

Report on Participation in Field Research in Taiwan (ROC)

Julie Taeko Gramlich

Year level: M2

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

Participation in this overseas field research trip to Taiwan was absolutely essential for building new bridges of friendship, mutual understanding, and gathering fresh ideas.

Our first lecture with Professor Lu regarding Cross-Strait Relations and the Role of the USA under President Trump, was very informative and well-delivered. Not only did Professor Lu study at Georgetown University in the USA, but he also was fortunate enough to attend the National Democratic Convention, when Hilary Clinton was running for Presidency. Through his lecture, we were introduced to the current relationship between the USA and Taiwan. On the same day, we visited the Taiwan-Japanese Association, and the current President of the Association, shared his personal opinions about current China and Taiwan relations in a frank and direct manner, which was invigorating and informative. For instance, the President shared the historical implications for why Taiwanese people viewed the Japanese and Chinese government differently. Specifically, he shared that under the Japanese regime, Taiwanese criminals were put into prison for around 2 weeks; whereas, during the Chinese regime of military rule, Taiwanese criminals were put away for upwards of 10+ years. We also learned that globalization was one of the root causes for low salaries and high unemployment rates amongst Taiwanese young people. The President also emphasized that he truly values his independence, and his ability to vote in local elections. Thus, the idea of “One China” was not acceptable to him.

On the third day, we listened to a lecture by Professor Zheng about the Taiwanese economy, where we learned about Taiwan’s lack of strong brand names such as Apple or Amazon. Instead, Taiwanese companies focus on managing the manufacturing and coordination process for international brands. Historically, Taiwanese companies have also competed on price and cutting costs. However, since the exponential economic growth of China, Taiwanese companies have suffered and have moved manufacturing to lower labor cost countries in Southeast Asia. With years of know-how and management skills, Taiwanese companies focus on coordination of manufacturing processes for multi-national corporations.

On the fourth day, we had a sustainable agriculture and rural development lecture and tour by Professor Chen and Mr. Lin — a local farmer and community organizer, who spoke very frankly about how hard he has fought to receive more funds from the national government, more environmental protection from the local government, and create a wide array of services to increase sustainable agricultural tourism, education, and job opportunities for elderly farmers. Apparently, some of the farmers are over 90-years-old, so Mr. Lin shared with us that one of his biggest goals for the next 3-5 years, is to create small businesses for elderly people, who can sell agricultural and sustainable products in the comfort of their local community.

Not only was this trip a truly inspirational experience where I gathered new knowledge, but I was also thrilled to

have the wonderful experience of sharing my research topic of women's entrepreneurship and empowerment in Japan at the best university in Taiwan — National Taiwan University (NTU). It was the perfect way to end our trip by sharing our research, gathering new ideas, and listening to the professors and students from NTU. Because this experience was so impactful, I hope I have more opportunities to participate in the near future.

Thank you very much!