

"Hugging" Asian Leadership Conference held in the heart of Bangkok, Thailand

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January 29, 2018



This conference can easily be dubbed "The Hugging Conference" where a total of 9 couples who are government officials were hugging each other joyfully each time the speakers encouraged them to give each other a hug. The 18 persons were in attendance together with 27 others from 10 countries in this January 26-29 Asian Leadership Conference held in the heart of Bangkok, Thailand.

The participants readily absorbed the presentations as Dr. Robert S Kittel and Mrs. Ursula McLackland gave deep content of the Divine Principle contextualized in societal settings. When we present our True Parent's life course and the contents of the Divine Principle to new guests, the biggest challenge is to get their attention and engagement during the conference to maximize absorption of the heart and will of Heaven. Gratefully, the speakers have the capability to achieve this in a short time as they pour out True Parents' heart and expectation during the lectures. After each presentation, the guests are gushing with excitement with the new-found knowledge, and the subsequent nuggets of inspiration that burst forth. As government officials, they always face the challenge of having to deal with problems on a daily basis wherein the decisions that they make could make or break a people, yet as a political reality, solutions are never simple. The decision making tasks of political personalities are made more complex when they do not have enough reasons to embrace their people with heart. The content of the Divine Principle gave them the rationale and the motivation to love, to forgive, and to stand united for the country, community, and family. As one delegate stated during the reflection that now, he has the reasons to "Love and serve the people even when it hurts"



Another important component of the conference is the interactions during coffee break. This is the time when the guests would talk openly about their reactions or whisper their apprehensions. A critical factor is the confidence that they need to have with a staff to express their true feelings and innermost thoughts. A case in point is the Matching. This is a source of pride to us, that with all trust and confidence we let True Parents, leaders and elders choose a lifetime partner for us. However, those who come from cultures that do not practice this get shocked when they hear this, even within the context of "Loving One's Enemy". When they are given additional explanation that there are processes that must be followed and

conditions that Matching Applicants must meet, they realize that it was not a walk in the park or a zombie-like practice where everyone just smiles and accepts whoever is given them. As they found out that Unification Members undertake sincere devotion and commitment to qualify, and that we have the option to decline and yet we accept because of our faith in the Matching and Blessing as the way to World Peace, then they get impressed by the willful decisions each member made in accepting their Matching Partner. And for the Filipinos, it always matter that the ones involved have a status in society, or is accomplished in life.

The delegation from the Philippines are a congressman and his wife from Cebu, and members of the Provincial Board of Region 4B who were invited by the Regional Chairman of the Provincial Board Members League. He met our elder member Leopoldo Uba during the wake of a Barangay Captain, a community leader, and when our member went to the capitol, he willingly talked with him. Recognizing the need to learn another facet of wisdom for nation-building and the long challenge to achieve peace, he used his position to reach out to the others. There was hesitation and negative reaction from a few, but he was able to gather 10 current provincial parliamentarians to attend the conference. Consequently, almost all of them expressed the need to expand the program to their colleagues, so as to generate one mind and build the foundation for a harmonious and positive interaction among the political and government leaders. Some of them also expressed the desire to carry out the Pure Love and Zero to Hero programs to help address the problems in their communities.



Sitting through the conference and as written down by one participant, learning about the Spirit World in detail is an important content that gives the reason for living life appropriately. The understanding of how the Spirit World works, and the systemic presentations that hammer down the pillars and beams, the responsibilities and freedom, while alive on the earth confirm to these decision-makers that they need to fulfill their mandates- duties and obligations to the country and people, responsibly.

Finally, it is important to note that participants are mostly grateful they attended the conference. So it can be said that we got a dime on the dollar since these delegates are decision-makers who have the authority to allocate budget on projects. Governments have the responsibility on the soft side of things- the culture and the people, and not just on hard projects like roads, bridges, and airports. When they discover the compelling reasons why they need to protect the traditional family and community from the assaults of sexual liberalist policies, and other movers of a decaying society, then they become the vanguards of Heaven and country who the future generation will be proud of.

