



2017 NARPI August 6-19, 2017 Okinawa, Japan



Summer Peacebuilding Training

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2017 NARPI NEWSLETTER



The 2017 NARPI Summer Peacebuilding Training took place in Okinawa from August 6-19. It was an immensely meaningful time of learning, thanks to many friends in Okinawa who helped to host and serve as local resource people. Nobuya Fukuda—a NARPI 2016 participant—decided to host this year’s training because he wanted to “step up” to do something for peace in Okinawa. He worked tirelessly to plan details for venues and the field trip, and also to coordinate the contributions of over 30 local resource people who helped us understand the history, culture, and current struggles in Okinawa by sharing during NARPI courses, evening events and field trip sessions.



The venue for Week 1 and 2 courses was Nago Youth Center in Nago, Okinawa. Nago, a city in the northern part of Okinawa, is the site of Camp Schwab, a U.S. Marine Corps base. Currently, construction efforts are underway to expand the base in preparation for the proposed relocation of another base - Air Station Futenma. Because of this context, Nago is a representation of the expanding militarism in Northeast Asia and a symbolic place for NARPI to hold its annual training. In this place we encountered both the remarkable beauty of Okinawa and the legacy of oppression from mainland Japan and the U.S.

Nago Youth Center is located at the top of a beautiful mountain, quite isolated from the city below. The Center is used by local education groups for such activities as sports camps or summer camps; we are grateful to Okinawa Christian University for booking space there on behalf of NARPI. In this special space where we shared three meals a day, full days of courses, evening activities, and even common showers, it did not take long for friendships to grow. Both during courses and outside of courses, sharing our ideas and talking about our differences, helped to create a small Northeast Asia peace community.



The annual Culture and Talent Night was a highlight evening event in Week 2, during which participants shared songs, poems, dance, calligraphy and other parts of their culture with each other.

Courses

There were six courses offered this year:

Week 1	Conflict and Peace Framework
	Theory and Practice of Peace Education
	Identity-Based Conflict
Week 2	Optimizing Peace Making by Ending Generational Trauma
	Restorative Justice: Rebuilding Identity, Community, and History
	Nonviolent Response to Militarisation

Of these courses, two were new. We'd like to briefly introduce the two new courses:

Identity-Based Conflict

Facilitators: Ryozo Teruoka and Kyungmook Kim



Identity-Based Conflict was a discussion-based course that concluded with participants giving a presentation on an identity-based issue of their choice. This course started by having participants reflect on what identities they carried with them into the classroom. The identities ranged from academic to smoker to Japanese to native chopstick user. From the outset it was obvious that each participant carried many identities of varying weight.

Xirentana (Coral), one of the nine participants, said that she valued the “open and free atmosphere between the participants, and between participants and facilitators. The key concepts related to identity are all discussed, and there are people from different identity backgrounds, so we practiced all theory as well connected.”

At the beginning of the course participants discussed aspects of personal and collective identity, and the ways certain understandings of identity can lead to stereotype, bias, and prejudice. The last two days of the course asked participants to reflect on how they could shape their motivations about cooperation and peace into a proposal for action. The course concluded with participants sharing these action proposals with each other to brainstorm what it might look like to address issues of identity within their own communities.



Nonviolent Response to Militarisation

Facilitators: Syd Wang and Yutaka Ohata

In this course participants had the opportunity to discuss and practice methods of engaging the rising militarisation in the region in nonviolent ways. The participants in this course made a second trip to Henoko to give participants an opportunity to join demonstrators in front of Camp Schwab. Daichi Miyamoto, one of the participants in this course from Miyazaki International College said, “I think joining protest is the most difficult thing because there are real police and guard men. But, we have to disobey their order. The experience is for the first time. However, it is so impressive experience. Thus, the experience is good for me.”

During the course facilitators Syd and Yutaka explained how best to form lines and support fellow protesters in situations where they are being shoved or pushed back. Syd shared how he once broke a rib while being supported from behind and pressed by a riot-shield from the front. In one exercise, participants split into two groups with one group pushing and the other group trying to keep their footing. They tried several different arrangements to see which held the best against the pushing.



Throughout this course, participants also heard from the speeches of renowned nonviolent protesters, such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mohandas Ghandi, Rosa Parks, and Shoko Ahagon who is called the father of the Okinawan civil rights movement. Their words offered inspiration for the participants of this course as they heard case studies, practiced resisting and attended the sit-in.

Field Trip



During the field trip we moved from the isolated mountain-top Nago Youth Center to the more urban Naha International Youth Hostel. During the field trip we experienced invaluable first-hand learning through three full days of stories, sites, and history. The theme of the first day was “Feel the present,” with a focus on the presence of U.S. military bases in Okinawa. The second day focused on history, specifically the Battle of Okinawa - “Touch the past.” And the third day was more forward-looking - “Imagine the future.”

Sakima Art Museum

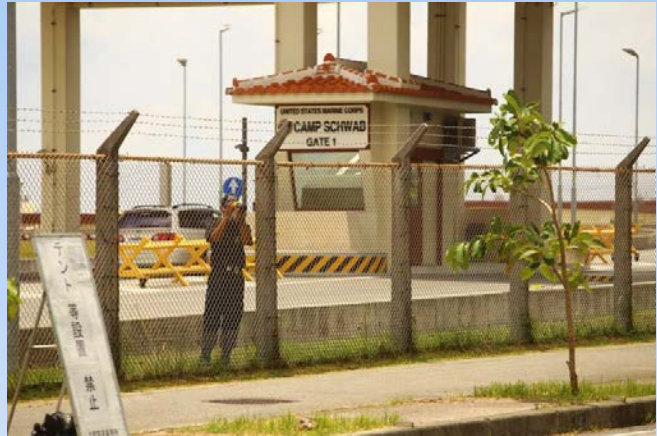


On the first day of the field trip we visited the Sakima Art Museum near the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in Ginowan. The museum was built on a piece of land that was formerly part of the air base, and from a bird's-eye view, it looks like the museum literally took a bite out of the air base land. While at the Sakima Art Museum, we wandered about the gallery soaking in the beauty and tragedy of the pieces, which aim to present both the war history and the current culture of Okinawa, through the

photography and art of Okinawans. One of the main pieces in the gallery is titled “The Battle of Okinawa”. It’s a large painting that covers most of one wall, and whose sheer size and stance reminded us that there is no escaping the tragedies of war. The museum owner, Michio Sakima, explained to us the history behind this stunning art piece, which was created based on the stories of survivors of the Battle of Okinawa.

Camp Schwab and Sea of Henoko

After visiting the Sakima Art Museum we traveled by bus to Camp Schwab—a United States Marine Corps camp—located in northeastern Okinawa Prefecture, Japan. On the way from Naha to Nago, our guide, Gen Kitaueda, pointed out how much of the land of Okinawa has been taken for military bases, and he shared about some of the problems that have resulted from the presence of the bases, such as military accidents, crime, and economic dependence on the bases. The buses stopped near Camp Schwab, and we walked to the front gates of the base. We passed by many activist tents built across the main road from the base. On this one Saturday, August 12, the tents were mostly empty due to a large rally in Naha, protesting the expansion of Camp Schwab and the Henoko base, that drew the activists and many Okinawan people - an estimated 45,000 people attended. Gen Kitaueda told us about the activists who usually fill those tents and daily protest against the construction efforts to expand the base.



After visiting the base, our group split into two groups and heard from two individuals deeply connected to the base issue who hold differing views. One was Akihiro Iida, who supports the expansion of the Henoko base under certain conditions; the other was Hajime Kanai, who does not support the base expansion proposal, or even the presence of military bases in Okinawa. It was a great gift for us to hear both of these perspectives. Different perspectives on the base issue have caused deep division in the communities in Okinawa. Our local host, Nobuya Fukuda, said that the presence of the NARPI group in Okinawa made it much easier for him to bring the anti-base and pro-base representatives together. He sees that NARPI has the potential to provide a creative presence in the midst of any conflict situation in the region, a peacebuilding perspective that is very much needed in Northeast Asia.

Peace Memorial Museum



On the second day of the field trip we visited the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum where we were able to learn more about the Battle of Okinawa—also known as the "Typhoon of Steel. We saw the Cornerstone of Peace, which has over 240,000 names engraved on it - all of the known victims who died in Okinawa during the Battle of Okinawa (from Japan, the U.S., UK, South Korea, North Korea, and Taiwan).

While we were there we also heard from four survivors of the Okinawa Battle. They shared about their memories and experience as children during the time of the war, and the impact it has had on them to this day. One memorable experience one gentleman shared was during his childhood as he hid in a cave with thousands of other villagers as soldiers searched through the wreckage of destroyed homes and buildings.



Abuchira Cave

On the second day of the field trip we visited Abuchira Gama, a natural cave in the southern Okinawa area where soldiers and civilians hid and students of a girls' school tended to the wounded during the Battle of Okinawa. We were able to see the areas of the cave that were used as the hospital wing, the lodging area, and the supply storage. We saw the back cavern of the cave where wounded soldiers were left alone in the dark to die because the Japanese army had



lost the capability to take care of them. We also saw the abandoned attempt to create an alternative exit to the cave. One of the chilling moments during our visit to the cave was when our guide asked everyone to turn off their lights. We all stood together under the weight of the impermeable darkness thinking of the soldiers and civilians who lived surrounded by these dark damp rock walls during the Battle of Okinawa. While the cave has a heavy past, these days it has become a peace education site for students and others.

Workshops on Peacebuilding Efforts in Okinawa

On the third day of the field trip we focused on imagining the future of Okinawa. We broke into five small groups, heard from local peacebuilders and discussed ideas related to their topic. The issues discussed were:

- How to put an end to crimes related to the U.S. bases – *Solidarity between women victims in Okinawa and throughout Northeast Asia.*
- How to win social justice – *A trial utilizing data and facts to evaluate the need for the existence of the U.S. Marines*
- How to connect the past with the future – *Aging survivors and young successors*
- How to overcome divisions and conflicts among



- community – *Utilizing a process of making multicultural community for peacebuilding*
- How to spread protest movements to “ordinary” citizens – *Changing political-based movements to non-political-based movements.*

Some of the groups had stimulating dialogue about the political climate in Northeast Asia; others heard moving stories of oppression, while others discussed possibilities for the future of peacebuilding in Okinawa.

NARPI Throughout the Year

These are some of the ways that NARPI alumni are working toward their vision for peace:

- Giving peacebuilding trainings in their home communities.
- Pursuing study or work in peacebuilding areas.
- Staying in touch with other NARPI alumni by sharing knowledge and resources and visiting each other to find out more about different peacebuilding efforts in the region.

These are some ways that NARPI alumni are supporting NARPI:

- Sharing about their NARPI experiences with family, friends, and colleagues.
- Continuing to join the NARPI Summer Peacebuilding Training.
- Recruiting participants for the NARPI Summer Training each year.
- Giving small donations to NARPI.

Stay connected!

Website: www.narpi.net

Facebook: www.facebook.com/narpipeace

If you want to do a presentation about NARPI in your community, please let us know at admin@narpi.net, and we can send you some resources.



2018 Announcement

The 2018 NARPI Summer Peacebuilding Training will be held in Jeju Island, South Korea. The tentative dates are August 8 (registration) to August 22 (departures). Please mark these dates on your calendar - we hope to see you there!

Special Thanks

We would like to thank the many people who worked to make NARPI in Okinawa a meaningful experience:



Local host: Nobuya Fukuda

Cohost for lodging: Okinawa Christian University

Official visa host: Peace Boat

Visa coordinator: Meri Joyce

Drivers: Mimi Kokubun, Yutaka Ohata, Eri Somoto, Kathy Matsui, Nobuya Fukuda

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Other resource people for courses: Akiko Ishihara, Stacy Hughes, Wang Ying, Sri Mayasandra, Katie Uemura



Local resource people for evening events: Airi Hiranaka, Shinako Oyakawa, Chikako Toguchi

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Please continue to support NARPI through your donations!
Donations can be received at the NARPI bank account:

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