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Host University: Hanyang University
Study Programme at IT University: Digital Media and Design
Exchange Agreement or Study Abroad: Exchange Agreement
Courses studied abroad: Brand Design 2, Contents Design 1, Visual Information Design 2, Digital Typography 2 and 3D Digital Design 2
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My stay abroad at Hanyang University

Disclaimer
There are two campuses at Hanyang University. One of them in Seoul, another in Ansan, a city just one hour away from Seoul by public transport. If you are a design student, you will be in Ansan at ERICA campus. My experiences are from studying there.

Living at Hanyang University

Overall, being at Hanyang University was a tremendous experience. I tried so many things that I would not have tried otherwise. One of the greatest experiences was just living at a campus. Living at the same place that one goes to school might sound like a bother, but because everyone else also does so, it gives you a great feeling of social life. Hungry? Text one of your friends, and you can meet up in one minute. Feel like partying? Gather a group of friends via text and meet at the convenience store for stocking up on drinks 10 minutes later.

Usually, it can be difficult for exchange students to bond with natives in other countries partly due to language barriers, but for most Danish people, it is the lack of alcohol at parties. Luckily, Koreans enjoy alcohol as much as, or more so, than Danish people. Even if you don’t like drinking, you will be able to find Koreans who feel the same way, and it is not an excluding factor. Hanyang University also runs a mentor programme for exchange students that I highly encourage anyone else to join. It is a great way to meet other exchange students, since there are mentor-mentee parties. And mentors are also incredibly useful when you need to get some of the practical things under control, for instance the tuberculosis test or applying for the alien card. Other than that it can be a great idea to join one of the clubs at Hanyang University. There are soccer clubs, guitar clubs, reading clubs, and even ukulele clubs (I joined that one). Clubs usually go out to dinner after their weekly meetings, which usually includes drinking as well as delicious food.

During the fall semester, there is a school festival, where all the clubs put up a tent on the campus and serve drinks and food. It lasts for three days, and it is a riot! You should miss even a single day of it, even though it will affect your classes.

As for pricing, most things are incredibly cheap compared to Denmark. Which doesn’t really say that much I guess. Half a liter of beer costs 5 DKK, and you can get full from a meal for
20 DKK. Taxis are also cheap, even though public transportation is by far the cheapest option.

**Studying at Hanyang University**

The academic level is slightly lower than the one at ITU. DMD students will be surprised that Hanyang University is closer to a “Professionshøjskole” than a university. Some DMD students might be pleased to hear this, as it offers a more hands-on experience. It was great to experience this for just one semester, but I prefer ITU’s way of doing things for an entire degree.

Another downside is the language barrier. While Hanyang University say that they offer courses in English, the practical implementation may be different. See, the thing is that the Korean students that apply for these courses are not that great at English themselves. Thus the professors will speak Korean to the students, if there are no exchange students present. If there is an exchange student, the professor will often speak mostly in Korean and once in a while give a summary in English. However, seeing as most classes in the design department are based on practice and not theory, this is not as big of an issue as it sounds. On the bright side, this presents a good opportunity to get exposed to Korean and learn some more words. Pro-tip: design is called “di-ja-in” with a hard j.

**Getting ready to go to Korea**

If you go in the autumn semester, it is likely that you will get your final confirmation from Hanyang University fairly late. So, if you want to save money on a plane ticket, it can be a good idea to buy it once you get the official nomination from ITU. From then, it seems to be a pretty secure fact that you are admitted at Hanyang.

The visa is very easy to get, and takes no more than a couple of days. It makes no sense for me to list what you need, because you can find it online. But they are very efficient, and you will just need a basic student visa.

Since I am a sucker for learning new languages, I started learning Korean before I arrived. This proved to be very useful, since not that many people speak proper. Broken English is almost everywhere, but once you want to get just a bit complex, you can get far with basic Korean. In one case, I helped a vegetarian friend order food by simply saying: “She does not eat meat” / “Chingu neun gogi reul an-megeosseo-yo”, since the Koreans don’t really have a word for “vegetarian”.

At the very least, it is a good idea to learn the alphabet. The Koreans pride themselves with their alphabet being the easiest to learn in the world, and I can confirm that fact. It will take you at most a couple of days to learn how to read it. If you know the alphabet, you will be able to recognize the most basic words: “kimchi”, “maekju”(beer), “keoppi”(coffee) or “keompyuteo”(computer), and you will be able to decipher traffic- and bus stop signs. Hanyang also offer a course for learning Korean that I can also recommend, which doesn’t take much extra time to attend.
Once you receive your confirmation from Hanyang, they will offer you a place in a dormitory on campus. It seemed to me to be difficult to get a place to live that was not the dormitory, so I gladly accepted the spot. The dormitory rooms are cheap, so there will be extra funds to do fun stuff and traveling to other places in Korea or Asia. They are however also somewhat dirty and small. You share an approximately 5 m² room with one other person, and they are not cleaned thoroughly before your arrival. The dormitories are gender-divided, so you will not be able to have guests of the opposite sex visiting. However, since the rooms are so small, you will mostly not want to. If you do have guests, you will lose points, and if you lose too many points, you will be kicked out. If you find the rooms a bit too sleazy, there is a chance that you can pay extra to get upgraded to the larger dormitory. Some Dutch girls I was friends with, did that.

Summary

Go to Korea, if you like kimchi. Go to Korea, if you like cheap delicious food. Go to Korea, if you like drinking. Go to Korea, if you like beautiful landscapes. Go to Korea, if you like Gangnam Style. Go to Korea, if you hate Gangnam Style. All in all, go to Korea.

Oh, and if you wanna get in touch with me and ask questions, don’t hesitate to ask. I’ve already helped three ITU students with their stay in Korea.

Useful resources

*Learning Korean:*

- [http://talktomeinkorean.com](http://talktomeinkorean.com) - Grammar and vocabulary
- [http://howtostudykorean.com](http://howtostudykorean.com) - Grammar lessons
- [http://dic.naver.com](http://dic.naver.com) - Korean/English Dictionary (Naver is like the Korean Google)

*Apps (I only added the Android links, but they should also exist on iOS):*


*Websites:*

- Eat Your Kimchi - Filled with info on korean culture as understood by foreigners - [http://www.eatyourkimchi.com/](http://www.eatyourkimchi.com/)