

## Generation Peace Academy and Paraguayan members tour Leda, Paraguay

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On February 27, at 3:00 PM, twenty-two young people -- Generation Peace Academy members and staff members -- along with three Paraguayan church members arrived at Leda in five boats. Because of the long trip (around five hours under a scorching sun) they were exhausted. Nevertheless, the Leda facilities in the midst of such a wild environment made a strong impression on them. Since they had left Vallemi Port by boat, they had seen only nature, nature and more nature for five hours. They may never have imagined that in Leda they would find clean, air-conditioned bedrooms, a vast conference hall, a spacious dining hall and a twenty-five meter swimming pool filled with transparent water. We welcomed them with a dinner made using products harvested from the farm -- meat, pork, pacu (a name covering several similar species of fish) vegetables and fruit. In the morning, we presented to them, via DVD and PowerPoint, the history of the Il Yang Won providence, the beauty of the Pantanal, all our projects (those we have completed and those we now doing) including the aid we provide to neighboring communities and villages. Additionally, we put on a conference that covered True Parents' South American providence and how they have invested in it.



### Developments at Leda

In the afternoon, we showed them around all the facilities we have created here -- various types of buildings, a water treatment plant, a generator room, a workshop for repairing engines and motors, a laboratory for pacu incubation, a room for processing fish and meat, and a coast guard office. Then we showed the farmland (producing potatoes, etc.), fish ponds (over twenty) and fields where we keep capybara and pigs. They expressed astonishment that we own all these facilities, have developed many projects and are making use of our creativity in a most disadvantaged place, although not one of us is familiar with all these areas. That night, Mr. Minoru Nakata explained how we had made this foundation out of nothing. The members appeared deeply moved by the missionaries' faith, perseverance and attitude of obedience toward True Parents. In the morning, we had a program of pioneer experiences. All the pioneers, such as the Pilgrim Fathers in the United States or immigrants in South America, had first to clear the land. That was our experience in the beginning, too. So we asked all those in our younger generations to have the same experience, if only symbolically, to inherit the spirit of pioneers. They discovered that clearing land, felling trees with axes and machetes under the blazing sun is not easy. Nonetheless, they exerted their maximum effort, defying their limitations, as blisters arose on their palms. As the trees crashed to the ground, they felt happy excitement. In the afternoon, we asked each of them to wade into a pond to harvest fish with a net. Going into the pond, in the middle of which the water reached their chins and especially seeing hundreds of large fish collected in the net exhilarated them. We brought the fish to the processing room to gut them and store them in the freezer. All the experiences that they had that day were new for them and demanded a lot from them, but they seemed inspired and energized. We felt that they had fortitude, and they gave us hope. That night Mr. Yasuhiro Toyomura (blessed among the 777-couples), who had worked primarily in the business side of our church, spoke to them, mainly about Father's heart. His insight, derived from his many experiences with Father, appeared to touch the audience deeply.

## Connecting with aboriginal people

One day, we visited an indigenous community, Diana, which is sixty kilometers (37 mi.) upstream from Leda. Diana is at the northern end of Paraguay, where few people ever visit. Yet since we began to settle in Leda, we have sent Japanese volunteer groups and any visitors to this village to help their school in any way we can. We even built a school with three classrooms. So when we decided to send the GPA group to this community, they were so happy. The trip took around three hours by boat. Diana residents welcomed us whole-heartedly. Having no class that day, all the local children concentrated on receiving the group. We stayed from 10:00 to 3:00. GPA members played with local children, who seemed to absorb joy and happiness through this interaction. Seeing the children's joy satisfied their teachers. Several female teachers took charge of cooking lunch. They made local dishes with alligator and capybara meat, which the GPA members evidently enjoyed tasting for the first time in their young lives. We donated a kitchen cupboard to the school, which the students varnished. The GPA members cared for plants that a Japanese volunteer group planted last year. For the members and local children to separate seemed difficult. All the children and their teachers came to the riverside to see us off. Everyone left the indigenous village richer in experience. GPA members expressed unanimous admiration at the simplicity and the purity of the indigenous children.



### An early missionary

That night Mrs. Takahashi spoke. She received the blessing in the 1,800-couple group and was one of the first Japanese missionaries to the United States. She described the rich, personal experiences she'd had with Father. Members exhibited keen interest. I think her testimony left a deep impression on them, as they had never had such an experience with him. The last day we took them fishing in the morning. Father had devoted a portion of his life to fishing. Whenever he had to make some condition, he went fishing. In Olimpo, several times he called Korean

and Japanese national messiahs for forty-day workshops, which meant Hoon Dok Hae morning and night and fishing all day long. Fishing is not recreation or amusement for us; it is an aspect of training in dominating the natural world. They caught many fish. We felt that God's blessing was upon them. After lunch, we took them horseback riding, which they enjoyed. They had to catch a public boat to Asuncion at around 5:00. Before leaving, they met with us to express gratitude for all their experiences, to sing beautiful songs to us and to dance with their whole heart. Through this visit, we felt hope seeing the second-generation members growing straight toward God. We observed their purity, their love toward True Parents and their enthusiasm for absorbing True Parents' traditions. They all expressed in some manner that their visit to Leda, Paraguay, uplifted them. We wish that they now carry stronger hope in our movement after seeing models of faith and devotion from first-generation members and what evidence they might have seen that we are moving toward the ideal world on earth. In the card they gave to us before leaving, they thanked us for their abundant love and care they received and expressed that they felt it necessary to learn from and inherit faith and traditions from those in the first generation.

### Some historical background

In 1999, True Parents held a forty-day workshop for Japanese national messiahs in Fuerte Olimpo, which is the capital of Alto Paraguay, a department (province, or state) in northern Paraguay. Being located right at the border between Paraguay and Brazil with the Paraguay River flowing by, Olimpo was well known as a hideout for criminals and as a dangerous place. Near the end of the forty-day workshop, Father told a number of Eve-nation national messiahs, "You do not have to return to Japan. I have prepared some land; go and pioneer there. I am sending you to hell for the liberation of hell." They followed True Father's instructions and on October 1, 1999, thirteen national messiahs arrived in Leda, thirty-seven kilometers away from Fuerte Olimpo. Leda lies in the department (province) of Alto Paraguay in Paraguay and in the midst of the Pantanal -- 14,000 square miles of swamps, lakes and floodplain. It was to this area, which Father had called the most difficult place in the Pantanal, an area that in those days had no electricity, no running water, no roads and no means of access other than boats or small airplanes.

When the pioneering group arrived, they washed their faces in the river, washed their dishes there and drank river water after boiling it. The people in the surrounding area had been doing the same. This has led to problems of hygiene and especially sickness among children. After a period of research, the national messiahs built a water purification system. They had to cobble together a habitable community in an environment that had become a den of poisonous spiders and snakes. Then, they started their pioneering work. Being inexperienced in the construction of a base, they had to learn everything and work from scratch. They labored in sweltering heat of over 40° C (104° F) while chasing away swarms of mosquitoes with smoke from bonfires. As for potable water, initially, they used a simple purifier to filter

water from the Paraguay River. One of their first projects was erecting a wharf for boats to land at and better living quarters. The former owner had only used the land for grazing animals; everything had been left in disrepair. The Eve national messiahs threw themselves into building a wharf that soon featured a boathouse large enough to accommodate eight motor boats and lodging for themselves as well as the local workers -- a total of a hundred men building an ideal city in what had been desolate prairie.



### **Raising livestock**

The raising of pigs and other farm animals is an important business that is taking place at Farm Leda. They started swine husbandry in 2011 with just ten pigs; by 2014 they had a drove of a thousand pigs. Those in charge are making plans to develop a pig brand that is second to Spanish Iberico by 2020. Spanish Iberico pigs have earned a reputation as the best pigs in the world. Ham from Iberico pigs sells for US\$220 per kilogram. Iberico pigs feed on acorns and freely roam when put out to pasture. Leda's pigs graze on a vast "Pig Land," a nearby pasture. They graze freely, eating grass, clams from the river and coconuts. To prevent them from returning to a wild state, Leda personnel feed them once a day. They trained the pigs from a young age to respond to the sound of a bell at mealtime; when the pigpen bell rings, pigs come from all directions. Some pigs even swim across the river to eat. It's a spectacular sight to see, when the bell tolls, calling the pigs in to where they are fed corn and other pig feed. The pigs, which roam in a scattered fashion throughout a vast field, all rush in at the same time to feed. Seeing some swimming across the river is a scene certainly worth watching.

### **A sampling of GPA comments**

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 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.