

Report on Participation in Field Research in Thailand (Bangkok) 2019

Zuo Anchen
Year level: M2
Faculty/Graduate School of: Economics
Kyoto University

The field research in Thailand was a trip which combined theory and practice, it showed us Thailand, a typical society in southeast Asia, comprehensively. The program had three core contents. The first was lectures at universities and agencies like UNESCAP. The second was field trips to feel real Bangkok and its surrounding area, ranging from visits to the rural area known as the “Lung of Bangkok” and modern constructions like the Bank of Thailand, from a weekend market with cheap goods to the central shopping malls full of the luxuries. The trip exhibited not only the coexisting of nature and Thailand people but also the gaps between classes. The third part was academic meetings. I was fortunate in getting an opportunity to listen to the presentations from students of Kasetsart University and Thammasat University as well as introducing my topic on “abusive supervision” and getting feedback from Thai scholars, which was an unforgettable experience.

The academic outcomes can be briefly divided into two parts. On the one hand I was able to know the theories which were applied in constructing Thailand’s cities and villages, some of them I had never heard of before. For example, the Sufficiency Economy promoted by the former King of Thailand. What’s more, the speech on SDGs helped me to deepen my understanding of sustainable development and awareness of the multitude of people who have struggled and continue to struggle with hunger, poverty and lack of educational opportunities. The development of Asia still faces a complex situation.

On the other hand, the precious chance to communicate with scholars and professors from southeast Asia enriched my knowledge. Their studies had a wide span in terms of content. From Ethiopia's sesame production to developing artificial intelligence in China, from cultural identification in Taiwan to RMB exchange rate fluctuation on China's foreign direct investment in Russia. The meeting left me with a deep impression that all students were not only holding a global version in various areas and different countries but also paying attention to practical problems rather than just theoretical questions. I also made a presentation and gained suggestions from other participants, which inspired me a lot in my future studying and the solution on how to improve my existing research. For example, one question raised by participants - “How can you account for cultural specific or generational aspects?” - pushed me to rethink the rationality for the abusive management in some cultures which I had not considered before. Moreover, I decided to demonstrate that abusive supervision has a cost for companies and individuals affected to make my research more persuasive.

Recalling the field trip, a phenomenon caught my attention. In the students’ canteen of the university, the staffs who took responsibility for the hardest jobs were immigrants from Myanmar and Cambodia. The same situation was also observable in other places, like the street cleaners were also from those countries. From the local student I learned that many of them did not have a certificate of identification and thus suffered from a severe working environment. I could not stop thinking about the solution on how to protect their human rights and how to manage them properly. From the beginning of the master degree I concentrated on Japan and China which has less problems

in this area. This trip broadened my view and I might start a brand new research or study theme for me that focuses on the management of vulnerable labor.