

Trip Essay (8-14 July)

Starting from Bangkok, we took a flight to Nakhon Phanom and took the van to Mukdahan which is one of the important border areas between Thailand and Laos. For me, Mukdahan still is not crowded as it should be. The province itself may stimulate economic more especially on the area near the border.

Savan Seno Special Economic Zone is the one of important gateway for product distribution of Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. This economic zone contains 5 major zones, A, B, B1, C, and D working under the Laos government. The idea of one-stop service in Savan Seno area is really good as investors can operate everything in one place. However, there is still a concern that the Laos government collaborates with institution to produce labor with the skill that supplier or firm that want to invest in Laos required. This makes Laos still be a follower even there is some contract protected the labor. In my opinion, Laos should develop the labor force parallelly with the industries.

In the second day morning, we went to Vinh Moc tunnels which were built to shelter people from the second Indochina war. I was surprised with the past innovation and how they live. In the evening, we went to the Cua Viet beach. The beach is quite similar to the Bangsaen beach in Chonburi but cleaner and less crowded. There are many restaurants near the beach and some food and drink cart. The street food is mixed with both local and Korean food. I found that bubble tea or boba is one of the interesting trend there. From my observation, many Vietnamese drink bubble tea the most compare to other menu in that shop. Some also just ride their motorcycle to only buy these drinks.

In the third day of this trip, we have a chance to visit one of the factories of C.P. Vietnam. In this factory, they produce only shrimp and also include a package system. This mean that C.P. Vietnam provides a full system starting from cook to pack for other brands. I enjoy watching satisfy thing like packing the shrimp in the box or unpack the shrimp. However, I believe that some process still can be improved by using technology like unpack the shrimp. Moreover, C.P. use location strategies by placed their factories near the resources hub to lower the transportation cost. C.P. also educate local farmer to use technology in farming and cattle which improve the ability in overall to the country.

In our fourth day, our initial plan was to meet with CEO from Chance and Challenge Co., Ltd (CAC) but the plan changed. So, we went to local department store to observe local consumer trend and behavior. Many products from Korea were sold in the supermarket. This show that Korea has influenced a lot in Vietnam through food and drink. The theater in the department store is quite small and less crowd. In the evening, we went to the market to buy local product to present in the class. However, the market that we went was created for tourist and sold the product with higher price than normal. On this day, we found out organic shop which is a collaboration of local culture and organic trend which is popular in this day.

On fifth day, we went to meet the general director of SCG Vietnam (Danang) who is also a faculty of economics alumni. The speaker was talented which make today's speech was really good. We can understand more about Vietnamese and Vietnam culture which can benefit my project and open my version wider. Moreover, this talk also encourage us to concern more about Thailand situation and development which tend to be slower than Vietnam.

According to the question section at SCG, I had asked the question about the important factor related to the growth of Vietnam which his first answer is the infrastructure investment. He believes that the government should invest more in infrastructure that can benefit both local people and encourage investors to invest in Vietnam. I agree as I see the point that large investment like infrastructure can create a better standard of living. Moreover, Vietnam

In our sixth day of the trip, we went to Sunworld Bana which is the place where tourist can enjoy the beautiful landscape and also many entertainments. In Sunworld, I had tried many rides and games. However, I was not that impressed overall. The thing provided in the park still less compared to the number of tourists. Moreover, the worker in the park can not speak that good English with low services quality which I see as a big problem that Sunworld itself has to improve immediately.

This is the last day of this amazing trip. In the afternoon, we went to Cham museum which is about “Cham” people who once live in the golden age but lose to the war with Vietnamese and have to move down to the central area of Vietnam. For me, the museum doesn’t arrange well. It should have one main way to explore everything in the museum. Moreover, the museum should concern more about temperature and humidity. The QR code provided in the museum is also not linked with the sculpture.

What surprises/impresses you most during the trip?

I was surprised by the Korean influence in Vietnam. There is a lot of Korean restaurant and product. Moreover, the Korea fashion trend appears among teenager to an adult in Vietnam. Many caf  s are also decorated in Korean style, white, clean, and chic. I really impressed with hang out culture in Vietnam. There is also non-alcoholic caf   open in the night more than in Thailand. Many teenagers meet their friend or study there like Thailand. However, Vietnamese tend to sit and look at the street which is not that common in Thailand.

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

I believe that this East-West economic route can create positive impact in tourism and economic to the region. Moreover, the community will be develop especially at Danang where is the final destination of this route. However, I have a concern on environment effect from this construction. I also consider on whether people along this area have not enough abilities and interests in this development which I think that government should educated people more about this economic route especially on how it can benefit them.

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

For Laos, I believe that it will become one of the good labor force markets for a foreigner to invest but it will still have slower development compared to Vietnam. Vietnam will be an important country to place the production hub as there is a lot of Vietnam improvement especially on infrastructure which the general director of SCG had concerned the most to the growth of Vietnam.

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

I have to truly accept that I can not work or live in Laos and Vietnam. The first reason is transportation. I am a person who strongly supports the public transportation system and Vietnam still has efficient public transportation. Moreover, Vietnamese tend to use a lot of motorcycle for a personal purpose which I think it is something too much for me. Second is the food. I can eat vegetable but not as much as Laotian and Vietnamese ate. The Vietnamese food also contains a lot of carbohydrate in term of noodle and spring roll sheet.

Feedback for the trip

The plan should be more fixed, so we can plan for the outfit and daily life management. The food is sometimes not that good. In my opinion, the pop-up assignment had disturb our trip a little bit. It might be better to announce before the trip.