



HWPL

INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS PEACE ACADEMY

Creating a Platform for Enhancing Comparative Scriptural Knowledge

Concept Note

1. Introduction

In our increasingly interconnected and diverse world, fostering understanding, cooperation, and peaceful coexistence among different religious communities has become a paramount concern. The need for inter-religious communication as a foundation for peacebuilding has never been more imperative. Inter-religious communication refers to the exchange of ideas, beliefs, and values between individuals and communities belonging to different religious backgrounds, with the aim of building bridges, reducing tensions, and promoting harmonious relationships.

Both state and non-state actors have emerged as a major threat to religious freedom today. They have been recognized as serious challenges to democracy, human rights, and international peace in the 21st century. According to Pew Research Center in 2022, accusations and violence against religious groups were widespread in 74 countries when COVID-19 hit the world in 2020. The international community has come to recognize that cooperation between countries to prevent and resolve conflicts based on ethnicity and religion is an important key to maintaining peace.

Differences in religious beliefs, practices, and worldviews can often lead to misunderstandings, mistrust, and even violence. However, when approached with respect, open-mindedness, and a genuine desire for dialogue, inter-religious communication has the power to transcend these divides and pave the way for peaceful coexistence. It enables religious communities to recognize their shared values, ethics, and aspirations, fostering an environment of mutual respect, empathy, and understanding.

This concept note introduces a platform named “HWPL International Religious Peace Academy” that will explore the essence of teachings in religion through lectures on scriptures from renowned religious leaders to promote effective interfaith dialogue and understanding. This will shed light on the fact that we can create a world where different religious communities come together in harmony by transcending differences and working towards a shared vision of peace and well-being.



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2. HWPL International Religious Peace Academy (IRPA)

HWPL, an international peace organization, has emphasized multilateral cooperation, including governments, international organizations, and civil society groups, as an essential measure for world peace. Since 2014, HWPL has been operating the World Alliance of Religions' Peace (WARP) Office around the world to promote understanding among religions, prevent conflicts caused by religion, and seek the role of religion for peace. These include a comparative study of scriptures by religious leaders; religious peace camps that promote respect and understanding among younger generations from religious backgrounds; and the HWPL Solidarity of Religions' Peace Committee, which delivers messages of unity about peace to the world as world religious leaders.

To meet the principle offered by the UN General Assembly resolution (A/RES/53/243, 1999) and HWPL's 'Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War' (DPCW) Article 10 "Spreading a Culture of Peace" through education, the International Religious Peace Academy (IRPA) was planned in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions."

The HWPL International Religious Peace Academy (IRPA) aims to deepen religious exchange and understanding beyond a basic level of comprehension of different religious scriptures. As part of this initiative, HWPL is inviting prominent religious leaders from various faiths to deliver lectures at the IRPA. These lectures will serve as a platform for comparative research, promoting a culture of peace, and interfaith unity.

3. Target Audience and Objective

The IRPA lecture series will invite over 1,500 religious leaders from different faiths worldwide. By leveraging expertise in planning and conducting seminars and events both online and offline, we will ensure the lectures reach a diverse and international audience. An HWPL team of experts and interpreters will facilitate international delivery of the lectures via Zoom, allowing for wider accessibility.

Here are the objectives of the RPA. First, religious and cultural exchanges through study of scriptures promote understanding of different religions and cultures. Second, through the provision of educational opportunities for learning the scriptures, the number of religious leaders who deeply understand the scriptures of other religions increases, and inter-religious exchanges are expanded. Third, since the scriptures are the essential teachings of religion, efforts to understand the scriptures can overcome unnecessary misunderstandings and baseless accusations that lead to violence and extremism against religions, thereby spreading a culture of peace.



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4. Schedule and Topics

The lecture series is composed of two sessions on March 2nd, 2024 (Saturday) and March 9th, 2024 (Saturday). Each day includes three sessions at 9AM, 2PM, and 9PM UTC and each session consists of 15-minute lectures about each religion on the given topic.

In the topic titled “About the Creation (About the Beginning of All Things),” we will compare the similarities and differences in each religion's scripture by examining the meaning of creation and the initial beginnings of all things. Through this lecture, we will learn about the essence of all things and their origins, which will further shine light on the value of our current existence.

“About Birth, Aging, Sickness, and Death” discusses what religions propose to humanity regarding life, death, aging, and illness. Humanity constantly asks many questions about life, and this curiosity and imagination have stimulated human development. Religion presents notions about the future world through life. What do life and death entail in each religious scripture? Are they depicted as hopeful or destructive? These questions will prompt us to consider how the messages conveyed by religion relate to our lives.

HWPL International Religious Peace Academy aims to overcome unnecessary misunderstandings and exclusive attitudes among religions through religious lectures on each topic. This is part of the effort toward positive peace, aiming to understand and communicate with other religions more deeply through the study of other scriptures. Through this initiative, we hope to build and expand a new and innovative culture of peace among religions.

Date	Topics	Details
March 2nd	About the Creation (About the Beginning of All Things)	15 mins per religion
March 9th	About Birth, Aging, Sickness, and Death	(Total of 5 religions)

5. Conclusion

HWPL IRPA lecture series aims to foster a deep study of various religious scriptures and promote peace and harmony among different religious communities worldwide. The participation of world religious leaders will contribute to the success of this initiative for peace. Religion, especially the scriptures, which are the foundation of faith, has the answer to achieve a world of peace and perpetuate the prosperity of mankind. IRPA will seek the role of religious leaders who have the responsibility to lead the human society based on their understanding of religion.