

120+ American CARP students in International Exchange Trip to Korea and Japan

Jennifer Pierce
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From June 19 to July 4, over a hundred and twenty American CARP students participated in the second annual International Exchange Trip to Korea and Japan. This year's trip was a success and opened up opportunities for the future. The big takeaways were experiencing Father and Mother Moon's heart and vision for CARP, the young people, and the world and fostering unity between the three countries of Japan, Korea and America.

The very first international exchange trip took place in the spring of 2016. The Los Angeles chapter of a CARP-affiliated women's group, Kodan, initiated these exchanges. They saw them as opportunities for local CARP members to develop leadership skills, discover CARP's roots in Japan and Korea, and build relationships with CARP members from other countries.

CARP landed in Japan on June 20. At the airport, Japanese CARP members greeted the CARP participants from different communities across America, Canada and England. After everyone arrived, we took a bus to the Isshin Education Center, where we stayed for most of our time in Japan. There was delicious curry for dinner and then a short orientation. Our hosts gave participants a booklet of information and we took some time to get to know one another in groups and to learn what motivated others to take this trip.



An initial workshop

This year, participants spent eight total days in Japan and roughly four days in Korea. The trip opened with a two-day Divine Principle workshop, which focused on the essence of the Divine Principle and the meaning and value of the blessing. Mr. Nakamura gave the lectures and clearly explained the principled

lifestyle and true families. Through these lectures, the participants gained a deeper understanding of God's heart and of how to develop healthy and lasting relationships.

"I learned a lot about the main principles from the Divine Principle," Daniel said. "I learned that relationships and love ensure a better life for a person, and that true love is sacrificing yourself to your significant other just as God did. I appreciate everything that God has done to ensure a better life for all humanity and I feel the hardships that he goes through when something goes wrong in his plan."

"I never realized how much True Mother had to sacrifice in her life with True Father, and it made me feel so grateful that God, True Parents, and my own parents have paid so much indemnity for the life that I have now," said Leo. "I also learned that without actual effort, you will never attain true happiness."



Discovering Father as a young man

After the two-day workshop, the participants went on a pilgrimage to Waseda University, following in Father Moon's footsteps -- the place he lived, the path he traveled, the jail he was sent to, and finally Waseda Institute of Technology, which he attended. This experience opened up a path to understand Father's past. They were able to connect to Father's heart during a painful time in his life and saw the very places they had read about in his autobiography, *As A Peace-loving Global Citizen*. We visited the police station where officials questioned and tortured Father Moon, the house where an elderly Japanese couple took him in when he needed a place to stay and the very first church in Japan. Father's love for Japan and the Japanese people despite the treatment from the Japanese government during that time moved everyone. Benjamin Lam felt, "It's pretty cool that Father Moon went to this school and it's still here and we could see where he was coming from. It's inspiring how he went through so much...."

To conclude the pilgrimage, we all gathered in front of the Okuma Hall to take a picture where Father Moon had taken his graduation picture many years ago. Then some of us paired up with a Japanese CARP member to walk through the campus and invite people to come to our special conference for intercultural exchange, the International Borderless Conference, which CARP-Japan was conducting on the Waseda University campus.

A world without borders

At the International Borderless Conference, four CARP members spoke -- two from CARP Japan (J-CARP) and two from CARP America. A Japanese student spoke about the beauty of Japan explaining that what makes Japan cool is not just the popular anime books and movies but also the honesty of the Japanese people. People say Japan is one of the safest countries in the world.

Then Jennifer Pierce gave a speech about America and reminded us that sometimes it is not easy to see the good side of America while living in the country but that if we take the time to look to our roots and foundation, something beautiful is there. The founders had the notion of putting God first and establishing an environment for people to cherish freedom and equality based on Christianity. We then heard two students talk about their dreams and aspirations. Koji from the University of Tokyo spoke about his dream to resolve energy issues in the world. "If we can eradicate poverty, climate change and hunger by creating infinite sources of energy, we could bring world peace more quickly!" Yasu then spoke about his dream. "I want to make God's dream my dream. I think God's dream is world peace so my dream is also to create world peace. I also want to be the best father to my children and pass on a world that they deserve to live in."

Following these testimonies, each student in his or her groups had a chance to describe their own dreams on paper. Then, each student shared what they wrote and each group member wrote them words of encouragement. After many reflections came performances by both the Japanese and American students, concluding the event in laughter and joy.

It was as if friends and family were meeting beyond national borders. We hope that this is the first of

many such events. To end the day, we heard a testimony from Mr. Harugai, who served as the pianist in Hyo Jin nim's band for fifteen years, about Hyo Jin Moon (1962–2008) Father Moon's oldest son. The experience today seemed to touch everyone. I hope this leads to a deeper and heart-to-heart connection to Father and Mother Moon and to the Japanese culture now and in the future.



The joy of new guests

Fifteen new guests showed up at the event. They were inspired by the content and some even began studying the Divine Principle, which showcased to the participants how CARP can positively impact people. They could see the importance and necessity of CARP.

The next day, an exchange program took place between J-CARP and CARP America with presentations and testimonies, culminating in a homestay for the American students at the Japanese CARP houses to experience CARP Japan's lifestyle. One team went by bus and subway to the Shibuya CARP center, where CARP-Japan members warmly welcomed them to their center, which was small but cozy. They made a lovely dinner for them—okonomiyaki. While enjoying the food they got to know one another better. Sharing experiences and a similar living space helped to bridge the cultural gap between the two CARP groups and foster new relationships.

Learning from each other

The leaders of J-CARP and CARP America met on June 26, exchanging plans and insights to build better CARP programs on both fronts. This was an inspiring exchange. "I feel like the one thing that we lack is ambition to [J-CARP's] degree," was Joshua's take on the difference. "The one thing I felt we could absolutely inherit from them is that conviction," he continued. "That's something that Americans can inherit. Moving forward [for CARP L.A.], the first step is working on a clear, logical direction and model for what that CARP chapter is going to look like."

J-CARP also came to teach the Mujojeon dance to CARP America who were asked by True Mother to perform at the Madison Square Garden event on July 15. Learning the dance in just a few hours was a challenge, but they managed it well and performed it for President Tokuno and President Motoyama and his wife later that day.

Afterward, CARP America performed at an Open Mic night as part of the last full night together with J-CARP.

Coming to Korea

Upon arrival in Korea, CARP on the eighth day, America participated in a pilgrimage to Beomnetgol, Father Moon's first church (also referred to as the "mud hut"), and Cheong Pa Dong, the first headquarters church. Witnessing Father and Mother Moon's humble beginnings moved many participants to realize how much they sacrificed for the world.

For Mika Miyagi, "it was a very deep experience thinking about the investment that True Father put into those places and seeing now how all his visions are coming true. People from all over the world are now coming to see [the Rock of Tears]. It is his devotion that really moves these people, and it's something that's really inspiring. It gives me hope for the future. Back in those days, Korea was underdeveloped. Busan was a small town, and now here we all are from across the world. It's really beautiful to think about."

"An amazing experience was being able to go to [Cheong Pa Dong] which was my first time....," Ikusei shared, "I remember the pastor there telling us how True Father was praying floods of tears until the floors were wet and seeping through the other side. When I heard that, I was able to understand even a little how big Father's heart was for this world. This pilgrimage helped me realize deeper God's goal for

the future."

Our closing ceremony was not without tears as everyone said good-bye to one another and gave gifts of appreciation to their staff. We hope this trip has inspired all the students from both continents and we hope to bring an even stronger determination into the next semester!



Longing for unity

The participants then attended the 2017 International Collegiate Symposium for the Reunification of the Korean Peninsula at the Korean National Assembly building (Korea's unicameral legislature).

Three representative students from CARP Japan, Korea and America gave speeches on the importance of peaceful reunification. It was inspiring to see all three countries coming together to tackle this very crucial issue that was also dear to Father's heart.

Afterwards, CARP America held an exchange program with CARP Korea to share, bond, and inspire each other to be their best self. One K-CARP member gave a testimony about a condition the members are doing together -- proclaiming True Parents on the streets. She explained how at first she was scared, but she overcame her fear through the realization that True Parents need her and that she loves them. There was no room for shame in this context. The two CARP groups ate together and perform for one another, making everyone laugh and cry.

Peaceful Chung Pyung

During our stay in Korea, we stayed at the Hyo Jeong Cheon Won Training Center (formerly known as the Chung Pyung Training Center). The peaceful atmosphere was refreshing and participants were able to take time to meditate and pray. In the morning, we went up to the Tree of Blessing to pray and reflect. We also heard a lecture from Mr. In Moon Pyo about how the spirit world works.

Meeting True Mother

Finally, the culmination of the trip was meeting Mother Moon at the Cheon Jeong Gung Peace Palace. First, they were led to Father Moon's eternal resting place, Bonhyangwon, for a prayer. From mud hut to palace in the presence of Father and Mother Moon, the participants were moved to tears and made determinations to work even harder from this point on.

"Visiting True Father's grave allowed me to experience a deeply spiritual experience. I felt a tangible presence of the man who gave me everything; the man who instilled within me purpose and faith.... but then I realized that he was not at peace. Not until all of God's children come home can Father be at peace. In this moment, I understood that fulfilling his mission is the only thing that will bring about joy to God, True Parents, and all of humankind." -- Ryusei

"I was holding in tears because of the emotional experience this trip has been. The love in the room was definitely there.... In that moment, I was filled with love that can last a lifetime." -- Darius

"Seeing True Mother in person allowed me to see the love that she has for humanity infinitely more clear than her portraits ever will. Today when visiting both Father and Mother, I felt a strong spiritual presence that I have only ever felt in my life when I was closest to God. I am looking for answers within my heart, and I won't give up on the Divine Principle until I find what I'm looking for." -- David

True Mother opened with words of love strongly urging the American students to fulfill America's responsibility in recognizing and providing an environment for True Parents. She shared that although she wanted to praise us, she felt she needed to focus on pushing us forward to finish God's providence in America. CARP America shouted with agreement.

During the lunch, we ate Heaven G Burgers and sat with True Mother while CARP America gave presentations about CARP including personal testimonies from Jermaine Bishop and Naoko Hiraki and a few words from CARP America President, Teresa Rischl. Afterwards, CARP performed for True Mother with such sincerity that many tears flowed from the CARP students.

Before the participants packed up to return home, they made determinations within their CARP chapters to create or expand their CARP chapters. Everyone was motivated to set goals and achieve them, even shouting them out loud for their fellow participants to hear.

All 120+ participants experienced one global family. With newfound determination and fond memories with CARP Japan and Korea, each participant is ready to go back to their communities and achieve more until the next year's trip!