

Youth Convention in Cambodia Draws 5,000 Students

Chung Sik Yong
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Battambang, Cambodia—On the early morning of June 13, 2015, nearly 5,000 students lined up to enter the Sopheap Maengkol Center to attend the International Youth Convention (IYC), whose theme was “The Role of Asian Youth for World Peace,” co-organized by UPF-Cambodia and the Union of Youth Federation Cambodia (UYFC). Several institutions of higher learning, such as the Battambang Provincial Hall, also helped contribute to the success of the event.

With the event venue having a maximum seating capacity of less than 5,000, many of the students chose to sit in the aisle. Student representatives from ten universities and teacher training associations, as well as nearly 40 participants from 11 different countries attended the conference.



The event began with singing of Cambodia’s national anthem, "Nokor Reach," followed by a moment of remembrance for Mr. Samdech Chea Sim, president of Cambodia’s Senate, who passed away five days before the event on June 8, 2015.

Mr. Sok Seng Yan, president of UPF-Cambodia, spoke about the IYC. Opening remarks were delivered by Mr. Chan Sophal, governor of Battambang Province. The keynote speech was given by Dr. Chung Sik Yong, chairman of UPF-Asia, who spoke about UPF’s principles of peace and explained the role of youth Ambassadors for Peace. The audience applauded him when he said that giving precedes receiving in order to establish relationships of true love. The chairman of Battambang Provincial Hall, Mr. Ouk Vong, then spoke about the value of UPF’s principles of peace.

Between presentations, dances and songs were performed by talented students from the University of Battambang.



Dr. Robert Kittel, education director of UPF-Asia, asked all the young people present to remain pure until marriage as the foundation for a happy married life in the future. The students responded enthusiastically, making a “Pledge of Purity.” Mr. Hajime Saito, secretary general of UPF-Indochina, spoke about the “Attributes of True Love.” Mr. Chay Chap, chairman of the Tong Il Moodo Federation in Cambodia and former secretary of Cambodia’s Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, encouraged the students to always be positive. The final speaker, Mr. Cheam Chansophorn, vice governor of Battambang Province and a representative of the Union of Youth Federation Cambodia, spoke about the activities of UYFC.

The program concluded with the presentation of gifts local to Battambang Province—rice in 20 kg—to all the international participants. Four local newspapers and one TV station reported on the Convention, in which they spoke about the importance of young people to keep their purity and respect family values, values held in the heart of Cambodian parents and teachers, but which are being fast eroded among youth by modernization and globalization.



The morning after the IYC, more than 250 participants gathered at the Khmera Battambang Hotel to recognize the volunteers who contributed to and celebrate the success of the event. Mr. Julius Maliodem, president of the Family Federation for World Peace (FFWPU) Philippines; Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, a member of Nepal’s parliament; and Mr. Kamol Thananopavarn, president of FFWPU Thailand, introduced activities in their nations and encouraged the Cambodian youth present to continue developing themselves. Finally, Dr. Lek Thaveetermasakul, vice chair of UPF-Asia, offered inspiration to the youth for their future based on the vision of UPF founder Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Dr. Yong presented them with a certificate recognizing their volunteer contribution.

Afterwards, the participants went outside to celebrate the start of the Peace Road Tour 2015—whose theme is “Connecting with the World for Peace”—in Asia. Six Cambodian youth began cycling from Battambang city.

Thanks to Dr. Chung Sik Yong, chairman of UPF-Asia; Dr. Lek Thaveetermasakul, vice chair, UPF-Asia; Mr. Cheam Chansophorn, deputy governor of Battambang Province; Mr. Sieng Em Totim, rector of the University of Battambang; Dr. Heng Monychenda, adviser of UPF-Cambodia; Mr. Hou Bunret, deputy director of Cambodia University for Specialties; Mr. Srey Kivsokhom, vice president of the Provincial Teacher Training College; and Mr. Sieng Sen, deputy director of the International University in Cambodia, for helping to carry out this event.