

Chennai remembrance event on Hiroshima-Nagasaki Day 2012

Report by Anbumani Arumugam

International Young Adult President, IARF-RFYN

Program:

The program started with an Invocation Song in Sanskrit, a young adult from Ethiraj College rendered the song with the meaning of peace and love which was apt for the occasion. Prof. Mrs. Sriranjani Sivasubramanian, Head of the Department of Human Rights, delivered the welcome address. Nithya, our RFYN leader and Young Adult, who was sent to Jordan RFYN program in 2008, works as an Assistant Professor in the same department.

Dr. Thomas Mathew spoke about the importance of nuclear free world. He have a detailed account of the state of affairs in the world at present with regard to Nuclear weapons and also highlighted the state of mind of victims of such nuclear attacks. He emphasized the need for peace and also the efforts made to bring one of the survivors of such a ghastly attack on an awareness tour to India.

The special lectures were delivered by

1.) Mr. Hiroo Iso, An Official Hiroshima Hibakusha (Survivor of Hiroshima Atom Bomb Explosion) - After Hiroshima: Personal Experience

Hiroo, who is on a tour of India, spoke about his personal experiences after the Hiroshima bomb and how his life changed after that. He narrated how his family was displaced and spoke about the death of his mother due to cancer. "I am from a middle class family of five. After the bombing, not only I but so many other survivors were all displaced. We had nothing. We had lost our roots," he told the audience with the aid of his friend and interpreter Yukiko Inaba. This survivor is now a staunch ambassador of peace. As part of a 'Peace Boat' Hiroo, along with 100 odd survivors visited 23 countries in 2009. He started spreading his message of peace after he turned 65. "I never wanted to go back to Hiroshima. But once I started visiting places and meeting people, I had to go back there. I go there quite regularly now," he says.

2.) Dr. S. Latha – Assistant Professor and Head, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice Administration, Tamil Nadu Open University – Nuclear Victims: Past Present and Future

Dr. Latha in her presentation gave a detailed and indepth account of the nature and meaning of victims, the kind of attacks one can face in a nuclear situation. She spoke at length enlightening the audience about the basics of bomb attacks, the current scenario with regard to the development of Nuclear arsenal by countries. The young student audience was completely enthralled by her presentation

3.) Mr. J. Mayuran, Representative from Organisation for Eelam Refugee Rehabilitation

Mr. Mayuran stood there amongst the audience as an example for the sheer courage and as witness to the successful rehabilitation program for Tamil Eelam Refugees, He as a 4 year old boy was witness to such carnage back in Sri Lanka that his life now is a clear statement for all youngsters that struggles can be overcome with the right intervention. He spoke about the need for peace in Sri Lanka and the world in the near future.

4.) Ms. Tenzin Phuntsok – President, Tibetan Student’s Association

He is one of the thousands of Tibetans settled in India for want of a better life and country of their own. He showed rare pictures of young women and men between the age of 17 and 35 committing self-immolation for the cause of a free Tibet. His speech really moved the audience because of the intensity of the happenings in Tibet. He also highlighted the importance of good education that many Tibetans get in India. He yearned for a peaceful Tibet and mentioned that he had not met his family in 2 decades.

The Mime:

The young adults who are students of 1-year Masters in Human Rights Education gave a stellar performance in the form of a mime depicting the actual scene of a nuclear bomb attack. The audience were moved by the performance of the young students especially Mr. Hiroo Iso who was very emotional when the performance was on and seemed to be recollecting some the moments in his life.

Mr. Ramachandran delivered the vote of thanks for one and all concerned for a successful culmination of the IARF-SACC-RFYN Awareness Tour in India.

Overall the program was a successful one by all means and I extend a my sincere thanks to Dr. Thomas Mathew for giving us an opportunity to organise such a program in Chennai. Moreover, this is the 1st time a Hiroshima Survivor is actually visiting Tamil Nadu leave alone Chennai. Hence, it becomes all the more special for all of us concerned. I am particularly happy that young adults who have attended and have been trained in HRE programs by Mr. Ramachandran from Anna Adarsh College, Krishnaswamy College, Valliammal College, Loyola College, University of Madras, Madras Christian College all attended the program in earnest.

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