

Overseas Study Returnee Report (Thailand)

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I went to Thailand with fellow students from Kyoto University, most of us studied or majored in Economics. We also had a student studying Education and one student in the African and Asian studies department. We arrived in Thailand on the 31st of August and left on the 12th of September. Those 13 days were very intense and beneficial to me. We arrived on the 31st evening, so we started our schedule on the 1st of September as we went to Thammasat University for a morning orientation which explained to us differences between life in Thailand and Japan, such as we cannot drink tap water in Thailand as opposed to Japan, and there is no toilets in convenience stores in Thailand in contrast with Japan. After the orientation we learnt some of the basics of the Thai language. Following that, we had had a tour of the Thammasat University campus. The second day of September we had lectures on society, culture, and energy development in Thailand. The third day we did our first study trips to the Temple of Emerald Buddha and Grand Palace, and AEON Thailand. The fourth day we made other study trips to Nong Khae Industrial Estate, and a Processed Chicken Meat Factory of Chareon Pokphand Foods (CPF) in Saraburi province. The fifth day we had a lecture on Economic Development of Thailand. The sixth day we had our student workshops where we presented our research topics; my research is on Gender and Soccer in Japan. The seventh day we had a lecture on ASEAN Cooperation in in Political Economic and Sociocultural Dimensions. September the 8th was our last day in Bangkok, we went to Ayuthaya province. Our first day in Phuket we went to meet the governor of Phuket, and we had a meeting in the Phuket Provincial Employment Office. The second day we visited a rubber plantation, pineapple plantation, and garbage NGO. The last day in Phuket we visited a goat farm and an organic farm.

I had a very rich life experience in Thailand, I have learned much from the lectures and from just walking in the streets and talking to Thai people. The difference between Thailand and Japan can be seen easily as there are more poor people in Thailand and the standard of living in Japan is higher. I bought some things in Thailand, and the same item would be a wee bit higher in Japan, I would suppose because of the higher tax rate. Another point is the ability to bargain prices and many stores in Thailand, especially in the street, something you cannot do much in Japan. There is a similarity in that with Thailand and my country of birth Egypt, but not with my hometown Qatar. Moreover, both Thailand and Egypt have a vehicle named Tuk-Tuk which is a three wheeled motorcycle working as a taxi. The Tuk-Tuk is non-existent in both Japan and Qatar, or the Middle East.

This trip was my first study trip ever, so it was a very important and valuable experience for me. Before going I wanted to learn about Thailand's economy and I learned that from the lectures in Thammasat University and by asking questions to the professors. Also I got to learn about Thai culture through not only the lectures but actually living and interacting with the Thai people. This trip broadened my interest to write reports in university about Thailand's economy, and take courses were which will include Thailand, and talk to professors in Kyoto University who have interest or research about Thailand. Moreover, I am very much interested to participate in another overseas study trip in the East Asian region in the future. I am already considering going to Thailand again, and would definitely consider studying there or even working there.