

Conference Proposes a Vision for Revitalizing the Family in Japan

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Tokyo, Japan—With a view to addressing Japan’s rapidly aging population and declining birth rate, UPF-Japan and its Council of Ambassadors for Peace organized the International Leadership Conference 2015, on the theme, “Family in Crisis and Vision for its Revitalization – Emergency in Declining Childbirth and Japan’s Choices,” on September 12, 2015 in Tagajo city, Miyagi prefecture, located north of Tokyo.

The event also commemorated the tenth inaugural anniversary of UPF, which took place on September 12, 2005 in New York.

In the keynote address, Prof. Hidetsugu Yagi of Reitaku University spoke about the US Supreme Court’s ruling in late June, which effectively makes same-sex marriage legal in all states of the country. In his analysis, “The argument used in America for legalizing same-sex marriage could be [used] to legalize bigamy and polygamy, as well.” He warned that this shift in America could influence Japan in a few years.

Speaking about the Same-sex Partnership Ordinance enacted this past March by Shibuya ward, one of Tokyo’s twenty-three wards, Prof. Yagi said: “The ordinance considers the sexual behaviors of hetero sex, same-sex, bi-sex, and transgender equal in value. Japan’s Constitution, [however], specifically protects the legal matrimony between a man and a woman because it procreates future generations. The ordinance, therefore, is contradictory to the spirit of the Constitution and [Japan’s] civil law, which distinguishes legal marriages.”

Quoting from *Suicide of a Superpower: Will America Survive to 2025?* a book by Patrick Buchanan, an American political commentator, Prof. Yagi expressed his concern that many people have become uninterested in marriage, which is further decreasing the birth rate in Japan: “[Does] Japan’s Constitution have no clause [about protecting] the family? Why don’t we urgently enact a basic law on the family?”

Dr. Eiji Tokuno, president of UPF-Japan, drew the audience’s attention to the number of suicides in Japan, which has one of the highest rates of suicide among developed nations. This reveals the situation of [our] youth, he said. To address this issue, he urged the family be revitalized and education be reformed in Japan. “In order to rebuild our society, which appreciates familial culture and sensitivities, we need to distinguish positive and negative elements of western civilization.” He also suggested that Japan eventually transmit a wholesome social culture to the world.

Mr. Masayoshi Kajikuri, secretary general of the National Council for True Family Campaign and deputy secretary general of UPF-Japan, then spoke on a “Vision for Revitalizing Families.” He stressed the need for a paradigm shift in Japan to encourage youth to raise children at home. He said tax benefits and economic support could strengthen bonds between and the living together of three generations (grandparents, parents, and children). He envisions the family being revitalized nationally by “a Japanese model” that strengthens the culture of marriage and the foundation of the family.

A panel discussion followed, where a city assembly member and education experts deliberated on challenges in child-rearing, the merits of three generations living together and measures to expand moral education.