

## Soongduck 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Camp

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In late April, on a Thursday, I found out that after school on Friday, the 6th graders were having a “camp” in the school which lasted for roughly 24 hours where they would do things like cook dinner, play games, do face painting, tell stories and have a sleepover. I was asked if I would help out with the event, and I said yes. I had only been at the school for less than two months, so this was a great opportunity to get to know both the students and the other teachers better. Also, I thought it might be quite fun, too!



The students began cooking their dinner at, roughly, 6:00. I spent this time going around taking pictures, mingling with the students and having them all offer me food, which I happily ate. Delicious! The clean up was pretty immense, and all the extra work was, of course, left to the teachers.

After the clean up, we took to the gym, where the students played games, showed off pictures of their homeroom teachers, and did fake weddings where boys dressed like girls and girls dressed like boys. That was extraordinarily entertaining. The night wined down with the students telling ghost stories (which I didn't get any pictures of, unfortunately).



They were in bed by 11:00. The teachers got to bed by 12:30. Luckily for me, I slept with the 6-8 class boys who decided they wanted to wake up at 3:30 and talk all the way through the night. I told them to go to bed three times, but it was ineffective. Even another teacher came by and yelled at them because they were so loud but

to no avail. They kept going. Eventually, other students started speaking up, but it didn't matter to them. Needless to say, I didn't sleep for the rest of the night. Despite that, I wouldn't change it for the world. It was especially funny hearing them practice their English in the middle of the night!

The next morning started off with breakfast, tired teachers and many different mini games that the homeroom teachers did with their specific classes. This was one of the most rewarding moments of the camp for me. I spent this time going around to each separate classroom, talking with the students, and bonding with them. They were happy to have me join them and participate in the games. Along with the games included face painting. This is where things got fun. I was first enticed to get a crown painted on my face (by the 6-5 class, I believe). As the day went on, the 6-2 class eventually wanted to get in on the fun and paint other teachers' faces. I complied but only if they did this:



With my newly painted face, I went around to all of the classrooms, peered into each of their windows and scared the living daylight out of all of those kids. It was hilarious, and by Monday, I had the students calling me "Joker".

The day ended shortly afterwards. The kids having gone home, the teachers went out for some food and drink to end a hard weekend's worth of work. I got home at 2:00 or 3:00 maybe. Having been entirely exhausted, I think I was in bed by 8:00 and slept for at least 10 hours.

If I could give any advice to those coming to Korea to teach, stay active. If you're invited to go out and do something with your co-workers or if your students just want to spend time with you, then gladly take that opportunity to get to know them. I don't always have grand adventures like this one, but every time I accept an invitation to do something, I enjoy myself, even at the expense of sleep. If anything, you may only be in Korea once in your lifetime. Make it worthwhile.