

Generation Peace Academy Tours Korea to Honor Unification Church Founder

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First-year Kristin Anthonis hands out pamphlets at Rev. Moon's Seonghwa Ceremony as a volunteer.

Although the trainees of Generation Peace Academy's (GPA) class of 2012-2013 had been aware that the year-long program included international service work, many had not anticipated traveling to Korea to partake in Rev. Sun Myung Moon's *Seonghwa* (Ascension) ceremony.

The GPA participants arrived from around the United States at the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown, NY, on August 28, 2012, where they kicked off the year with orientation workshops and auditions for a choir of 40 that will compete in the Unification Church's annual choir competition in Korea early next year. On Sunday morning, September 2, 2012 as the GPA members traveled to Manhattan for Lovin' Life Ministries, they received the news about Rev. Moon's passing and returned that night to UTS to share their thoughts in candlelight around a rock that had been blessed by Rev. Moon.

"The plan had been to go out fundraising and come back to UTS a few days before the *Seonghwa* to complete the kickoff workshop," said Roland Platt, director of GPA. "However, the teams had been out for only two days when we received news that we would all go to Korea. The news came as a huge and unexpected blessing, and we got busy preparing ourselves internally and externally to depart on September 11th."



Second-year Lara De Oliveira and first-years Andrew Bartolome, David Coyne, James Edwards and Andreas Hochmuth gather outside the World Peace Center stadium before Rev. Moon's Seonghwa ceremony.

This GPA year has expanded its program to include four modules: the Leadership Program in Manhattan, fundraising training, international service, and the new 21-day Divine Principle lecture training, as well as

the option of participating in “adventure training” or the Ocean Challenge program. The mission statement of GPA as of 2012 is as follows: “The Academy to Inspire and Empower Young People to Become Generation Peace” by “discovering God, cultivating personal identity, establishing a Unificationist lifestyle, creating a culture of heart, and preparing for future success.”

The class of 2012-2013 saw a record number of GPA first-years for the third year in a row; 2010 had welcomed 111 enrollees, 2011 had welcomed 123, and now 2012 welcomes 135, five of which are international participants. The number of second-year participants amounts to 25, third-year participants to six, and core staff, including Platt, to 14.

Platt does not anticipate many changes to the GPA program with the appointment of Rev. Hyung Jin Moon as the new leader of the Unification Church in the United States, but he said he is open to the input he may have.

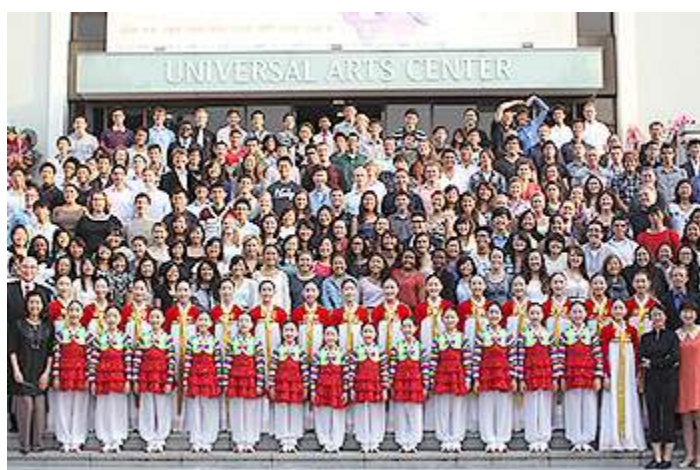


From left to right: First-years Marina King, Chie Hlady, Amy McCready and Satoe Ogawa pose with a picture of True Parents outside Sun Moon University.

Participating in Rev. Moon’s Seonghwa Ceremony

The GPA trainees spent a total of 11 days in Korea from September 12th-23rd, first in Chung Pyung and then in Seoul to honor Rev. Moon, or “True Father,” by undertaking a pilgrimage of the significant sites that had been impacted by his life. Housing in Chung Pyung was provided at the Cheongshim Theological Seminary located halfway up the mountain between the Cheongshim World Peace Center and the Cheong Jung Gung palace, the residence of Rev. Moon and his family, or “True Family.” For the last several days, the GPA participants moved to Guri, a training center in the north-eastern area of Seoul.

The day after their arrival, September 13, 2012, GPA participants had an opportunity to view the body of Rev. Moon in the Cheong Jung Gung palace and to greet members of the True Family.



The Little Angels Children’s Folk Ballet put on a private performance for GPA at the behest of Dr. Bo Hi Pak.

“The palace is breathtaking and surrounded by mist,” said Platt. “You feel that it is so easy to ascend from there, as you are already among the clouds. Below the palace is the museum that we also had the opportunity to visit. There were precious artifacts from Father’s life there, from the last shirt that he wore and his favorite hat and jacket to different items that he had had an attachment to. It was a very personal representation of Father’s life, and a beautiful way for the GPA members to feel more connected to him.

“A moving experience we had was participating in a flower ceremony, during which we offered flowers to Father’s altar. We also signed a virtual guest book, so there will be a record of our visit for all of

eternity. Many GPA members went through this ceremony several times to represent different members of their family.”

A highlight on September 14, 2012 was a private tour of the site where Rev. Moon’s helicopter had crashed in October of 2008, which Platt characterized as a “solemn moment that moved many.”



First-year Amanda Hokanson, second-year Yemi Harford and first-year Yuki Bard mingle young Korean members.

Most of the GPA members had the opportunity to assist in the *Seonghwa* ceremony at the Cheongshim World Peace Center on September 15th; 12 trainees worked the night before the event to bedeck Rev. Moon’s car in flowers, and two thirds of GPA participants helped usher during the event.

“This is something that all of this year’s GPA will be able to tell their children’s children about – that they were in Korea at True Father’s *Seonghwa* and actively participated in it,” said Platt. “There were tens of thousands of members outside watching the program on screens, but all of GPA was inside the stadium. The moment when Father’s body was brought in caused a profound hush; we all watched as Mother [Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon] walked up the stairs and Father was placed on the dais. It was, of course, a moment of profound sadness, but as we looked around the stadium, it was impossible not to feel that the roots of what Father has established run so deep, and that our responsibility is to help it to continue to grow and flourish.”



Second-years James Kernan and Harumi Miyakawa read the pamphlets they received before viewing Rev. Moon’s body.

A Unificationist Pilgrimage to South Korea

After the *Seonghwa* ceremony, the GPA members traveled from Chung Pyung to Seoul in order to be able to visit various sites significant to Unification Church history.

“Through the GPA Choir’s visit to Korea last year, we already had the experience of visiting Korea and had some ideas where to go,” said Platt. “In order to better understand the background of True Father’s life, we visited the DMZ, the Korean War Museum in Seoul, and the Cheongpadong Church where True Parents had held their Holy Wedding and first Marriage Blessing ceremonies. It was amazing to be able to see and touch artifacts used by True Parents and True Children. A short walking distance from there is a very impressive and high-tech museum that covers True Parents’ course and developments of the Unification Church from its early years up until now.”

An entire day was dedicated to visiting Busan, the location of the famous Rock of Tears and “Cardboard Church” where Rev. Moon had begun his ministry in 1951 after being released from the North Korea’s

Hungnam labor camp and travelling to South Korea as a refugee.



Generation Peace Academy's class of 2012-2013 find a moment to memorialize their visit to Sun Moon University.

“It was an incredible experience for participants to stand at the top of the mountain where Father had prayed and looked over Busan, which was back then a devastated city filled with refugees in war-torn Korea,” said Platt. “What he has achieved and how much Korea has developed in 60 years is nothing short of a miracle. It is obvious that God’s hand is behind it.”

According to GPA participants, a particularly memorable experience was visiting the Little Angels School, founded by Rev. Moon in 1973. “We were warmly welcomed by Dr. Bo Hi Pak, who led us on a tour, gave us an inspiring talk, and provided a special, private performance by the Little Angels just for GPA, which literally moved us to tears. It was unforgettable and all participants were deeply touched by his love and spirit,” said Platt.



Many GPA trainees testified about their experience praying at the Rock of Tears in Busan as life-changing.

The GPA trainees spent their final days reflecting on their experiences in Korea at the Yongpyong Ski Resort, which is owned by Rev. and Mrs. Moon and managed by the Tongil Foundation. The resort has received not only national fame as the filming location for the Korean drama, “Winter Sonata,” but also international recognition as the anticipated site for the 2018 Winter Olympics. “Yongpyong is rated one of the best ski resorts in Korea, and we were all impressed by the extent of our movement’s foundation in Korea,” said Platt. “The mountains that we rode and climbed up provided a great environment for reflecting and making a new determination.”



First-years Johanna Henry, Alex Swenson and Aloysia Pfeiffer wait in line to view Rev. Moon's body.

Other activities included afternoons of shopping and exploring Seoul, relaxing at a famous Korean bathhouse called Dragon Spa, and interacting with Unification youth in Korea. According to Platt, GPA had the opportunity to teach a line dance along the lines of Shakira's 'Waka Waka' to their fellow Korean brothers and sisters, who were "so inspired by it that they practiced it and taught it to their parents!"

"The GPA first years for this year certainly have been through a lot in their first few weeks, more than any other GPA class before them. Of course, True Father's passing happens only once in human history, and it happened to be just five days into this GPA year. Then just a few days later, we received the news about Rev. In Jin Moon's resignation and had to deal with that. Being in Korea was the best possible place to be, and I can say that this group has been brought to reflect deeply on their personal relationship with True Parents and True Family. I am sure that these experiences of the past few weeks will become an incredible foundation for this year and for their lives."



Visiting the "Cardboard Church," where Rev. Moon had begun his ministry in 1951 after being released from the North Korea's Hungnam labor camp, was also a meaningful experience for many GPA trainees.

Testimonies from GPA Trainees:

Alina Scanlan, first-year: "Every time I stopped to pray at a rock [at the Rock of Tears], I could feel the presence of True Father standing next to me, telling me that I have to keep pushing myself to reach a wonderful victory. Because I was struggling climbing up the mountain, I feel that True Father pushed me so that I could see the view from the top of that mountain."

Aloysia Pfeiffer, first-year: "True Father has taught me the way to live and is the example of what I can aspire to be. The most meaningful experience for me in Korea was hearing Dr. Bo Hi Pak speak. He showed me what it means to have complete faith in God and True Parents. He put his life on the line in order to stand up for God and True Parents, and that is really inspiring."

Alyssa DaSilva, first-year: "I loved watching the Little Angels perform. It was such a rare and intimate experience to watch them dance only a few steps away from me. I was able to see the beautiful details in their dances, costumes, and expressions."

"My most meaningful experience was visiting the Cheongpadong church. Being able to personally see where True Family lived grounded me in that I could see where their roots lie and what kind of foundation our church was built upon. A quality of True Father I admire the most is his dedication to God. Even when Father was faced with imprisonment and opposition he still fought for God."

Andreas Hochmuth, first-year: "My favorite part was Dr. Bo Hi Pak's speech and video, by far. I was completely blown away by his drive and persistence. I realize that the government sometimes uses power unjustly and the fact that he was able to fight for a movement he loved and believed in truly impressed me. The video was something that I feel a lot of people will never get a chance to see and I loved his personal testimony. I love what he did and just his story alone made me realize how powerful True Parents' teachings are."

Chang Mansur, first-year: "Going to Busan and hiking to the top of the mountain where True Father started it all made me realize that True Father started his life's work from nothing, but was able to create something so huge and world changing. At True Father's Seonghwa, I was able to witness just how many lives he was able to reach out to in his short time on Earth."

Seeing True Father's body one last time meant a lot to me. Just being in the same room as True Father, being in the presence of the messiah, is amazing. Having the opportunity to give one last full bow in person to the man that gave me life was very special."

Glen Davidson, first-year: “After he delivered his inspiring testimony to Mr. Frasier and the court he cried. When I saw Colonel Bo Hi Pak cry, I also broke down in tears because it was so amazing.”

Harumi Miyakawa, second-year: “The most joyful experience I had in Korea was when I was able to look across the stadium and see how united we are as a movement. Even though we may not understand each other, being able to realize that we are all here because of this one man’s work, makes me filled with joy and happiness.

“Being able to see True Father one last time was one of my most memorable experiences. I’m so grateful I received the opportunity to see True Father as a representative of my own family.

“One thing that made me shed tears is when I heard, after her inauguration speech, True Mother discuss about the future of America. It just brings me so much joy that she cares for the American movement even when she is struggling and in sadness. I felt so much love from her.”



GPA participants share a reflective moment in the Cheongpadong Church, where Rev. and Mrs. Moon had held their Holy Wedding ceremony.

Inmee Holmes, first-year: “True Mother is the epitome of devotion and humility. It was only on this trip that I really became aware of her accomplishments.”

James Abendroth, second-year: “When we were at True Mother’s inauguration, I was looking around the room at the 14,000 people, and I took the perspective of someone who had never heard of this church. I asked myself why all these people were in here and why were they all willing to follow this lady. The answer I found was that she absolutely sincerely loves us all.”

Jia-Xin (Kailey) Teo, first-year: “I think it’s amazing how from a cramped hut made with his own bare hands, mud, cardboard and rice bags, Father was able to hope, to dream of something so big, so seemingly impossible.”

Mai Thurston, first-year: “Even though I had to quickly learn and speak a few Korean phrases to be functional as an usher [during the *Seonghwa* ceremony], I saw it as an opportunity to work on my Korean and serve True Parents.

“With all his being, True Father yearned for the unity of North and South Korea. As I viewed North Korea from the observation tower (at the demilitarized zone), I could even see some people on the other side, and my heart ached for them, since they had no idea the type of life they could be living. I could only imagine that Father feels this 100 times over, and through this realization, I could come to understand True Father’s heart more.”

Matthew Barber, first-year: “The thing that really solidified my understanding of the heart of our movement was learning how genuine True Father’s life was. I always doubted his work and didn’t think he was as ‘real’ as people claim him to be. But I came to know that, messiah or not, he truly devoted his entire life to his work and beliefs. And based on that, I understand and appreciate him so much more. When I saw Father lying in his casket, it really hit me. Seeing him there made me understand how real his life was. I started to digest reality. And from that day forward, I had a much more serious heart. I began to see what he gave to me as well as the world. That was the moment that changed my whole attitude in Korea.”

Michael Wolfenberger, first-year: “Being a part of the church makes me a part of True Father’s legacy, which makes a part of something meaningful and something that is far bigger than myself. [In Korea], God could hear me better than when I prayed elsewhere.”

Miho Frankowski, first-year: “It was a bittersweet experience knowing that this would be the last time I

see Father but knowing that he will always be in spirit world watching over us and doing his best to help continue God's will."

Nathan Bratcher, first-year: "Even if his spirit and body were separate, it meant so much to me to just offer a full bow and have a few seconds to think about him while he was right in front of me. I felt so blessed to be Korea with both my heart and my mind, and I felt so connected to Father just being there to attend him."

Sebastian Rinkema, first-year: "My most joyful experience is when True Mother stood up said 'I love you' to the cheering crowd. Considering all she went through recently, she still showed the most sincere gratitude to us, which we do not deserve."

Songja Ono, first-year: "The Rock of Tears was impactful for me because I could visibly see how Father's tears made discolorations on the rock. Although faith should not be built on tangible things alone, that rock to me was a symbol of Father's love for the world."

William Hauer, first-year: "This experience helped me to see that my character, heart, and life are all direct results of True Father's work and that I should inspire others by showing them the capabilities of my own heart through sharing true love."