

2018 Jeonju International Biennale of Korean Studies

Earlier this month I have had a pleasure of representing Vytautas Magnus University on the 2018 Jeonju International Biennale of Korean Studies. There I had presented my research from the previous semester on China's role in the current negotiations with North Korea. As I said during my obligatory Soju toast, that representatives of each country had to make, this was the most important trip in my academic career. It was not only my first participation on a conference, but also my first visit to East Asian region. In this one week I saw just how different this place is from any other area of the world I have visited before. This made me realise that choosing East Asia as my major was worth it. Their society is indeed something worth studying about.

The conference consisted mostly from presentations in Korean language. Mine was among the few that were in English. However, I was still able to communicate with my colleagues, as well as staff managing the conference. Thanks to the conference, I gained important connections and built friendship with some of the participants. Right now I am actually planning to meet with my new Latvian and Estonian friends that I met in Jeonju during the upcoming winter break.

Aside from a conference, we had an opportunity to visit multiple museums and historical areas of Jeonju. The official tours were in Korean, but you could always find someone to translate you the content of the tour. It was a pleasant experience, especially when we visited one of the museums while dressed up in hanboks.

The last two days were dedicated to a temple stay, where I have spent one night. In addition, I also went to Seoul with my Latvian colleague. Although I was excited about expanding my knowledge on meditation, which was offered in the temple stay programme, I could not lose an opportunity to see the capital. My new Latvian friend had had an experience in staying in Korea, so she was very kind by showing me around.

I would like to thank Mr. Alpo Rusi, who supervised my work, Ms. Kim Yu Ree, who provided her academic critique and Mr. Linas Didvalis, who suggested my work to represent VDU on the Biennale, and Mr. Seo Jin Seok, who helped with the conference application. All of them helped this great trip to come true.