

Report on Participation in South Korea Field Research

Kaifeng Zhang

Year level: M2

Faculty/Graduate School of:

Graduate School of Economics

This field research was very interesting and helpful in developing my own interests. It also encourages me to participate in similar activities in the future and to plan/start up my own field research trips to other countries for the purposes of furthering my own study. During the trip I had the opportunity to listen to lectures and seminars delivered by the host university, and communicating with South Korean students at Kyungpook National University, from which I certainly learned a lot about the history of this country and how local people think about several topics, including the implications of Korea's recent/contemporary history in effecting the course of economic development and the political environment in South Korea. Some of the thoughts that I gathered from such interaction are actually quite different from what I used to think before the trip, and so this trip and the exchange with academic with Kyungpook University has really helped me to understand the country and people much more than I previously did.

As a citizen from another East Asian economy, I am truly motivated by this wonderful experience to learn more about the interesting connections between different East Asian countries and most importantly how we can work together to create a better future for all of us in the region, so that we can move on from the tendency to fight amongst ourselves and refuse to cooperate on several things that should be of mutual interest.

In terms of suggestions for future visits to South Korea, I think that it would wonderful if we could arrange to visit the R&D department of some important firms in South Korea in order to observe and learn from how these important and successful companies actually manage to retain their core competitiveness in a challenging environment at the forefront of the technological frontier.

During this trip, we visited many important historical places in three cities in South Korea. For me, perhaps the most memorable episode was being able to meet the vice mayor of Daegu city and listening to him explain to us about their blueprint for building a city brand for Daegu and their focus on selected strategic industries. Visiting the start-up incubator project in Daegu city that was built on the birth location of Samsung was also a fascinating experience to learn how the local government and big companies work together to plan for future development and business innovation. As one of my career plans is to work in such an industry, this field trip further developed my interest in working with such companies, especially with those who demonstrate their encouragement of innovative and dynamic ideas/technologies.