

Day 1 : 8 July

This was the first day departed from Bangkok, Thailand to Savannakhet, Lao PDR, we used van to cross the Thai - Laos border. Thai people who travel here don't have to worry about the language and the currency because most of the Laos people can speak Thai and we can use Thai baht in trading. Thailand and Lao PDR share the culture together between the border. We arrived Savan-Seno Special Economic Zone at the afternoon. Savan-Seno Special Economic Zone or SENO SEZ located in the Savannakhet province which gain the location benefit from East-West economic corridor to attract the foreign investors especially Thai investors because of the border sharing. East - West economic corridor connect 5 countries together, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, where SENO SEZ located at the centre of the corridor which can further connected to other countries such as China. SENO SEZ promote the one stop service centre to the investors where investors can ask for information and invest through SENO SEZ. Foreign investors tend to invest more in Lao PDR because of political stability, strategic geographical location, tax incentives and low labor and electricity cost. However, one of my friends asked the lecturer about the labor's holiday and the labor's behavior that if it is a problem for foreign investors' attractiveness in too much holidays in Laos which we found out that this labor's behavior affect the investment.

Day 2 : 9 July

The second day we left Lao PDR to Vietnam. Vietnam's scenery was quite different from Lao's as Vietnam was more developed. I observed that the drivers in both Laos and Vietnam drive on the left side which was opposite from Thailand. The interesting thing about today was going through Vinh Moc Tunnel. The tunnel was so narrow that it made me think about how war refugees in those days managed to live days to days under such poor conditions, unknowing of what would happen to them in the next day. Inside the tunnel, tiny rooms were allocated to each family and it was obvious that there was not enough space to fit one whole family in comfortably. Life inside the tunnel was clearly not fit for children to grow, learn and become proper citizens for future benefits of the country. This was something the war had taken a toll on the country. After that, I went to try bánh xèo, an original Vietnamese food. It was crispy and savoury, filled to the brim with bean sprouts, quail eggs, and other ingredients which all contributed to its unique taste. I certainly enjoyed it and wished that I could try it back home in Thailand too. The highlight of my first day in Vietnam was, strangely, crossing the Vietnamese road. The number of bikes in the road was unbelievable and if it had not been for my friends helping me, I would have stayed on the other side of the road to this day.

Day 3 : 10 July

On the third day we went to Thien Mu pagoda or the Royal Tomb of Khai Dinh king in the morning. The royal tomb was built for the twelfth emperor located at Chau Chu mountain. I had a chance to know that Thai and Vietnam also share the tradition about how we respect our ancestors. The later generation bury the ancestor's body and call their soul back to their house together. In the afternoon we went to C.P. Vietnam Corporation located at the Hue city. The Charoen Pokphand group has expanded the investment to Vietnam because of the geographical location near the sea and rich in natural resources. At the Hue city factory, they mainly focus on production line from the raw resources to the packing process, the location of the factory is nearby the sea which can lower the logistics costs and can remain the product to be fresh. The company also has sustainability policy to control the gas emission and the wasted water. They also create jobs and hire lots of local labors and assure them to have stable income instead of using machine.

Day 4 : 11 July

The fourth day in Vietnam was spent mostly in a department store. This was a great opportunity for me to learn about Vietnamese consumer behaviour and their economic situation first hand. In general, Vietnamese products are cheaper than Thai but this may be due to the difference in currency (as Thai baht has recently soared ), rental fee, and cost of labour. In fact, Thai, as well as Korean, products are regarded as superior to Vietnamese products. This is evidenced through the fact that most products in Vietnam need to be labelled in Thai and Korean to attract buyers. Another reason for the labels being in Korean may be because of the high number of Korean tourists in Vietnam, showing Vietnam being one of the most popular destinations in southeast asia for Koreans. Moreover, I found it interesting that both Thailand and Vietnam have similar trends regarding popular cuisine like the craze over bubble tea. This is a great knowledge to keep in mind for new business owners and startup companies looking to expand their business in Vietnam. In addition, I noticed that the ice skating rink was also a popular activity among the locals as my friends and I failed to join them because there were not enough skating boots for us. Regarding Vietnamese consumer choice in the malls, the department store boasted luxurious product shops similarly to Thai department stores. There was also theatres, although it was quite small and the tickets were much cheaper comparing to Thai cinemas.

Day 5 : 12 July

The fifth day I went to SCG Cement Building Materials Vietnam at the afternoon. I learned more about the general information and economy in Vietnam compared to Thailand. Vietnam has the higher growth rate in population than Thailand and in the future, Thailand will become the aging society faster than Vietnam. The young labor force will attract the foreign investors more, so, they tend to invest more in Vietnam. At night, we had to decide what would be for our dinner and we end up at the Korean food restaurant near the hotel where the price of the food were surprisingly cheap. After that, we went to the Hoi An ancient town near the night market. The price of products here are quite high compared to other local shop, this might be because the tourist attractions will charge a price for tourist higher than the local shop for the local people. I and my friend was interested in the bracelet, the flower bracelet in the market, so, we bargained the price and can buy it at around 40 baht. I also found out that there are a lot of cafes for Vietnamese teenagers and tourists and what interested me the most is one of my favorite bubble tea brand, Gong Cha is in the Hoi An night market which we do not have this brand in our country.

Day 6 : 13 July

Almost a week in Vietnam, this day we went to Ba Na Hills, an amusement park which is, true to its name, up on a hill. To get there, we needed to get on a cable car. After a few minutes, we arrived at the park and it seemed to serve people of all ages. Younger children could enjoy rides made specially for their own safety while teenagers could go to more exciting rides and game centers in the middle of the park. For the elderly, the Golden Bridge, a large bridge which was built through a gigantic hand, was the main attraction along side the flower garden. I was content for having to only pay once at the entrance and not at all rides. Food and drinks were, of course, understandably not included in the price but that was fine. There was a lot of people this day due to it being the weekend, yet we managed to slip pass the queue at the entrance as we arrived early in the morning. For lunch, we went to a buffet place. The food was average but the lack of recognition on queuing manner among the Vietnamese surprised me. It was not just only at this restaurant but throughout my stay here in Vietnam so far.

Day 7 : 14 July

This was the last day in this Laos - Vietnam trip. I gain a lot of memorable moments during the trip. In this last day, I went to Non Nuoc Fine Arts village before arrived at the airport. Even this called a fine art village, its more like carved marble shop and exhibition. However, every single work there were detailed and unique which we can identify the owner's intention. In the evening, this was the time departed from Da Nang, Vietnam back to Bangkok, Thailand, the first time in Lao PDR and Vietnam was an unforgettable moment for me

In my opinion, Vietnam in the next 5 or 10 years will be one of the most attractive country for the foreign investors because the political and economic stability, the geographical location where they can shipping by sea with the various port or by land through the one belt one road project from China which can lower the transaction cost, low rental fee and low labor cost. Vietnamese government also support the development and education in developing the human resource. I have heard someone said that Vietnam is the country that keep developing and clearly see the change in every aspect we go back there.