

Trip Note

GHNI Myanmar Trip 1-10 April 2010

Welcome! We're thrilled to have you join us for a GHNI compassion trip!
Enclosed is the information to help you prepare for the trip. Please read this carefully, and feel free to email me with any questions you may have. (lincoln.yip@ghni.org)

Quick Date

--- February 1st – confirmation that you are joining the project to Myanmar. Email: lincoln.yip@ghni.org

1. **Application Fee: US\$50.**
2. **Trip Costs: US\$565** covers all local transportation, lodging, meals, humanitarian supplies, etc.
3. **Air tickets, Insurance & visa:** For applicants outside of Hong Kong, you must book & purchase your flights, insurance and visa. (We will refer you to work with your continental office) Many of us use the services of Sybille Graff-Franceschi (info@grafitireisen.ch) who can often get humanitarian discounts. Mention about this compassion trip.

Please DO NOT purchase airfare until your participation is confirmed by GHNI

Myanmar... and Our Project there

In May of 2008, cyclone Nargis claimed 130,000 lives. It was the worst natural disaster in Myanmar's history. With few people able to reach the worst-hit Irrawaddy Delta villages, GHNI was in a unique position to help the most vulnerable and helpless.

Orphans: Hundreds of children are grieving the loss of their parents from cyclone Nargis. These children are alone and defenseless against exploitation and international child slave predators. Our GHNI team continues to find children and bring them to "The Father's House," a GHNI home for orphaned children, where they will receive long-term care. Volunteer teams have helped by building furniture and

purchasing clothing and other needed items for the children at “The Father’s House.”

Medical Team: GHNI partnered with HKU Medical Faculty to bring a medical team from Hong Kong in 2009. The team provided primary medical care for hundreds of people suffering from both the cyclone and extreme poverty. For many villagers, they don’t have money for medical need. Their faces lit up with joy!

Our Trip

1. We will focus on supporting our local staff to carry out the work in Yangon, Myanmar - To develop a sustainable environment for the underprivileged to transform their communities.
2. We will be supporting through
 - Community health care education
 - Teaching English in Father’s House and village
 - Visit villages

Flexibility

However, although we are preparing as thoughtfully as we can, our oft-repeated mantra will be “flexibility.” It’s critical to keep in mind that we are serving in a culture with a different view on planning and efficiency. Due to unforeseen circumstances, such as natural disasters or manmade, let’s be flexible in our conduct and attitude in Myanmar.

Unexpected Benefits

Being part of a GHNI compassion trip is about blessing those you visit. But there are also blessings we often take home with us:

Experiencing another culture up close and personal – This is not the tourist’s view of Myanmar. This is the real deal.

Understanding and vision – Most of us want to make a positive difference somehow. Often being part of a compassion trip like this one provides the insight and inspiration necessary to return home and get involved in some greater good.

Friends – working together toward a common goal builds grounds for enduring relationships. We expect you’ll keep in touch with some of your compassion team mates for years to come.

Vaccinations

You are responsible to obtain the vaccines you will need. We cannot give you any medical advice.

Recommended Vaccines for Myanmar include: Typhoid, Hepatitis A Hepatitis B and Tuberculosis

The best thing to do is to visit a local travel medicine office (private or public). They are set up to consult with you and then administer the vaccines you choose.

You can also get a “World Health Organization Certificate of Vaccinations” card from your travel office. They will record and date the various vaccines you have received on that card. Staple it in the back of your passport.

Our Demeanor

Humility We’re going to serve and learn. For both safety and effectiveness we must follow the advices of our local staff and the directives of the trip leader. There have been past times of participants who disregarded directives, offended the local culture and jeopardized the safety of the team in the process.

Relationship We’re all spending a great deal of time and money on this trip. As a result, we like to measure the value of the trip by “productivity.” However, other cultures can measure the value of our trip by relationships. It’s difficult to quantify the long-term power of kindness, laughter, servitude and friendship. As a cross cultural team, we’re going to be bridging the cultures of our own to the local ones. So let’s be good ambassadors in the sense to build good relationships with our counterparts.

Friendliness Friendliness is universal! Men, be friendly toward local men rather than local women. Don’t give a lot of eye-contact to the local women – it may communicate respect in our culture but it means something different in theirs. Women, however, can give the women LOTS of eye contact and smiles! Also, don’t promise anything you can’t deliver. Westerners are known to make promises casually that other cultures take seriously. Listening more than talking is always the best posture.

Women, be careful. Women please don’t EVER go anywhere alone. Take a man with you and preferably go in small groups. That’s just smart in most places in the world.

Packing guidelines

Here are two general guidelines:

- 1) Pack light. Some people are Spartans – they love to just “go” with little on their back. Others look like they’re moving to Manhattan! Please keep it to a minimum, we recommend a medium-sized suitcase.
- 2) Pack clothing appropriate to the Asian culture. Pack for warm weather! It is going to be hot and humid during our stay there, however we should experience some rain as well. April to May is the seasonal change from Wet to Dry.

Please also dress simply and to know that it’s not our goal to attract attention on the road.

For footwear, pack shoes to work in and lighter shoes for walking. Pack a light jacket (waterproof for rain is best) for cool evenings....

Make sure one of your outfits is good for grungy manual labor.

Medical

Malaria meds

Mosquito repellent

Treat your clothes with DEET pre-trip

Any medications you need personally

Liquid soap to regularly wash hands (i.e. small bottle of hand sanitizer)

Maybe something to help you sleep on the flights

Pepto Bismal chewable tablets – for whenever you have a slight stomach upset

Miscellaneous

****Passport! (have a few of copies of the main page, stashed in a few locations)**

****Air-Tickets**

Bring money for your personal extras, like souvenirs. Bring US/Euro major currency in a money belt. There will be places for currency exchange.

Sun block

Sun glasses (reading glasses if needed)

Small flashlight

List of important phone numbers

Camera

Extra batteries you may need (for camera, MP3 player, flash light, etc.)

Toiletries

Pencils/Pens/Note pad

Electrical converter for electrical appliances (Indonesia is 220v)

Money belt

Book to read on the LONG flights

You should be able to fit the above in a medium-sized suitcase and a carry-on bag.

All righty guys! If you got any questions email me at lincoln.yip@ghni.org

Sincerely,

Lincoln Yip