

STUDENT MOBILITY SCHEME REPORT



[For participants]

Your experience can help other students when they are planning for their study abroad program. To make sure that prospective students have a chance to learn from your experience, everyone who has participated in the SMS program should complete a Student Mobility Scheme Report.

Upon completion of the form, please submit it to the office which handles the ACUCA SMS at your institution.

Please note that the information will be shared with other students who are interested in the SMS through the website.

Thank you for your cooperation.

[For coordinators]

This report will be posted on the ACUCA Website. We would appreciate it if you could email us the file electronically.

(Evan Jiang, ACUCA Secretariat, Email: acuca@mail.fju.edu.tw)

1. Name: Tomoki Takeuchi

2. Home Institution— Name: International Christian University Country: Japan

3. Host Institution— Name: Sogang University Country: South Korea

4. Study Period: from 08 / 2012 to 12 / 2012 (mm/yyyy)

5. How did you hear about the ACUCA Student Mobility Scheme? (Please Specify)

International Office at your institution, ACUCA Website, From Fellow Student, Others

Comment:

6. What did you study and what kind of activities did you take part in while abroad?

In lectures, I studied religions and Confucianism in the wider context of globalization. I also conducted several trips to other cities in South Korea and found cultural differences among the cities such as foods, houses, and languages as well as uniformity among them which may have been caused by urbanization or modernization.

7. Was it difficult adjusting to life abroad, and if so what were some of the difficulties?

I found no problem in adjusting to the life in Korea partly because Korean culture and Japanese culture are similar in a number of ways and partly because I usually find it easy and enjoyable to adjust to different environments. Local people such as restaurant owners and the vendors at markets were very kind to foreigners, and I enjoyed talking with them, who patiently tried to understand my terrible Korean.

8. What advice would you give to fellow students at ACUCA universities who are thinking of taking part in the Student Mobility Scheme?

I would say it is highly recommended to take part in the SMS because you can (1) make friends with lots of international as well as local students, (2) brush up your language skills by directly communicating with local citizens, and (3) understand similarities among Asian cultures as well as particularity of the culture of your home country. Besides, if you use your time well, a one-term exchange program is long enough to absorb what you want to learn, so I think the SMS offers you a nice compact study abroad plan.

9. Have you been changed in any way by the experience, and if so how?

Yes. I used to be a very quiet and inward person as typical Japanese people are, but by interacting with many Koreans and other international students, I could gain confidence to be outward and be interactive.

10. How do you feel about other Asian Cultures now?

Since I went to South Korea, I felt the strong influence of Chinese culture on East Asian countries. However,

at the same time, I saw the strong influence of Western culture in highly urbanized Korean cities. Now I see other Asian cultures (especially East Asian cultures) as truly a mixture of the traditional and the modern.

11. Any comments?

Below please attach a more descriptive account (300-400 words) of your experience with the SMS for possible publication to allow others to find out about the ACUCA SMS Program. Include such information as the type of study you did as well as the cultural experiences you had, and any other things you would consider interesting. Photos are welcome.

My stay and study at Sogang University was the most fascinating moment in my life. Although I have lived in England with my family when I was little, it was the first time I had been in a foreign country by myself. With a little knowledge of Korean, I wandered the streets of South Korea, talked with people at the market, and visited many museums and interesting places, sometimes outside of Seoul.



A Hanyak shop at Yangneongsi

The most interesting place I visited during my stay was the Yangneongsi Museum of Oriental Medicine at Taegu. Yangneongsi refers to the name of the medicine market that used to be held twice a year, and at the museum, visitors can see ingredients of Korean traditional medicine (Hanyak) taken from plants, animals, and minerals. I was impressed by the way Korean people thought about disease, which is viewed not as the problem of a single part of one's body as the Western medical science does, but as the problem caused by the loss of the equilibrium of the whole body including the mind and heart. This helped me very much to broaden my perspective, which, admittedly, was strongly influenced by the Western way of looking at the "oriental".

The Korean language course, which I took at the university, was also a notable experience. Students registered for the course were divided into small classes according to their language level. The program put emphasis on speaking and listening rather than on reading and writing, and it was interesting because teachers encouraged students to speak only Korean during the class, even to the students at the beginning level, which I found very helpful when I talked with Korean students and people outside of the university. My class was a nice, homely, and truly international class with 13 students coming from the US, France, Taiwan, and several other countries, and I feel glad to have studied with such nice classmates.



The Korean Class



At the top of Seorak

I made friends with lots of other international as well as Korean students at different courses, the dormitory, and sometimes by chance, with whom I did many activities such as climbing a mountain, visiting a temple, and eating lunch together. I am very grateful that I could participate in the SMS program to gain such wonderful friends and experience at Sogang University and would recommend whoever is thinking about studying abroad to join this program.



Lunch with friends