

By Jeremy Ho



Biggest Take Away from Chiang Mai: Learning the true meaning of “take it easy” and that though we probably cannot lead as slow a pace of life in Singapore, we should take things slowly and live each day to the fullest for we will never know when will be our last day on this Earth. These two weeks has truly been an eye-opening experience and I am really grateful for being given a chance to be part of this life-changing experience.

Bangkok

Bangkok proved to be much more than an urban jungle for me. I feel that there is more room for social prosperity and growth, especially amongst the middle to low-income earners. The most striking example for me would be the tour of the canal village communities. There was a lack of, if not absence of flood walls that resulted in many families’ homes being inundated by floodwaters in October 2011. The lack of or absence of roads made commuting difficult for the elderly and sick who had to rely on a small fleet of rescue boats. However, a nuance must be added at this juncture of my reflections. There was not in any point of time a moment where I met a Thai who complained or grumbled about his or her social standing and standard of living. Instead, they were beaming with warmth and hospitality and led such simple lives that proved to be much of an eye opener for me. Seeing young children (both girls and boys) swimming in murky river water and laughing merrily really struck an emotional cord – while we have clean pools at home, we often find ourselves complaining of overcrowded public pools, dirty facilities and the list goes on. Contrary to this, the Thais are perfectly content swimming in the river amongst river lizards, huge catfishes, crocodiles (on rare occasions) and the never-ending traffic flow of speedboats ferrying curious tourists like us past their homes.



Thus far, I am very pleased with my week in Bangkok, having gotten to know everyone on a more personal level and making lifelong friends like Dean (my room buddy). Well, I am relieved that we are escaping the never-ending gridlock traffic in Bangkok, but I will surely miss the food and people here. I hope Chiang Mai will bring much more memorable experiences and warm friendly people.