

4-day Asian Leadership Conference (ALC) in Bangkok, Thailand

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Fifty two participants from five nations attended a 4-day Asian Leadership Conference (ALC) in Bangkok, Thailand, July 7-10, 2017. Participants came from the following nations: Cambodia – 30, Nepal – 7, Philippines – 7, Thailand – 6, and Malaysia – 2.

Among the conference participants were: three Members of Parliament (2 current and 1 former), two military generals (retired), two governors, a vice-minister for education (retired), five college principals, two medical doctors, a television director, a consultant for national defense from the Presidential Office, two women's association chairman of the at the provincial level, several government officials and district leaders. It was the highest level ALCs held in Asia this year. We have had four leadership conferences in 2017.

For many, the climax of the educational side of the program was a special high-level session where H.E. Madhav Kumar Nepal, Prime Minister of Nepal (2009-11), and Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, 2-time Minister in the Government of Nepal, both spoke to the conference delegates.

In an address entitled, "The Role of Governments, Parliamentarians and Civil Society in Addressing Critical Challenges of our Time," Prime Minister Nepal said that "the role of civil society in our time, particularly in developing countries, is highly important. It plays a role to enhance transparency and good governance.

"Besides, civil society enhances and strengthens the democratic system promoting ideas of self-reliance." He went on the say that "the sole responsibility of the government is to serve the people by systemizing the financial activities under proper regulations."

Before outlining the chronology of the launching of chapters of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) throughout the world in the last year and a half, the Hon. Minister Dhakal explained four fundamental principles of IAPP. It was politically neutral, religiously inclusive, dialogically based, and focused on world peace with ideal families as the cornerstone.



At the end of the program an Interfaith Peace Blessing Festival was held where nine couples rededicated their marriages based on a renewed understanding of the importance of marriage and family. Those who were single or did not bring their spouse rededicated themselves to the ideal of purity before marriage and fidelity in marriage.

This was a solemn time for all, but it was also filled with song and laughter. Couple not only had a serious attitude towards the blessing, they also took seriously the opportunity to make a new beginning for themselves and their loved ones.

Comments from the reflections from various participants, included:

An appreciation for the interfaith approach to the Divine Principle education.

The "Attributes of True Love" given by Dr. Yong Chung-sik, the Regional President of UPF-Asia, was very interactive and well received.

The universal applicability of these teachings was easily obvious as they could be applied in education, government, business and religion.

The strong emphasis on marriage and family -- backed up by documented sociological data -- added professionalism to the program.

Capping off the celebrations, 11 Ambassadors for Peace awards were given to participants from three nations.

