

PAMI Field Study
by
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Summer 2015

My study abroad experience was very different from most. I was able to go on the Pacific Asian Management Institute's Asian Field study during the summer of 2015. My experience began with the introduction to BUS 677 the class that would frame my field study experience. Nervous and a little worried about meeting the graduate students I would be taking the class and field study with I made my way to Shidler to set up my blackboard account that would let me enter our online class. It was at that moment I met my professor Dr. Jack Suyderhoud and some of the fellow peers I would be embarking on this journey with. Much to my surprise I was the only undergrad in this program. This was in early March and it was at that time I learned the date we would be leaving to go abroad... June 19th 2015. I was so excited because in just a few short months we would be going to 4 countries; Korea, China, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

The next few months were a whirlwind. From finishing up finals, trying to get my passport and visas for the first time, and not to mention working extra hours while trying to figure out how I could take time off from my other responsibilities as a Resident Assistant and mentor for the College Opportunities Program. It was difficult to say the least but many 4-5 hour class sessions, and tons of research and reading later it was a few days before I was supposed to leave. The recent scare about the Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome in Korea had me a little on edge, being that our first stop was Seoul the central hub of South Korea. But June 16th

finally came and with passport, bags, and mask in hand, I was off to the airport for the 10-hour flight to Seoul!

The flight was amazing because everything from food to movies were free. A few short naps and a couple movies later I looked out the window as the captain stated over the intercom, "Welcome to Korea." I was amazed at this new place with so much lights

and such a vibrant aura around it. I was very excited to say the least.

We landed in Incheon International



Airport and I was wide eyed. But I was quickly grounded as the pace of the trip set in and our group was off and running, down the airport hallways to baggage claim, the currency exchange and on the bus headed for our hotel in Seoul.

We wasted no time as soon as we got the hotel we threw our things down changed and were out the door following Grant Kim our fearless and seasoned guide. We took a short walk over to Myeong dong and were greeted with tall buildings, vibrant lights and most importantly the smell of delicious food!



This was part of our group in Myeong dong right before Grant released us to try some of what Seoul had to offer. After eating our fill we retired at around 2:00 am so we could get some rest before our city tour the next day.

June 21th 2015:

We woke up at around 5:00am and headed out to breakfast. We were treated to a walk around Seoul visiting Incedong and other monuments like the Gyeongbok Palace. But the biggest event of the day was catching the green line to Doosan Stadium for a baseball game. The stadium was huge and there were so many different vendors selling everything from dried squid to fried chicken and beer. There were tons of fans and everyone cheered in sync. It was the best way to conclude a tour of Seoul.



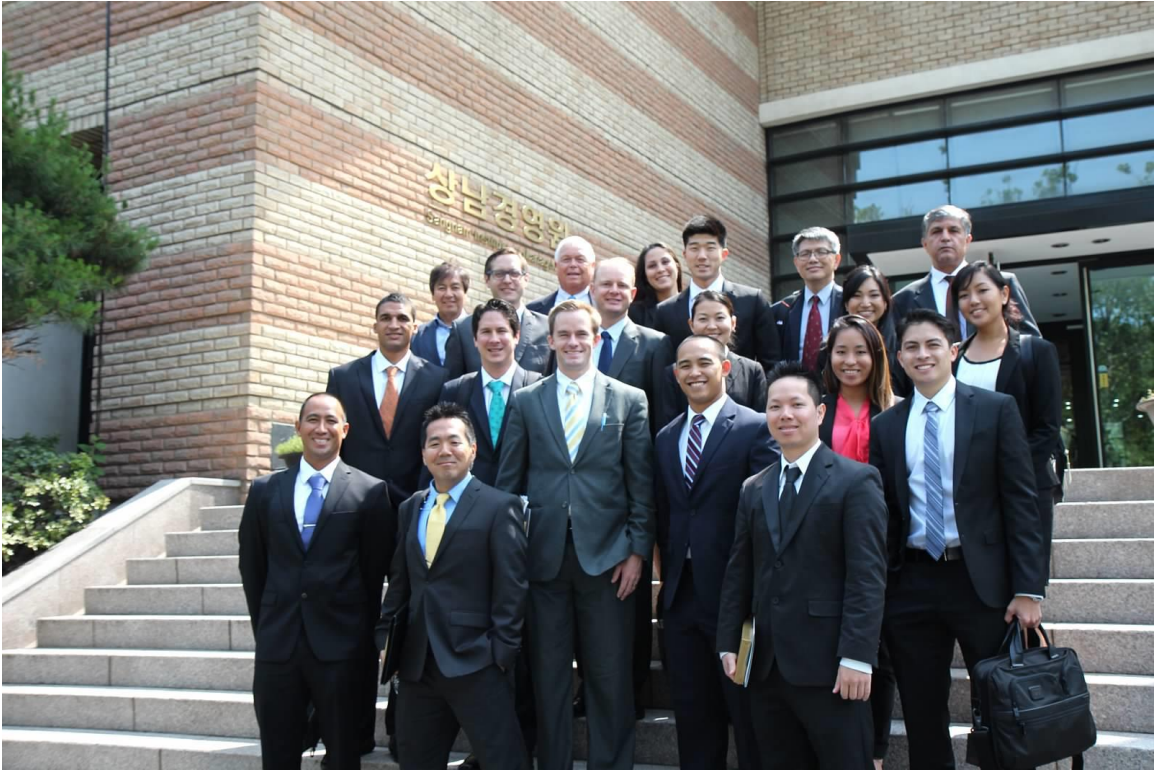
June 22th 2015:

Today the work begins as we met at 6:00am to board the Mag lift train to head all the way across South Korea to Pohang. Our destination was POSCO Steel Works. Upon arriving there by train we took a half hour bus ride to the POSCO Refinery where we were given a tour of their factory and how they make steel. Because of their trade secrets our cell phones were taken away and pictures were not allowed. Afterwards we were treated to a presentation and Q&A session followed by lunch in their cafeteria. The evening was filled with more food and shopping as well as reading up for the next company visit.



June 23rd 2015:

By now everything is moving so fast we hardly have time to think, today we went to Yonsei University for a lecture about the Korean Wave, a surge of Korean generated media and music. From there it was straight to CJ Entertainment the biggest producer and media provider in the country to learn more about Korean Media and the entertainment market. This was followed by our final stop for the day at Samsung where we got to learn about their newest technologies as well as see the development of their virtual city. After a long day of traveling, learning, and networking we bedded down and prepared for the next day.



June 24th 2015:

We packed up our bags for an early morning flight. We were all groggy but very excited as we headed to China. The flight was really rough since we just missed a storm flying in. Once we got into China I was shocked at the sheer number of people and cameras. There were surveillance cameras everywhere! The pollution was unbelievable and the smell of coal was everywhere, but the food was amazing and really cheap.



June 25th 2015:

We had an early call time at 5:30am with a long day ahead of us. We were able to try some dim sum on our way to Flextronics. At Flextronics we were allowed to look behind the scenes and see how they make their electronic components that are used in everything from car stereos to manufacturing machinery. We had to put on smocks to protect ourselves from static and we got to watch a component being made from start to finish. We were able to get an inside look at how the electrical components market operates and just how rapid the developments and advances occur.



June 26th 2015:

This was a long day because we headed to Volkswagen China, the Rockbund Group, and the Nest. It was a day filled with bus rides and walking but we got to network with a group of Shidler alumni working abroad. Volkswagen China boasted

an impressive tour of their car plant where we got to see actual cars go from fabrication to finished product. The Rockbund Group took us around the historic Bund area of Shanghai, and showed us the development and modernization of the area. A key example is the Nest, a bar sponsored by Grey Goose, where we were treated to some fresh oysters and a glimpse of the nightlife in Shanghai.



June 27th-28th 2015

This was our travel day from Shanghai to Vietnam. This was one of the trials of the trip because we were delayed for 5 hours in the Shanghai Airport. After that we sat on the plane for an hour, landed in Vietnam at 1 am, and paid a questionable fee to get our visas.

June 29th 2015

We went into Intel and Briskheat for our company visits. This day was full of bus rides and wrong turns but when we finally got to the outskirts of Vietnam, where the plants were located, I was surprised at the complexity of the infrastructure and facilities they had. Ho Chi Minh City was an urban sprawl of low-lying buildings and tons of mopeds. Traveling out from the city and seeing large buildings in a lower income country was quite a shock for me.

June 30th 2015

This was a big day for me because it was my turn to do the company brief and presentation as well as present to the Head of Better Work Vietnam. I had spent the better half of my summer researching and preparing for this presentation and subsequent interview. Needless to say it was very intimidating, but after getting to the Head Quarters and with the support of my fellow classmates it was a successful learning experience; and I was able to get some first hand knowledge of the organization for my research paper.



July 1st- 3rd 2015

These days went by all too fast and it was really a whirlwind that I was trying to keep up with. I had contracted a stomach virus my last night in Vietnam and it made flying to Indonesia first to Jakarta then Bali kind of difficult. I didn't take too many pictures of this part of the trip because I was struggling to focus on what we were learning and keep my body in check.

We got to see first hand the developing economy of Jakarta and the strategies of Indonesian business. We had landed during Ramadan, a period of fasting for the Muslim religion, which dominates most of Indonesia. Because of Ramadan we did not see much food traffic during the day but at night the city exploded with thousands of people moving about and traffic that would make Honolulu look like the Autobahn.

My most memorable part was a taxicab ride for 2 hours to get to an authentic Indonesian cuisine. It was pretty amazing to see how much was jam packed into a small city block, vendors, convenience stores, salons and eateries all shoulder-to-shoulder and teeming with people. We were able to go to the stock exchange, which was by far the most overwhelming part of Jakarta. It was the place where so much wealth-changed hands every second and the fact that we got to go onto the floor was amazing.



July 4th – 5th 2015

We packed up and flew into Bali! We were fortunate enough to attend the PACIBER Conference, which was hosted at our hotel in the Nusa Dua. It was there we got to sit in, listen, and contribute to large scale issues that pertained to international business between the ASEAN nations and all the countries we had visited prior. There was so much knowledge in one room that hours flew by and before I knew it we were packing up to return home.

July 6th 2015

Tired, amazed and a bit under the weather we boarded our flight back to Hawaii. We had a 10-hour layover in Seoul before retuning home where we all tried to get some food and medicine to hold us over as we drafted our final papers and presentations while trying desperately to organize and utilize all the experiences we

had gone through. When we finally touched down in Honolulu after a nine-hour flight we all hugged and parted ways for some much needed rest and recuperation.

Personal Reflection:

I cannot put in words just how blessed I feel to have taken part in such an eye opening experience. The people I met and the knowledge they shared were truly priceless. It gave me a new perspective and a greater appreciation for what I have and where I live. Seeing the disparity between the first world and the subsistence life style of some people really cemented how important it is to develop businesses and a strong economy. I know that this experience will frame my thinking going forward and I cannot express how thankful I am. Mahalo pihā to Rikki, Grant, Jack and everyone that contributed to this experience it was truly once in a lifetime.

