

GPA Overseas in Bangkok Thailand: Reaping the Harvests of Investments

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Saturday January 24th was the day we had long waited for. Finally, it was time for the workshop. Everything we had done up until this point, was all for this time. Our witnessing efforts, all of the guests we brought back to the center, the jeongseong conditions we set, even the event Food is Love. Everything was so that we could invite guests to our workshop, and allow them to hear God's truth while being touched by God's love. With anticipating hearts, we eagerly awaited for the arrival of the guests.

Some came in to eat breakfast with us, others came barely on time for registration. Slowly but surely the guests came, and all of our efforts began to be substantiated. After everyone introduced themselves to the group, we were promptly put into groups to think of our group name and chant. As each team had a mix of English speaking and non English speaking members, communication was quite an interesting experience. But as it was our first experience as a team, each person did their best to contribute their ideas.



After that we had a talk by a local pastor, Reverend Sutin. He gave a talk on the importance of LFSO,

because the state of the world right now comes from a lack of caring for others. Stressing that this mindset is important for a true life of happiness, Reverend Sutin instilled the core values of the Unification Church without actually mentioning our church. He also gave a talk on YSP (Youth and Students for Peace) which also holds living for the sake of others as a core value. This portion is considered cognitive learning, which is where guests are educated intellectually through guidances and lectures. Reverend Sutin also spoke on the fact that we are one global family, and showed a video on a boy named Ryan. Ryan was a young boy in Canada, who performed miraculous feats in order to build wells for people in Africa. Despite the net insurmountable walls in his path, Ryan moved the hearts of others and through his mission, and succeeded in raising a large sum of money to construct wells for people in Africa, his inspirational story taught the value of caring for others, but also how the small acts of one can bring about great change in the world.



Next was experiential learning, where participants of the workshop had the opportunity to apply what they learned. Each setting an internal goal before heading out to have clear intentions, everybody headed out to go pick up trash. As we went by foot, it was a great way to explore the area and genuinely examine the living situation of those in Thailand. Singing songs as we went, as well as dancing for people in the markets, we sought to bring joy to all those that we met. As we received so much from being in Thailand, it was a wonderful way to give back to the community.

We also played some games to help everybody with each other more. One game was one where we all sit in a row, and one person received a prompt. They draw out the prompt within 7 seconds, and pass it off to the next person, who also has to draw it within 7 seconds. This goes on until the last person, who had to guess what the drawing is. One Thai brother managed to guess the prompt correctly despite receiving a blank sheet of paper, which was truly a miracle. He was praying to True Parents before that, truly showing off the power True Parents hold. Another game was one where there is a guard divided into 50 squares. Each square reveals a picture underneath, and we have to guess what the image is within uncovering 5 squares. As we spent time playing games, the room was filled with hollering and rambunctious laughter. Everyone was having so much fun, and feeling so much joy. It was a great way to bond with your teams, and was a genuinely great experience.

The next day, we shifted the focus slightly more into Divine Principle. Reverend Sutin still gave talks on living for the sake of others, but he also discussed things such as the Three Great Blessings, the ideal family, four position foundation, and give and take. Talking about POC without actually talking about Divine Principle or the church, Supposedly, Thai people are not especially fond of churches but they love helping out others, so they start from the angle of teaching how to LFSO, and slowly align it to the Divine Principle. It amazes me how naturally they can include Divine Principle into the lectures.

One such way they alluded to more traditional churches was by alluding to a higher being. We held an activity called Nature Voice where we go out into the beauty of nature and fully experience nature as our parent. By reading out poems and guessing peoples' characters through that, we experienced that everybody is able to connect o each other despite language barriers. Through that, we allude that we all come from the same origin.

One video we watched, called Project X: Tanaka, talked about a man named Tanaka. Mr Tanaka was a 41 year old man who donated his bone marrow to a leukemia patient so that they can be cured of their cancer. At that time, during Japan, donating bone marrow was stigmatized, as the procedure was rather extreme and required multiple days of rest. The only reason Mr Tanaka was able to go through with the procedure was because he thought of the leukemia patient as his son. So he was only able to live for that patient because he thought of him as family, and that's how we build a peaceful family. If we can see others as family, then the problems of others will become a personal problem for us. The story of Mr Tanaka was very inspiring, and LFSO-ing truly looks like. This also ties back to the fact that everybody comes from the same place, God, and we should live for the sake of them accordingly.



After the video, we prepared for our performances for Entertainment Night. Each group had to come up with a skit with an inspirational theme, and we quickly set out to prepare. Each group bounced off ideas and the room was filled with laughter as they had good give and take within the team. Each team had a unique type of performance with a unique energy, and was very enjoyable to watch. It was a reminder that LFSO comes in different shapes. To get out of my comfort zone and perform in front of people was still a way of LFSO-ing, as it was with the intention of giving joy to others. You can always give like Mr Tanaka, but making these small steps to give joy is also a way of LFSO-ing. So it was a wonderful night filled with joy and laughter and was a bright energy overall. The Thai members even prepared snacks for us, as well as gifting us with Thai tote bags.

The third and final day of the workshop was a very packed schedule. There were many lectures, as if to make the last push of the workshop. P' Munoi, a second gen leader in Thailand, gave Divine Principle lectures regarding the spirit world and the Fall. Despite being topics that we as second gen have heard many times, it was fascinating to hear it from a different perspective. Hearing how other cultures view the Fall was something very interesting, and it was a great way to experience a different culture. It was a bit nerve wracking to think about the guests' reactions to this new truth that they've likely never heard before, but they all seemed to take it well.

After the lectures, we did Unity Ball with our teams as a way to practice working as a team. As we complete different objectives, it gets harder and harder. Playing with one hand, hitting only with your fists, staying in one spot... It was a way to show what your attitude will be during difficult times. Will you blame others if they fail, or will you encourage them to do better and give support and love? So it was a very intense time where everyone's hearts had to be united in order to achieve the objectives. Many teams did not get very far, but it was a good activity in which your patience towards others are tested. After that was the conclusion of the workshop, and each of us received a certificate of completion. It was a wonderful way to end the workshop, and everyone was beaming as they received their certificates. These past three days were so filled with joy, and everyone felt love abound. The GPA team, who were scheduled to leave almost immediately after the workshop for a reflection workshop, felt reluctant to

leave. Taking pictures with guests, exchanging social media, and saying our last farewells, the said goodbye to the people that gave them so much love. It was beautiful to see the bonds between GPA and guests deepen within the span of a mere three days. The power of love is truly fascinating to see.



After the workshop, GPA headed to Pak Chong to have their reflection workshop. A workshop only for GPA, it was the reunion of the three groups that had split off very early on during overseas. With excited hearts to meet our brothers and sisters, the members of the Bangkok team embarked on a four hour drive. The van was filled with conversations left to right, though it died down somewhat as members succumbed to their sleep debt. Planning out the presentation for our experiences in Thailand made time fly, and the four hour drive felt like an hour and a half drive. Immediately when we got to Pak Chong, we were greeted by the Chiangmai group that had arrived earlier than us. Getting to eat dinner with them and catching up with them was so amazing, and it was beautiful to see the reunion of brothers and sisters. Everyone excitedly shared what they did in their cities, and there was a notable strong bond developed during their time together in their cities. Getting to see our wonderful brothers and sisters was amazing.

These last few days have been filled with so much love and joy, and meeting the rest of GPA has made the experience even better. Though we don't have much time left in Thailand, we are looking forward for what the next couple days hold.

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