

Is EFL Worth Studying at Japanese Colleges? Readers Theatre Provides an Answer

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This paper discusses issues, insights, and considerations concerning Readers Theatre and its applications to Japanese EFL classrooms based on the author's experiences in taking part in a Readers Theatre (RT) workshop. Although RT is of great use when teaching Japanese college students, the application of its techniques should be introduced within the framework of the EFL settings where almost all of the directors, performers, and audience consist of Japanese speakers who study English as a foreign language, not as a first or a second language. Elements related to the students' social growth such as cooperation, responsibility, and sense of fulfillment should be considered more when RT is taught in college EFL classroom settings.

Introduction

For some time, a great number of researchers and teachers have spent time and exhibited enthusiasm for finding ways of teaching communicative EFL at Japanese universities. Many of them know the attempts they make would be more rewarding if university entrance exams were better able to screen for students who are more serious about their English study. Most freshman students show little interest in studying EFL now that their mission of entering university has been completed. The fact that the students' goals of studying EFL at college are directed simply toward getting credit for their classes can undermine the efforts of many committed EFL teachers. It is about time that university EFL courses presented another goal or purpose of learning EFL other than cramming for scores and grades.

The teaching experience in a required class awoke the author to the roles of university EFL classes; that is, there should be a shift in the orientation of the EFL class from credit-taking to social-growth goals. A questionnaire on this topic was administered to first year economic majors in a first year reading class at the end of the spring semester in 2010. On the questionnaire were the following questions:

- Do you think this class was beneficial?
- What did you learn in this class?
- What is the purpose (goal) of your study at college?
- Did you enjoy the group work?
- Do you think the textbook is easy (difficult)?

Students answered the questions freely in their own words. The purpose of the questionnaire was not formal research, but to just get a sense of the thinking of these university students. Quite a few students answered

for their goal of their study at college that they gave priority to credit-taking for graduation over improving English. One way to combat this attitude is for university EFL courses to go beyond the goal of providing students with skills in EFL, toward more concrete goals such as getting better scores on standardized tests in preparation for seeking jobs after graduation, or nurturing a well-educated adult with some knowledge of English and English-speaking countries' cultures. In short, is English study at college worth doing with or without setting different goals that are more important after graduation for the lives of students? This paper introduces an activity that gives students such a goal.

Studying EFL for Social Growth

It has been a while since college students were first noticed to be lacking in skills in student-to-student and/or student-to-professor interactions, even in Japanese. A large number of universities have decided to educate their first year students to be more cooperative with peers. In addition, the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry advocates setting three educational goals in the areas of basic social abilities: the power of thinking things out, taking action, and participating in teamwork. A variety of activities in an EFL classroom can and should contribute to such goals.

Readers Theatre in EFL classrooms in Japan is one way of nurturing basic social abilities. What is RT? According to Adams (2003):

Readers Theatre is a presentational performance based on principles and techniques of oral interpretation and conventional theatre to present all kinds of literary and non-literary material in a choice of staging styles to entertain, instruct and persuade.

RT provides many occasions for students to “interact socially” with their peers (Sloyer, 2003). Social interactions begin with discussions on interpreting the selected English texts to perform, and continue with scripting the texts, staging, practicing, and performing. Students may find time to get together during the class hours but often that will not suffice. They have to negotiate with each other to arrange their schedule in order to find time for preparation. No part of the preparation for RT performance can be done individually, except for practice reading at home. All through this process RT can provide students with a sense of fulfillment, responsibility, pride, contentment, unity, and solidarity.

If one accepts that RT is one answer to the question of how to make college EFL education more meaningful to EFL teachers, and of more value to college students by giving them something worth having—social growth, then the next step is to implement RT in the classroom. How to do this? The following is one way to do RT, based on a workshop at the 35th International Readers Theatre Workshop, held in London from July 20 to August 2, 2008.



RT performance at university Oral Interpretation Festival

Description of RT through the Workshop Experience

The RT Workshop was sponsored by the Institute for Readers Theatre (IRT), San Diego, CA, and co-sponsored by the University of Southern Maine, but was conducted in London in 2008. The two-week schedule of the RT workshop was divided into two parts. The first week focused on theory and preparation for performances. The second week moved away from theory and focused on performances. Specifically, the first-time participants attended sessions in the first week on such topics as RT background, script making demonstration, script making practice, rehearsals of fables, oral interpretation, staging demonstration, performance of the fables, and appreciation of RT performance presented by faculty members. The main textbook was *Institute Book of Readers Theatre: A Practical Guide for School, Theater, & Community*, by Adams (2003). It is the main source for this paper. The second week sessions included writing reports, attending rehearsals and performances, and a special clothing demonstration by a guest faculty member. The total amount of the actual workshop hours was 55.5 hours in two weeks. All of the sessions were solely conducted in English, some in British English but mostly in American English. The following is an abbreviated description of the lessons taught at the workshop.

Three Elements for RT

The basic lesson from the workshop is the three main elements of RT. They are script making, staging, and interpretation. All three elements are defined and described below.

Script making

The workshop used Adams' (2003) definition of RT: "RT is a presentational performance based on principles and techniques of oral interpretation and conventional theatre to present all kinds of literary and non-literary material in a choice of staging styles to entertain, instruct, and persuade." Since RT is a "presentational performance," the first thing to be done is to choose a selection of materials which are felt to be of value or importance to present to an audience.

For RT performance, as a rule, Adams (2003) suggests that in the selected piece there be "drama (conflict of characters, of ideas) inherent" in the selected piece (p. 5). He also suggests to look for a piece that has a "strong basic situation with progressive action" and "characters [that] are vivid" (p. 5). Adams also cautions that first person point of view is more difficult as it assigns much of the text to one performer—the narrator.

Staging

According to Adams (2003), there are three well established styles from the least overt staging of Simple RT on one end of the presentational continuum, to the most active Chamber Theatre at the other end, with Staged RT in between. Simple RT is the "presentation of a script with an emphasis on interpretation of the text through inner responses of thought, emotion and experience (kinesics) with a minimum of physical activity" (p. 5). Staged RT has "a formal setup, but externalizes the actions of the script with characters on revolving stools and narrators situated at music stands" (p. 5). The RT closest to conventional theatre is called Chamber Theatre, which uses "more elaborate elements of stage craft and memorized lines" (p. 5). The main differences among the three are in the amount of stage "furniture" (chairs, stools, boxes, music stands), costumes (from street clothes in Simple RT to costumes for Chamber Theatre), and in the use of hand-held scripts (present for Simple and Staged RT, to none for Chamber Theatre).

Interpretation

As Adams (2003, p. 5) repeatedly states that the "oral interpreter needs to know everything possible about the literature to be presented to an audience," it is vital, at first, to know the connotative meaning,

as well as the denotative, of each word and its precise pronunciation in the first place. In other words, a superficial or surface reading of the selected material must be followed by a deeper reading of it before presenting it to the audience. A reader is supposed to know all of the figures of speech and must investigate to answer such journalistic questions as who, where, when, what and why of the selected materials.

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Observations on Scripting and Staging

Much detail was given about the stages of Scripting and Staging. The procedures and observations are included in the following sections.

Scripting before the RT Workshop

Well before the RT workshop began, each participant had been requested to submit material of his or her choice, which was to be scripted by the participant with the assistance of faculty in the first half of the two week schedule. It was perfectly acceptable to pick from “all kinds of literary and non-literary material” for scripting, as Adams (2003, p. 5) writes, and he says that script making is “one of the most enjoyable features” of RT (p. 5). Of concern were the kinds of literary material appropriate and appealing for students in Japan, both cast and audience, with their limited English skills. One piece selected by the author was called “Prayer for Peace in Asia,” (see Appendix 3) of about 200 words in length which was used in a reading class with first-year students the previous semester. About 80% of the students revealed in the questionnaire at the conclusion of the reading class (discussed above) that they found the piece difficult, and yet informative and inspirational. In addition, “The Lord’s Prayer” (see Appendix 1) and “Luke 11:1-10” (see Appendix 2) were selected. The combination (hereafter called the Asano materials) of these three has a total of some 520 words in length.

Scripting during the RT Workshop

At the RT workshop, the Asano materials came under question in terms of suitability for scripting. The workshop teachers say that some RT techniques or principles for script making call for a few considerations on the appropriateness of the material for cast and audience: appeal, availability to the cast in terms of vocabulary and style, level of sophistication, literary value and content value. Although it was not entirely impossible for an experienced RT script arranger to successfully script the Asano materials, they were not the best fit in that most of the texts in the Asano materials were comprised of one character’s dialogue and narration, which, as Adams (2003) cautions, should be avoided because such pieces can be difficult to script. After following suggestions by some of the workshop faculty to cast four people for the piece, and to divide the narration evenly among the four performers, the RT script dramatically improved in terms of a more equal distribution of words spoken by each performer.

Staging

The three religious pieces were selected to be performed at the RT Workshop for two reasons: one is that “Prayer for Peace in Asia” inspired the Japanese students the previous semester, and the other is that the students/performers study at a Catholic university, so the pieces were appropriate. Simple RT was chosen as the RT style for the Asano materials because it is the easiest to employ for inexperienced directors.

Knowing that Simple RT emphasizes the reading element most, the four readers, all native English speakers, were directed to stand in a straight line most of the time with no music stands. For the “Luke” piece, two readers stood in the centre by turns, in front of the rest, having the reader in front take care not

to block the sight lines of the cast members at the back. In order to create a solemn, serious, and solid atmosphere, the four performers read in unison for the whole time. After all the performances, it became clear that only a few presentations done by other participants engaged in such choral reading and even then only partially, so this is a point to consider for self-improvement.

Interpretation

One of the most distinctive findings about the interpretation phase was that the English-speaking participants knew more about the selected materials to be performed than the Japanese director did, which was to be expected in most cases. The native English speakers were able to understand the same piece more deeply and quickly than the non-native English-speaking director. Connotative meaning, sensory images, and tone colour, as they are called in the Adams' book, are the three performance approaches that were the most difficult to learn through actual experiences during the RT workshop.

Also, the group faculty members suggested more than once that the author project his voice more strongly at the group performance. It was very interesting for the author to know that he did not project enough and that it was hard for the audience to hear what was being said, because it is the same advice given by the author to Oral Interpretation class students at his college in Japan. The fact that workshop teachers pointed out the author's "weak" projection suggested that teachers need to work more on this part of interpretation when teaching Japanese students.

Additionally, the lengths of most of the pieces selected by native English speakers were quite a bit longer than the pieces that would probably be read by college Japanese students. Relatively shorter ones took 20-25 minutes to be finished by native English speakers and longer ones took 40-45 minutes or more at the RT workshop. This also characterized the differences between native English speakers and Japanese speakers studying English as a foreign language in selecting the material for RT.

Exploring Ways of Applying RT

The RT workshop has given the author an occasion to become a reader/performer, a director, and a member of the audience, all of which were experienced for the first time in a setting where no Japanese reader and audience existed except for one person. From this experience, it became clear that three aspects need to be considered when RT is done in a Japanese classroom to teach English: the performing aspect, the interpretive aspect, and the cooperative learning aspect, all described in the sections below.

Performing Aspect

The performing aspect is composed of speed, gestures, and onomatopoeia. Observations on how to teach each in the EFL setting follow in the sections below.

Speed

First of all, reading speed should be closely related to the length of the piece of material used for a performance, but English actually read by the performers at various presentations during the RT Workshop sounded very, very fast to Japanese ears. It was so fast at times that it was impossible to follow the material while practicing. There were words or phrases that were deliberately read slower to the audience to give some connotative context during the performances, but they were the exceptions. It is possibly true that native English speakers feel nothing unnatural about the speed at which the performances were done. They might feel, on the contrary, the performances would be strange if read at a slower pace, and might suspect slowness to indicate some special connotations unless the performances maintained the reading speed observed at the RT workshop.

In the case of Japanese students performing RT as part of English learning, it would not be advisable to instruct them to increase the speed to make the performance become more “natural” to native English-speakers, as the audience members are Japanese students. Some hard-working, motivated students could read the performing material as fast as native English speakers, but that might ruin the harmony of the group and most probably performers speaking at such a speed would have to sacrifice natural intonation that should be more important than speed. Since Asano (2005, p. 243) insists, “differentiating the speed of reading aloud in the middle of the performance will help the audience know changes in the meaning orally,” it would be a sensible suggestion that students as interpreters take more time to understand the performing material and attempt to connect their interpretation with the proper speed for Japanese student audiences.

Gestures/Body Language

The next issue to be considered in the performing aspect is gestures or body language. Gestures/body language here includes such nonverbal communicative tools as facial expressions, miming, and gestures, which are all employed in RT performances. “Like a conductor learning an orchestral score or the actor memorizing a part,” Van Oosting (1986) stresses that “these disciplines of vocalization and movement encourage the fullest range of somatic response.” The term “gestures” in this section means either one or two, or all of the nonverbal communication elements described above. Compared to native English speakers, Japanese speakers seem to use far fewer gestures while they engage in conversations in various settings in their daily life. Therefore, there would be some confusing, bewildering, or strange expressions in the contexts of performing materials if more gestures were used. Chances are that Japanese speakers might not know how to use a gesture, or what gesture to use, to go along with the context, not only because of differences in the use of gestures but because of the less frequent use of them. To illustrate this, in the workshop there were some confusing lines from an excerpt from Kevin Patrick Necessary’s “The Last Normality.”

1. Jack stood up, his hands anxiously brushing at his sides, his eyes avoiding the gazes of the other six gathered.
2. Jack wrung his hands together, his palms balmy and sweaty. “I thought I was doing well with the project.”

From the lexical and denotative meaning and from the context, it was relatively easy to gather how Jack felt as he stood, but it was impossible to picture how Jack moved his hands at the words “brushing at his sides.” An American colleague in the group showed her hands brushing at her sides which communicated the picture instantly. It was different from what most Japanese readers would have imagined beforehand. Also, the implication of that nonverbal gesture differed from that of the Japanese context.

What are the ways for Japanese speakers to interpret and perform the selected materials where there can be a number of such phrases expressed by an author? There may be only a few ways. A native English speaker would be the most reliable source who could demonstrate in front of the students such phrases that are hard to imagine. Perhaps students should watch American or British films and television shows, as well as look at photos to get a mental image of the gestures together with the contexts. Students could also imagine body language from the context and create some gestures that would go along with the context. These gestures would not necessarily be the same ones employed by native English speakers, but as long as they would help the audiences comprehend the presentation, they would be fine, since both performers and audience are Japanese speakers.

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is the last issue to be considered in this performing aspect. Since RT is a presentational performance “it is concerned with the audience’s ability to help create the action imaginatively” (McHughes, 1980, p. 6). In Staged Readers Theatre and Chamber Theatre, full use of the voice is suggested to interpret the performing materials. Interpreters are expected to be able to stimulate the senses of the audience, but

the use of words and how the words sound in English are different from those of Japanese. Sounds described in some onomatopoeic English words are similar to Japanese onomatopoeia but most Japanese sounds conveying the equivalent meaning in English are different, so that it would be impossible for Japanese students to produce the onomatopoeic words that should “make the English words come alive” in the selected materials (Stump, 2008). Below are two examples:

Example 1. The heat of the sun is pushing at me through the window. I can hear buzzing insects outside.

Example 2. The kettle starts whistling. As the whistle builds it makes me feel hotter. (“Scrabble OR Tile ‘M’ For Murder,” Charlie Fish)

In Example 1, the buzzing insects may make the /zzz/ sound in English, creating a busy, annoying, and hot connotation, but Japanese buzzing insects make /bu: n/ sounds, as in “boon,” giving the same connotation. Example 2, likewise, illustrates the differences in onomatopoeia in both languages, i.e., the kettle in English makes /sss/sounds, and in Japanese it makes /pi: / sounds, as in “pea,” when the water boils if the spout is equipped with a steam whistle. The point is that Japanese speakers must be provided with model sounds made by native English speakers when presenting to an English speaking audience in order to make the prosaic or dramatic texts more emphatic. The Japanese English classrooms, however, cannot always find English-speaking teachers or informants. English dictionaries, including e-dictionaries, would be of no use when it comes to onomatopoeia because they just explain the representing sounds literally. On top of that, RT materials taken from literature are full of descriptions that depict the characters' physical movements and narrations that sketch out the scenes. One alternative would be to try using Japanese onomatopoeia where it is necessary in place of English onomatopoeic words. This would be more comprehensible and more emphatic to Japanese speakers, and that still would be clearer to native English speakers than the making of uncertain sounds by Japanese speakers. Below is an example of English using Japanese onomatopoeia:

“I was awakened by some noise at midnight. Every night I hear the lift come and go through the walls and the door of my room. So I started to sleep again, /gu: gu:/, paying no attention to the noise: /kacha, kacha/. In a minute or two, I gasped /ha/. I heard /kacha/ again from the door. I threw the bedclothes aside and jumped out of the bed! I tiptoed to the door! Gathering up my courage, I took a glance through the peep-hole and saw a stranger out there! Suddenly, /kon, kon/, the stranger knocked on the door without a word. I heard my heart thud, /dokki, dokki/....”

This quotation is from a passage the author actually wrote for the RT workshop and performed for the English audience at a session for Oral Interpretation. From the reactions at the discussion later, it was clear that the way the words were uttered effectively made the audience associate the sounds with suspense and enhanced the meaning of the words, although the onomatopoeic words were presented not in English, but in Japanese.

Interpretation Aspect

For the interpretation aspect, teacher-directors need to focus their attention on interpreting the materials to have a more fruitful and educational performance. This means that the teacher-director should keep in mind that RT has more meaning than just getting engaged in choral reading. At the RT Workshop participants were able to proceed to rehearsals at this stage without taking time for considering climaxes and various sensory images that the authors included in the selections. That was almost instantly done by the experienced native-speaking English teachers.

RT can promote a high level of comprehension of the reading text, which is the first step for RT performance, because RT presentation is not done by rote memorization of the performing material without understanding it. RT is not the “oral imitation” of a model reader who reads the performing text. The teacher-director should place more emphasis on the interpretation aspect because Japanese students tend

to skip considering the meaning of the piece deeply and instead go on to perform the material without giving any consideration to climaxes and sensory images (Asano, 2005).

Cooperative Learning Aspect

The fourth aspect, the cooperative learning aspect, as described in Kagan and Kagan, (2009), is that RT can never be completed without cooperation and responsibility. RT requires group members' cooperation or collaboration from the first phase of reading the selected material for analysis, then onto the phases of fluent oral reading for oneself and for the group, and to the last phase of actual performance. During these processes, one has to listen to others and work out somehow how to read the material together with other members. Also, one needs to be responsible for one's own improvement in reading and in performing one's own role. Each member of the group is essential to the production so that there is a high level of accountability.

At a school setting, oftentimes groups that are to perform are randomly chosen by the teacher-director and for that reason there is a variety of student-performers in them: strong readers, slow learners, weak performers, lazy students, habitual late-comers, quiet students and so on. Therefore, the group must be able to be cooperative with each other and the individual has got to be accountable to the group. Everyone has a chance to contribute in his or her own way.

Readers Theatre can never be completed without cooperation and responsibility.

Three Practical Considerations for RT in the EFL Classroom

There are three practical considerations for introducing RT in the EFL classroom. They are the number of class meetings or amount of time that will be allotted for the activity, the number of readers in a group, and the performance time period. All three considerations are discussed below.

Number of Class Meetings or Time Allotted for RT

First, consider how many class meetings or how much class time could be spent on teaching through RT. For many RT practitioners the most likely scenario would be to have a bite-sized lesson with RT during the course or just for the remaining class time for a change of routine, unless they have a regular course on performance or RT. There are two different approaches to teaching lessons.

Plan 1 would be three 45 or 90-minute-class lessons. In the first class students discuss a piece of literature, already scripted, to lead them to comprehend the linguistic meaning and its communicative aspect, including the messages the piece should convey. Students then practice reading the script in the second class in groups before they do a quick run-through in the second half of the class period. The third and final class would be for performance and wrap-up time for reflections. Students learn from their peers and this experience will help their skills of self-expression progress.

Plan 2 is for spending 20-30 minutes on RT in regular classes. Divide students into groups and have them work as teams. For instance, take a short passage of a reading that is one to two minutes in length and get students to do a choral reading of it. While interpreting it, students examine the passage to comprehend the message it should communicate to the listeners. Students discuss in groups to determine the word, phrase, or sentence that they should place emphasis on. In other words, the number of simultaneous choral readers will vary, depending on the places they want to convey emphasis to the audience. One group might find an important message in the last sentence and another might find it in the first sentence. Students will enjoy the freedom of self-expression this way. They will find out in the wrap-up period at the end of the RT project why they differ in interpretations of the passage.

Number of Readers in a Group for RT

Next, consider the number of readers in a group, not the number of students in the whole class. Be it a 20 or 60-student class, it would be best if the same number of readers are in each group. Since the teacher has no choice as to the number of students to teach, it is suggested that the teacher employ special care for groups that have more or fewer readers than the others. Any group that has more readers would need to re-script the piece to match the number of the readers, but that requires the instructor's assistance. An easier way would be to split the narrator's reading and cast more than one reader to the narrator part, although this solution is not optimum.

In the case of a group with fewer readers, some readers can perform double roles, taking the interval of the double roles into account. An alternative would be for the instructor to participate as a cast member. Students in general welcome the participation of the instructor in the performance because he or she can display a model as a reader from whom they learn meaningful reading points. One disadvantage to the instructor taking part in the students group would be that it may disproportionately or unfairly affect the result of the performance, especially if the performance is included as part of class evaluation.

Performance Time for RT

The final consideration is the performance time of a piece of literature to be read. There can be a RT performance within a minute or one longer than an hour. Taking the constraints of class periods of 90 minutes and the students' limited attention span into account, the performance time of a piece of work will typically range from one minute to 20 minutes. It all depends on the students' ability of English and perseverance, but shorter pieces are recommended for classroom RT performances for a few reasons. First, the class ought to have all the performances finished, with students discussing their own presentations afterward, so this all should be done within a 90-minute period. A second reason is that shorter pieces are obviously easier to be taught by the instructor and also can be more frequently practiced by the students. A third reason given in favor of shorter performances is brevity can outweigh longevity in that students will get more experiences of RT in the same semester; they will be exposed to more variety of readings and a wider range of characters.

Conclusion

Japanese EFL classes can make a greater contribution through approaches such as RT, as described in this paper, to develop basic social skills before the students graduate from college. In addition, RT is a holistic approach that enables the students to read for comprehension, to read orally, to listen to the other readers, to be creative in staging, and to cooperate with classmates in preparing for performances and offering constructive advice for other groups. The results of implementing RT in EFL classes should be the promotion of valuable social skills, qualitatively better language learning, and more job satisfaction for teachers

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Appendices

Appendix 1 The Lord’s Prayer (New King James Version)

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as it is heaven.
Give us day by day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins,
For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.

Appendix 2 Luke 11: 1-10 (New King James Version)

- 1 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”
- 2 So He said to them, “when you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
- 3 Give us day by day our daily bread.
- 4 And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”
- 5 And He said to them, “Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, “Friend, lend me three loaves;

- 6 for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him;
- 7 and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'?
- 8 I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.
- 9 So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.
- 10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Appendix 3 Prayer for Peace in Asia

For homeless children begging in the streets of Colombo, close to a million internally displaced Burmese, prostituted women waiting under Bangkok night lights, church people and peace advocates killed in the Philippines:

We pray for peace.

For the victims of war-torn East Timor, Tuvalu and Kiribati threatened by the rising sea level because of global warming, the alarming rate of suicide incidents in Tokyo, sexually abused migrant workers in Singapore:

We pray for peace.

For factory workers receiving low wages in Beijing, the long-standing rift in the Korean Peninsula, oppressed and persecuted Dalits in India, refugees starving to death in Afghanistan:

We pray for peace.

For tsunami victims in South Asia, troubled relationships between Taiwan and China, babies born without eyes in Saigon caused by Agent Orange, brothels filled with thousands of child sex slaves in Cambodia:

We pray for peace.

We pray for peace so that carpenters building rich peoples' houses will have roofs over their heads, the life-giving earth will bless us with its fruits, farmers, whose tears and blood have watered the fields, will have food on their tables, textile workers will clothe their weary bodies, and those who struggle for peace will find justice, because Christ is our peace.