

TRAVEL REPORT

Name: Alia Julia Pablo

Place of Travel: Gwangjou, Korea

Purpose: Participation in the 1st Asian Youth Culture Festival

It was an honor to represent the Philippines in Korea's Asian Youth Culture Fest that is why I made the most out of my stay there. The nine days in Korea was packed with lots of activities. To share those nine days to you, I took note of what we have done there:

21 August 2011 SUNDAY

I woke up very early in the morning to get ready. I rode the PHSA mini bus. It was funny because even though I lack sleep, I did not feel sleepy during the trip from Los Banos to NAIA because I was excited for my first travel aboard a plane and abroad. The idea of travelling only with my batch mate, Owen, and no adult made me more excited.

We met at NAIA and waited for four hours before our departure. We were both thrilled that we were looking after ourselves alone at the airport. We felt like adults! When I rode the plane, I can't deny that I was overjoyed. The plane we boarded was ASIANA Airlines and it was so beautiful. The service was great. The food they served was delicious. I sat beside a Korean couple and in front of Owen.



We landed after four hours at the INCHEON Airport in Seoul. It was unbelievably huge and beautiful! Owen and I felt lost at first until two Filipinos, who were older than us, accompanied us to the places we where we were expected to be.

After taking our luggage bags, we were welcomed by a tall Korean guy wearing glasses, a black cap and shirt, holding papers with our name on it.



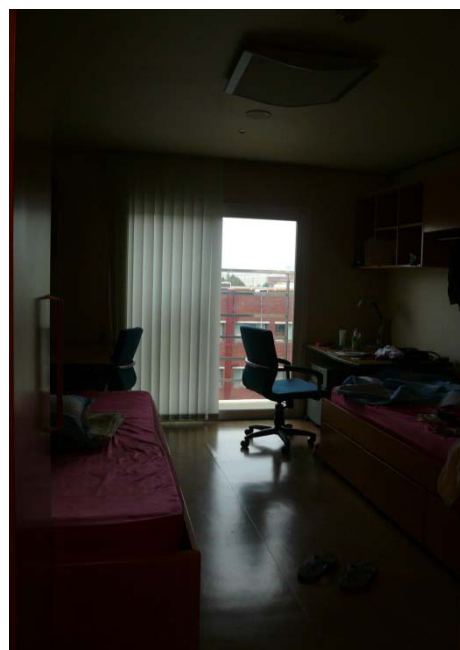
We joined him and he introduced us to three more participants who also arrived that day- a Nepali girl named Rubina Rai, a Japanese girl named Hirose Yuuki and a Chinese girl named Lan Jiang. They were our first friends. They had a hard time speaking English but Owen and I tried our best to communicate with them.



After our acquaintance meeting, we ate at a Korean traditional restaurant. We all ordered the same thing- Spicy Noodles. It was so spicy but yummy.



We rode the bus which took us to our dorm at the Korean province Gwanjou. We met other participants who were already there. At the bus, some participating adult Filipinos welcomed Owen and I warmly. They were so funny and they made Owen and I feel like we weren't foreigners at all. In fact, we were the noisiest in the bus during the trip. 😊



We have arrived at Chonnam University where we would be billeted. The room I stayed in was relaxing, it was for two people but I did not have a roommate yet. When I was just about to sleep, more of the feeling of excitement came in to me. That was my first day at Korea.

22 August 2011 MONDAY

My first breakfast at Korea was all so spicy. Everything on my plate was spicy. Even the soup! Good thing I can handle eating spicy foods. We ate our meals at the Chonnam University cafeteria.



Today, we just had our orientations then we interacted with the other participants. We were grouped into eight. Each group had five to seven different nationalities and one Korean adult leader. My group was composed of two Koreans, two Vietnamese, two “-tans” (Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan) and one Thai.



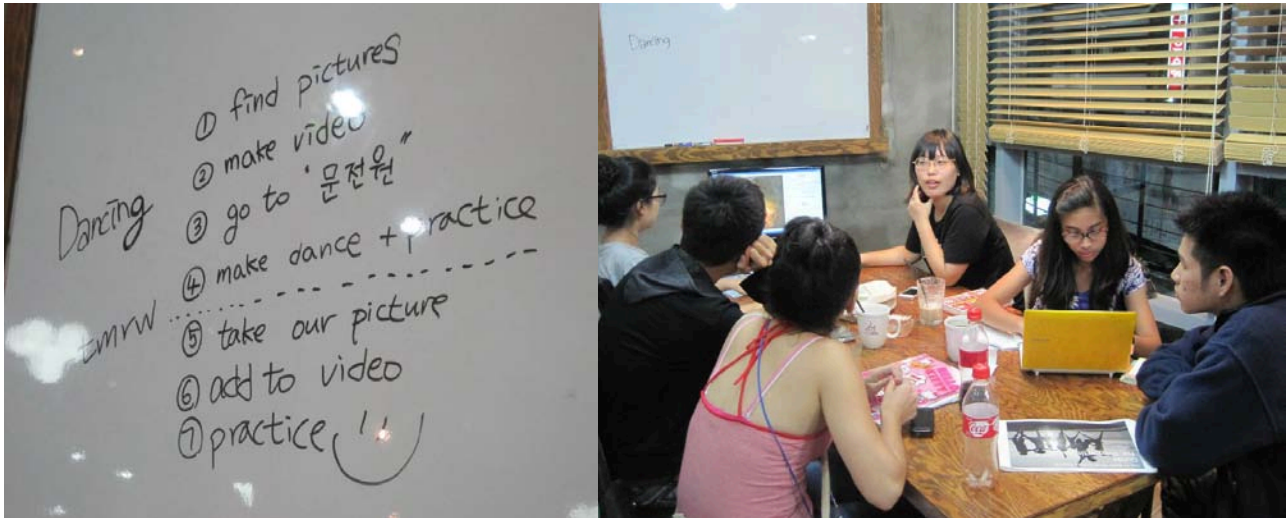
After those activities, the Filipino adults- Kuya Randy, Kuya RC and Kuya Nash invited Owen and I to drink at the coffee shop down the dorm area. Kuya Randy and Kuya Nash helped Owen and I with our reports while Kuya RC repaired my Filipiniana’s zipper that got broken. They were awesome people. We left the coffee shop late so we slept late.

23 August-25 August 2011 TUESDAY-THURSDAY

The participants had their individual speeches from morning till the afternoon. Owen and I did well. The other participants did well too. Some prepared performances like their country’s cultural dances and music.



At the end of each report and performance for the day, we were gathered in groups to prepare for our performance on the 25th of August. We only had two days to prepare. Our group did a collaboration of our different cultural dances and prepared a video presentation as our background while dancing. I was the one who made the video but I was required to dance as well. It was my first time to dance in front of so many people but I was not nervous because nobody knows that I don't really dance.



We had one afternoon to enjoy and tour around Gwangju. We went to exhibits and took lots of photos.



Our group's performance was great that is why we were one of the two groups chosen to perform in front of the Minister of Korea! Meaning, we were asked to dance for the second time in front of much more people and on television.



Since two groups were chosen, we decided to merge both performances. It turned out well. We finished all of our rehearsals by 4am and I can't believe we did not get tired or sleepy. We did that for two night rehearsals. We enjoyed so much, especially because they always prepared food for us.

26 August 2011 FRIDAY

Today was our day of performance. We did great! Our Filipino friends were so proud of Owen and I because Owen was chosen as one of those who took an on-air conversation with the minister. He was also one of the hosts of the event while I was part of the chosen youth group to perform in front of the Minister. We even met Kuya Otto, a visual arts alumnus of PHSA!



In the evening, some of our Korean friends together with our Filipino friends decided to sneak out downtown to eat traditional Korean food. They invited Owen and I. It was cool riding the public bus of Korea. It's very different from our bus here in the Philippines. The food we ate downtown was different from the type of Korean food at our dorm cafeteria. It's really nice discovering new things. After our sneak out, we rode a taxi going back to the dorms.



27 August 2011 SATURDAY

Today, we just had free time from morning 'til the afternoon so we went downtown to shop for *pasalubong* and souvenirs. Korean stuff is so affordable! I wanted to buy lots of things but I was saving my budget for the next days. Most of my souvenirs came from this shop called "Art Box" where they sell lots of cool stuff.



In the evening, we watched the World Music Festival. There were lots of people. It was like a huge picnic where everybody sat on the grass and just watched the different Asian musicians on stage.



After that, we went to a Korean bar and had a Networking Party



28 August 2011 SUNDAY

From morning 'til the afternoon we toured around special places in Gwangjou like the Soswaeon Garden and the Bamboo Park. We bonded with our Filipino friends in all the places we went. It was opportunity to bond with our Filipino friends.



After our tours we watched other performances that were of the World Music Festival where Kuya Otto (the PHSA visual arts alumnus) performed with a traditional music group composed of different Asian nationalities.



After the performances, we had a picnic near the performance area. There we met more Filipinos.



At night, I spent time with the elders (our Filipino adult friends with their other friends) at the coffee shop at Chonnam University. We had a great time just chatting, eating and drinking frappe and coffee.



Again, we slept late. 😊

29 August 2011 MONDAY

Today is the last day of many of the participants. Some of us who are still staying in Korea are going to leave Gwangju and head to Daegu- another province in Korea. The travel was three hours long.



We checked in at a Youth Hostel where I had three roommates a Cambodian girl, a Malaysian girl and a girl from Thailand. We became close friends, of course. Our room was a traditional Korean style room that is why we slept on the floor with the Korean traditional sleeping beds.



After we checked-in, we roamed around Daegu and went downtown where live performances were held.



Then we ate dinner at a traditional Korean restaurant.



The menu was all the same for us. There was just one food served that did not come pleasing to my taste buds- the cold noodles. ☺ It tasted a bit weird for me.



In the evening, we watched performances. My favourite was the jazz band named Volcano. They were so good.



That was our only night in Daegu.

30 August 2011 TUESDAY

This is our last day in Daegu and in Korea. We had our last breakfast then checked out at the Hostel and bid our farewells to our Filipino friends who are staying in Korea.



We left in the morning, headed back to Seoul and arrived the Incheon Airport in the afternoon.




We bid goodbye to everyone.



Owen and I waited for our flight by 7pm. In our flight back home, we brought along great memories with our Asian friends. It was quite an adventure.

THE END.

To the other Ibarangs who would be blessed with an opportunity like I had, I advise you to make the most out of it. That means do everything you can to make your travel in a different place so memorable. Make a good impression because you are representing our country, the Philippines. Make new and lots of friends because through this you may build connections that may be useful in your career in the future. Last but not that least, enjoy! Don't be afraid to be a stranger in a foreign land. You would regret it when you come home. Just enjoy and do your thing there but of course don't forget to stay disciplined as we are trained in PHSA. 😊


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