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At the 'Minna-no-Hiroba'

Many events were held including setting up of booths by various Co-ops nationwide featuring their peace activities, including peace messages and peace songs.



Booth introducing co-op peace activities

During the period of August 4 to 6 a total of 16 subcommittee meetings were held with the participation of about 1,000 people pushing for a nuclear-weapon-free world. Also monuments and Hiroshima bomb ruins tour were organized for school children.

"2016 Children's Peace Conference" was held where the children discussed ways to build a brighter future and appealed for peace.



State of the monument tour



State of children's peace conference



2016 Peace Action in Hiroshima and Nagasaki

At the occasion of the 71st anniversary of the Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japanese consumer co-operatives promoted the "peace action 2016" with various activities including peace parades and seminars by co-op members nationwide to share the wish of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to express their objection against war and the abolition of nuclear weapons.

The Hiroshima event which was held for three days from August 4 to 6 was co-sponsored by JCCU and the Hiroshima Prefecture Consumers Co-operative Union. It was attended by 1,200 co-op members from 61 co-ops nationwide.

The Nagasaki event was held for two days from August 7-8 under the co-sponsorship of JCCU and the Nagasaki Prefecture Consumers Co-operative Union and was attended by 850 co-op members from 43 co-ops nationwide.

The Hiroshima event took as its theme "Learning and understanding the heart of Hiroshima by the younger generation - 71st year since atomic bombing, renewing our commitment towards the inheritance and peaceful creation of a world without nuclear weapons".

"Niji-no Hiroba" Event

This event consisted of two parts, the 'Niji-no Stage (Rainbow stage)' and the 'Minna-no Hiroba (Everyone's space)' was held on the afternoon of August 5, at the Hiroshima Prefectural Sports Center 'Green Arena'.

For part one, "rainbow of stage", curtains were opened to Japanese drumming performance by school children which received great applause from the audience.

Mr. MATSUI Kazumi, Mayor of Hiroshima in a greeting emphasized on a collective effort to realize a peaceful world without nuclear weapons.

Taken turns, Mr. WADA Toshiaki, the Managing Director of JCCU urged the audience to firmly perceive the thoughts of the atomic bomb survivors and strive for peace.

Thereafter relay messages from young people calling for peace were introduced such as "A-bomb painting" by the Hiroshima Municipal Motomachi high school and computer graphics of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima before and after by the students of Hiroshima Prefectural Fukuyama technical high school produced through interviews and hearings from A-bomb survivors.



Mr. MATSUI Kazumi, Mayor of Hiroshima



Mr. WADA Toshiaki, Managing Director JCCU

The 33rd Okinawa old battlefield / base tour held

From March 29 to 31, JCCU and Okinawa Prefecture Consumers Co-operative Union co-organized the 33rd Okinawa old battlefield/base tour for co-op members nationwide. 225 members participated.

The aim of the tour was to provide an opportunity for the members to think about peace, learn about the actual situation and current issues facing the Okinawa base.

This year the tour was in three courses. The first, "basic course" was organized particularly for people who are taken part of the old battlefields-base tour for the first time under the theme "Think about Okinawa and the peace of Japan". The second, "parent-child course" was organized for families with children and the third, "Henoko-Takae Course" that offered a chance for a tour to the base center in Okinawa. There was a general feeling among the participants that the best way to reach out to many people regarding peace efforts is to tell the people about what they saw, heard and felt during the tour.



Participants listening to the story of Shuri Castle destroyed in the Battle of Okinawa



Participants listening to the story of the reclamation work of Henoko

Co-op Hiroshima baseball night game "Peace Nighter 2016"

On August 6 which is the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Co-op Hiroshima and other organizations co-hosted the "Peace Nighter 2016" under the theme "Inheritance" during an official professional baseball game between the Hiroshima Toyo Carp and Tokyo-based Yomiuri Giants held at the Mazda Stadium in Hiroshima.

The aim of the event was to use the location where baseball fans gather to spread a message for the abolition of nuclear weapons and the realization of perpetual world peace.

In this years "Peace Nighter" the activities of the youth who are working hard in Hiroshima were introduced.

Ms. YASUDA Mayu a resident of Hiroshima and A-bomb survivor storyteller threw the ceremonial first pitch. In addition there was a performance by the children of the next generation.

Also at the "Peace Nighter", a large screen showed peace messages from Mayor MATSI Kazumi and the Prefectural Governor YUZAKI Hidehiko. A local high school students also gave a "Peace Performance".

At the end of the 5th inning and by matching with the song entitled "Imagine" by John Lennon, a red line called Peace Line 25 was performed, at the same height as A-bomb Dome, to appeal for peace.

It became a day where many people had the opportunity to think about the abolition of nuclear weapons and world peace.



Appealing for peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons from the Mazda Stadium



Peace performance by high school students

Osaka Palcoop held Peace March 2016

Peace activities is one of the major events in Japan in summer season. Consumer Co-ops and many other Japanese peacekeepers look back on the history of Japan's war and atomic bombings and holds relays and peace march through all prefectures across Japan to carry the campaign for a nuclear weapons free world.

On July 5, in extremely hot weather, the members of Osaka Palcoop took the street with an impressive peace relay to convey citizens displeasure about nuclear weapons.

The moderator of the event gave an opening greetings touching on security-related laws established last year by the United Nations and lamented that even though these laws have been enforced, yet nuclear test is still being performed in the world. He further mentioned that for the realization of the "Nuclear Weapons Prohibition Convention", aiming at a world without nuclear weapons, terrorism and war, and to provide a safe place for human settlement, it is the responsibility of all people to work hard. Participants wore t-shirts, ornaments and banners and marched happily and energetically receiving waving and cheers from people on the roadside.

There was also a mini-concert by female vocal group "SANTA ☆ MARIA" from the Kansai area which was joined by everyone in the gathering.



Joining in a song "The only Flower in the World"

Co-op Kumamoto launches a mobile catering service

After the Kumamoto earthquake, JCCU and co-ops nationwide have engaged in various relief activities such as supporting the needs of the stricken area, sending task force to coordinate activities towards reconstruction and rebuilding of victims living.

Through the victims support, one major issue that became visible is the economic distress and social isolation of the victims in the stricken area.

By the request of the prefecture, to arrest the problem regarding shopping inconvenience of the stricken area, Co-op Kumamoto on July 26 launched a mobile catering service to reach out to people in the affected areas especially those in the temporary housing complex of Oozu-machi in seven locations, once a week, with the sale of food and daily necessities. About 400 households benefit from this service.

By 3-ton truck with full-sized refrigerators and shelves, items such as meat, fish, fresh food, vegetables, daily foods and detergent are sold. Co-op Kumamoto listens to the voice of the users and improve the assortment and supply route. A ceremony was held to commence start of the mobile catering service.

Mr. YOSHINAGA Akira, the President of Co-op Kumamoto expressed continuing support, stating that the Co-op would cooperate in the effort to bring relief to the victims now and in the future and also help in the reconstruction effort of the affected areas.



Ceremony to commence start of the mobile catering service

Miyagi Co-op and FamilyMart integrated store opens next spring

In spring 2017, for the first time in Miyagi Prefecture, the first integrated store of a super market and convenience store function will be opened as a joint business venture between Miyagi Co-op and FamilyMart Co. Ltd. (Tokyo) in the city of Shichikashuku.

This comprehensive partnership agreement aims to function as a social and living infrastructure by employing the effective use of management resources and management expertise of both organizations, working together to improve the convenience of the local residents.

FamilyMart has unique specialty in operating convenience store by supplying daily necessities, while Miyagi Co-op business bring smiles and good health at dining table through the supply of safe and reliable food items such as fruits, vegetables, fresh fish and meat. Through this partnership the integrated store will display a combination of assortment of goods that will serve the needs of almost all citizens in the area.

In addition, the agreement was fully endorsed by Mr. KOSEKI Koichi, mayor of Shichikashuku

as a policy drive towards "community improvement where people can live in peace with a feeling of security".

The local store intends to offer job opportunity to the local people as well as promoting local production for local consumption through the handling of local products.

The store which will have a sales area of about 260 sq. m, will operate 24 hours a day and will have the merit of convenience stores and supermarkets implying that it will handle items including daily delivered goods and fresh products that are limited in general convenience store. The convenience store will cover between 60-70% of the sales area and rest will be supermarket.



Complete image of the integrated store to be opened in 2017 (next spring).

2016 Quality Assurance workshop of Co-op Net Group held

On July 14, Co-op Net Business Federation consisting of six consumer co-ops in the Kanto area held the 2016 Quality Assurance workshop in Saitama cultural center with the participation of more than 600 people from 350 supplier companies, mostly sales personnel, quality assurance department personnel, chiefs from production factories etc.

The workshop provided a platform for discussion and exchange of experiences among the main stakeholders in quality assurance of co-op products.

During the workshop Co-op Net reported the fiscal 2015 quality assurance initiatives stressing on the safety of the food chain, and presented practical examples of the kind of inquiries and correspondences they got engaged with co-op members in the fiscal under review.

Again, the 2016 quality assurance and the trend of the future quality assurance management system proposed by JCCU were explained to the suppliers.

Particularly, regarding the opinions and suggestions from co-op members in respect of co-op products, Co-op Net requires the suppliers to reflect those opinions in product development and improvements.

The workshop provided an opportunity for participants to update their knowledge and extend their professional development.



Iheya locality visits and exchanges

Co-op Net Business Federation provides funding for activities under the 'Iheyason Churashima Support Project', which is to protect Iheya's nature and biodiversity and to foster industries.

Co-op Net has launched a campaign where for each purchase of 'Co-op seasoned Okinawa mozuku (gel-like seaweed) 1 yen is donated to the fund to support Iheya's environment protection.

The activity also serve as promoting the sales of mozuku and fostering exchanges between producers and Co-op members.

From June 21 through 23, board members of the Co-op Net group, member activity leaders and some officers paid a visit to Iheya Island in Okinawa Prefecture which is the production area of 'Co-op seasoned Okinawa mozuku' for field observation and exchanges.

The group observed the neighboring sea with a white sandy beach to watch the migration of the sea turtles which is very symbolic in the area. However, along the coast were accumulation of drifting ashore garbage. Turtles are very delicate creatures and the situation poses a threat to their breeding.

Participants in the burning sun, picked up the trash and made the surroundings neat.

Washed ashore trash continues to increase in recent years and for that reason four or five times in a year, clean-up activities of the sandy beach by the people of Iheya Island is in full force.

Cost of transportation for these cleaning activities and collecting garbage is funded by Co-op Net funds.



News in Brief

ICA-AP training program for Managers of Consumer Co-ops

In 1990 Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU) and its member co-ops founded the "Asia Cooperative Development Fund" for the purpose of HRD, exchanges and cooperation between co-operatives in the Asia Pacific and Japan. Through the use of this fund ICA-AP training for managers of consumer co-ops have been organized each year in collaboration with JCCU.

The first batch of the 2016 program was held from July 29 to August 7, with Miyagi Co-op and Co-op Net Business Federation providing the training grounds, the facilities and resource persons.

The training program which lasted for 14 days was attended by 5 co-operative members from Shree Warana Vibhag Sahakari Grahak Mandal Ltd., India (Mr. Shridhar Nanaso Lambe and Mr. Ramchandra Pandurang Patil), Dure Consumer Co-operative Union, Korea (Ms. Dae-ok Choi and Mr. GyeongCheol Na), and Saigon Co-op, Viet Nam (Mr. Vo Dinh Dung) in the areas of store operation and management.

A comprehensive program, consisting of different training modules that covered the training proposals requested by the trainees to address their difficult challenges in their work place, was designed by the host organizations.

At Co-op Net, participants received lectures on the structure and mechanism of Co-op Net's business solidarity, social and environmental initiatives.

At Miyagi Co-op, participants received lectures in the areas of store operation, home delivery, personnel education, examined how practical work is conducted at the store and had the

chance to attend conventional meeting between the store manager and the chiefs of various sections as an eye opener to consumer co-op business.

At the end of the training, an action plan was drawn by each trainee to address what they intend implementing upon returning to their home countries.

The trainees returned home on August 7.



Trainees holding their certificate of completion pose for a picture with staff of Miyagi Co-op

Co-op Mirai/JCCU hosted Internship program

Co-op Mirai hosted the International Cooperative Education (ICE) summer internship program for two young students from University of Michigan (America) from June 11 to August 10 2016. The students were Pan Zijian and Ahn Sung-Joon.

The aim of the program was to provide the students with the opportunity to learn Japanese culture and the language through workplace experience and homestay.

The program started with a 2-day orientation at Co-op Mirai and JCCU respectively to learn about the social contribution of consumer co-ops, co-op

product development and environmental measures. The rest of the period, students were exposed to co-op business especially in store operation and the home delivery areas.

Below is a short introduction of the students impression about the program.

I've learned how integral consumer co-ops are to the community and how they confirm the safety of the elderly through their business (Ahn Sung-Joon).

I was really impressed by the strong focus on freshness, food quality and security of CO-OP Brand Products (Pan Zijian).

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