

Members of Generation Peace Academy spent five days in Leda, Paraguay

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Twenty-two members and staff of Generation Peace Academy (GPA) spent five days in the Pantanal region of Paraguay at the Leda Settlement, a sustainably developed community inspired by True Parents and built by Japanese national messiahs starting in the late 1990s.

First Day: February 27

On the first day of their visit, the young people arrived at Puerto Leda in five small boats, accompanied by three Paraguayan Unificationists. Because of their long trip—about five hours under a scorching sun—they were exhausted. Since leaving Puerto Vallemi by boat, they had seen only river and jungle and raw nature. They never imagined that at the Leda Settlement there existed clean, air-conditioned bedrooms, a vast conference hall, a spacious dining hall and an Olympic-sized swimming pool with clear, fresh water. They were welcomed with a dinner created with food from the Leda farm—beef, pork, *pacu* fish, vegetables and tropical fruits.



Second Day: February 28

In the morning the Leda staff gave a presentation, using DVDs and PowerPoint, on the history of the *Il Yang Won* Providence, the beauty of Pantanal, all the projects that we have done and are doing now, and our help for the neighboring communities and villages. We also gave a presentation about True Parents' investment in the South American Providence.

In the afternoon, we showed the GPA participants around the facilities, including a water plant, a generator room, a workshop for repairing all kinds of engines or motors, a laboratory for incubating *pacu*

fish, an atelier for processing fish and meat, a police station or naval office. Then we showed them the agricultural fields, over 20 fish ponds, and land for raising pigs and *capybaras* (a large rodent). They were astonished that we have so many kinds of facilities and that we developed a lot of projects, making use of our creativity in a most disadvantaged place, although none of us had been familiar with all these areas.

In the evening Mr. Minoru Nakata, the director of the Leda Project, gave a testimony of how we made this foundation out of nothing. The members were very moved by the missionaries' faith, attitude of obedience to True Parents and perseverance.



Third Day: March 1

In the morning we had a program about the pioneer experience. All the pioneers of the past—such as the Pilgrim Fathers in North America or any immigrants in South America—first had to clear the land. We also had the same experience when we first arrived in the Pantanal. So we asked all the young visitors to do the same, even symbolically, in order to inherit the spirit of pioneers. They found that it was not easy to clear the land and cut the trees with axes and machetes under the scorching sun. But they gave their maximum effort, challenging their limitations, even getting blisters on their palms. They were so excited and happy when they could cut down the trees.

In the afternoon we asked them all to enter a pond to harvest fish with a net. They were so excited to go into the water up to their chin, even more so when they saw hundreds of big fish collected in the net. Then we brought all the harvested fish back to the processing atelier to take out the guts. The young people also did that and put the gutted fish into the freezer.

All these experience were new for them and very challenging, but they were inspired and excited. We also felt inspired by their courageous spirit.

In the evening Mr. Yasuhiro Toyomura (a member of the 777 Blessed Couples), who mainly has worked in business missions, gave a testimony in which he spoke about True Father's heart. The members were deeply moved by his insights gained through his many experiences with True Father.



Fourth Day: March 2

On this day we visited an indigenous community, which is situated 60 kilometers (more than 38 miles) upstream from Leda. This community is at the northern end of Paraguay where visitors hardly ever go. But in the years since we settled in Leda, we have sent various Japanese volunteer groups and other visitors to this village, and they have helped the people in many ways. We even built a school building with three classrooms. So when we decided to send the GPA group to this community, they were so happy.

It took around three hours by boat. They welcomed us with their whole heart. There was no class on that day, and all the local children concentrated on receiving the group. We stayed from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., during which time the GPA members played with the children. The local children were so happy, and the teachers were very happy to see the children's joyfulness. Several teachers took charge of cooking the lunch. They cooked local food, using the meat of alligators and capybaras, which the GPA members very much enjoyed, tasting such a meal for the first time.

We donated a cupboard for the school's kitchen, and they varnished it. Also they took care of plants that the Japanese volunteer group had planted last year. The GPA members and the local children seemed reluctant to say goodbye, and all the teachers and children came to the riverside to see us off. Everyone left the village with rich experiences. The GPA members unanimously said how impressed they were at the simplicity and purity of the indigenous children.

That evening Mrs. Yasuko Takahashi (a member of the 1,800 Blessed Couples and one of the first Japanese missionaries to the United States) gave a testimony. The GPA members were very interested to learn about her personal rich experiences with True Father, and I think her testimony was deeply engraved in their hearts, as they themselves had never had that kind of experience with True Father.



Fifth day: March 3

On the last day we took them fishing in the morning. True Father devoted his whole life to fishing. Whenever he had to make a spiritual condition, he always went fishing. In Fuerto Olimpo he several times called Korean and Japanese national messiahs for 40-day workshops whose contents were Hoon Dok Hwe in the morning and evening, and fishing during the day. So for us, fishing is not a simple recreation or amusement, but it is a part of the training to dominate the creation.

The young people caught a lot of fish, and we felt that God's blessing was upon them. After lunch, we took them horseback riding, which they enjoyed very much. They had to take a regular public boat to Asuncion, the capital, at around 5 o'clock.

Before leaving, they organized a small gathering with us to express their gratitude for all their experiences, offering us beautiful songs and dances with their whole heart.

Through this visit we felt hope, seeing the Second Generation growing straight toward God. We saw the purity in them, their love for True Parents and their enthusiasm to absorb True Parents' traditions.

All of them have expressed that they were very much uplifted through the visit to Leda. They have felt a lot of hope in our movement, seeing a model of faith and devotion in the First Generation and seeing that we are advancing toward the ideal world on the earth. In a card that they gave us before leaving, they thanked us for a lot of love and care and at the same time expressed that they felt the necessity to learn and inherit the First Generation's faith and traditions.



Participants' Testimonies

Thank you so much for all the blessings you gave us! I personally felt so much love and beauty from all the activities we did. I didn't think Leda would have been all that impressive in the beginning, but hearing the history in Leda and all your investments, I hope for the best at everything and wish to come back soon! Never lose hope, keep loving.

-Yasuharu

Thank you for everything that you've given to us. I didn't think this Paraguay trip would have been [as good] without Leda. I really enjoyed everything about this place. Thanks for not giving up on the Leda project. Thank you for your sacrifice for Heavenly Parent and True Parents. Your efforts shall never be forgotten in our hearts.

-Mikito

Thank you! You have given us so much, and I am incredibly grateful. I really hope that you can see your investments come back through us. We hope for you and I hope we can really create so much more with the foundation you have made. We can't give up.

-Mia

Leda—it has been quite an honor for us to come here. I never thought I would come to Leda, despite hearing so much about it. I am very grateful for the accommodations and food—but even more for your hard work and dedication for God and True Parents all these years. Thank you so much.

-Josh

My heart is here in Leda. Thank you so much for giving us so much love! I can't wait to share the blessings I received here. I will come back soon!

-Gerlyn

Dear Leda Family,

Thank you so much for this past week. I am so grateful for all of your love and deep devotion for God and True Parents. Every day was filled with so much love, I was so moved by the purity in your hearts. Thank you for serving us so warmly and for seeing us as family. Thank you for your kindness and giving to us through the work we did and testimonies as well. Leda will always hold a special place in my heart. Thank you for keeping True Parents' legacy alive.

-Yukimi

Thank you for giving such a warm welcome to us GPA participants. We're super-grateful for all of your hard work and warm hospitality. All the testimonies and activities really inspired me to do more in the little time I have to give more love and joy to those around me, no matter where. I hope to come back again for a longer stay to help out more as well!

-Misato

Thank you for this beautiful experience in Leda. The first steps here were filled with so much beauty and awe. And it never went away. This is a truly beautiful place that I will never forget, and thank you for all the investment, effort, and love you all put into establishing Leda. This experience will forever remain in my memory, and I can't wait to come back. Thank you for everything that you have done.

-Sanae

Thank you so much for all the love you poured out to us. Also I am not going to say much other than "Don't worry, I'm coming back!" Thank you. You have been a great role model for me to be a filial daughter to God and True Parents.

-Sarah

Thank you for everything! This experience has been the most inspiring.

-Tobias

Thank you so much. No words can describe how much you have done. I will never forget this experience here, and I am so excited and hopeful for the future when we can all come back again with our families. This place is so beautiful. Thank you!

-Helen

Thank you so much for this beautiful experience in Leda. Honestly, I was able to feel so much of God's love being here. I was so inspired that I want to come back soon! Thank you again!

-Elissa

Thank you all so much for the beautiful experiences here. The foundation that has been laid here is amazing. Thank you for your hard work and investment!

-Mika

Staff testimonies

Dear beautiful staff,

We can't forget this amazing Leda, holiest of Holy Grounds. Because of your incredible foundation, Leda's providence is so dear to God, our True Parents and for the future of humankind. May Heavenly Parent always be on your side.

Most sincerely,

Francis Maurel

Thank you for teaching our Second Generation young people through the way you live, investing devotion and love for Heavenly Parent and True Parents. We are so grateful that the vision of Leda is continuing.

-Louise Honey

I have the highest respect for your dedication. I am really inspired. Muchas gracias.

-Concha Marchitelli