



21 Days at the Top Gun Workshop 2015

M. Kim
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Welcome to Top Gun! August 5, 2015

Dear Readers,

My name is M. Kim and I'm 21 years old. I decided to go to Top Gun because I believe in True Mother's vision. As a woman, it's inspiring to experience female leadership in our movement. Also, living in a time where woman leadership is now vocalized and insisted, I am excited to see how much True Mother can accomplish and the potential of our movement to move onward. And it's true, I believe there is a great deal of untapped talent and resources that need to be utilized.

As a Unificationist born into this movement, I feel it is vital I go back to where our movement originated – in Korea. Also, to really probe the question, where are we right now as a movement, and where are we going? Young leadership is important, but global leadership is necessary. I do forget we are one big family, and I forget the need to transcend boundaries physically set around us.

Genuinely, I hope to comfort True Mother by simply stepping up. Despite the hardships over the past few years in the American movement, I seek to rebuild trust and responsibility. God's principles remain absolute to me and regardless of negativity or problems, I hope to be part of the solution.

This blog is an invitation for everyone to join the Top Gun participants on their journey to unveil the much-anticipated Top Gun international workshop. Of course, as participants, a basic schedule and clear purpose have been communicated. Yet there still remains an element of curiosity and excitement of what is to come. Surprisingly, a total of 190 Top Gun candidates stepped up to attend the workshop: 25 from Europe, 40 from Korea, 40 from Japan, and despite the long haul travel, 70 from America join together at the Chung Pyung Training Center.

Along with being a Top Gun participant, my vision as a blogger aims to relay True Mother's heart in raising the next generation of global leaders. My desire is to show you the stories happening all around the Top Gun workshop and what participants are experiencing. I definitely prefer refraining from providing you a schedule mock up report. I hope this blog may offer transparency and clear insights of where we are headed as a movement.

The blog will incorporate photos and videos to fully illustrate the Top Gun experience. While taking these new steps on this spiritual journey for the next 21 days, I hope you will feel included and loved by God and True Parents.

Sincerely,

M. Kim



Arrival August 6, 2015

It seemed like half the battle of this workshop was actually getting to Chung Pyung. After landing in Korea, we still needed to make the extra two hour bus ride to the Chung Pyung Training Center. Even so, it's satisfying just to finally land in Korea. An exhilarating rush of excitement caught when Top Gun participants found each other at the airport. I arrived to find a group of American Top Gun participants socializing and meeting one another. An automatic sense of comfort and ease filled the air when waiting for the bus to Chung Pyung. We subconsciously knew we all were here with a sense of purpose.

Are we going to be the next historical figures? This was a serious question participants considered. We anticipated the magnitude of the workshop and the implications it may have on the movement.

Moving along, we all stepped into Chung Pyung close to midnight. It was my first time in Chung Pyung and I instantly felt a sense of serenity and peace. Although it was dark, the pure fresh air created a comforting atmosphere. Many of us couldn't believe we made it.

I was definitely exhausted from my 20-hour trip, and gratefully reached the sleeping quarters in the small lecture hall. It was "Chung Pyung style" as the greeters joked, making a play on the hit song, "Gangnam style". We slept on the floor. Despite the grandeur of Chung Pyung, sleeping on the floor put me in a humble place. Personally, it reminded me of True Father, who wrote the Divine Principle in his mud hut; how he would sleep on the uncomfortable floor and only focused on God's providence.

My desire to understand God and True Parents' heart, who we are and what is our purpose instantly grew when arriving to Chung Pyung. It feels easier to feel something spiritual here. A final thought, it's surreal to know we are physically near True Mother.



Opening Ceremony August 7, 2015

At Chung Pyung our daily routine consists of waking up at 5:30am. Usually that would be a tremendous struggle on a day-to-day basis; however, with the time difference and bit of jet lag the routine is bearable. After waking up early in the morning, we gather in the small lecture hall and prepare to read the Cheong Seong Gyeong. In the first Hoon Dok Hae session, I joined a mixed group of ten participants and discussed our 10-minute reading. From the session, I found it beneficial and inspiring to hear different perspectives on how each individual interpreted today's passage. The exercise allowed us to learn from each other and acknowledge our own personal faith.

When we finished up, Demian Dunkley, Director of Evangelism at the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) USA, announced our schedule, which allowed us the flexibility for the day to explore Chung Pyung and to network with each other.

Immediately after breakfast, I took advantage of visiting the Tree of Blessing with some new friends I met. I wasn't sure what to expect on this walk up to the tree, but this first walk was vigorous. The steps and the steepness of the path to the Tree of Blessing left us all slightly out of breath. Even so, the feeling we got on top of the hill felt surreal. We were told that everything we can see from the hill was owned by our movement. Despite a bit of fog, I could appreciate and welcome the beauty and simplicity of the natural.

Walking back down from the Tree of Blessing, the workshop staff had an assignment waiting for us: we were tasked to move 10,000 bottles of drinks to a storage unit. You may say it was our team work exercise. Moving the boxes of bottles flowed smoothly with the help of Top Gun participants lining up in rows and passing along boxes of bottles to one another in an orderly fashion. It allowed us to break the ice among each other, and enjoy a refreshing drink of McCool and sparkling water for our hard work.

Meanwhile, when waiting for dinner, I took advantage of exploring some of downtown near Chung Pyung and doing some shopping. Long story short, I had ended up having my check-in baggage misplaced at the airport the other day, and arrived at Chung Pyung with just the clothes I had on and very basic necessities (phone, passport, etc.). What's interesting is I didn't freak out or panic...I was just so happy to be at Chung Pyung and feeling internally at peace. I know a few other participants felt the same when they arrived.

After arriving back from downtown, I had the pleasure of having dinner with one of the Top Gun sisters from Europe (Czech Republic). Her story inspired me and really brought me to think more about members in this global community. She shared that she recently joined the movement (eight years ago) and received the Holy Marriage Blessing in 2012. Furthermore, she mentioned how she really cares about the young generation and wanted to convey how blessed a life they are given from True Parents by being born in this movement. It was empowering to meet a recent young new member in our movement.

Finally, toward the evening the Top Gun workshop officially launched with an opening ceremony and orientation in the small lecture room. I got to see the entire group of Korean, Japanese, American and European participants. We were graced to have as emcee the new World CARP Director of Administrative Affairs, Dong Sung. Throughout the ceremony, one point was made clear to all: we are not here to be leaders; we are here to be owners and really take care of our movement. After the ceremony we were all moved during orientation when listening to the sacrifices each Top Gun participant had to make when coming to Chung Pyung. We had newly pregnant mothers and parents leaving their little ones for the 21 days. Also, young adults who turned down job offers and college entrance exams. Their efforts were definitely noted and encouraged me to try my best to meet every single Top Gun participant.

So I end with leaving you all the purpose of our workshop, which the staff spent hours formulating:

“Be leaders of integrity and inherit a deeper heart of love for Heavenly Parent, True Parents and humanity.”



Pilgrimage Orientation August 8, 2015

This morning after Hoon Dok Hae, we officially had our first Holy Song Session (Chan Yang) or more familiarly known as “Ansu”. This involved singing the holy song, “Grace of the Holy Garden” in Korean multiple times while clapping and tapping our bodies to the rhythm of the music. Ansu is a common practice here known to help elevate our spirits and “tap away” anything that might be burdening us or holding us down. In this session the Top Gun group dispersed among the participants from other workshops held at Chung Pyung.

Chan Yang can seem awkward to westerners due to the constant tapping; however, I decided to look at

the exercise as meditation and a tool to help others, since part of the exercise involves tapping the back of the person in front of me. During the session, the music Chan Yang team passionately led the exercise while the participants delivered an immense desire to improve the spirit within their bodies.

Following Chan Yang, we were told to pray at the prayer hall. The prayer hall displays a large painting of True Parents, Heung Jin Moon, and Dae Mo Nim. This hall is known as a place to send prayers clearly and directly to God. For me it felt comforting to know something spiritual existed here and I took the opportunity to sincerely pray. The concept of spirits have been on my mind since my father ascended when I was young. My father is Korean, so being in Korea and on spiritual ground I wanted to somehow feel his presence and connection.

I am actually half Korean and half Japanese, however I feel completely westernized. Being here, along with trying to understand my father's side of the family, I wanted to understand the young adults in our movement around the world. It's very easy to notice the cultural differences; however, with modern technology and social media it feels easier to initiate conversations. For instance, many of the participants have iPhones or Facebook profiles. Fortunately, having the workshop in English definitely gave the American participants a benefit in networking with other countries. Many of the participants spoke their native language along with English. With my limited Korean and Japanese, I am getting by and enjoying meeting my brothers and sisters.

The highlight of today was our Pilgrimage Orientation. We were told our trip will include nine Holy Grounds, places of prayer established by True Father, in the span of five days. Also, I was excited to learn we would be sleeping at saunas every night to recuperate for the next trip. I, like most participants, have not yet visited a Korean spa!

In our upcoming pilgrimage, we will be visiting the following locations:

Cheong Pa Dong – The first church building of the movement

Hannam Dong Museum – True Parents' previous residence

Gyeryong Buddhist Temple – The place where the world providence began after True Father was tortured in Hungnam Prison

Ya Mok Holy Ground – The cradle of witnessing education

Naju Munam Rock – The place where the Moon clan began

Yeosu Morning Garden – The place where True Father began the ocean providence

Busan Bomnetgol – The beginning of witnessing in the southern part of Korea

Mungyeong Seje – The uphill True Father crossed

Paju Wonjean – The tomb where True Parents' children, grandchildren and early Unificationists are buried

Many of these locations have been mentioned in True Father's autobiography. I'm excited to receive this opportunity to relive the earlier years of our movement in Korea and to see the foundation that led to our current global movement.



**Pilgrimage Launch
August 9, 2015**

To help coordinate the pilgrimage with such a large group, we were placed into teams and also group color teams. For instance, my group consisted of eight people and I was placed in the red group. Each Top Gun participant received a colored Top Gun t-shirt and Top Gun labeled sunglasses. The pilgrimage was led in two different routes; one group started at the eastern side of Korea while another group started at the western side of Korea.

My bus went through the western side of Korea. Our first stop was Paju Wonjeon where True Parents' children and grandchildren, and older members of the movement were buried. An old Korean reverend living with his wife nearby the memorial quickly showed us each site, including Dae Mo Nim's, Hyo Jin Moon's, and True Father's father's grave. While passionately trying to convey the significance of each site he offered to sing the Song of the Korean Peninsula mentioned in True Father's autobiography. I, along with many participants, were moved to receive a special piece of history that resonated closely to True Father's early life.

Following Paju Wonjeon, we arrived at Cheong Pa Dong, a former church headquarters in the 1950's. This old building truly let us experience the early days of the movement. Cheong Pa Dong was where True Father began his blessed marriage life with True Mother and raised their first eight children. We saw where his family slept. Also, we entered a room and found a desk where the the Divine Principle was written. The Korean host for this location sincerely poured his heart out to us Top Gun participants and by sharing personal stories supported us to become the future face of our movement. He exuded much pride and honor in our movement. Personally, when observing Cheong Pa Dong I felt our church came from a very deep, humble, and strong foundation in Korea and has grown so rapidly into a global international movement. The Korean host shared anecdotes of when True Father received opposition from neighbors, who threw rocks at their church. Without being angry, True Father had said to the early Unificationists, "Please pray for these people." Also, True Father had really taken care of Cheong Pa Dong by constantly cleaning the church to the point his fingers were bleeding.

Our final two pilgrimage destinations for the day were Hannamdong Museum and Cheon Bok Gung. The Cheong Bok Gung is where the golden statues of the Jesus, Buddha, and Confucius are holding hands.

What was very evident about from this first trip is how much the workshop staff and Korean Unificationists are taking care of the Top Gun participants. The workshop staff had been working endlessly in double or triple checking for the workshop. We are well accommodated at night, and we visited the spa in Seoul called Dragon Spa. It's only been the first day of the pilgrimage and I'm already overflowing with a sense of such sincere love and support from God and True Parents.



Healing the Pain August 10, 2015

Readers, I write to you at after midnight here in Korea hoping you receive daily news of activities here at Top Gun.

We began our second pilgrimage today by switching bus partners and meeting a new Top Gun participant. I had the pleasure of sitting next to a sister from Osaka, Japan. Many may wonder how is it possible to connect internationally when you can't speak the same language. Along with having very dedicated translators who translate to English, Japanese and Korean, many Top Gun participants are somewhat bilingual. In my case, my bus partner and I conversed with her speaking English and I trying to speak in Japanese. It's not perfect, but somehow we can exchange conversation and share our faith. Many feel the language barrier is not a let down but a push for many of us to try to learn a new language. There is a deep desire to convey love for participants from another country and really get to know each other.

Today we visited Ya Mok church, the Gapsa Temple, and the Rock of MunAm, Naju. Briefly, Ya Mok church was where True Father held the first two 40-day workshops. Gapsa Temple is a symbol of where the Japanese movement originally started. This is where Missionary Choi Bong-chan received a special

assignment to carry out missionary work in Japan. The Rock of MunAm represents the origin of the Moon clan or True Father's ancestors. I received much spiritual inspiration from each location; however I would like to highlight the Gapsa Temple...

As participants were told, after True Father was released from Heungnam Prison, he retreated in Gapsa Temple to recover and move forward from his confinement. At the temple, we did not have a host to share about the location or share stories of True Father in general, so we simply walked around and reflected. Gapsa Temple is a location with multiple temple buildings within a park. Inside these temples are golden Buddha statues and multiple lines of colorful lanterns hanging from the ceiling. Each of the temples are wooden and beautifully painted with vibrant colors. We were able to visit the pine tree where Father prayed during his stay.

One of my thoughts at this temple is that True Father was seeking refuge at this location after prison. He just received injustice and mistreatment; however, he took time to heal himself and reflect. I felt, having gone through a tumble in our movement, True Father was inviting me (and other Top Gun participants) and saying, "Please use this place to heal your pain." I felt he wanted me to feel better despite the fact that True Father actually had dealt with more pain and suffering than I ever have. Walking out of the temple, I experienced such a relieving change in my heart and felt the urge to move beyond any pain and confusion I have felt in recent years. I am feeling I am getting to know who True Father is through reliving his life and following in his footsteps. What's interesting is many of the locations we visited are within rural country settings, including lots of farmland and trees. So many of the locations seem to remain the same since the early day of the movement or when True Father would visit. Since many locations were not modernized, we were seeing the sites exactly as True Father was viewing them throughout his life.

True Father and True Mother are truly welcoming us and taking care of us. I do feel guilty because I feel the Korean members have been the ones really staying strong to hold the movement together, and that they should be taken care of more. Our expenses for this trip have mostly been covered, including receiving delicious Korean dishes and retreating at the Korean spa at night. Also, the pilgrimage itself is a blessing. Many members desire to visit such holy ground; however we have immediate access and information to such locations. No words can express how grateful and truly unworthy I am to receive such treatment.