

Report on Participation in South Korea Field Research

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Year level: M1

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My major is Linguistics. Driven by a passion for learning foreign languages, I took an intermediate Korean class at Kyoto University last year. That made me become more and more interested in Korean language and culture. So, I planned to go to Korea someday. Rather than simply go traveling, I prefer to attend some programs to learn more and experience more than would be possible by myself. That was the original drive to attend this field research trip.

Before I departed, I was a little bit worried that this field study would be difficult for me, since I do not major in economics. However, this trip was not so difficult because everything I attended, including the lectures, were extremely accessible, educational and meaningful in terms of content.

During the trip, we visited 2 museums, the National Bank of Korea Currency Museum and the National Museum of Korea. I was so impressed by the traditional Korean art and culture on display. I feel it is very important to find out about both the similarities and also the differences in Asian cultures.

I was not so interested in politics and history before this trip. However, when we visited the National Assembly, I was deeply affected. I visited the place where the policies and laws of Korea are made. We also visited the Gyeongbokgung Palace, the main royal palace of the Joseon dynasty. Because my hometown in China is far away from Beijing. I haven't even visited Tiananmen or the Forbidden City. We visited 2 factory plants too, Samsung Electronics Smart Gallery and LG A3 TV Factory Tour. I saw first-hand the procedures they use to assemble phones with such small parts. We watched the Pyeongchang Olympics Opening Ceremony at a 'Livesite' as well. I tried Virtual Reality technology as well, which was my first time in this respect. That experience made me feel that the technology in Korea is so advanced.

What I did in this trip that was related to my research is the visit of bronze statue of King Sejong the Great in Gwanghwamun square, in the bronze statue, the Hangul created by King Sejong the Great were listed and it also wrote the writing of "King Sejong the Great, who created the Korean characters Hangeul". Besides, I am interested in a phonetical phenomenon called "Korean Fricative Voice Gestures", which is when people want to emphasize something, a strong fricative voice even in vowels was used. Before I went to Korea, I just heard it in Korean TV shows and read some papers about it. When I observed the voice being applied in person, it was so interesting for me.

In addition to the visits we made, I also made a lot of friends. All the group members were so kind. We helped each other the whole time. What's more, some of the group members and I made some Korean friends, we talked a lot about cultural differences and personal ambitions.

I have studied abroad in Japan for almost 2 years. Japan was the first foreign country for me to visit. Then I attended some programs at Kyoto University, making me realize the importance of cross-cultural communication. I really appreciated having the opportunity to attend this field trip. In the very near future, I want to participate in some similar activities, make more friends from different backgrounds and learn a lot from different cultures.