

國立東華大學
National Dong Hwa University
姐妹校國際交換交流學生心得報告
International Inbound Exchange Student Report

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It was last spring when I was about to finish my Master degree in my home university. I wanted to study PhD in Prague, I went there to meet my future advisor. We met and we talked for hours, he asked me how I visualize my next ten years and where I want to be in my carrier and personal life after those ten years. Actually I didn't have any idea and obviously I wasn't ready to study PhD at that time. He also told me that I can't study PhD with my poor English and without abroad experiences. He suggested me to prolong my Master study and go to abroad as soon as possible. The train from Prague to my hometown goes almost one and half hour, on the way I was thinking only about his words. This happened at the end of April and I decided to go anywhere as exchange student.

And because that time it was late to apply for Erasmus in Europe my professor recommended me to go to Taiwan. He was there many times and he was teaching in Dong Hwa University. I was really excited, because I never thought before and I will have a chance to visit Taiwan. I could choose between NDHU and one university in Taipei. My professor recommended me just NDHU because I don't like big cities much. He said that NDHU is located in the middle of mountains and the place is really nice and calm, but sometimes it can be also boring. I saw some pictures of NDHU on the internet and I decided to apply for exchange program. Nobody from my university wasn't there before me. Everything was really fast and the last day of August I left Czech Republic. I came to Taiwan at the first of September, and of course I was scared. Everything was new for me and I fell in love with Taiwan so fast.

I took three courses in NDHU in fall semester 2016 – Fundamental Chinese for beginners, Introduction to Taiwan and Space, ghost and society. Fundamental Chinese was challenging for me but I really liked this class. Our Chinese professor was funny and nice, and he taught us many useful phrases to survive in Chinese speaking country. Even if Chinese is difficult for me, especially because of tones which are extremely hard for me, I decided to continue with further study. After 4 months of learning Chinese I can recognize some characters even in everyday life in Taiwan. We learned four chapters from Chinese textbook, it means basic phrases, how to shopping, bargaining, make a phone call and also how to introduce ourselves. We had test from each lesson and our final exam consisted from last lesson, short self-introduction and video. Each group of students had to make short video in Chinese and we had to use sentences and phrases which we learned during the semester. It was really funny

experience. Thanks to Chinese classes I had a chance to learn some new elements of Chinese and Taiwanese culture.

When I chose course named Introduction to Taiwan I was expecting lectures about historical and cultural facts of Taiwan. After first lesson I was surprised, we had to meet our classmates and find out some basic information about them. After two weeks we introduced ourselves in front of the class and third week the professor divided us to groups. Each group was consisted from two international students and five Taiwanese. So we learned about Taiwan through interactions with our Taiwanese classmates and for them it was a good chance how to improve their English. The course was selected to several parts – student's presentations, taichi, singing, drumming and dancing. From presentations we learned facts about countries of international students and our Taiwanese classmates were presenting their hobbies, hometowns or interesting places to visit in Taiwan. All activities we did during semester were new for me except of Mazurka dance which is originally Polish traditional dance but also well known in Czech Republic. The most important thing for me was that we had a lot of fun and I met many different and amazing people in this class.

I would recommend this class to other international student who want to have fun at Monday's mornings and learn not only about Taiwanese culture. The idea of this class is totally different from other classes I have ever visited and because of that this class was special for me.

Tuesday's class, Space, ghost and society, was also amazing, even if we had many homeworks and readings. From each reading we supposed to make a summary of 1500 words. Sometimes it was tiring but ghosts have played a very significant role in different cultures and societies and especially in Asian areas. During this course I realized that in Europe we have totally different understanding of ghosts and they are not important for us like it is in Asia. And also thanks to my classmates I learned new facts about ghosts in Thailand or Vietnam. At the beginning of December, we had an amazing fieldtrip to Kaohsiung. We spent all weekend in this city on the south of Taiwan and we visited memorial places, haunted place and temples. Every student who wanted to pass this class had to present also final presentation in front of class on the topic related with ghosts or dark tourism.

At the end of my report I would like to say why should future exchange students choose National Dong Hwa University. At first, NDHU has beautiful and big campus located in calm area in the middle of mountains. Students can find many calm places for studying in campus and all so a lot of sports activities like basketball, baseball, swimming etc. And campus is perfect for running. Nearby dormitories students can find convenient store Family Mart where they have everything to survive including food or ATMs. Staff in Family Mart can speak basic English or non-Chinese students have a chance to try their Chinese skills. In campus are located also some restaurants. My favourite was Lakeside restaurant, they have many vegetarian dishes, students can eat inside of restaurant or outside by the lake and food there is not expensive. Sometimes I could spend few hours by the lake after lunch, it is relaxing and also good place for studying or reading.

Exchange programme in NDHU gives you a new view to life, experiences of different lifestyles and cultures. Every semester in NDHU study many international and exchange students so you will never

fell alone in campus. And even if there is no bar or student club with your international friend you will have a lot of fun. But the truth is that I didn't make a good friend among Taiwanese students. I could practise my Chinese more with them and learn more about Taiwanese culture. Another positive part of studying in Taiwan in general is that Taiwanese people are really nice and kind to foreigners. It was very interesting for me because in my country every foreigner is perceived like an alien. Also thanks to this semester I learned how to be more independent and confident in unfamiliar environment.

In many places in Taiwan you can see slogan *Taiwan touch your heart*. This slogan is in my mind every time when I see beautiful mountain around me, every time I am riding in my bicycle in campus, every time when I try some new food here or every time I have a fun with my lovely friends. I fell in love with Taiwan too much that I am planning to do my next degree here or just live my dreams here. NDHU is friendly environment perfect for everyone who loves nature, fun and beautiful landscapes.

Now I have only few days to go back to my country and I am really sad. Previous few months were amazing and truth is that this period was too short. Time flies so fast. Before I came to Taiwan I couldn't imagine almost five months without my family and Czech friends. But actually everything was too fast. It was like yesterday I came to Taiwan. But I believe that these days are not my last in Taiwan. I am not feel like I am leaving Taiwan. I found my new home here, I want to improve my Chinese and go back to Taiwan. And also these few months totally changed not only my minds and beliefs but also my life. My life will never be the same like before Taiwan. Thanks to NDHU, thanks to Taiwan and thanks to my professor from my home university to send me here.

