

I am herewith happy to share with you the recent developments as part of my visit to Dhaka University, Bangladesh. I was invited to be part of the delegation which included Rev. Takahiro Miwa, Mrs. Yukari Miwa and Dr. Thomas Mathew. The event was organised by the Bangladesh Chapter of IARF-SACC by Dr. Kasi Nurul Islam of the Department of World Religions, Dhaka University, Bangladesh. I was invited to present a paper in the conference organised on this occasion.

Day 1 - 23.09.2012

The delegation from IARF-SACC-RFYN reached Kolkata, India. Mr. Asit Basu received us and took us to the Ramakrishna Mission premises. The present head priest greeted us with much warmth. After tea we had a good interaction about traditions and practices in each religion.

Day 2 - 24.09.2012

We reached Dhaka University which is called locally as the second parliament in the country. They believe that the Dhaka University established in the early 1920's by the then British Government, is an important point for amalgamation of thinking by the young and bright minds of the country. The International Seminar on "Human Rights and Religious Freedom in South Asia" started in the evening by 4pm in the majestic senate building of the Dhaka University.

Some of the eminent people who spoke on the occasion were

- Rev Takahiro Miwa, International Council Member IARF, Head Priest, Tsuyoshi Shrine, Nagoya, Japan
- Dr. Kasi Nurul Islam, Department of World Religion and Culture, Dhaka University and head of the IARF-Bangladesh Chapter
- Dr. Tapan.C.Rosario, Department of World Religion and Culture, Dhaka University
- Prof. Patrick Gaffney, University of Notre Dame, USA
- Prof. Waldemar Lies, Professor of Communication and Reconciliation, Germany
- Dr. Thomas Mathew, Chariman, SACC and Fmr President of IARF
- Ms. Anbumani Arumugam, International Young Adult President, IARF-SACC-RFYN

The seminar was a huge success with the audience comprising of scholars, Researchers, young students from the Dhaka University etc. The speakers had a good impact on the audience and impressed upon the youngsters the need for global thinking and local implementation in an increasingly multipolar world. The ideas of the speakers were well received by the members of the audience and the forum was open for constructive criticism.

Day 3 - 25.09.2012

In the morning we had a short lecture demonstration by Rev Takahiro Miwa. The topic was "Shinto Religious Tradition" and the audience were the students from the Post Graduate Department of World Religion and Culture, Dhaka University. Rev Miwa enlightened the audience about the basic tenets of Shinto religion. He also shared with them the philosophy of Shinto religion and how it is received in the Japanese culture. The students also asked some interesting questions to Rev Miwa and the session was a very engaging one considering that the students of the department study all the religions of the world in their semesters and were aware of the Shinto religion.

In the afternoon, the same day we had another formal meeting in the Department of World Religions and Culture, Dhaka University. The students of the department had prepared to showcase their skills to the visiting guests. The evening started off with their student Shafi Mustafa, a Research Scholar taking over the role of MC and Mr. Abu Taher, Assistant Professor in the Department coordinating the evening function. Two of their young student scholars spoke on the occasion. Each one of the girls expressed their views and shared their knowledge on fear psychosis and human rights in south Asia. Dr. Thomas Mathew spoke about the importance of IARF and work the organisation is doing in the field of Human rights and Religious Freedom. He impressed upon the students gathered the need to join such similar organisations and that will enable them to get exposure in the grass roots level also. The special guest of the evening Mrs. Yukari Miwa, Priest, Tsuyoshi Shrine, Nagoya, Japan also introduced herself to the audience and spoke briefly about her role. I spoke briefly on the importance of opening our mind to the differences amongst our community and around us. I felt my presence in Bangladesh was to have a positive influence on the young student friends the need to learn and unlearn our ideologies which we have developed over our growing up years. I have attached my speech for your perusal in this mail. The students showcased a short PPT about human rights violations around the world. The audience were left speechless after the presentation. In the end, it was hoped for someday in the near future to present the positive steps taken around the world in human rights and religious freedom.

I sincerely thank Dr. Thomas Mathew for giving me an opportunity and Rev. Takahiro Miwa, Mrs. Yukari Miwa and Dr. Kasi Nurul Islam. They have given me a platform to express my views on Human Rights and Religious Freedom in South Asia. I am happy that I was not present just as a tourist but as a Youth Ambassador representing IARF-SACC-RFYN but also representing my country and my value systems. In that sense the response I received from the students there has been tremendous. **The Bangladesh Chapter of RFYN was inaugurated on the last day and Dr. Thomas Mathew declared it open.** I once again thank everyone concerned for giving us proactive roles to play otherwise being in a position without doing useful work for the growth of the organisation is not beneficial to the process of growth of the organisation. In that sense the opening of the Bangladesh RFYN Chapter is a stepping stone to success for the growth of young leaders for the IARF-SACC-RFYN on the whole.

Thank you

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