

Report on Participation in Thailand field research

WU QIANG

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**Faculty/Graduate School of: Economics
Kyoto University**

This is the second time for me to participate in the overseas field research under the East Asia course program. The last time I joined the Korean field trip, mainly focusing the Korean automobile industry. Actually it had brought us a very good opportunity to observe and compare the countries of different development stages in East Asia and Southeast Asia. We can see how the industry changes among the different countries, like in South Korea, the manufacturing industry, typically automobile, steel, shipbuilding, and electronics are the most important part, while in developing countries like Thailand, agriculture still played a very important part. While if we look back to Japan, we find that the soft power like human development, social harmony, absolutely reliable infrastructure and high-standard service had brought Japan into another more advanced development stage, which will focus more on the intangible assets, instead of tangible assets.

Talking back to Thailand, I would say, Thailand field trip is quite fruitful in my opinion. During the 10 days in Thailand, we had a very abundant schedule, including academic lectures given by former government officials, scholars and also NGO leaders, together with field visits to a variety of places like NGOs, international organizations, government organizations and so on. The most important event is that we successfully held a joint workshop cooperated with Chulalongkorn University and Thammasat University, both top tier universities in Thailand.

In terms of academics, the visit to Thailand provided me a great opportunity to observe how a developing country develops its economy as well as its politics. We all know that Thailand had so-called democracy in politics, but highly influenced by the monarchy and sometimes overwhelmed by the coup d'état. The economy of Thailand used to have excellent performance among the Southeast Asian countries, like for example, it is among the Tiger Cub Economies in the 1990s. However, its development was highly influenced by the unstable domestic politics.

The politics and economy seemed to be strongly influencing each other in the Thai context. The less developed economy, relatively monotonous industry structure and poor human literacy caused the political system difficult to function well--like, the vote could be easily bought by those political candidates. On the other hand, we can see in the Thailand case that the unsustainable political system had made lots of barriers for the economy to grow well. The most obvious area must be the tourism industry. Thailand is famous for its attraction to tourists worldwide. But, due to the recent terrorist attack in Bangkok, the number of tourists decreased sharply. Another case we all know is the fight between the Red Shirt Army and Yellow Shirt Army in the past several years, which had caused large scale internal instability and also hit the tourism industry strongly.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to Hisano Sensei, Lambino Sensei, Souk Sensei, Imai San and all the other KUASU members and staff members, thank you so much for your making great efforts in organizing such a fantastic and amazing program, which not only provide me an opportunity to know more about the target country, but also let

me have the opportunity to make good friends with other East Asia course students and interchange our opinions academically and normally. Should there be any chance, I would very much like to join our oversea program and meet you again.