

## CARP America's Japan Trip - Our Journey to Japan Begins

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May 25, 2016



### Day Zero: Preparations

“Welcome everyone!”

Karen and Jermaine, members of CARP Los Angeles (LA), served as emcees for the trip orientation prior to take-off. They welcomed the 36 excited participants from all over the nation who will be joining this cultural exchange to Japan from May 25 – June 6.

### Purpose of the Trip

The group met in Los Angeles on Tuesday, May 24th and reviewed the resources in the booklets that had been prepared with much love and care the day before. These booklets included the purpose of the trip which is to:

1. Visit Japan where the founder of CARP (Rev. Sun Myung Moon, affectionately termed our True Father) spent much time, devotion, and prayer, and
2. Experience a cultural exchange by learning about the traditions of Japanese CARP students, and
3. Share CARP America’s support, friendship, and best practices.

During the last two days of the trip, students from CARP Korea will also join to take part in an international conference. The purpose of this two-day conference is to provide an opportunity for students from Korea, Japan, and America to connect, network, and learn from each other to create a common vision for the future together.

### Welcomed with Love and Care

Naoko Hiraki, the main organizer for this trip and Advisor for the CARP LA chapter, shared a few words on the importance of this trip:

*“Thank you so much for coming. When you go to Japan, you will feel the difference. There are many difficulties there, but I want you to encourage CARP Japan. That is the greatest goal and motivation for this trip. Japan has a lot of history, so we also want to inherit the spiritual treasures in Japan.”*



*Founder of this Intercultural Exchange, Naoko Hiraki, beams with joy during the Orientation.*

CARP members who had flown in from different regions all over America to attend this trip were warmly welcomed and participated in ice breakers by teams, giving participants the chance to meet each other, introduce themselves, and assign roles for the trip.

### **Tour Through Japan**



The emcees explained that our American CARP students will be able to meet Japanese students in different cities, chapters, and regions in Japan. The group will arrive in Tokyo, spend some time sightseeing with the students and then do similar activities with CARP students in Kyoto and Osaka. The group will then return to Tokyo where students from CARP Korea will also join them for the 2-day international conference. Part of this experience will be visiting Waseda University where True Father studied as a student.

The orientation ended with a touching prayer, moving the participants with gratitude for being able to go to Japan and spread joy and hope to the CARP students there.

### **Day One – Our Journey Begins!**

## **LAX Airport – Take-Off Testimony by Nina Urbonya, Trip Coordinator**

“Today is finally the day that we go to Japan. Some students are teasing and laughing at each other’s passport photos. “You show me yours, and then I’ll show you mine!” Others are talking about their favorite Japanese food. Everyone is impressed with the amazing customer care displayed by Japan Airlines. The agent even came out to personally escort us to the check-in desk. We are already feeling the warmth of Japan, where the “customer is king.”

While waiting in the security line, I got a chance to talk to Ilya Hack from CARP Las Vegas. When I asked him what inspired him to come on this trip, he replied with two main reasons:

*“To meet CARP students in Japan and learn about the foundation of CARP established by our founders in Japan. Also, my mother is Japanese, so this will be a good opportunity to understand the culture and better understand my mother.”*

There is only one hour left before we take off. Those who missed the orientation from last night are being briefed on the schedule now.

One by one, the students take out their snacks and pass them around; we had chips, chocolate and, combo rolls. CARP is all about sharing and these students are really embodying that!

Everyone is tired from all the preparations and travelling but you can see the excitement in their faces pushing past the fatigue.

Our journey begins with a 13-hour flight on Japan Airlines. Guessing from the customer care at the check-in desk, we will be well taken care of on the flight. It will be a time for fun but also reflection as we prepare to meet our friends in Japan.

Please send your prayers and support. We’ll continue to keep you updated along the way!