

Summer 2014

PAMI Asian Field Study



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In the summer of 2014, I was given the amazing opportunity to travel abroad, many thanks to the Oscar and Rosetta Fish Scholarship for Excellence. Because being away from home too long scares me and the nature of my school/work life, I was only able to study abroad for the summer. I had originally wanted to study in Japan, however, there was no program that fit my needs. Fortunately, I found out about the PAMI Asian Field Study. Although the Japan was only one short stop in the itinerary, it gave me the chance to go to the country I really wished.

The PAMI Asian Field Study is a 3 week-long trip to many Southeast Asian Countries. We traveled as a group of 19 students and 2 Shidler faculty, Jack Suyderhoud and Grant Kim. There were many different programs from Shidler that participated. There were majority of the class from the EMBA program, a couple from the MBA program, and 3 from the undergraduate program. I was super lucky to have been one of the 3 undergrads to be accepted into the program. I was also really glad that my fellow FISH Scholar, Ren Tachino was able to attend the trip as well. My roommate for the trip was Lorrie Luke, and I am very happy to say that we got along great.



Roommate Lorrie Luke

We traveled to 4 different countries, and 5 different cities. They are Tokyo, Japan; Hong Kong, China; Guangzhou, China; Manila, Philippines; and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. It was a whirlwind of a trip, with only about 4 days in each city. 3 of those days consisted of company tours and one day or cultural tours.

This trip was my first time out of the country so it was both exciting and scary for me. I knew very little Japanese and no Chinese, Filipino, or Vietnamese so I was pretty worried that I would not be able to get around and get lost. I also heard stories about people getting their purses stolen in countries like the Philippines or Vietnam so I was so nervous to walk around on our own. On this trip, I did not have any internet or phone access, so once I left the hotel, I would have no connection to the outside world. However, I was lucky enough to be traveling with a group of other

student whom I became very close to over the trip, which helped make the experience less scary and even more unforgettable. They helped look out for me and we looked out for each other. I am so glad I was able to share all our fun experiences with them.

Prior to the trip, we had class where we learned about each country we were visiting. To see how businesses are run, we examined cases from each country. We also did a presentation on a country as a group we were visiting to learn different aspects of the country as a whole such as the basic information, political, social, and economic environment they face. This also allowed us to work with people in our class and get to know them better. In addition, we were each assigned a site visit. We did research on a company that we were visiting, and shared it with the rest of the class so that we were well informed before we visited the site.

Each country was so different and definitely not quite what I expected. In Japan I expected people to speak English and it would be fairly easy to get around. I expected both Hong Kong and China to have a lot of people, be highly polluted, and have a lot of high rises. I thought the Philippines would be scary and I would

get my purse stolen. And in Vietnam, I was worried I would not find anything I liked to eat. However, thankful, my experiences were much better than I expected.



Most expensive block of real estate in Tokyo

We left Hawaii on Friday, July 4th. The flight wasn't too bad, only about 6 hours or so, but it felt much longer in the anticipation of landing in Japan! When we landed, it was about 3:30 pm. We went through customs and exchanged out currency. By the time we got to the hotel, it was already around 7 pm and everyone was hungry for dinner. We walked around the Shiodome area and got to see the most expensive block of real estate in Tokyo. After, we walked to a little

place underneath the train station. There were many little bar type shops. All were too small to accommodate all of us, so we had to split up. Ren and I ended up going to this little, what we guessed, after-work, bar-like place. To our surprise, the entire menu was in Japanese, so we had to use the very little Japanese knowledge we had to decipher the Kanji. We ended up ordering yakisoba and some mystery meat kabobs that we ordered because we saw other people eating it. It was an interesting experience trying to order and pay in Japanese, and the first of Ren and my adventures.



Mystery meat

On our second day in Japan, we had our cultural tour. We started by walking around the Hamarikyo Gardens that was a few minutes from our hotel. There we attended a tea ceremony. We weren't quite sure what to do, but luckily there were some Japanese people also attending, that we could follow. I am not a huge fan of green tea, but it was fun to experience the "culture." Throughout this trip, I made efforts to eat foods out of my comfort zone and really experience each country's cuisine.

After, we took the Sumida Boat Ride over to Asakusa. Asakusa is a really interesting place. There were rows upon rows of small little shops. There were so many people walking around. There was also a temple there. Many people were shaking boxes to get their fortune, giving incense, washing their hands in the water, and also going to pray in the temple. I have never been to anything like it. We then walked around the area to find something for lunch. We found a little shop that was making



Tea Ceremony

soba in the window and decided to try it. The fresh soba was so good and nothing like the packaged ones that we have in Hawaii.



Homemade soba

We had the afternoon open to explore. Ren, Nolan (the other undergraduate student), and I decided to go off on our own. We took the shinkansen (bullet train) to Odaiba, a shopping mall with the giant Gundam statue. It was a really scary planning our trip there. We had to look up maps and pictures to make sure we knew exactly where to go because once we left the hotel we would not have any internet access. Despite all of this, our trip was a success and I was super proud of ourselves! We had a fun time going to all the different places in Odaiba.

The night ended with a dinner with the JEMBA alumni. We went to a little shop that one of the JEMBA's owned. It was fun getting to know about a different program run by UH that I was not aware of before. Everyone was really friendly and enjoyed

hosting us and teaching us more about the Japanese culture. We had some pretty interesting things including chicken sashimi. I was pretty nervous trying it, as there is no way we could eat raw chicken in Hawaii. However, since everyone else was trying it, I tried it too. It wasn't too bad, it was little chewy and had a slight taste that resembled chicken.

The next day, was our first day of site visits. We were able to visit Fujitsu and IBM. Both companies are competitors of each other, so it was really interesting to see both of them in the same day to compare.



Chicken Sashimi



Ramen booth

After the tours, we had to evening to ourselves. Ren and I really did not want venture very far from out hotel, but did want to try ramen in Japan. Per the suggestion of one of the JEMBAs we ate at Ichiban Ramen. Although it was only a ten minute walk from our hotel, we definitely had an adventure trying to find the place. Before we departed, we didn't realize that Japanese streets were organized by block instead of street so we had a hard time navigating with the map we were given at the hotel. When we finally thought we were in the correct area, we could not seem to find the place. We were forced to try to ask people in our broken, limited Japanese. Some people gave us strange looks or tried to

point us in the right direction. After much searching, we found the restaurant. The reason we had such a hard time finding the location was for two reasons, the sign was in Japanese and it led to a small hallway the led us downstairs to the restaurant. Once we arrived, we were in for a surprise. First, we had to buy our ramen ticket from a vending machine. After, we walked into the shop to find that each seat was located in a cubicle like area, so each person ate alone. It was an interesting concept and according to the menu, this was so a person could enjoy their ramen in peace. The ramen was cool in the sense that you could customize it to your liking, richness, spiciness, etc. Ren and I laughed and said it would be an interesting place to go on a date, but we figured that this was more of a lunch place for workers to grab a quick bite undisturbed. We had a great experience and so glad we ventured out on our own to find this little place.

The next day was another day of tours. We went to Frontage a medium sized advertising firm, Merck MSD, Dentsu, and Pokemon. It was really interesting to learn about the advertising industry in Japan. Dentsu is the biggest agency and controls all the media time. Smaller companies must buy time from them. In addition, I learned that unlike in the US, Japanese medical companies are not allowed to market drugs directly to the consumers.

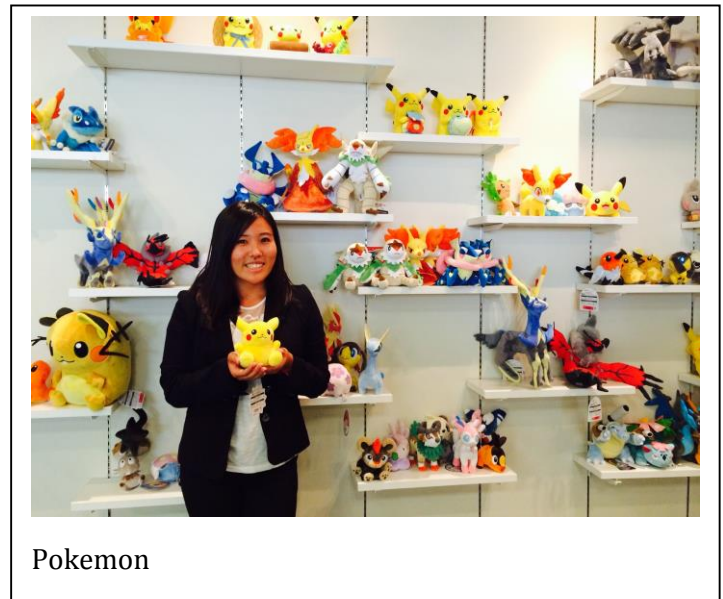
After the tours for the day, we were able to go to the skywalk observatory and see the city skyline of Tokyo. We were able to see how truly amazing all the buildings in Tokyo are and the Tokyo Tower that sticks out above the entire city. We were able to stay long enough to see the sun about to set. It was an amazing view.

I had an amazing time exploring Tokyo and by the fourth day, I finally felt like I was getting the hang of the area and could navigate fairly well. However, it was time to move on to the next country. Our next stop was Hong Kong. I was not looking forward to China and what I thought would be just a big mob of people. I was nervous that I would get lost in the crowd.

We left Japan in the morning and arrived at Hong Kong in the evening. Everyone was pretty tired from a day of travelling so we opted for a dinner near the hotel. Majority of the group ate at a Chinese Restaurant near the hotel. It was really nice being able to sit down and relax for a meal. Tokyo went by so quickly since our days were always filled. I was able to get to know my fellow Asian Field Study students better.

After enjoying good water in Japan, I came to realize that it was the end of that road and I would need to start drinking bottled water. We set out after dinner to find a store to get water. To my surprise, we found a 7-11. For some reason, I thought 7-11 was only in Hawaii. But I guess that was because they sold spam musubis. Either way, I was glad to see a familiar store. We decided to turn in early and get some sleep. We still had more than 2 weeks full of activities and we didn't want to get sick.

The next day, we visited Esquel Headquarters and Cyberport. I remember someone telling me that summer is monsoon season in Asia, but I never quite understood that until this day. We were walking to our first tour when out of nowhere, it started to downpour. Some of us had umbrellas, but it was really no match for the rain. We arrived at Esquel Headquarters soaked from head to toe. It was quite embarrassing but also a crazy experience. Hawaii is warm, but the rain in Hong Kong was warm as it fell. The rain made it so



Pokemon

humid that the store fronts of places we passed by were fogged up and we couldn't tell if we were wet from the rain or from sweat.

At Esquel, we got to learn more about their company and the process it takes to make a shirt; we learn about the process from the beginning of growing the cotton to the end of sewing the shirt. This tour made me really appreciate all the labor that goes into my clothes and excited to go on Esquel's factory tour when we arrive in Guangzhou. Cyberport is a science and technology part for entrepreneurs and budding businesses. It was crazy to see how huge the property was, however, it concerned me that only about 60% of the whole space was occupied.

After the tours, we ate a fast dinner around the hotel, then caught a cab to the Aqua. We heard that Hong Kong had a light show every night so we wanted to find someplace up high to watch. The view was amazing and we got to see the skyline. I thought it was cool how all the buildings along the river all coordinated together to put on the show every night.



Hong Kong light show

The next morning, we had a Dim Sum breakfast with Eddie Lam, President of Feng Tai Footwear and

Richard Leung, Hong Kong Government Banking Industry Committee, and former UBS Executive at Ocean Super Seafood Restaurant. I had a great time talked to both Eddie and Richard, learning about their experiences doing business in Hong Kong. But what I enjoyed even more was being able to eat dim sum in Hong Kong. It was so interesting to try all the different types of dim sum. I wasn't even sure what some of

them were, but I tried everything. Not everything tasted good, but at least I tried. There was plenty of food to go around so everyone was plenty full after our breakfast.



Variety of Dim Sum

After a nice nap, we went to Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation. This was another place for innovation and new ventures. This park specialized in IR and telecommunication companies. Both parks are very similar to Silicon Valley in the US. They both offer similar product offerings such as programs for companies in different stages of their business—idea, research, and production. We had an open evening so we decided to go to karaoke as a group. It was a great opportunity for us to have fun and relax. It was funny to see all the different generations come together and sing. We got to hear everyone sing songs from their childhood. I was worried that they wouldn't have many songs in English but there was a large variety and I was also surprised that all the songs had the actual music

video, because I guess copyright doesn't stand in other countries or it was used illegally.

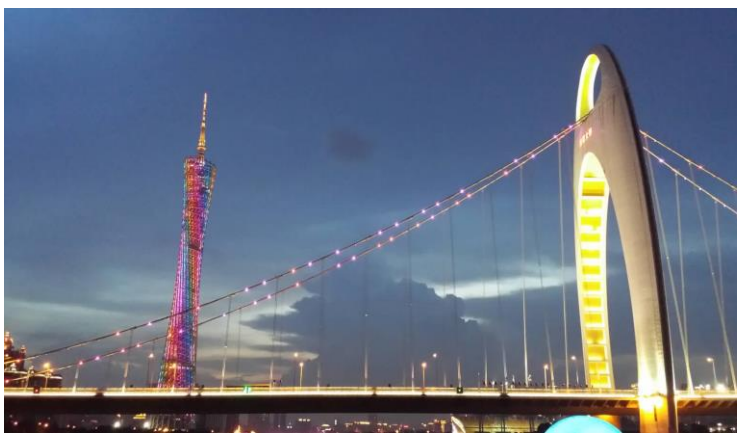
For our last day in Hong Kong we had an open day to explore. A small group of us decided to venture out to Victoria Peaks. This is popular tourist destination that allows you to see above Hong Kong looking out to the ocean and all the skyscrapers. We took a ferry there and got to see how brown and polluted the water was. I was so glad that we went with someone that has a good sense of direction and could navigate us without any problems. It was truly amazing to see how high the buildings are, I just hope that Hawaii never has buildings that large.

I realized that Hong Kong was definitely not quite what I expected. Yes, there were many high rises, but for the most part, it reminded me of New York City.

We left that night on bus to Guangzhou. It surprised me that we had to switch buses midway through. I guess that is just part of China's policy to prevent us from taking excessive amount of things into China. I was so worried to enter China since I heard about the pollution, the huge population, and communism. What I totally forgot before I went into China was to let my family know that I would not be able to access any social media and would have to be reached by email. To my surprise, Instagram worked and allowed me to communicate through that.



View from Victoria Peaks



Bridge and Canton Tower from the river cruise

The first day in Guangzhou was our cultural tour. We visited the Museum of the Tomb of Nanyue King. We got to look at all sorts of historical artifacts like old weapons and tea pots. Next we went to the Sun Yat Sen Memorial Hall and the Temple of the Six Banyan Trees. Since we visited a temple in Japan, it interesting to see the difference in China. To me, they seemed very similar and I couldn't really tell the difference. To end the night, we went on a night river cruise. We got to see the sunset, all the bridges, and also different buildings particularly the canton tower that lights up and changes color.

The next day, we got to visit the Esquel Factory in Gaoming. It was awesome to see all the ladies sewing the dress shirts and just seeing how fast they are producing their respective part of the process. We also got to visit their R&D part where we got to see fabrics that showed letters when wet, absorbed sweat and made the wet spot disappear and also wrinkle free fabrics. We also got to see the fabric library that had all these little patched of fabric all neatly filed like books. This tour truly made me understand the manufacturing in China and how rough and fast paced the lifestyle is. I thought it was interesting however, that workers were pretty much wearing anything from shorts to skirts, to tank tops with slippers. I expected to have better safety precautions.



Looking at different fabrics at Esquel
The blue shirt shows "Just Do it" when wet

They next day, we visited Shunde for the American Chamber of Commerce. Surprisingly, less than 2% of the goods that Americans use are actually "Made in China." It was neat that the American Chamber of Commerce reports these facts and others like the success of doing business in China. After that we were taken on a tour of Shunda Polytechnic where we got to see various businesses in the area like an air condition and heater company and a barbeque grill company. We ended our tour at their culinary school, where students got to show off their skills as well as teach some of us how to make them. We got to try traditional steamed fish and a milk dessert.

Our flight the next day got delayed from 8 am to around 5 pm due to Typhoon Glenda hitting the Philippines. When we finally arrived, it was shocking to see how powerful a typhoon could be, especially since I had never seen its destruction first hand before. There were huge trees ripped out of the ground and debris everywhere. When we finally arrive at our hotel, we were shocked. It was nothing like we expected. It seemed that we were in a scary part of town with crazy homeless outside the hotel. When we stepped inside, it was not much better. The hotel was not fully functioning due to the power outages, so we had to wait quite a while to get checked in. When we finally got to our rooms, we found we could not open or lock our doors because the key cards were not operating. They had to manual open the doors for us.



Aftermath of the typhoon

Inside the room, the situation was not much better. The bath tub had mold on the edges, and the room smelt musty. Some people also reported mysterious hairs and stains on their sheets. Many wanted to change hotel, but as it was so late (past 12) we just had to deal for the night. Needless to say, it was not a good first day in the Philippines.

Our first stop for the day was Jolibee. We went to their main offices and factory as well as a store. It was so incredible to see all these people at work and seemingly happy to be there after the devastation that just happened. The people in the Philippines were so resilient and went to work anyways. After our bad night, Jolibee was spirit lifter. All the people were just so glad to have work, in a country where poverty is so

prevalent. We had so much fun seeing their mascot dance and also trying the food that we saw being made in the factory. I was nervous that I would not be able to eat the food after seeing it made, however, Jolibee uses great ingredients and their facility was really clean. I really enjoyed the spaghetti, which was sweet and with hot dogs. It was different from the spaghetti I am used to, but it tasted good all the same.

Luckily, we were able to find a new hotel. We stayed at a Holiday Inn, which is much nicer than the ones in the US and it was even connected to a large mall. It was surprising, however, to be faced with wands and bomb sniffing dogs at the entrance to the hotel. Apparently, this is an everyday thing in the Philippines, as they often face bomb threats. Interestingly enough, every time we walk through the security screen, we beep, so we never quite figured out how it worked. We guessed it may be more for show than anything else.



Ren and I posing with Jolibee's mascot

The next day, we had five tours scheduled. However, we were only able to get to barely four. We experienced first had the horrible Philippines traffic. This was the first time the Asian Field Study had ever been in the Philippines, so everyone was not sure what to expect. The traffic was worse than what we experience in Hawaii, and it makes me almost grateful for our traffic. What was a 2 mile drive took over an hour, even with the fact that cars in the Philippines make up their own lanes. The highway is only 3 lanes, but as we looked out the window there were 6 lanes of traffic.



People hanging out of the city bus while stuck in traffic

The first tour we made it to was Ayala Land. I was really excited for the tour, because Ayala Land is known to be one of the few large conglomerates in the Philippines that is not corrupt. As we learned in class before our trip, the Philippines is known to be very corrupt and not have trustworthy business practices. However, we read a case that Ayala has no part of that and we were curious to make a judgment for ourselves. I was happy to find from the tour that they seemed as genuine as in the case.

Our second stop was St. Lukes Global City Medical Center. This hospital is known for medical tourism. This means that the hospital

specialized in higher clientel to do patients that do esthetic treatment or buy wellness packages. We got to see the suite hospital rooms that looked more like hotel rooms than a hospital.

The next stop is when we experienced traffic and arrived super late. We went to Aegis a business process outsourcing company. One of Philippines main industries is BPO since most of the population speaks English. I really wanted to see the call center, but since we were running really late, we had to move on to our next tour.

We missed our next tour entirely, due to the heavy traffic that we experienced. So we decided it would be best to at least try to get to our last tour on time. Our last tour for the day was to the Asian Development Bank, which is the company I did research on and shared with the class previous to the trip. The Asian Development Bank is a regional bank like the World Bank that helps developing countries with infrastructure loans and other assistance. I think what this company does is very admirable and overall a great asset to society.

Joey, one of the Asian Field Study Participants is actually from the Philippines, so his parents took us to dinner after this long day of tours. It was great to meet his family and enjoy Filipino food. We had foods like adobo, oxtail curry, and some rice with little dried fish. After dinner, we were again faced with traffic, we ended up stuck in traffic for over 2 hours moving only a couple blocks. We even saw the buses jam packed, with people hanging out. We decided to abandon our tour bus and walk the rest of the way to the hotel. I was really nervous leaving the bus because before leaving the bus, we were warned to stay close to each other and hang on to our purses. I thought we were going to get mugged, but thankfully, we made it to our hotel safely.



Pancit from Ayala Museum Cafe

Our last day in the Philippines was a cultural tour. We got to visit Fort Santiago, which was built in 1571 and destroyed multiple times by armies or earthquakes. It was the headquarters of many different countries over the past centuries. It is also part of the Last Walk to Martyrom Trail to commemorate Dr. Rizal's walk to his execute in the fight for Philippine's freedom. We also got to see the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Manila, first built in 1581. Since Catholicism is so dominant in the Philippines, I was glad to be able to see a cathedral. It was very grand with many different rooms on the side. To end the tour, we ate at the Ayala Museum Café. I ate pancit, spring rolls, and tried a calamanci drink. All the food was so good, I

was actually sad leaving all the food in the Philippines, and nervous for the food in Vietnam.



Stream of mopeds

After a full day of traveling, everyone was pretty tired. We went shopping for water at a nearby 7-11 and then chose to eat dinner at the hotel. We stayed at Hotel Majestic, which was pretty majestic. It had an old European feel, due to British influence at one point in Vietnam's history.

After the Philippines, I was really expecting bad traffic. However, in Vietnam, many people ride on mopeds which helps with the flow of traffic. As we drove in the tour bus, we could see a sea of mopeds riding beside us. It was neat because they have an unwritten rule where all the cars drive on the left side of the road and the mopeds on the right. We even learned that when crossing the street, you just need to go and walk slowly and at an even pace and mopeds and cars will adjust around you. I was so scared that I would get hit, but we crossed the street multiple times and did not get hit. I wish I was able to take pictures of us crossing the street. However, Vietnam is known to have purse

snatchers so we needed to have everything in our bag close to us when crossing the streets and walking around.

For our first day in Vietnam, we had four tours set up. Our first stop was Trung Nguyen Coffee. It is a popular coffee brand in Vietnam besides Starbucks. They are known for their weasel coffee (weasels eat the coffee beans and poop it out, making an exquisite flavor) which is sold for over \$2,000, which they have learned to synthetically replicate and sells for \$100 a bag. They are also known for the G7 instant coffee. We got to try some of their synthetically made weasel coffee, and it was really strong. I don't drink coffee so I only drank a couple sips, however, everyone else reported a huge caffeine high.

Next on our agenda was Better Work Vietnam. It is a company that helps improve labor compliance in Vietnam. Since many factories have been moving to Vietnam, there has been many labor disputes. Better Works helps assess different companies, advise them, and train them.



Slightly protected at the factory with Alfred



Pho in Vietnam

After this, we saw three Vietnamese factories—plastic parts, agricultural fertilizer, and salon chairs. At one of them, no worker wore protection. They were using a lot of chemicals and fiber glass, wearing no protective equipment. When asked if they have had worker injuries, they responded casually that some workers have lost fingers. Although Vietnam is growing rapidly, it has a long way to go with worker safety.

The next day, when we woke up, we realized how polluted the air in Vietnam was. From the roof of our hotel, you could see all the haze in the air. That day, we saw the factories of Sandhill Scientific and Hutomaki. Both of these had much better safety practices. Sandhill Scientific creates medical colonoscopy devices and Hutomaki creates the packaging for products like snacks and laundry detergent.

Taryn, one of the Asian Field Study participants is from Vietnam and she suggested eating Pho at Pho Le. I have tried Pho in Hawaii and did not care for it. But I tried the one from Pho Le and it was so tasty! They left all the veggies and herbs on the side in a huge basket so we could control what we wanted inside.

Our last day was a cultural tour. We went on a river cruise along the Mekong Delta. The river was a murky brown color. It was really crazy to see another part of life along the river. They homes on the river were run down and you would really tell that you were in a developing country. There were children playing naked in the water and boat hauling large amounts of produce and livestock to other parts of the river.



Mekong Delta tour

As a celebration for the last day on our trip, we went to a networking event with UH Shidler VEMBA students at one of the student's restaurant. It was a fun wrap up to the trip and it was great getting to meet people who live in Vietnam and hear their experiences in the VEMBA program. It was also neat to see how so 7 years of program students came together to meet us. I also found out that they are all pretty well connected and keep in touch with get togethers everyone in a while.

Overall, the trip was an incredible experience. I got to see both the business and cultural aspects of each place I visited. I had the best time getting to know my fellow Asian Field Study students. We got so close over the trip and had a lot of memorable experiences together. I am so thankful for the Ocsar and Rosetta Fund for Excellence for making this trip possible for me. I am also thankful for my fellow Asian Field Study participants to looking out for me, and not letting me get lost.



Asian Field Study participants

I had such a great experience and recommend anyone looking to get a brief overview of a lot of countries to go on the PAMI Asian Field Study. It is a great opportunity to meet people, and experience both business and culture.