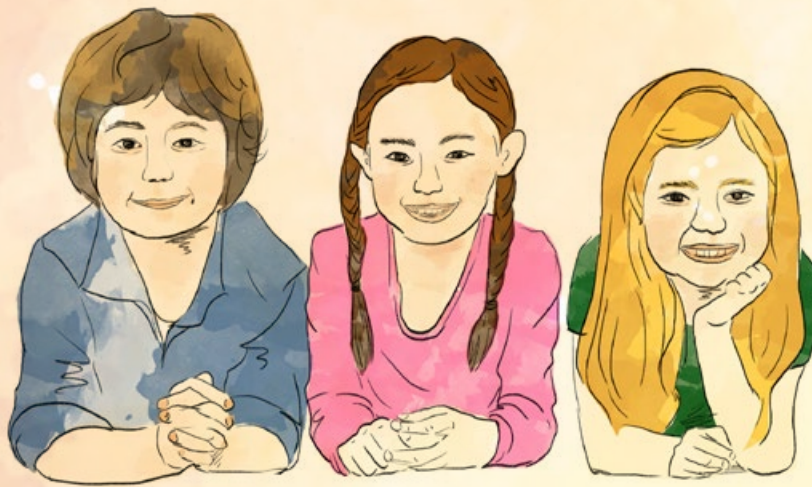
He wrote, “As a responsible citizen of the peace-loving country Nigeria, I hold allegiance to any meaningful work that shapes human life positively...I believe my choice as a Publicity Ambassador for HWPL was not because I am better than everyone is, but because HWPL felt my commitment to service to humanity was sincere.”

He is also a winner of the Best Producer of the Year Nigeria, which was awarded by USAID/BBC Media Action – MESSAGE in 2012. As a peace journalist who holds the media accountable to accurately deliver news Ibraheem, through his coverage, speaks out against war and violence and highlights the efforts of HWPL and other organizations in preventing conflicts and provides possible solutions for the people to observe and perceive.

Ibraheem acknowledges that when the media holds to the value of ethical and responsible reporting, then it can become a great assistance in conflict management and resolution. Not only through various external channels, but also through his own social media accounts, he is taking full responsibility in providing eyewitness accounts of the conflicts in Nigeria and those worldwide and encouraging the press and viewers to build a strong network of increased understanding about the need for peace.



We Stand for “Legislate Peace”



Romania

Romanian Youth: We are Tomorrow's Decision-Makers 35 students from the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, participated in a handprint and signing event in support of the DPCW.



Philippines

Students from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines presented about the role of the media and journalists in building peace.



Malaysia

The first step toward peace was taken by young people in Malaysia. Mr. Pathma Venthan, Assistant Secretary General of the Malaysian New Community Development and Awareness Association, gave a speech about “Why peace is needed” to the youth, introduced the DPCW, and presented the activities and plans of IPYG in Malaysia.



Morocco

Members of MAYA, the Moroccan Association of Youth's Access Alumni-Ait Melloul, had a meeting under the theme of ‘Morocco: Stepping to Peace Hub in Euro-Africa’.



Nigeria

500 students and many influential figures, including the prince of Kano, police chief, academic dean, and others, attended the 'Conference of Building Culture of Peace' in an Islamic University in the Kano state of Nigeria.



Nepal

A young student is holding up a slogan wishing to stop violence and start communication. 375 students at Srijana Higher Secondary School in Srijana Chowk, Pokhara, held a peace rally where they sang a song about peace and marched together as one.



Nepal

In the corner of Nepal, students from Somnath Baba Higher Secondary School and College in Sunwal, Nawalparasi district, held a Peace Walk while holding the HWPL and IPYG peace slogans, hoping for world peace.



Nepal

Students at Holy Mount Higher Secondary School in Lekhnath, Kaski, Nepal, attended a special class to learn about the activities of HWPL and contents of the DPCW.



Australia

On the 21st of April, in celebration of National Harmony Day, Australia held the 3rd Peace Builders Forum. Members from the Australian government, Islamic leaders, newspaper journalists, and other people from all different fields joined the forum.



Malaysia

At Taman Merdeka Park in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, more than 650 people, including the prince of Johor Palace and mayor of Johor Bahru, participated in a Peace Carnival, attempting to spread the culture of peace through various cultural performances.



2017.04

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