

I could easily fill many pages describing all that we did. The tapestry of experiences woven during those days is indeed colorful with exquisite sights, scenery, flavors, melodies, smells, and sweet memories. I feel like I left a part of my heart there and came away awed by the vastness of cultural diversity represented by the minority groups within these countries, and how isolated many of them still are from a clear knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Some of the highlights include:

- Fellowship with joyful deaf Christians who faithfully meet for worship in one city and a visit to an innovative project that provides employment for the Deaf in another city;
- Delicious meals with an immense variety of tasty ingredients totally unknown to me before this trip, and learning to take stronger and stronger doses of hot spices;
- Generous hospitality, warm glimpses into family life and celebrations in these most ancient of cultures;
- Fervent moments of prayer, sharing and song with our Father's family in Asia who are courageously involved in His business in spite of the risks;
- Breathtaking mountains and lakes, field after field carpeted with yellow ripened rice, dotted with diligent harvesters, roadside apple orchards loaded with fruit;
- Huge, refreshing pomelos (of the grapefruit family), the infamous durian, "king of fruits" to those who like it, deliciously succulent mangosteens, cold sliced dragon fruit on a hot day, picture-perfect peaches;
- Fantastic massages from toe to head, and the most ticklish pedicure in the world done by myriads of tiny nibbling fish;
- Colorfully dressed artisans creating intricate pieces of jewelry, woodwork, stonework and other crafts. Musicians playing their instruments and dancers performing with varying degrees of skill in almost every park or plaza I visited;
- Open "wet" markets teeming with a huge variety of fresh produce and indescribable local delicacies (a scoop of roasted crickets, anyone? No? Maybe cicadas are more your thing... or grubs...?) and avid customers enthusiastically bargaining for the best price;
- My childhood fascination with elephants being delightfully renewed by spending a morning watching them clown around and PAINT (yes, actual paintings!) then riding one full circuit around the camp.

I close with a full and grateful heart. May the New Year ahead, 2010, bring a sense of expectancy and find us warmer than ever in our pursuit of God and in learning to walk in His loving ways. When all is said and done, this is the one and only thing that counts, is it not?!

And lest we grow fainthearted in this walk I quote God's words to Joshua:

*«Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged.
For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.»*

Or as Dr. Seuss would say,

*«This is your day!
Your mountain is waiting.
So get on your way».*

