

FFWPU Int'l: Interview with Newly Commissioned UPA Special Youth Envoys Huang Ling-Yi, Yoshiyuki Shikanai and Patima Atithanakul

Doo Seong yeon
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Interview with UPA Youth Envoy Yoshiyuki Shikanai

"With Heaven's Will in Our Hearts, We Move Forward as Proud Youth Envoys."

On the 1.6 by the heavenly calendar in the 14th year of Cheon Il Guk (February 22, 2026), a day of profound significance commemorating the Holy Births of the True Parents of Heaven, Earth, and Humankind and the 13th Anniversary of Cheon Il Guk Foundation Day, the Commissioning Ceremony for the 11th Class of Cheon Il Guk special youth envoys was also held.

The seventy-nine graduates, having completed six years of education and training, pledged before Heaven to become proud hyojeong-rang as they now go out to mission fields around the world as special youth envoys. The letters of appointment and commissioning rings they held in their hands bore witness not only to the fruits of six years of dedication, but also to the profound responsibility they now carry for the fulfillment of the providence and the firm settlement of Cheon Il Guk.

True Peace Magazine met with several of the newly commissioned envoys to hear their candid reflections on the mission of UPA, their aspirations as special youth envoys, and their vision for the work that lies ahead.

Interview Participants

Huang Ling-Yi (Sun Moon UPA 1st Class, Taiwan)

Yoshiyuki Shikanai (Sun Moon UPA 1st Class, Japan)

Patima Atithanakul (Sun Moon UPA 1st Class, Thailand)

Question: Congratulations on your appointment as special youth envoys. What motivated you to apply to UPA?

[Yoshiyuki Shikanai] When I was in high school, I went through a time of deep reflection about my future - Questioning whether I should pursue my own personal dreams or dedicate myself to the path of public service in support of True Parents. Around that time, True Mother delivered a message at a rally in Japan commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Japanese mission. Hearing her speak about how second-generation members from Korea and Japan were actively going out into the world and making an impact, I felt a strong conviction that I, too, should step forward into the wider world and contribute to the providence.

From that moment, I set my heart firmly on the path of public service.

Later, while studying at a language institute, I learned that Sun Moon UPA had been established.

I immediately recognized this as the unmistakable guidance of Heavenly Parent and True Parents. With my heart overflowing with gratitude and joy, I made a resolute commitment to join UPA.

[Patima Atithanakul] Before joining UPA, whenever I faced difficulties and turned to prayer, I always felt Heavenly Parent right there beside me. Each time, I sensed Heavenly Parent watching over me with love - never once departing from my side, not even when I made mistakes. Through those countless experiences, Heavenly Parent became the greatest presence in my life. So when the moment came to make a major decision, I reflected: since Heavenly Parent has always remained by my side, this time I wanted to remain by Heavenly Parent's side as well. That is why, instead of choosing the easy path or the one I personally desired, I chose the path dedicated to Heavenly Parent.

[Huang Ling-Yi] On July 21, 2019, after a rally in Cheonan, I attended the victory celebration, and True Mother spoke to us, "In 2020, Sun Moon University will be transformed. I will build up the department of theology to become like a military academy. It will become the university that second-generation members from around the world most want to attend."

At that time, my Korean was not strong, yet these particular words reached my ears with striking clarity, and I was able to understand them fully. I felt with great conviction that this message was a personal calling directed to me. I also sensed True Mother's earnest hope - as she looked toward the younger generation - to help us grow through UPA. Quite naturally, I found myself moved to join in fulfilling that hope.

Question: How did your family or those around you respond when you applied?

[Yoshiyuki Shikanai] Everyone around me gave their wholehearted support. At first, there was concern, since this was not an easy path to walk. But when I shared candidly about why I had chosen it and the conviction behind my decision, they came to understand my heart and stood with me.

[Patima Atithanakul] They responded very positively.

My parents and family were all very supportive, and a friend I had studied with also applied to UPA with me, which made me feel even more at ease.

[Huang Ling-Yi] My parents had always supported my studies and the decisions I made, but when I said I wanted to enter the Department of Theology, my mother opposed it. Both of my parents had served in public missions, so they knew firsthand how demanding that path could be, and it was out of concern for me as their child that my mother was concerned. Even so, I felt that if I did not go to UPA, I would regret it for the rest of my life. So I made up my mind and expressed my determination to them. My husband, too, waited patiently for me. Now, both my husband and my parents are proud of me as I devote myself wholeheartedly to the providence.

Question: After you entered UPA, what has been the most difficult moment for you, and how did you overcome it?

[Yoshiyuki Shikanai] The hardest moment came when I felt the wide gap between the person True Parents envisioned me to be and who I actually was. My sense of calling was clear, yet whenever I felt how my abilities and capacities were falling short, I sank into deep discouragement. There were times I even found myself questioning, "Am I truly worthy to walk this path?" Yet each time, rather than letting shame take hold, I resolved to acknowledge my shortcomings and make them the starting point for growth. Through prayer and True Parents' words, I re-established my center and steadily worked to build up my skills, starting from even the smallest areas. While it is also important to strive for perfection, I steadied myself with the mindset of simply moving one step beyond who I was yesterday. Through that process, I came to understand not only what it means to grow as an individual, but also how to grow within a community. Looking back now, I see every one of those moments as precious training that has made me more resilient.

[Patima Atithanakul] In my third year, I went on a mission to the Philippines. Once there, I encountered many challenges - difficult living conditions, economic limitations, and even conflicts within the team. As the situation grew more difficult, we found ourselves having to manage meals and daily necessities on a very limited budget. In the midst of it all, I began to ask myself, "How can I change in this situation?"

Around that time, while reading True Mother's autobiography during Hoon Dok Hae, I came across these words, "Happiness does not come to us when we have everything. It comes mysteriously, when we have seemingly lost everything yet still feel gratitude." Reading those words led me to reflect on the life True Mother had walked. I realized that she had taken a path far more difficult than mine, yet she always moved forward with a heart of gratitude toward Heavenly Parent. True Mother's life and those words became a great comfort to me - they were like a compass that gave me direction and helped me overcome those hardships.

[Huang Ling-Yi] In my second year, a great trial came to my family. At the time, I was a second-year student at UPA and beginning to feel the weight of many responsibilities, so when this happened to my family, I went through a very difficult time emotionally. I felt deep guilt, thinking that while I spoke about happiness and love in the family, I could not even protect my own. I kept wondering whether things might have been different if I had been at home. Lying alone in my room, I wept and found myself asking, "What am I living for?"

Why am I walking this path?" Then I thought about how hard it must have been for my mother, so I reached out to her. But instead of sharing her own pain, she comforted me, saying, "Don't worry." In that moment, I realized why the word "mother" carries such significance. At that moment, I felt Heavenly Parent's love - especially True Mother's love - surging toward me like a storm. I realized how profound and powerful True Mother's love truly is. From then on, I began to think that I wanted to become a public leader who could share that love with many more people. I also felt a deep desire to become a light for those who cannot find hope in life, and to bring them hope.



Interview with UPA Youth Envoy Patima Atithanakul

Q. When was the most memorable moment for you?

[Yoshiyuki Shikanai] The most memorable moment for me was when I had the opportunity to meet True Parents in person. In particular, the moment when True Mother called the UPA cadets and shared her words with us remains deeply engraved in my heart.

It was not simply that I was present there - I truly felt that I myself was being called. In True Mother's voice and gaze, I could sense her profound love and high expectations for UPA. At that moment, a strong sense of responsibility took root in my heart to live up to those expectations. It remains my most precious memory, one that strengthened my faith and deepened my resolve.

[Patima Atithanakul] During our mission work in Los Angeles, we met an elderly man who was not very welcoming toward us. Nevertheless, we continued visiting his home and bringing him food and snacks.

On the last day before leaving the United States, we went to his house to say goodbye. For the first time, he opened his heart and honestly shared about the painful experiences from his past. In that moment, I felt my perspective change. I began to see him through Heavenly Parent's eyes - not as a man over ninety years old, but as a wounded young person.

Through that experience, I realized that Heavenly Parent always sees us as beloved children - waiting for us and loving us with a parent's heart.

[Huang Ling-Yi] The moment that left the deepest impression on me was in September 2025, when True Mother entered the detention center. Until then, I had received so much of True Mother's love. Her presence and love felt completely natural to me - like the bond between a mother and child connected by the umbilical cord. But in that moment, I realized that if something I had always taken for granted were even briefly cut off, it would be so painful that I could hardly bear it. That was the moment when I most deeply realized that I cannot live without True Parents - especially True Mother.

Question: What do you consider the mission of UPA?

[Yoshiyuki Shikanai] I believe it begins with developing a deep understanding of the heart and circumstances of True Parents. UPA is not simply an institution for acquiring knowledge; rather, it is a place where we first come to know the heart of Heavenly Parent and True Parents, and where individuals are nurtured to put that Will into practice in their lives. To achieve this, I believe it is important to grow in a balanced way - not only in faith, but also in character, competence, leadership, and a sense of community. Of course, there are many practical challenges. However, I believe that the very process of overcoming those limitations one by one is itself a form of training and growth.

[Patima Atithanakul] I believe it is about growing into representatives of Heavenly Parent and True Parents.

At UPA, people from diverse backgrounds and with unique personalities come together, yet we all share the same heart toward Heavenly Parent. The journey at UPA is about becoming individuals who, through our distinct personalities and abilities, can reveal and share Heavenly Parent's love with the world. I also believe our mission is to go where Heavenly Parent and True Parents wish to go, and to meet and love the people they wish to embrace - on their behalf.

[Huang Ling-Yi] UPA is a program that prepares Cheon Il Guk leaders who will guide the next generation, grounded in absolute unity with True Parents. True Parents' dream has remained the same from the beginning - to realize world peace and establish the kingdom of heaven on earth and in heaven. As UPA envoys, we must become people who can play a central role in bringing that vision of peace to reality.

Question: After being commissioned, what kind of work would you like to do as a special youth envoy?

[Yoshiyuki Shikanai] I aspire to become a person of exceptional ability and competitiveness - one who earns recognition not only within our faith community, but in society at large. I want to grow into someone who embodies not merely a passion for faith, but also professionalism, strong execution, and the ability to solve problems, so that I may responsibly fulfill the mission entrusted to me. I am committed to disciplining myself and maintaining a humble attitude of learning at all times, so that my personal growth may serve as a source of hope for our community. As a representative of True Parents, I aspire to live a life worthy of that calling, and to serve as a special youth envoy who faithfully carries out every responsibility entrusted to me, through to the very end.

[Patima Atithanakul] I hope to dedicate myself to educating and caring for young people. Because youth are the hope of the future, I believe they need great attention, love, and proper guidance. Many young people go through a confusing time as they search for their identity amid many value systems. I want to be someone who can support them and walk alongside them on that journey.

[Huang Ling-Yi] I hope to serve in local churches and help build communities where people can grow together joyfully, centered on True Parents. If Heavenly Parent's dream - to dwell together with us - can first be realized within our families, churches, and communities, then that dream can expand to the nation and ultimately to the world. Becoming a special envoy does not guarantee that everything will go smoothly. Nevertheless, I am determined to remain steadfast in remembering the dream that True Parents have carried for the ensuing generations, and to work so that it becomes a living reality rather than remaining only a hope. I also aspire to nurture a culture of fellowship within the church, while continuing activities such as volunteer service and environmental stewardship, thereby contributing in practical ways to the realization of a peaceful world.

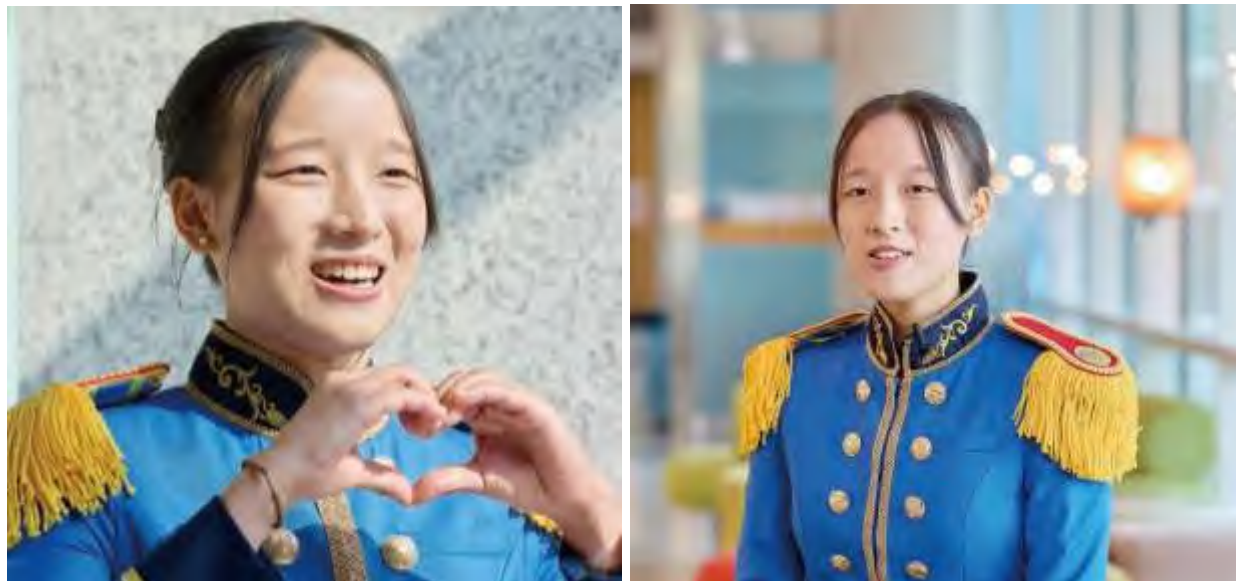
Question: Do you have any words you would like to share with the junior cadets?

[Yoshiyuki Shikanai] No matter how difficult your circumstances may be, never give up. At times, the struggle may feel endless, but once you overcome it, you will discover - almost without realizing - that you have grown stronger and more resilient. In every situation, trust yourself and give your utmost until the very end. Those who faithfully endure such times will surely grow into greater individuals. One day, each of us will stand in our own place as representatives called to fulfill Heaven's Will.

[Patima Atithanakul] I am deeply proud of each and every one of you - our juniors who have chosen this path for the sake of Heavenly Parent and True Parents.

Along the way, you may face hardship and moments of uncertainty, but through both good and difficult days, Heavenly Parent is always with you. Even when you cannot feel it yourself, in Heaven's eyes, each of you is an immeasurably precious child. Let us strive to become the most inspiring leaders we can be for Heavenly Parent and True Parents, and walk the path of filial devotion together, side by side. I cheer you on with all my heart. I love you - please persevere!

[Huang Ling-Yi] Let us not yield to fear, but step forward boldly to meet every challenge, anchored in love. It is precisely in the most difficult of circumstances that the greatest growth takes root; therefore, let us face all adversity with courage and resolve. May this season become the defining chapter of your life - a time of such profound significance that it is carried in your heart always. Let this truth never depart from you: on days of joy, on days of trial, and even in moments of deepest sorrow, Heavenly Parent and True Parents are present with you in every moment, without exception. Let us hold True Parents' vision close to our hearts, and with unwavering commitment, give the full measure of this one precious, irreplaceable life - leaving nothing undone, and carrying no regrets.



Interview with UPA Youth Envoy Huang Ling-Yi

Question: Please share your gratitude and love for True Parents.

[Yoshiyuki Shikanai] Beloved Heavenly Parent, and ever-victorious True Parents of Heaven, Earth, and Humankind - I offer my deepest and most sincere gratitude for guiding and nurturing us throughout these past six years. The journey was by no means easy, yet through it, I believe I have grown in faith, character, and practical ability, becoming a special youth envoy capable of fulfilling my calling wherever I may be sent in this world. From this day forward, I will go of my own accord to wherever True Parents need me most. Without letting the circumstances or conditions hold me back, I am determined to stand in full unity with True Parents and faithfully carry out every responsibility entrusted to me - until the very end - as a devoted public servant and special youth envoy of Cheon Il Guk.

With my deepest gratitude, and all my love.

[Patima Atithanakul] True Parents, thank you from the bottom of my heart for believing in me and walking with me until now. Looking back, you were there at the very beginning, and you are here with me today as this journey comes to its completion. Without your unceasing love, I could never have stood here today. We will go out into the world and help build a beautiful world where Heavenly Parent can dwell. Thank you. I love you.

[Huang Ling-Yi] True Parents, your dream has become my dream. When I first entered UPA, I was still young and did not fully understand what you longed for.

But now, from the depths of my heart, I want to help realize the kingdom of heaven on earth and in heaven that you have so earnestly desired. You began this path alone, but now we have one another. Standing on the foundation that you have built for us, we will persevere to the very end - making True Parents known to people throughout the world and sharing the dream of Heavenly Parent and True Parents so that all humanity may live lives of true happiness. We will become filial sons and daughters of whom you can be proud. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for always being with us. We will love you forever.