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Experience in Taiwan

I could still remember when I first stepped here in Taiwan, I was filled with doubts, full of uncertainties and a lot of what if's. What if things will happen not the way I want it to be? What if I couldn't be able to adopt the life here? What if I couldn't make it up to 2 years? What if I cannot be able to communicate with people because of the language they have? But the biggest question that was holding me was, did I made the right choice? And believe it or not, I had been able to surpass six months and still here. It may be hard to live the life way too far from what you are used to. Far from family, far from friends, that even sometimes you cannot help it but feel homesick. It's way too difficult for us from the very beginning up to now, but what matters for me is I enjoy the process and got to learn in everyday living. I find new and good friends. Meet and greet new people every day. Adopt the new culture a little by little. Learn to speak even a little of Mandarin. Exposed to the beauty of Taiwan. And love the people itself, because honestly speaking, Taiwan people were so kind and generous.

I know I still have a long way to go, a continuous process to take but I know deep down in myself, I could proudly say that I had made the right choice and I am fully determined to pursue and finished my master's degree here in Nanhua University. There's no turning back now.

Course in 1st Semester

The first semester ends pretty fast, yet the learnings we got was so much. We had five subjects during the first semester, which includes; Research method and thesis writing, Climate change, Green energy, Soil and water conservation and lastly, Sustainable Agriculture.

In our Research Method and Thesis Writing, as the subject itself says, we were taught the correct methods of writing a research paper and thesis writing, what it is consists of and the format in making it. We were also given some examples from our Professors. We also learned how to use some software to further evaluate the data. In our Climate Change and Soil and Water Conservation subjects, we made a lot of reporting together with experiments. In Climate change, we first reported about the extreme rainfall of the past 50 years from 5 different Asian countries and since we're from the Philippines, we have to give a report about it. We also learned about different kinds of permeable pavement, its importance and everything about it. In regards with permeable pavement, we were obliged to conduct an experiment on our assigned pavement to find out the relationship between the height and storage of our pavement and also tried the single and double ring experiment to evaluate the permeability of the pavement. Lastly, we did the artificial rainfall on the pavement to find out the relationship between $I-O=dS/dt$. At the end of every experiment, we gave a report on the class about the following data we had gathered and the results of all experiments. In our Soil and Water

Conservation subject, we first learned about the soils, since it will be a big part of the class topics. We had studied as well about landslides and erosion. And in this subject, we as well conducted some experiments like sieve analysis, Proctor compaction test, permeability test, and the NEFT or No Erosion Filter Test on different soil classifications. While on Green Energy, we were further enlightened about the different types of energy, its sources, and technologies used in it. Lastly, is Sustainable Agriculture, in this subject we learned so much about organic agriculture, black soldier fly, honey bees, circular economy and many more. In line with this, each of us were given the opportunity to take care our own boxes of honey bee, in this way we learned how to take good care the honeybees, how to collect pollen, how to make sugar water and when to feed them and how to make frames for our honey bee boxes, and a lot more.



(Searching of Honey bee queen)



(making of frames)

For our final term, we were assigned to report one goal from the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of United Nations, I chose the number 12 goal of SDG, the "Responsible consumption and Production" which mainly focuses on zero waste, with this, we further understand the purpose of each goal.

Conference

In this semester, we were given the chance to be involved and participate in the 2nd International Conference on Sustainable Development and Green Technology, last October 19-20, 2018 that was held in Taichung, Taiwan. We're so glad to have been involved in that certain conference wherein heard and learned a lot of new and useful things and gathered numerous information from diverse topics related to Green Technology and Sustainable Development. We also got the idea on how speakers talk about their studies in front of all delegates, so in our time, hope we could be able to do it as well.



(conference photo)

Tour in Taiwan

Sydney Harris once said " The time to relax is when you don't have time for it", so yes, despite our hectic schedules in school we have managed to go out, refresh and unwind. So far we had three different trips within our six months of stay here in Taiwan. First, we visited the Sun Gold Joint company, an international and known company for producing different and efficient materials for preventing soil erosion that commonly occurs nowadays. They gave us a well-speech, introducing their firm and how they successfully expand it throughout the world. They also showed us some pavements with the application of materials they produced which was closely related to our discussions in school. Then we proceeded to City Bear owned by our respected professor, Mr. Chen Shi-Shiung. He toured us around the City Bear farm, and I was so amazed to see how Mr. Chen utilizes the area, having lots of honey bee boxes, raising chickens, some fruit trees, vegetables, flowers, and the black soldier fly. He also practices organic farming which we pursue as an agriculturist. His farm is totally a good example of sustainable farming. Our next tour was a two-day trip, on our first day we dropped on Aogu Wetland and Forest Park, where we have seen different species of bird, right after that, we went on a beach, where we had experienced having lunch on the boat and it was fantastic. We got to enjoy and have fun on the beach. On our second day, we went to Alishan Mountain, a well-known mountain here in Taiwan. It was nice to experience again walking under the tall shades of trees and calm ambiance of the forest, though I had expected to have hiking since it is a mountain.



(photo in Alishan Mountain)

The last but not the least, the one I love the most, our Butterfly tour in Maolin. It was a three-day trip filled with excitement, adventure, happiness, learnings and not to forget the free foods. However, as a graduate of BS Agriculture in college, we considered butterflies as an enemy, we hated them despite the beauty they possessed. With the fact that they are destructive to plants especially during its larvae period where they feed on plants causing the production to become low. Yet when we arrived in Maolin it was a great feeling when we first saw the butterflies, hundreds of butterfly, showcasing the beauty they got and it was such a good thing to see that those beautiful creatures were given the chance to live freely and contribute its alluring beauty to the aesthetic art of nature. It was then our first time to mark butterflies and to determine its species. Yet, it was not just about the butterfly, we are also given the chance to do the tree planting. I was so overwhelmed that I'd be able to do it again because, in the Philippines, every person is expected to plant for at least 10 trees per year with the aim of saving our Mother Earth. And I was so glad that even it's not in the Philippines I have planted those trees, and it was here in Taiwan, I was still grateful that I had made it because it's not just the Philippines we need to save but the world as a whole and I believe that taking small steps like planting trees could create a massive changes and could be able to fight climate change. We got to hiked as well and were exposed to the breathtaking scenery of Maolin. We got to experience the dance of the native people, know the Lukai tribe and some part of their history. It was like we're home because of the mountains, nature it surrounds, which gave us peacefulness inside, the feeling of staying close to nature is truly great and awesome. But the most incredible thing there was to find out that most of the people in that community were so much like Filipinos, their looks, their culture, and even some of their words were spoken the same with ours. We also got to experience the making of mochi made of glutinous rice, which we ate

right after. It was apparently a tiresome trip yet it was good that at the end of the day we got a comfortable place to stay, thanks to all the staffs of Maolin National Scenic Area for giving us a good accommodation and for the assistance for the whole trip and for allowing us to experience the insect hunting on our last night of stay there, it was totally incredible. If I will be given a chance to go back there, I will not hesitate to. It was indeed a great and amazing trip with so much fun and learnings, special thanks to Professor Hong-Yao Ming for being a gateway to all these wonderful and memorable tours. Looking forward to more exploration here in Taiwan.



(photo before tree-planting)

Internship

I believe that experience is the best teacher. During our winter vacation, we got the chance to work on field areas relatable to our course. And since we're a graduate of Agriculture, we got to work on a flower farm. And it's not just the money we earn but the learnings as well. We definitely do practical and hard works, yet I believe that there's no work as an easy work so I guess it's also a training ground for us to become strong that we may be able to do all the things assigned for us to do. And I'm also hoping that during my two years of study here in Taiwan, I may be able to work in areas much more related or closer to Agriculture or farming and be exposed to modern technologies used in farming here in Taiwan because as what I know, Taiwan is also known for having a high technology machinery for farming.



Conclusion

Studying abroad is really not easy, staying away from your family and living a life a bit different from what you're used to and having no choice but to engage in a new environment, new people, new cultures and especially new language. Yet, it's not a big reason to turn your back on this kind of opportunity of studying abroad, a big thanks to Taiwan's Ministry of Education for opening this kind of opportunity, for letting me experience the life here in Taiwan. For teaching me how to be independent and putting me outside my comfort zone. I'm considering myself lucky to be one of those fortunate students who has acquired the TEEP scholarship you had granted. It may seem to be hard at first, but as time goes by we learned to adapt to it. Some of our subjects may be difficult for us because it's way too far from our course in college but what matters is we have survived it and at very least we have learned. We may be struggling for now, but I believe it will soon be paid off. I could say that it is truly great to be here in Taiwan.