

Report on Participation in Korea Field Research

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This Korea Field Research was a great opportunity to get to know about Korea. Before I went to Korea, I did not have a lot of knowledge about the country. But through the experiences we had and having visited many places, I was able to gain a lot of knowledge about Korea in terms of its economic situation and also its history, national culture and so on. This time we could visit three major cities in Korea (Seoul, Daegu, Pusan) and I think by travelling to different area of the country, rather than just the capital, helps us to know Korea well. Let me tell you about the three main experiences that I felt were particularly valuable.

Firstly, the trip gave us opportunities to get to know some Korean students and faculty from Kyungpook National University as we attended a workshop at Kyungpook University. At first, a Korean professor gave us a lecture about the Korean economy in past, present and looking forward to its future prospects and challenges. From the lecture we could gain several insights into Korea's economic situation. After the lecture some of the Kyoto University students made presentations about their research and benefited from interaction with Korean professors and students who asked many questions. It was a good chance for me to experience the atmosphere of an academic meeting. After the workshop, we talked with each other and exchanged information about our major and university life. Some students took me to a fancy café near Kyungpook National University. We had a great time discussing student life and our studies.

Secondly, I could learn some historical things about Korea from this trip because we visited several historical places as well as museums. In Seoul, we visited Gyeongbokgung, which is an old palace in Korea, and the National Museum of Korea. In these sites we could gain an appreciation of the ancient and modern development of the Korean nation and how it interacted with its neighbors. We also visited Seodaemun Prison History Hall. As you know, Japan used to control Korea and they strictly punished some people in Korea. This Hall displayed some instruments of torture from that time and portrayed the difficult struggle for Korea to maintain its independence. In Seoul we also visited the Korean national assembly. Unfortunately, there was little information that was available in a language other than Korean but it was still a good experience to visit there as we could appreciate the difficulty of Korea's transition from dictatorship to democracy and its aspirations for unification.

Thirdly, in Gumi city, near Daegu, we could visit the factories of Samsung and LG, famous companies in Korea and the world. At the Samsung Electronics Smart Gallery, we could experience first-hand some new VR technology. Before visiting there, I avoided using Korean brands because I had the image that they were not high quality. But I realized that this was my misconception. Korean companies developed the power to compete with other companies as a global brand. Someday, more Japanese people may possibly use Samsung.

In addition, during our many official visits we also found time to explore each city. This meant that we could also get a sense of everyday social and commercial life in Korea. I tried to eat a lot of kinds of Korean food which I found to be very good, although spicy. In Seoul, we visited the commercially and culturally

important Myeong-dong area, which I felt is similar to Harajuku in Japan. This area is popular for shopping among younger generations and many tourists visited this area.

To sum up, I think this program gives us a lot of valuable experiences. If you have chance to participate in this program, I highly recommend that you would join and you can experience Korea directly.