

Trip Essay

8 to 14 July 2019

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Monday, July 8th, 2019

It is the first day of this trip and I am really excited to visit places. We first fly to Nakorn Panom and go visit one biggest Special Economic Zone in Laos PDR which is Savan-Seno. Before we are here, I have no idea what we need to do about SEZ. However, there are zoning for investors and residential areas. I am quite impressed about the economic zone because I feel like it is really useful for those country who need to advance their ability to produce and worker skills. Also, the place also encourages investors to come and invest here by having a tax holiday. In addition, the place provides facility as it is a one stop service center. I think it can catch more investor from providing one stop service center because in term of document and official processes working fast would give more advantages to the country. We next go to Thai Embassy, people there in the embassy is really nice and kind. What I can see from today is that the weather in this part of Thailand is hotter than in Bangkok and when we cross border from Thailand to Laos the driving lane is in the opposite side so we need to be in the circle and change the lane and this is so impressed.

Tuesday, July 9th, 2019

Today we leave Laos and go to Vietnam. I am really excited to go to Vietnam because it is my first time there and I have no clue about the country. Also, it is a road trip meaning that this took us over 4 hours to drive. What I can see is that the road from Laos to Vietnam is too small as there is only one lane per direction. In my opinion, if the country wants this route to be official, they should expand more lanes because when there is only a lane for each direction, it could do it better as product can reach the destination faster. However, if the country doing so people who lives along the way would be in trouble. We cross border at DanSavan-Laobao which is Lao-Vietnam border. After we cross the border things getting different. What I can

see is that houses in Vietnam is small but houses in Laos are from woods. Our first stop in Vietnam is Vic nac tunnel which is the place where elderly and kids stay when there was war in the country. Underground was small as it is a tunnel meaning that one person has such a limited space and it is really dark in there. I really feel sorry to those Vietnamese who lived there and I am glad the war ended.

Wednesday, July 10th, 2019

It is the third day of the trip and I have my most favorite restaurant for the trip today. I personally really like to eat rice paper roll and in Vietnam rice paper roll is different from Thailand because Vietnamese eat the rice paper dry but we eat it wet in Thailand. When I first try paper rice roll here, it is really strange at the first bite but I cannot stop eating it and I ended up eating everyone's rice paper roll. We visit CP Vietnam in Hue. CP has long been in Vietnam and the product they sell here is similar to what they sell in Thailand. We get to see the production of freeze shrimp and shrimp for sushi. CP export shrimp to European countries and also Japan. It is unbelievable that shrimp that is for sushi exported to Japan but it is true that most sushi shrimp exported to Japan. They also give us sample and what I like the most is shrimp for sushi. However, seeing worker work is a little strange to me. In the afternoon, we go to heritage places in Hue. What I found interesting is that those places are on top as we need to climb stairs and it really make me tired. At night I get to visit department store near the hotel and have bubble tea and I found out that beverages here is too sweet.

Thursday, July 11th, 2019

We do few things today which is go to Vincom plaza in Danang. We observe consumers' behavior here and what I found out that it is different from what we have in Thailand. There are more domestic brands and cloths are not the same as what we have in Thailand including style. The clothes have the sense of traditional wear and I really like it as they are wearing traditional cloths in every day's life. There is also Thai brand in the store which is, lingerie brand, Sabina. In addition, we go to supermarket. There are many Thai product in the

supermarket. Also, there is some product that is not available in Thailand but sell here. What I see are Korean products as there are lots of Korean visitors. As the influence of Korean drama, there are plenty of Korean products in the supermarket. I found variety of domestic and Korean instant noodle brands but I cannot find Thai instant noodle brand. It would be because the taste does not match their preferences. In the afternoon, we go to Han market. The place sells the same product but what is funny is that we can bargain the price and things there is really cheap.

Friday, July 12th, 2019

Today we go visiting SCG and the speaker is BE alumni. He is kind and friendly. We talk about many interesting topics and what SCG does in Vietnam. The speaker talks about how Thai people spend their money. What he says is that Thai people spend their future earning and current earning cannot cover so It makes the economy collapse. Also, Thai people always speculate meaning that it is difficult to know the real demand. However, it is different from the policy in Vietnam because the government here hardly give out loan and it is impossible to speculate. Talking about how SCG invest in Vietnam, the company acquire a brown field cement company and make it better. For cement product, the higher the price interpret to be the higher quality. Because in Vietnam price signal the good's quality, setting high price means the product has high quality. In addition, people trust Thai product's quality so, SCG putting Thai words on label to make it more Thai. I really like how they do it. Visiting Big C is fun too. We get to see product that people really have in Vietnam. I personally really like window shopping in the supermarket. In the afternoon, we are in Hoi An and we walk around Hoi An old quarter and I really love the vibes here. Hoi An becomes my favorite place in Vietnam so far.

Saturday, July 13th, 2019

It is a fun day today at Ba Na hill. It is a mountain that used to grow banana and French colonial turns it to be vacation house. The place is really high which we need to take about half an hour to go to the top. The weather up there is colder than on ground. We have so much fun and we

also help one little boy as he cannot find his parent. I feel really good when he found his parent. There are many things to do up there as it is also a fun park, golden bridge and flower park. The place is crowded because it is Saturday and there are many things to do here. Compare to Thailand, we do not have anywhere similar to this. Ba Na Hill does not serve only Vietnamese but also tourist. If Thailand have some place like this, there would be more tourist for sure. I really like today as I use all my energy and I really tired after a long day. We have Korean BBQ and the electricity black out many times which is annoying me. Also, the air conditioner is really hot and I hope if I am here again next time things would get improved.

Sunday, July 14th, 2019

Finally, it is the last day of the trip. I do not want to go back as it is really fun with class and I think a week is quite short. I get to see so many things after this trip and I am appreciated to take the course. Today we go to museum called Cham museum. Walking around make me feel like we are in Thailand as the scripture is not different from what we have in Thailand. Compare to those European museums, it is so much different. We can do only few things today because we are heading home in the evening. My team and I start editing video for Monday's presentation. This trip is really great as I get to talk to my classmate a lot and we get closer. Also, there are many unexpected experiences that I would not forget. When I plan a travel trip, I had never thought about Laos and Vietnam before but after this trip things change. Our neighboring country should be explored more.

What surprises/impresses you most during the trip?

Because I expected nothing before joining the trip. Almost everything surprised me as I have never seen Laos and Vietnam before and it is my first time. The language in Laos is impressed me because I know that our language is similar but when I am here it is definitely the same only some words make me feel strange but we can understand each other. In Vietnam, traffic and street vendor impressed me. I really shocked when I cross the street here and it make me

feel like it is going to be my last time crossing the road. However, when times go by. I used to it and can cross the road with less panic than on the first day. Street vendors is another thing. I like their small table and chair as I have never seen things like this before. Unfortunately, I did not sit on those tiny chairs.

How do you see East-West economic route (R9-from Mukdaharn to Laos to Danang) as connectivity in the region? (more potential? problems? or any issues? border crossing?)

I think the East-west economic route give benefit more than harm because car is the most inexpensive way in term of logistic. What I found is that the road is good there is less hole than what we have in the city. However, there is only one lane for each direction and this would limit the potential to deliver good from one to another country and it is dangerous to pass the car. Border is fine to me but border from Thailand to Laos is more complicated than from Laos to Vietnam.

How do you see Laos and Vietnam in the next 5-10 years?

I think Laos and Vietnam are growing everyday. Laos would be more like an industrial district in Savannakhet and companies would rotate to produce more in Laos and more inward FDI. Workers will have better skills and wage in Laos would be higher because of their limited working force. There would be more tourist in Vietnam and things would not be the same anymore because the country's growth keeps increasing over years. There would be better in term of infrastructure which is better road, more traffic controller and better electricity.

Can you imagine yourself working/living in Laos and/or Vietnam? Why/Why not?

I think it is challenging to work in Laos and Vietnam. if I work in Thai embassy in Laos and Vietnam, it would be fine to me because I have Thai people there. However, if I work at somewhere else would not be a good choice except working for Thai company like CP and

SCG. It is difficult to me because Laos and Vietnam are different from Bangkok. It is more civilized in Bangkok and Bangkok is home. I do not have to do much if I work in Thailand but work in Laos and Vietnam is a different story. Because in Thailand more up to date things are in our country and I do not know what should I do in Vietnam as it is not match my preference.

Feedback for the trip

This trip teaches me a lot. I really appreciate to study this course because we get to see the real thing. We get to see supermarket in Vietnam, go to CP Vietnam and talk with the director of SCG Vietnam. I get to understand and know things better. I also know more about people and myself. Studying outside classroom is always a good choice. Ajarns are nice to us. B.E. office staffs are also kind. The plan for the trip is really well organized as I did not feel bored. I would like to thank you everyone who organized the trip. I really want this course to stay in B.E. forever.