Taipei, Taiwan  
November 9-29  
Jiufen Old Street

I flew into Taipei Thursday night, and was greeted with a warm welcome by my great uncle and auntie. As a Taiwanese American who has never set foot in Taiwan, I was pretty excited to finally visit this country. The next day, my relatives took me to Jiufen, a mountain town packed with street-food stands and souvenir shops.

Jiufen developed during the gold rush during the Japanese era. On this day, the weather was perfect!

We visited the Gold Museum which depicted the history of the gold mining industry in the Jiufen District.

This hunk of gold clocked in at 220kg and cost $9,334,697 USD. But rumor has it that you can get it for free if you can pick it up!

View from a bridge we crossed.

We came across this beautiful waterfall.
We then went to the main part of town for lunch. There were all sorts of food I've never seen before! These were ice cream spring rolls which contained vanilla and taro ice cream, shaved honey peanuts, and basil wrapped in a tortilla. It's an interesting combination, but it tasted pretty good!

Ba-wan is a Taiwanese dumpling which consists of a translucent dough filled with meat.

Taipei 101

My aunt and I spent the afternoon shopping near Taipei 101.

Taiwanese taro and sweet potato balls.

And we stayed in the area until dinner time.
**Raohe Street Night Market**

For dinner, we went to the Raohe Street Night Market which is one of the oldest night markets in the Songshan District, located at the northern tip of Taiwan.

There were so many different types of street food!

Here, a chef demonstrates the process of making Hujiao bing (pork pepper buns), one of the most well-known street foods in Taiwan.

**Rainbow Bridge**

Apparently, it was somewhat of a family tradition to eat pork pepper buns while sitting near the bank of the Keelung River overlooking the Rainbow Bridge.

The pepper buns were baked in a clay pot and were only 50 TWD ($1.52 USD).

This was the first time I met my cousins!

My relatives thought they were a handful, but they were hilarious and fun to be around.
Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial

The next day we went to the Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial which commemorates Chiang Kai-Shek, the former President of the Republic of China.

“Ziyo Guangchang” (Liberty Square)

View of Liberty Square from the top of Memorial Hall. There were 89 steps to the top, one for each year Chiang Kai-Shek was alive.

Maokong Gondola

Next, we took a gondola to Maokong Station.

We waited for the Crystal Cabin gondolas which had a glass bottom.

The Memorial Hall was undergoing renovations at the time.

Inside the memorial.
**Lunch**

At the top of Maokong, we went to an upscale restaurant called Longmen Restaurant. Everything was really delicious!

*Their specialty was hand pulled chicken.*

*They gave us gloves so we could use our hands to pull apart the chicken.*

*Chicken oil noodles*

*Green onion stir fry*

*Tea leaf fried rice*

*Egg with preserved radish*
Ximending Youth Shopping District

That night, my aunt took me shopping in Ximending. Known as the "Shibuya of Taipei," Ximending is a major fashion hub in Taiwan.

We perused a street fair which featured a variety of merchandise including hand-drawn postcards, hand-made soaps, bracelets, and various trinkets.

My aunt introduced me to this mocha latte bubble tea from 50 and I instantly became a fan.

I love shaved ice desserts!

Martyrs' Shrine (Zhong Lie Ci)

The next day, we visited the Martyrs' Shrine which was built to honor the fallen Kuomintang soldiers after the Chinese Civil War.

These soldiers had to remain motionless for a whole hour. I hardly even saw them blink!

The changing of the guards occurred at the top of each hour. Watching their expressionless faces, precise movements, and perfectly synchronized movements was truly amazing.
Grand Hotel

The Grand Hotel was originally built to cater to foreign ambassadors and other distinguished guests. It is currently a landmark in Taiwan and one of the world's tallest Chinese classical buildings.

Lunch

Before I left for the airport, we had lunch at a place called (ironically) Little Shanghai, which served really good Chinese food.
Wash U Thanksgiving Dinner

Back in Shanghai, we had a feast where the Wash U crew, our teachers, and a few of the doctors whom we had shadowed came together to celebrate Thanksgiving.

Turkey free for all!

We also used the occasion to celebrate Michelle and Sydney’s birthdays, so Mu Laoshi bought them a special cake!

Chinese level 1 class group photo!

After the Thanksgiving feast, we went to Mr. X Escape Room which was a ton of fun. We had an hour to escape the room by using clues we found. There are similar games in the U.S. which I highly recommend playing if you haven’t already. Oh, and we got out of the room with plenty of time to spare!
Clinics
The next two clinics I shadowed at were the Natural Path Academy and the Community Health Center.

Natural Path Academy
Natural Path Academy integrates TCM, martial arts, and culture and generally serves more affluent patients. I was particularly interested in Natural Path because I’ve trained in taekwondo for many years and wanted to learn how martial arts integrated into TCM. I went with Velimir who also had a martial arts background.

We also learned about Tai chi and meditation. The doctor emphasized the concept of “harnessing the universe’s energy,” which he demonstrated. He asked us to push him against the wall as hard as we could, and he pushed us aside with one finger! His arm muscles didn’t even tense up!

Community Health Center
I was excited to shadow at the Zhoujiaqiao Street Community Health Center. This clinic served the general population and had a very different feel from the private TCM clinics. Our group included Justin, Ryan, Edide, Cintia, and Zoe, and each week we shadowed a different part of the center.

Cintia and I got to visit the Ob-Gyn clinic. I was impressed by how the doctor managed to juggle the demands of interacting with multiple patients, filling prescriptions, updating records, and performing examinations. Despite being extremely busy, she was very kind to her patients and even offered to take a picture with us!

The following week we went on a house call with a doctor to this local couple’s apartment. They warmly welcomed us and offered us oranges :)

One of the doctors who specialized in Wing Chun kindly explained and demonstrated the methodology behind this form of martial arts. Wing Chun specialized in close range combat where hand techniques were emphasized more than kicks.
Until Next Time!

At this point we only had a couple weeks left in Shanghai, so a lot of us were out checking things off of our bucket list. A major item on my list was visiting Japan. But more on that next time!

See you in Japan!

谢谢阅读

Thanks for reading!