

Travel Plan Proposal

Some people said Taiwan is an orchid without root. However, from my opinion, the root of Taiwan is each of us. Not for the past, the history, but for the moments we live in present, the living. Unlike Europe which filled with historic contexts, Taiwan is a young and energetic country. Taiwan is full of uncertainties every where. That is the reason why I choose India for my next destination after traveling around the south Europe.

“Going out is for coming back.” this saying was heard when I participate in the activity OPTOGO (Taiwan pavilion in Milan). Since then, I was thinking that what things given to us, the kids living in this island and what things I could contribute to this beautiful country. I'm currently studying in Tunghai University for the architect major. During the education in school, I always think that architecture is not only beautiful sculpture but also the container for the residents to live and build the relationships in each of them. So I pay more attention on how people live in a place.

To me, traveling is kind of actual practice. When I study at school, I learn knowledge by books, movies and lectures. I learn to cognitive this world and the human nature, even to myself mentally. While I am traveling, I think things in a different way, using my perceptions. I see, I feel, and I react. I try to experience the world which is unfamiliar to me. Each sight redefines the things I seem to be known well in the pass and that I can review the places I live now.

Last summer, due to the OPTOGO preparation and the curiosity about Europe culture, I headed for south Europe and traveled alone through Italy, France, Spain and Portugal. One morning I was wakening up by the cold breeze and the low temperature in Lyon because I slept in front of the gate of Lyon train station. I walked through the new town to the old town and I walked alone at riverside. I saw the sun rising and turning the color of the building wall from gray to pink. The river became splendid like a giant floating silk. People jugged near the water. That scene was so normal but impressive. The Lyon citizen lives so close with the river. I started to think about what kind of the way of living is belonged to Taichung the place I study and Taipei the place I was born. However, when I pictured this river together with the Taiwanese city, I thought something is missing. The cities in south Europe are too quite with tranquility and the usage of the space usually in well order. That condition is hard to find in Taiwan.

In my definition, the uncertainty of the living is a state that the users use that space in many possibilities which is out of designer's imagination. Taiwan is so dynamic that the uncertainty and flexibility of the space using can be noticed in each corner of the city. In Taiwanese city, people put their tables and pots outside the house and the iron brace, additional structure can be found easily to make the different events happen. This uncertainty seems out of the rule, but somehow the city still remains order in its special way. To me, this phenomenon might be the rebellion of western modern building style. To find some types of the living for us, the nation with active soul, I decide to go to India, a vitality country with so many conflicts.

India is similar to Taiwan at some points. First, we both once became a colony. Facing the western strong culture, India combines its culture and living style with the western technology. Second, both of us locate in an isolated place in the Asia. Becoming a close system, India maintains its own local peculiar celebrations and activities. Third, both countries contain different kind of people with different cultures. Each of the culture affects one and another. Conflict, interruption and combination become a new balance of the India right now. Forth, the climate are alike, both are hot and rainy in some seasons. This mysterious country haunts in my mind when I became a backpacker. The people I met in my journey who had been to India each have a pair of shining eyes and lots of beautiful story. From then on, I gradually believe that I will go there one day and that journey will be a turning point of my life.

This long journey is focus on two big things. One is making a pilgrimage to the architecture built by Le Corbusier, Louis Kahn and Studio Mumbai. The other is

observing the living of local resident. To observe the Indian style of living, I find three different ways to experiment.

First, three class of the living, I try to find the way to live with the local. Second, three objects' finding and recording, I will find three kinds of objects (or materials) which are strongly related to their daily life and record them. Third, three ways of the reading, I choose three books for three different perspectives of reading to the Indian living. Those books are Siddhartha by Hermann Hesse, Invisible Cities by Italo Calvino, Discipline and Punish by Michel Foucault. Siddhartha is a book describing a man get through his three important periods of life in ancient India. He started from conscious asceticism to self-imposed exile and visual senses. Finally, knowledge and the pursuit of peace became his life's ultimate goal. And the second book, the Invisible city, is the author use different elements and topics to see the different face of the city respectively. The third book, Discipline and Punish, traces the cultural shifts that led to the prison's dominance, focusing on the body and questions of power. Those books are not directly related to India. But somehow, I think they are kind of interesting ways to see Indian religion, social structure, and the atmosphere of the city. For me, those results may be a very helpful resource to find out how do Indians live and how do they use the space.

This journey begins with the India's biggest city, Mumbai, a city which has big problem with the gap between rich and poor, comes out with a very interesting result. In the picture on the internet was so amazing. The slum is near to the airport. And the area between two modern buildings is the poor build their home with iron sheet. With those pictures, I want to figure out how people can live in this place filled with so many conflicts. I will go to the slum, the port, and Dohobi Ghat, a place provide the laundry service. The slum may make us occur to the poor having no enough money for rent a house. However, as far as I am concerned, the slum is the most organic form that people make. Without the established brace of a building, it's from and the materials frankly reacting the people's need and the common things which are easy to get. The slum just like a big community, we can find so many different professions in the some slum, hair cutters, chefs, teachers, even doctor. People live there, designing the place, and build the building by themselves again and again. The slum seems change gradually, due to the people who use it. The next three destinations are Jaipur, Dehli, and Agra, the golden triangle of the India. Jaipur, so called the Pink City of India, the giant and delicate architecture form and color presents the character and aesthetic of the Indian in the 17s. The urban planning is interesting, too. The quarters are divided by networks of gridded streets. It is also a place retain many traditional shops selling antiques and handicrafts. Delhi, the capital city of India, through most of its history, has served as a capital of various kingdoms and empires. It has been captured, ransacked and rebuilt several times, particularly during the medieval period, and modern Delhi is a cluster of a number of cities spread across the metropolitan area. Agra is famous of its many splendid Mughal-era buildings, most notably the Tāj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpūr Sikrī. It is also largely recognized with the capital city during the Munhall Empire period. Vranasi is a city with Ganges River, the river give birth to the Hinduism. The crematorium was built alone the riverside facing the everyday sunrise and sunset as the people facing the life and death. The river is also a lifeline to millions of Indians who live along its course and depend on it for their daily needs.

After this adventure, I hope that I will be inspired by the things I see during the journey. The way of life, the material the Indian use and the way they use the space. By reading the living of the Indian, reflect the living in Taiwan. Think that what the speciality of the Taiwanese living is and what kind of the possibilities we might be.