

Grand tour is certainly a school activity which King Ling students look forward to the most. Waiting patiently for ages, 2022/2023 form 5 students finally and unbelievably have the opportunity to go on the grand tour after the pandemic. We went there with an exuberant heart and came back with a remarkable collective memory. Not only did 5A build a great rapport between each other and know each other better, one thing that certainly cannot be overlooked is that we all grown up after being away from home for 5 days.

I'd say one of the best part of the trip is the museums we have went through, from the National Museum of Korea and the War Memorial of Korea to Cheonggyecheon Museum. We read the history with our eyes and feel the past lives with our hearts, especially when we stepped into the National Museum of Korea and the War Memorial of Korea, the strong sense of peace overwhelmed us. What strikes me the most is the piece of metal on the floor of the war memorial, which the words 'if you want peace, remember war' are carved and engraved to remind the future generations. That reminded me of the tragedies I saw in the history text book. We were all astonished by the determination and perseverance of the ancestors to build a better home for their future generations, an example of which is how the Cheonggyecheon, which is a river, transformed into a ditch, then into a highway, and now a reserve.

As an English saying goes, every rose has its thorns. Our joyful grand tour was not an exception as challenges were facing us. We were told to commission a research on Korean pop music culture which required us to have interview with Koreans. It seemed impossible to us as we all didn't have any experience of opening a conversation with strangers, let alone having interviews with Korean strangers under the language barrier. It turned out to be true at first as most of the Koreans we came up to do not favour an interview with us in the N Seoul Tower. One of the reasons behind is, without any doubt, language barrier as many of them do not speak English. Apart from the language barrier, the prime reason is probably that we were all afraid of coming up to strangers and talking to them. Having a deep understanding of the difficult situation, we decided not to be cowards. We cheered ourselves up, sparing no efforts and doing our utmost to overcome our fear. We plucked up our courage and took turns to have interviews. It came out that more Koreans are willing to have conversations with us and are more opened up to us. Perhaps lack of courage to do something is the culprit of failure!

The best part of the Grand Tour trip was that we all can have a taste of being a Korean! We tried all the most famous Korean cuisines in traditional restaurants, from the simplest kimchi and the pickled radish to the pork Bulgogi; Korean fried chicken to the spicy Korea Army Base Stew. We all can't get enough of the Korean food! Apart from that, we also managed to have a chance to dress up in hanbok and go for a stroll around the Gyeongbok Palace and Bukchon Hanok Village under the perfectly dazzling sunset. Last but certainly not least, we had a great time with Korean students in Youngil High School. At first, we were quite shy, but with the contagious enthusiasm of Youngil students, we all loosened up. We learned from each other, from each others' cultures and languages to our attitudes of learning. We laughed together and played with each other. I think that's the best and the most meaningful part of a grand tour.