

Asian Leadership Conference in Thailand: The Missing Element in Education

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December 19, 2016



Giving students knowledge and skills for a good career is not enough.

The 75 participants from five nations attending the Asian Leadership Conference (ALC) in Bangkok, Thailand, Dec. 12-19, clearly understood that people in all walks of life need to be provided with universal spiritual and moral values, and encouraged to build loving marriages and families.

Members of Parliament from the Philippines along with their wives, principals and owners of schools/colleges from Nepal (many who came as couples); a midwifery vocational trainer with her husband from Indonesia; a military general with his wife from Cambodia; and a member of the Family Federation of Switzerland all acknowledged that more, much more, is needed to prepare our youth for nation-building.

Sociological data demonstrate definitively that when families are healthy and strong then the personal and social benefits will be massive and long-term, including: better education (cognitive, emotional and behavioral improvements in students; higher levels of graduation), crime reduction (relieving the burden on the courts, police, prisons, and legal structures), improved health care (from child birth to elderly care and in between).



This ALC, a project of the Universal Peace Federation, went a long way to accomplishing that by bringing this discussion to decision-makers and leaders attending the 5-day program entitled, "Providing Vision and Leadership for Nation-building and Peace." More than 30 ALC conferences have been held in the past five years. This time educators, lawmakers, and military leaders resolved to promote family values in the classrooms, during military training, in vocational training programs and have them enshrined in law.

The largest delegation, 59 participants, was from Nepal. This group of principals comprised the Board of Directors of the National Private and Boarding School Association of Nepal (N-PABSAN) which has more than 2,500 schools nationwide. They plan to conduct teacher training programs in Nepal and bring “Pure Love” education programs into classrooms throughout the country.

Going far beyond the rationale for transmitting sexual knowledge to students, the “Pure Love” curriculum explains the psychological, emotional and also social benefits for keeping human sexuality within the bonds of marriage. This program explains why keeping sexual purity for young people is one of the best things they can do for the sake of their nations. In essence, remaining pure is an act of patriotism.



TESTIMONIES (*English has been edited, RSK*):

Nepal – Mr. Karna Bahadur Shahi (*Principal / Founder of the Texas International School, President, N-PABSAN*)

This conference is very important especially for founder-principals involved in school education. Their attitudes, motivation and lifestyles which they carry into school education are central for quality education. We have learned in this conference to honor family values which are needed to make the personalities in our children healthy and whole.

The students are the future assets of the nation. When they go forward with this vision and organize their professional careers as well as their family lives accordingly, they will definitely contribute to the society and the nation.

Nepal – Mr. Pravin Moktan (*Founder-Principal Shree Dewa School*)

This family-based character education is a very essential part of a child’s education and, unfortunately, this is what has been missing from our curriculum. Of course, we have a subject called “moral science” but this is simple values education and is rather superficial. We really need to go into more of the essentials, like what was presented at this conference.

We normally teach according to curriculum, to the syllabus, and add some of our own insights. We teach so children pass the exams. But in doing that we neglect the higher aspects, the spiritual and moral aspects, which are more important.

This is the pillar of nation-building because a nation will become what children make it. The moral values, insights and perception that these children grow up with is what the nation will be in the future.

Philippines – Hon. Anthony M. Bravo (*Congressman, Coop NATCOCO Party list*)

As a legislator, the content of this conference definitely caught my interest. In any society, if you want to build a good community and prosperous society, the foundation should not be just intellectual education—but moral values. If we provide education without moral values to our children we are not going to produce a good society. We have to build a society with moral values at the core and pass this on to the next generation.

Philippines – Hon. Salvador B. Belaro Jr. (*Congressman, Ang Edukasyon Party list*)

We should love our enemy. But the enemy is within us; it can be dogma, bias, and lack of self-discipline

or self-control. First, education helps in self-conquest. Second, education could lead the way in teaching sacrifice, not only for oneself, but for the family, village and nation...

We, as delegates to this convention, are resolved, are willing and have the heart and passion to look for the commonality, beyond religion, and to work for world peace.



Indonesia – Mrs. Triyana Ety Ruswati (*College Teacher of Midwifery Academy of Permata Husada Samarinda*)

The presentations were very powerful. The UPF idea is simple but we did not realize it, even though we knew about it. In my school we teach children to do what is right. UPF is like a great power, a good power, supporting us to do the right thing. This gives us energy and confidence. I believe God gave us a heart-sound, a conscience, which is like a micro-chip from God that tells us what is right and wrong.

This education is very suitable. In my midwifery school, we are all girls. Girls are very vulnerable today, especially in having sex before marriage. The health minister gives free condoms for colleges and schools... but we don't do that because we believe free condoms are not good for them. That's why I'm so interested in this valuable program.

We are women and women will deliver, give birth to, the next generation. If women are strong and have a good mind and are strict to keep purity until marriage and to build a harmonious family, then the next generation will be good.

Cambodia – Mrs. Touch Cheata (*Wife of Brig. General Chhann Phea the Vice-Director, Ministry of National Defense*)

These sessions are very important for us all to learn about peace, especially in relationships in the family between husband and wife. This starts with good education. The content of this conference is very useful, not only for Cambodia, but for all nations. I will bring this experience and education to our nation when I come back home.

Peace starts from me and my husband... then expands to everyone. But peace requires sacrifice. We should give first and receive later. Marital fidelity is very important and I like the idea of one key for one door. It makes me happy and I'm sure it touches the hearts of all women.