

# J-CARP TRIP 2017 REPORT

27<sup>th</sup> June – 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2017

This summer a group of us went to Japan representing European CARP to join in with the Japanese CARP activities and experience the everyday life of Japanese CARP members. During this experience, we have learnt a lot and made many new experiences. In this report, I am going to highlight the key experiences and activities of this J-CARP trip.

## Sightseeing

During our first 10 days in Japan, we did sightseeing whilst staying at different CARP centres. We stayed at Tokyo Chusei CARP centre for 4 nights, then Kyoto CARP centre for 3 nights, and finally Hiroshima CARP centre for 2 nights. During this time, we had a wonderful time sightseeing with the Japanese CARP members, we got to meet many new people and get used to CARP centre rules and daily schedule to prepare us for the main schedule in Kyushu.



*Group photo with Chusei CARP members*



*Breakfast at Chusei CARP centre*

During our time in Tokyo, we visited the holy grounds including Yoyogi Park holy ground and the old holy ground at Meiji Shrine. We also met with president Song and had lunch together while talking about our families and European CARP activities.



*Yoyogi Park Holy Ground*



*Meeting with president Song*



*Kyoto sightseeing (Nara)*



*Hiroshima sightseeing (Miyajima)*

### Japanese CARP activities

After our 1-week sightseeing, we went to Fukuoka and then Kumamoto to join in with CARP activities, staying about 2 weeks at each centre. During this time, we did many different things, made many new memories and met many church members. Many first-time experiences were made, for example for almost all of us, it was our first time witnessing.

### Witnessing

The Japanese CARP members go witnessing every week day in universities appealing to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students who have more time. They witness by giving CARP the image of a social university club and don't talk about God or religion, however they do mention that they study the DP. They do this because religion isn't viewed well in Japan and this way of witnessing is more effective in bringing guests. We took part in witnessing, we witnessed a total of about 8 hours while in Japan. At first witnessing was nerve wrecking for most of us as we had to approach strangers, but eventually we got used to it. The toughest part of witnessing is when we did it for 4 hours straight and getting over rejection. In the end although it was tough, witnessing was a valuable experience and we all gained something from it. We also took part in welcoming guests and looking after guests at the CARP centre.



*Witnessing at Kyushu University (left) & looking after guests (right picture) (guest in middle)*

## Teaching English

In Kumamoto, we taught English lessons to second gen, consisting mostly of junior high schoolers. We had to prepare different games and activities for the children, which would be both interesting and helpful for their learning. We had a fun time teaching the Kumamoto young second gen and we could really learn to connect to the hearts of the children. We also had many activities outside of the lessons in which we attended where we continued communicating to the second gen in English so they could practice their speaking. These activities include ultimate frisbee, football and even going to a fireworks festival with Kumamoto second gen which was a memorable experience.



*Teaching English at a church in Kumamoto*

Some activities had winners, in which we gave souvenirs from our countries as prizes, and smaller runner up prizes for the rest of the children so they didn't feel left out. After our English lessons, we usually performed for them and then ate and talked together.

Playing ultimate frisbee with the Kumamoto second gen was also very enjoyable. We were put in teams with only 1 or 2 European members per team, so we could communicate a lot with many new people and work together strengthening our bonds. It was very tiring but fun!

It was very nice to join in with Kumamoto second gen in these activities, getting to know them and have good memories as we practice our Japanese and they practiced their English.

## Peace Road

In Kumamoto, we took part in an event called Peace Road which tries to connect all countries to strive for world peace. We had to go to quite a few meetings with important people from different towns and cities around Kumamoto and Fukuoka to introduce ourselves as European representatives taking part in peace road. The peace road coordinators would explain a bit more about peace road to the politicians and then they would sign a map of the world. These meetings ended with us taking a picture with them and giving gifts. The Peace Road itself took place over 2 days where we would take turns as groups of 3, consisting of 2 European members and 1 Japanese member who knew the way (at the front). We would cycle using sports bikes in various locations, from winding mountain roads to flat local roads, it was quite challenging at times but also relaxing at other times. We did not cycle the whole route as there was a lack of time so we ended up driving a good amount of the route. None of us have done anything like this before so it was a new and interesting experience for all of us, it was good to challenge ourselves and do something out of our comfort zone. At first, we were nervous as none of us are used to cycling on the road with cars, or downhill on sports bikes, but we got used to it and we all enjoyed the experience in the end.



*Pictures from Peace Road*

## Volunteering

We participated in 2 days of volunteering work in Kumamoto. This volunteering involved working with Kumamoto second gen and a few friendly local people (non-church members) who took us to the locations and worked with us in weeding tea farms, cleaning dirt off workshop floors, and weeding asparagus plants. This work was very physical and required a lot of effort, especially in the heat. This was a satisfying experience, especially when weeding the tea farm because there were so much weeds that when you pull them all off one area, the tea plants looked so much better and cleaner which was rewarding. It was challenging work but we were glad to have helped local people.

## Matsuri festival

In Kumamoto, the church takes part in the matsuri festival where church members carry their own portable shrine on their shoulders. This year, us European members also took part in carrying the portable shrine. We carried it for 3 hrs in a line with other groups carrying their own shrines. Walking for 3 hours wasn't as tiring as it sounds because most of the time we were just pulling the shrine on wheels, there was only certain times where we would pull it up onto our shoulders as we paraded the streets in Kumamoto. We started at Katō Shrine and took a route which took 3 hours to traverse and we ended up back at Katō Shrine to finish the ceremony. Kumamoto church members and second gen also came to cheer us on. It was a new and fun experience!



*Pictures from Matsuri Festival*

## Japan to Korea tunnel

For one day, we visited the Japan to Korea tunnel in Fukuoka where we met many Japanese and Korean CARP members and listened to a talk about the tunnel, we also went down the tunnel to see its progress. At this moment, they are clearing the earth and water from the tunnel to make space for construction. The slope was quite steep, for every 4 metres horizontal there was a 1 metre drop in vertical distance. They are still digging downwards and haven't reached the desired bottom level yet. After seeing the tunnel, we were put into groups of 4-6 with a mix of Japanese, Korean and European members. We were put into pairs at first, European members with Japanese and Japanese members with Koreans, then each group consisted of 2-3 pairs with only up to 1 European in a group (there were many people at this event). As groups, we spent the rest of the day together going around a shopping area in Fukuoka (Tenjin). After eating lunch together, we met in a lecture hall in Tenjin where there were representatives from Korea CARP, Japan CARP and European CARP giving a speech. From the European members, I (Benjamin) gave a speech about the Eurotunnel and I was translated by Leo. Each country then gave a performance, all of us Europeans performed a Korean Dance (Majokon). It was nice to get close with small groups of people with people you have never met before and from different countries, it was interesting to learn about diverse cultures and talk together.



## Other Activities with CARP members



*Fukuoka CARP members speaking out to fight against communism. We helped give out leaflets.*



*Sports with J-CARP members*



*Cleaning streets with J-CARP members (They do this every week)*



*Fireworks with J-CARP members*



*Festival with Kumamoto Second gen*



*Fishing and BBQ with Fukuoka CARP (we cooked the fish we caught)*

**END**