

Generation Peace Academy Overseas: Bangkok Thailand - The Final Countdown

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The third to last full day in Thailand, Monday 27th, was the day that the entirety of Thailand nation gathered for our reflection workshop. Separating from our respective communities, each group traveled a varying amount of time to arrive at Pak Chong, where they have a Cheonpyeong training center. The building was pristinely white, indicative of its newness. A grand and spacious building that was worthy of being a training center, every GPA member felt honored to be able to go to Pak Chong.

Our first day started off with an outing. We went to a place called Khanong Phra, where they provide a variety of activities. From laser tag to riding ATV cars and so much more, it was a joyous day in which we got to decompress from our witnessing week. Riding the cars, and shooting off at high speeds along a dirt road was an enjoyable experience, and it felt as though it was Mario Kart in real life. Many people drove too vigorously, leading to their cart crashing into the cones and tires nearby. Laser tag was a very fun and exciting game, and yells and screams permeated the small area in which they played laser tag. It was a beautiful time in which the Thailand nation, which had been separated for two weeks at this point, could meet up and enjoy the presence of one another.



The members also took us to a natural spring water area, in which many people were enjoying swimming. It was a beautiful deep blue color, with small waterfalls here and there. Surrounded by lush greenery, and gazing upon the lovely calm water, it was truly a wonderful place. The GPA members gleefully swam in the waters, while some opted to go out kayaking. Each enjoying the water in their own ways, the GPA team spent a day taking in the beauty of God's creation. It was a great way for the members to feel the love of God, knowing that he created all things in order for us to enjoy.

Later that evening, we had a presentation regarding the work they each center did throughout the two weeks. Separating into their respective teams, each center collaborated with their centermates to make a

slideshow. Reverend Kamol, the national leader of Thailand, has been very eager for us to have a wonderful life changing experience in Thailand, and this was the time in which we could very heartistically speak about our experiences. To hear the things that our beloved brothers and sisters went through for the past two weeks was a great way to grasp just what a special experience we had. We saw just how deeply the GPA members were touched by the Thai members' hearts, and we felt very grateful to God for preparing all of these experiences for us. Each presentation also came with two testimonies, and it was clear just how much everybody had grown within this very short period of time. Each person received so much love during this time, and every single person had a special experience.



The second to last full day in Thailand was a day focused more on reflection. We had a talk by Reverend Kamol on how to become an owner of Cheon Il Guk, and how to love people. During our time in Thailand, it is safe to say that every single person felt a lot of love and comfort within the Thai members. Yet, feeling love is not enough. If there is no substantiation behind what we experienced and learned, then it just becomes a memory. It is only when we put action behind it that it becomes a core part of our life. So Reverend Kamol's talk focused a lot on the core values that we observed within the Thai members, and how to put that into action.



We also had reflection time about our experiences in Thailand. A lot happened in the past three weeks, and it was very important that we sat down and reflected on it. It was a time in which people made many good realizations about their time in Thailand, and proved to be a very fruitful time. Some opted to reflect outside, where they can fully enjoy the beautiful nature that lay ahead of them, while others chose to reflect inside to indulge in the refreshing feel of air conditioning.

After the reflection time, Reverend Sutin generously took us out to a cafe. It was unlike anything we had ever seen before. Tara Cafe was a beautiful outdoor cafe, in which customer could fully take in the beauty of nature. It was very large and expansive, with lush trees and flowers all around. They even had a waterfall, with a romantic bridge connecting one side of the cafe to another. A river flowed in the back section of the cafe, with lively fish swimming in the clear and sparkly water. A world unlike anything we had ever seen before, the GPA members could only marvel at the sight. We all got a drink, and spent a

good hour simply enjoying the view.

After we got back from the cafe, we had a debrief in which we split into small groups so that we can share about what we reflected on. Verbal reflection often is a very good way to digest experiences as well, and has the added benefit of learning from what others share as well. Hearing the one on one experiences of others was a wonderful experience in which I truly felt how much they grew.



We also had an open mic testimony night, in which we get to share our experiences to the whole group. I had the opportunity to share, and I talked on the topic of LFSO. LFSO is not the way we envision it to be. The concept of LFSO is that we must suffer and sacrifice our whole being so that we are living for the sake of others, but that is not always the case. We did a performance during our workshop as an Entertainment Night, and it actually took a lot of getting over myself to do that. But that small act of me getting over my own embarrassment was LFSO, because I did it with the intent of giving joy to others. So even if people use actions are small, if we have the right heart and intent behind it, then it's living for the sake of others. My father, who often does the smallest things around the house such as changing the toilet paper rolls when they're out, is living for the sake of others. This realization made me appreciate the small things that people do, and noticing how that is a form of love as well. So this whole trip was just me re-examining my relationship with my dad, and having an ever deepening gratitude for what he does.

Several other first years have testimonies, each giving one of varying topics. From erasing concepts how we laid a foundation for God to claim his children to how each of us were placed where we were and made the impact we did because we are special, every testimony was full of heart and love for the experiences we had in Thailand.

A particular testimony stood out to Maggie Buergi, a first year GPA participant. She commented, "At first, I didn't know what I'd expect from Unja's testimony, but as the testimony went on, the joy that Kenzo-san had on his face brought joy to me too." Unja is notoriously shy and would be last person expected to give a testimony. The pride and joy shown on everyone's face was apparent, and everyone listened attentively. Kenzo-san, her father and the commander of this nation, seemed especially proud.

After the beautiful night of testimonies, we bid farewell to the staff of the FFWPU Cheonyeong building, and headed off to the Bangkok HQ center. As we headed over, the van was filled with joyous laughter and the voices of excited GPA members.

Our last full day in Thailand was an outing day. We had the opportunity to go to a mall, but it was unlike any mall in America. In America, malls are expansive and each store is of a sizeable size, in this mall we went to, it was tall vertically and every store felt like a small market booth. There were so many stores to visit, and was a very exciting experience. Every time we thought we hit a dead end, a new hallway would open up and we would go to a different area. Each person set out to buy their own things, and came back with a huge haul.

But the most fun part was still about to come. We had a farewell dinner party for GPA, where members

from Chiang Mai drove 10 hours just to see off their beloved GPA family. We had a wonderful dinner which the Thai members cooked for us with their entire hearts, and then we had a little testimony after that. Preparing the atmosphere through singing, the Chiangmai members led the worship session. It was almost like a concert, the way we became so fired up. We were signing our lungs out, jumping up and down, just embracing the love and opportunities that Heavenly Parent gave us.



A GPA member from each center gave a testimony, two first years and a second year. Each person expressed their gratitude to the love they felt during their time in Thailand, and it was ever so apparent that we enjoyed our time here. Every person went through so much, and this was our time to appreciate all that the Thai members did for us. A Thai member from Chiangmai and Bangkok also gave a testimony filled with gratitude and love for the GPA members. Reverend Kamol also gave a brief talk to us about the work that GPA did. At the beginning of our trip, Reverend Kamol shared his vision for us as GPA, and the impact we will have on the Thailand members. Hearing it for the first time was intimidating, as high hopes were placed on us, but hearing Reverend Kamol made us realize that we were able to fulfill his vision for us.

Our Thailand trip, though full of ups and downs, was a victorious one. Even after the event ended, people felt reluctant to leave. Knowing that we have such limited time left for each other, and wanting to bask in the love we have for one another, people continued to talk. The Chiangmai members went so far as to play until 3 am in the morning. The time we spent in Thailand was so short, yet so precious. It was an amazing time in which we received so much love, and we grew so much in this short span of time. The relationships that we established here will be in our hearts forever, a precious memory to be cherished.

Thank you so much Thailand, for all that you have given us. As members of the elder son nation, we will do our best to fulfill our duties and inherit the love that you showered us with. This goodbye was a hard one, but as they say, the hardest goodbyes are the best ones. We look forward to the time we can meet you again.

GPA blogger, Nana H., signing out.

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