

Encountering the true spirit of God and the strength of our church in Japan

T. O'Hanlon
August 10, 2013



My visit to Japan as part of the J-CARP project was a very good experience; I learnt many things about CARP life and the Japanese members.

For me going to Japan was an encounter with the true spirit of God and the strength of our church. The dedication and heart of the Japanese members made me realize how strong our church is and how it was the strong faith and determination of the members that built this movement out of love, hope and faith.

CARP life really inspired me and I greatly admire the young carp members that follow this lifestyle. It isn't always easy and you have to invest a lot of

heart and determination in order to live this very high standard. I was given an insight into my own life and how I can improve my daily life to be more focused and to have a stronger faith. The carp members would get up early to do Hoon Dok Hae and the European members would do Hoon Dok Hae separately, but at the same time. We would then have breakfast together, which was nice to be able to share and bond, then a lot of the carp members would head on for university.

The way they handled and balanced their studies and also living this high standard, dedicating themselves to daily activities with carp and studying, really moved me and I felt very inspired by their attitude, it showed great faith, maturity and determination to lead a life dedicated to True parents.

We would go witnessing in the afternoon and come back around six or seven in time for dinner. This was a new experience for me as I had never witnessed on the streets before in this way. I found it a great experience that deepened my faith in the church and the purpose of witnessing. I felt it really connected to my parents and what they had sacrificed and what they had done.

There were quite a few guests we brought back to the center and it was very encouraging to talk and discuss principle with them and listen to their values and opinions. If the guests we invited back could not speak English that well, we would ask one of the carp members to lecture principle in Japanese on our behalf. Seeing the depth of heart of some of the Japanese carp members was very inspiring and made me reflect on my own level of heart.

Our first meetings were at Shibuya Headquarters; we were able to introduce ourselves to the main congregation and then were invited to meet the carp members there as they had a separate service. They were very welcoming and it was so nice to meet other carp members and share with them. We were then able to meet the High school members and they asked us a few questions about the activities we have in Europe for second generation and also what our education structure for second generation is like. I felt so good inside be able to share with them what it is like in Europe so that they could have an insight into the church in other countries around the world.

After this we were able to be part of the very first meeting they were holding for blessed couples and meet all those participating. We had a brief talk and were able to share a little about ourselves and where we come from.

Our next meeting was with the CARP president, I found this a very important time for us as European members and of course carp members.

I strongly felt that the bonds between Asia and Europe within CARP should be strengthened and meetings like this were very important to share opinions and thoughts on CARP as a worldwide institution. We were given an in-depth talk on the work the CARP president has been doing in Japan and what CARP is like in Japan. We also gave a brief talk on the structure of CARP in Europe and how we organize activities for second generation.

Our second meeting was when we were invited to church run hospital outside of Tokyo, we met the manager of the hospital and the lead Doctor. We were able to hear a little of her testimony and I personally found it very inspiring. We were able to give a little, by singing a song written by one of the European members and we then sang it several times to different departments of the hospital and also a few patients.

Our third meeting was with the leader of UPF, Oliver Davies gave a presentation about youth UPF and afterwards we had a discussion with the UPF Leader and some of the carp members that were present. It was one of the most inspiring meetings we had during my stay in Japan. I felt that there was a lot of give and take, we shared a lot from Europe, but also received a lot. Being able to share thoughts and opinions on the current structure of CARP In Europe and Japan, gave me hope that in the future ties with Asia and Europe will be strong in the church and that we can really achieve so much when we work together.

Our Fourth meeting was with President and Mrs. Song, which was a very nice experience, we were able to convey our experience so far in Japan, what it was like living in the carp centers, and how some things were very different to Europe, e.g. the fact that in England and Italy and Greece we don't have carp centers, (these were the main countries representing Europe with the J-carp Project).

Our last week was spent sightseeing around Japan; we visited Hiroshima first, and stayed in the CARP center there. I thoroughly enjoyed staying in Hiroshima the members in the carp center were very warm and welcoming.

The first day we went to visit the War Bomb museum, this was very interesting for me, it gave me an insight into the devastation the attack on Hiroshima had caused. I also knew the history of Pearl Harbor, but never fully knew the impact of the attack in Hiroshima.

We then moved on to Kyoto and visited quite a few temples it was lovely to experience this part of Japan.

All in all, I feel the experience in Japan that I can take home with me, has strengthened my faith and also taught to get involved more with activities in my carp community. How important it is to nurture relationships with brothers and sisters in the church and to have more positive influence on our communities.