

Long Walk to God, Part 1

THAILAND | May 3

Pada



Twelve-year-old Pada couldn't understand why his older brother had left the family faith to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Thailand.

"Why have you become an Adventist?" he asked his brother, Morja.

"Come live with me, and you'll see," Morja replied.

Pada moved in with Morja.

The boy was the youngest in his family, and he really wanted to know why Morja had become an Adventist.

Morja was the oldest child and the family leader after their father's death when Pada was three months old.

Mom, who had six children to raise alone after Dad's death, was glad that Morja could help care for Pada.

Pada quickly saw that life was very different at Morja's house. Morja was 11 years older than Pada. He was already married and the father of three young boys.

Morja and his family did not eat pork, snakes, and mice like other mountain people living on the border of Thailand and Myanmar. Mountain people were very poor,

and they ate whatever they could find. Morja and his family were not rich, but they only ate what Morja called "clean food." Morja explained that the Bible forbade people from eating unclean food such as pork, snakes, and mice.

On Sunday, Pada helped on his brother's farm. He watched the water buffalo when Morja wasn't using them to plow the rice paddy. He watched the water buffalo again on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

On Saturday morning, Morja woke up Pada at 5 o'clock. It was still dark outside.

"It's time to get up and get ready for church," Morja said.

Pada wasn't happy. He wanted to sleep. But he respected his brother and needed to listen to him. He also remembered that he had wanted to know why Morja had become an Adventist. Maybe he would find out at church.

Pada got up and joined his brother and the rest of the family for a simple breakfast of rice and vegetables. Morja's wife had prepared the meal on Friday.



After eating, Pada accompanied Morja, Morja's wife, and their three children on a long walk to church.

There was no Adventist church in their small town, and they needed to walk eight miles (13 kilometers) to the nearest church in another town.

Morja picked up one small son and carried him in a cloth wrapped around his back. Morja's wife picked up a second son and carried him in a cloth wrapped around her back.

Pada walked with their oldest boy, who was 6.

The family of six walked for three hours. They climbed mountain paths. They trooped through rice paddies. They navigated rivers. Finally, they arrived at the Adventist church in time for Sabbath School.

Pada liked the worship service. The Adventist pastor had three daughters who were about his age. The girls played the guitar and sang beautiful songs about Jesus.

After the worship service, Pada enjoyed a delicious lunch at the church. He especially liked a delicious pumpkin soup prepared by the pastor's wife.

While Pada's first visit to church was a good experience, he wasn't thrilled when his brother woke him up at 5 o'clock again the next Sabbath. He wanted to sleep, and he didn't look forward to the long walk to church. But once he arrived at church, he was happy to be there.

This is how it went every Sabbath after that. Pada grumbled in his heart as he got ready for church and took the long walk. But he always enjoyed the music and the food. 🌍

Thank you for your Sabbath School mission offerings that help proclaim the good news about Jesus' soon coming in Thailand and around the world. Find out next week how Pada decided to follow his brother's example and become a Seventh-day Adventist.

By Andrew McChesney

Story Tips

- Show Thailand on the map.
- Pronounce Pada as: PA-da.
- Pronounce Morja as: MORDG-a.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division: bit.ly/ssd-2025.
- Know that this mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 2, "To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach in large cities, across the 10/40 Window, among unreached and under-reached people groups, and to non-Christian religions"; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives"; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults"; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, "To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview." For more information, go to the website: IWillGo.org.

Fast Facts

- In Thailand, the head is considered a sacred body part, so one must not touch other people's heads. The soles of the feet mustn't be shown, as they are considered the lowest part of the body.
- Stepping on Thai currency is illegal because the face of the monarch is printed on it.
- Some popular Thai dishes include *pad thai* (stir fried noodles with fried egg); *tom kha gai* (spicy coconut soup with chicken and lemongrass); *khao pad* (fried rice that is not too spicy and is enjoyed by children); and *khao neaow mamuang* (rice cooked in coconut milk and served with fresh mango slices).