

The Leda Project

Dong Mo Shin
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After True Parents visited seventeen nations in Central America and South America from May 16 to July 7, 1995, they personally directed the South American providence from the field until 2001. In 1999, as True Parents had directed, Japanese national messiahs began pioneering in Leda, Paraguay. Gradually, they transformed the land, which had looked like a wasteland, into a cultivated area.

In 1999, Father 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 is well known as a hideout for criminals and as a dangerous place.

Near the end of the forty-day workshop, Father told Mr. Takeru Kamiyama and other Eve-nation national messiahs, "You do not have to return to Japan. I have prepared a 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, Paraguay.



A workshop that was held at Farm Leda in September 1999

First, 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, they used a simple purifier to filter water from the Paraguay River.



The then President Frederico Franco (in glasses) and Rev. Dong Mo Shin help release 20,000 pacú fry 5 - 10 cm. in length into the Paraguay River

True Parents' Visit

Three months after they arrived in Leda, on January 7, 2000, True Parents paid a visit to encourage the hard-working members and to comfort them saying, "We must designate our new hometown for the future united earth. Without doing that, we cannot break away from the fallen realm, which would indicate that we are still in the fallen realm. Put behind everything, indemnify everything by overcoming everything, even if it means overexerting yourselves. We must choose a hometown for the future new earth now. Will you all make this determination? If you do that, the purpose of my visit has been achieved."



True Parents with members including the Japanese national messiahs who worked to build Leda on the day True Parents' residence was dedicated.

Feeling invigorated by True Father's reassurance, the members in Leda started constructing the base in earnest with local workers. They built an official residence for True Parents on the best location for it, one that had a great view of the main stream, a tributary of the Paraguay River. Gradually members in other countries shipped them furniture for the home. In cooperation with the national government, they built a

river police station that is manned by local river navy authorities. They donated it to the Paraguayan government on November 12, 2000.

A few days after that, on November 30, 2000, True Parents paid another visit to Leda for the dedication of True Parents' official residence, which will always be remembered in the pioneering history of Leda. This event happened exactly a year and two months after the arrival of the Japanese leaders in Leda. True Father invited all the local workers at the congratulatory event and encouraged them, saying, "The location where this building has been established will become a famous tourist attraction in the future. You are creating a new future in the Amazon and Pantanal areas. Please regard your participation and work here with great pride." True Father also said, "Please work in unity with the local workers and make effort toward the construction of Leda centered on Mr. Kamiyama."



Pigs trained to associate a tolling bell with feeding time, rush to the feeding place

An Ideal Site in the Wilderness

Ten years later, on September 20, 2009, the tenth anniversary of the Leda Project was grandly celebrated with prominent figures from the Paraguayan government and leaders from many fields. Mr. Hugo Brites Ibarra, vice-minister of the Ministry of Education and Culture, gave a congratulatory address at that time, saying, "What you have achieved here is a dream that has become reality. Leda is a sample of one seed of hope that grows to yield truly beautiful fruit. I express my gratitude on behalf of the Paraguayan government for achieving what you have done in Leda. The government is not the only entity that is thankful for what has been achieved here in Leda in ten years; this is something that deserves great praise also from the people's perspective." By that time they had a small water purification plant, a generating station for electricity, a barn full of farm equipment, a riverside dock and workshop center that even has a swimming pool.



A member from a nearby village smokes bees out of a hollow log to harvest the honey

How to Get to Leda



The neem tree, native of India, is famous for its medicinal and insecticidal qualities

It took two hours by light airplane from Asuncion, Paraguay's capital city, for reporters to arrive in Leda on April 23 at 5 pm. The bright stars that illuminated the evening sky right after the sun set completely washed away the fatigue felt by the travelers, who felt as though their bodies and minds were being completely cleaned from city-life contamination.

There are two ways you can get from Asuncion to Leda. You can rent a light airplane from an airfield on the outskirts of Asuncion, which may take a few hours but is convenient if you plan to stay in Leda for only a few days. If you plan to stay longer, you can take a long-distance bus or a periodically-operated commercial plane to Bahia Negra, in northeast Paraguay where

it abuts Brazil and from there go by boat on the Paraguay River all the way to Leda. From abroad, another way to go to Leda, is to go to Campo Grande, in western Brazil and take a night bus to Paraguay's Porto Murtinho, a relatively big port, where you can rent a boat for Leda. Different types of boats can be rented there, ranging from small boats to large boats equipped like a two-floor hotel. You can easily find a size that fits the number of people travelling in your group. A small six-passenger boat that is popular for fishing purposes cost around US\$1,200 to rent for three days.



Pasturing cebu, the local type of cattle, moving in groups on the plain

Raising Pacú Since 2010

We visited Farm Leda's pacú fish farm the day after our arrival in Leda. Last year, on May 3, they released twenty thousand young pacú into the Paraguay River at an event attended by the then President Federico Franco. This event gained so much importance that Mr. Franco returned with the older brother of today's President Cartes for a similar event on April 27. Presently, they have thirteen fish ponds of various sizes and efforts are being made to ensure there are no inadequacies in carrying on the fishing providence that True Parents started to resolve the food crises that humanity faces. They plan to build an even bigger pacú farm in the future.

The Japanese national messiahs began raising pacú in 2010. Pacú is a highly popular fish in Paraguay and Brazil. A special trait of the pacú in Leda is that they eat coconut meat, among other things. Leda's pacús are loved and known for their great mouth-watering taste; they are so popular that large trucks come all

the way from Asuncion to purchase them. Their present goal is to release a million pacú to protect the Paraguay River as a natural habitat and to restore the river's resources. They are determined to raise 100,000 pacú by 2020.

Pigs Swimming Across the River

The raising of pigs, cows and goats is another important business taking place at Farm Leda. Around a thousand pigs were trained from a young age to respond to the toll of a bell at meal time; when the pigpen bell rings, pigs come from all directions. Some pigs even swim across the river to eat.

They started swine husbandry three years ago with just ten pigs; to date, it has expanded to a thousand pigs. Those in charge are making plans to create a pig brand that is second to Spanish Iberico by 2020. Spanish Iberico pigs are known to be the best in the world. Ham from Iberico pigs sells for US\$150 per kilogram. Iberico pigs are said to be fed with 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 becoming wild, they are fed once a day, a spectacular time when the bell tolls, calling the pigs in, where they are fed corn and other pig feed. The pigs, which had scattered throughout the vast field, all rushed at the same time to be fed. Seeing some swimming across the river is a scene certainly worth watching.

Hydroponic, Yam and Neem Trees

On April 27, we watched young pacú being released into the river. We looked around Leda's natural surroundings and even had the chance to witness honey being extracted from a hollow tree. Bees were smoked out from the hollow of an old tree and the beehive, with honey dripping from it, was quickly removed. We dipped our fingers in the honey and the sweetness we tasted was so strong, it felt as though we were drunk. The Leda team tried to cultivate various vegetables and crops but saw tremendous loss because of birds. In collaboration with an agricultural university in Japan, they are now conducting research on the possibility of growing yams through hydroponics.

To preserve the greenness of the earth, the Japanese national messiahs began to plant neem trees, a type of evergreen, in April 2001 as part of their planting trees activity. The neem tree not only produces seed oil with insecticidal qualities but it has also been acknowledged for its medicinal properties. Someone from the United Nations even called it the tree of the twenty-first century. Paraguay has the highest rate of deforestation in South America; hence, the national government has been promoting tree planting. As part of the movement that encourages every person to plant one tree each, this planting activity is seeing results. Now thousands of neem trees grow in Leda and neighboring villages.

At the end of the four-day Leda coverage, on the 26, the reporters left Leda reflecting on how the Japanese National Messiahs left behind everything and completely invested themselves in pioneering Leda, changing it from a desolate land to a fertile one under True Parents' guidance; everyone in the group felt solemn in front of the dedicated efforts of the Japanese National Messiahs.