

The mission trip to Myanmar this year helped me see what the world is like out of my comfort zone. As our whole group started on the journey to a country we've never been to before, I was really excited that I could meet new people who may be so different from me and still share one important thing: believing in Christ. We all met up in the airport in Yangon, and I was glad that Lillian, Kathy, and Frederick were joining us. When we visited the orphanage, the kids we saw were really friendly, so I didn't feel that awkward in front of them.

For the following days, we always started with a few worship songs. I was entirely overwhelmed by how well they could sing. They sang with their hearts, and the whole classroom echoed with their voices. Their faith in God is so pure and strong! After that, we taught English to the teenagers our own age, and some were in fact older than us. They all look so young- some who look like they're fifteen are actually in their twenties! They were willing to learn, and I have to say they're more serious and focused than me in studying. After a while, I took them as my friends. They're really lively, despite the heat, and I'll never forget that they loved to play a game called Mafia. We played it over and over again, and since we had different amounts of people from time to time, it was really fun. Throughout those days, I noticed that they treat each other like brothers and sisters. I didn't see them argue, and they shared everything they had, like the extra balloons my mom gave out. I think I'll need to improve on that too.

We also visited some of the brothers and sisters of the church nearby. Their lives were really simple, but they were content with whatever they had. We were told that some of the families find whatever they can in the morning, such as soda cans, sell them in the market, and use that for their daily meals. Their houses- well, they're more like huts the size of the youth room at our church- were made out of sticks, had dirt floors, and often leaked when it was rainy. Every time we visited a family, we would ask them if they had any prayer requests, and guess what? They didn't ask for a big house or lots of money. What they really wanted was for everyone to be healthy, and for their family members who were working in China, Thailand, or Taiwan to be safe.

In every family we visited there was a watchdog or a cat. At first, we thought they were pets, but then we saw a woman hit a dog with a long stick. We all thought, "Animal abuse!" But they soon surprised us by saying that the dog was in charge of barking to warn the family of thieves, and the cat was to catch mice. And in exchange, they get food from the family. Our guide helped us ask them if the cat was a pet, but they didn't even know what a pet was! After our guide explained, one father laughed and said, "I don't even treat my children that way." I was shocked, but then I understood that their environment doesn't allow them to have pets. The one thing that I will always remember though is that these families only focus on what they NEED.

When my family and I returned back home, the first things I said was, "Wow, our house is HUGE." Everything here in the U.S. was so comfortable, including the weather and the living environment. I'm really glad I had the chance to step out of my comfort zone and go to Burma to see how others lived. The trip is unforgettable, and I hope that I can get another opportunity to do so again.