

# Project Management Report

## ● Introduction

My four months of Germany has a big influence on me, even beneficial to my whole life. This experience proves that my thought has been correct, that is to experience more is anyway good. It took me several months to think about whether I would go to Germany to participate this exchange program, because it clashes the autumn recruitment for students going to graduate. Losing the status of newly graduates will add much difficulty to getting a job. But I could not repress my urge to see Europe, to see the world. This could be my last chance to study abroad since I temporarily did not plan to have another degree. Studying and living at a place for some time is definitely different from travelling. So I made the right decision, at least so far I think it is a right one.

At first I was uneasy about the late arrival because of the late beginning of relative works. Four months is really short. With time going, I was gaining more and more. At the beginning period in Germany, everything was fresh for me. I was even amazed by the automatic doors. I didn't know how to chat with people. I could not communicate with people in German. I could not even immediately understand most German signs in anywhere. Now I know the differences between Chinese people and German people. I know how to interact with people from different countries. I dare to speak with them. Ignorance is the origin of lack of courage. I can communicate with service people in German. I dare to travel to a country without understanding its language after a long Christmas travel.

## ● First Impression about Germany

Before I came to Germany I knew Germany is a country of highly developed science and technology. When I arrived here I was amazed by its high degree of automation. Everything is automatically done as long as it can be done. When I was still in a hostel in Berlin, I saw the well sorted garbage bins were collected by the machine. In many places, the doors are automatic.

Before the Christmas, our buddy in the Patenprogram Christina invited us to her apartment to bake. We were all amazed by the modern kitchen. I had already heard about the Germans emphasize preciseness even in cooking. They cook according to recipes. Chinese people cook by their experience. Even they cook according to recipes, they often do not follow them strictly, and Chinese recipes usually do not give exact instructions. For example, the most common words are "putting a little salt", "frying them for some while with some water". The German recipes are exact to the amount of measurement, time and temperature, especially the baking. We

saw many kinds of measurement tools and cutting machines in Christina's kitchen. In China, cutting is usually done by hands and cutting skills are important especially in fine banquet cooking. The whole process of our baking in Christina's kitchen was strictly according to the recipe. After we finished eating our self-made biscuits, they threw all the things into a dish-washer.

I have heard that German people are famous for being on time. We were amazed that the Tram and buses were run by the time set up in the system. There are timetables on each station. We never find timetables posted in station in China. When we said on the class of Project Management that the transport was always on time, the German students said they couldn't understand. They thought it was not on time and not so convenient. I think it's because they have higher standard on being on time. Once I went to watch an exhibition with a German and an Indian. The German boy arrived on time. I arrived several minutes later. The Indian arrived one hour later. The German told me that was a common situation for Germans, Chinese, and Indians.

Germany have good facilities whose design taking consideration of every group of people. For example, the bus or Tram provides convenience for the disabled people to enter into. There are usually another scroll of paper in the toilet. But when it comes to working time, it is really inconvenient for people. There is a joke that the German staff you are going to visit is always on vacation. Usually the government administrations, school administrations, banks, etc, have certain work time. They are not open on some day some time. In my impression Chinese people work much longer than German people. On weekends I often see German families come out for a walk sometimes with their lovely pets. On weekends some Chinese are still working overtime.

Another general impression of German people is that they have good manners. No matter the staff in the shopping malls or staff in school offices always smile to you and greet you every time. In China even many people who work in the service industry do not show such politeness. The first time I took the elevator with my buddy Katja, someone in the elevator said hello to us. When he left he said good bye. We thought everybody knew Katja. After that we found everyone said hello to us in the elevator, in the kitchen, in the corridor. Then I understood that this is their way to show politeness. In China if people do not know each other they usually do not talk to each other, especially in south regions of China. As long as they know each other, they are more likely to get closer with each other. German people seem not to talk much after their greeting. They tend to keep distances with others. Someday when I was in front of the school canteen asked by some psychology students to take a test. The test participant should tell the tester as long as he or she feels uncomfortable, as the tester is approaching the participant. The test was to find the correlation between the distance you keep from people and the degree you influenced by German culture or the degree you getting into German society. I remember that I said stop when the tester was four to five centimeters far from me. Once in CDK I told a German boy that I thought German people were very polite, he totally disagreed with me. He thought that German people do not like to have conversation

with others. However, I do think that Germans generally have good manners. People here hold the door after they open the door if somebody is behind them, as long as the person behind them is not far away. This action in China would be considered very nice or gentle. On our good-bye party, professor Schmied said that he think Chinese just do not like to pretend they are polite if they do not want to. I agree with him. The majority of Chinese people do not have the concept that having good manners is an indicator of civilization. So they do not feel like necessarily pretending to be polite.

Compared to people from other European countries, German people are more introverted. The Italian and Spanish people are more extroverted. They have rich facial expressions and gestures. In general German people are very reliable. This reliability shows in many aspects of people's lives. In my impression the school staff always reply my emails quickly. There is usually a second roll of paper in the washroom.

## ● **Project Management Course**

### ■ In Class Discussion

I have gained a lot in the discussion on the Project Management course. Under the advices of Schmied, we introduced Chinese names, Chinese pinyin, Chinese cuisine, etc. to students from different regions in the world. They were confused about our first names and last names. I explained to them that our last names are put before last names in China. But in Germany, in order to comply to western rules, we usually put our first names first. We usually have English names, which is also for convenience of western people. Because it is not so easy for them to pronounce our Chinese names. They pronounce them in English way, which sounds funny for us. People who work in a multinational corporation in China usually have English names, which is to comply to the western customs. However, I prefer people call me just my Chinese name "X". My English name "Y" is so common, and can remind people of some American girl, as not only one person told me. Also, "Y" does not look or sound like an Asian name, thus people sometimes ask about my Chinese name. If "X" is pronounce correctly, it sounds just like the English word "she". Some friends are also curious about the meaning of my Chinese name "X". It means "sunshine in the morning", which is much meaningful than "Y". More importantly, it shows my Chinese identity.

### ■ Blogs

Z wrote a blog article introducing in detail Chinese characters and Chinese pronunciation system including "pinyin". She drew some graphics to present the

When professor Schmied asked us what impressed us most. I said the transportation is always on time. The other students complained that the train was not on time. Later I heard a German boy say that the German Railway was always late. Professor Schmied was also interested in the difference between transportation in China and transportation in Germany. So G wrote a blog introducing kinds of transportation in China. H. wanted to introduce something interesting about China, so she wrote about a new festival in China which is called "Single Day". It is because the figure of the day 11, Nov. is like four sticks. In China "stick" also has a meaning of "single man". Young people use this day as an opportunity to express their emotion of being single.

I wrote about Chinese cuisine. On the class, Professor Schmied joked that Chinese eat everything, and he wanted me to write about what Chinese really eat and what were rumors. A Turkish classmate talked about having read about a lucky gift in Chinese restaurant in America. And he also heard that this rarely happens in China. We had never seen that in China before. I guess it is because China has many schools of cuisine and different kinds of customs in different regions. I have heard that most of the earliest Chinese people who came overseas were Cantonese. This custom may come from the Cantonese people, and it was well maintained through history overseas. This custom may not persist now in China. Or maybe it exists but we don't know about it. Then I wrote a blog about Chinese cuisine. I briefly explained why some western people thinks that Chinese eat everything. That is definitely a rumor. But this rumor comes from nowhere. Chinese cuisine culture emphasizes on taking the essence of nature, and believes many things in nature can provide good substances for human body. I think a significant feature of Chinese cuisine is that it is based on empiricism. There are many words indicating different kinds of ways of cooking, some of which have only nuance differences and people can only tell by their experience. I did some research on words of cooking skills and find the English equivalents of them, like "deep frying", "pan frying", "braising", etc, and I drew a gram to present them. Chinese cuisine has a big regional variety because of its long history and vast territory. Different regions have different eating habits and styles. There are mainly eight schools of cuisine. To classify them more briefly, there are four schools of cuisine. I chose two of them, which have totally opposite styles and ideas, Chuan cuisine and Yue cuisine. I selected several typical and famous dishes of these two cuisine schools. Chinese cuisine is very rich. I hoped that I could provide a general idea of Chinese cuisine culture.

English equivalent	Chinese	Description	English equivalent	Chinese	Description
Braising	烧	Raising ingredients over medium heat in a small amount of sauce or broth and simmering for a short period of time until completion. Known as hong-shao (红烧, lit. red cooked) when the sauce or broth is soy sauce based.	Deep frying or frying	炸	Full or partial immersion cooking in hot oil or fat
scalding	焯, 烫	Par cooking through quick immersion of raw ingredients in boiling water or broth sometimes followed by immersion in cold water.	Pan frying	煎	Cooking in a pan with a light coating of oil or liquid and allowing the food to brown.
Gradual simmering	炖	Adding ingredients to cold water along with seasonings and allowing the contents to slowly come to a prolonged simmering boil. This is known in English as double steaming due to the vessels commonly used for this cooking method. The term is also used in the Chinese language to describe the Western cooking technique of stewing and brewing herbal remedies of Traditional Chinese medicine.	Stir frying	炒	Cooking ingredients at hot oil and stirring quickly to completion.

## ■ Events

### ◆ Trip to Dresden

In order to provide more opportunities for students of different backgrounds to exchange their ideas, Project Management course requires us to organize some events together. The first was the trip to Dresden with a German girl, an Iranian girl, a Turkish girl and a Turkish boy. They took us to the Christmas market. We visited some interesting traditional sites like some churches, the palace, the wall of timeline, etc. The Turkish boy introduced some relative history of those sites to us.

Before this trip we four Chinese girls had already been to Dresden and visited those sites. That was not a well-prepared trip. We did not do enough research before visiting those sites of long history. The other group of Project Management course had divided themselves into several sub-groups. When one of the sub-groups sent us their proposal of visiting Dresden, I was not that willing to go, but I really did not want to turn down their first proposal. I was afraid that if we refused it they would feel that we were a little bit picky. I knew it was not so easy to organize a proper event which was easy to implement and also interesting. Then I said yes to them and the other three girls also did so. When they took us to Dresden and found that we had already been there, they were a little bit at loss. Then I explained to them that we did not have a detailed idea about those places we visited. When another

sub-group gave us their proposal and asked about our opinions and we did not reply immediately, they sent us an ensuing email stating that we should tell them our true thoughts. If we were not willing to accept their proposal, it was okay that we refused it then they could make a new one. In this email, they criticized our attitude and implying that we had not conformed to German style. I apologized for it and explained that we did not do that on purpose. We thought it would be embarrassed to go against others' opinions. We just didn't realized such difference between Chinese way and German way of communicating. This incidence was a good lesson to us. Most of the time we should express our opinions and have our own standpoints. We should not necessarily sacrifice our own interests for the harmony of things, which is usually what people do in Chinese society. In this case, it was reasonable to refuse their proposal, and they had the right to be told enough information that includes we had already had similar experiences of the city we were going to visit. Problems could be solved by proper communication.



#### ◆ International Evening & Chinese Evening

The second event was the Chinese Evening, which was organized by our four Chinese girls and the English Club. Before the meeting of discussion with students of other countries, we discussed what were we going to present. We had too many things to introduce. We wanted people know more about Chinese culture, especially Chinese traditional culture that we see as our treasure. We wanted to talk about Chinese cuisine culture, Chinese traditional medicine, Peking Opera, Chinese traditional festivals, Chinese traditional wedding, etc. But the time given to us in the evening was limited since would held the Chinese Evening along with the International Evening in one evening. We finally selected Chinese cuisine, travel in China, paper cutting, traditional musical instruments. I was responsible for introducing Chinese food.

As usual, the Evening should have something to eat that is the most interesting part. We planned to make some typical food in China, and selected three famous dishes in three Chinese cuisine schools, and one dessert. The four dishes are Sweet and Sour Pork, Cucumber Salad, Yangzhou Fried Rice, Sweet Rice Balls. I have done Sweet and Sour Pork before. A German friend said he liked it. So I wanted more people to have a taste of such traditional dish. We managed to buy materials for the four dishes we made under the limitation of money provided by the English Club. The sweet rice balls was a challenge for us. It is a traditional dessert in Chinese Spring Festival. It has a good meaning of gathering together of family members. We really wanted exhibit it to students from other countries. The filling usually is sesame sauce or peanut sauce. But we couldn't find such fillings in Asian Supermarket. So we used chocolate sauce as a substitute. To avoid doing too long a presentation and letting the audience fall asleep, we designed some game, the shuttlecock, which is a very traditional sport, and is good for group play.

On the International Evening, everyone brought one or two dishes of their own country. This Evening began with Chinese Evening. It started with H's introduction of Travel in China. She selected ten of the most famous cities of China, including the capital city, Hongkong, cities that are famous for tourism etc. Those nice pictures showed China's breath-taking beautiful sceneries, and its modern state scenes like the skyscrapers. I was touched by the natural landscapes, and felt proud of my own country when H was doing the presentation. Then came Z's presentation of Chinese paper cutting. Z had intended to ask everyone to cut paper with her, but the lack of money did not allow purchase of scissors. Then she cut some paper as finished work before she came to the Evening. After all the presentations, a German student Pia came to Z to learn the paper cutting. G introduced kinds of traditional musical instruments. I introduced Chinese food. When I mentioned about the rumor that Chinese eat everything, everybody laughed. After our presentations, the other students each introduced the food they brought.

When the buffet time began, everyone was excited and was interested in the food. It was wonderful that I could have a taste of food from so many regions around the world. We had food in the middle east Asia, Iran. We had food from our neighbor country Korea. And food from the southern hemisphere, Brazil; food from Turkey, etc. And there were more German food. I especially liked some traditional German food, with the fresh raw meat on the bread. That was the first time that I ate fresh raw meat. Some people came to me and tell me that they liked the Chinese dish. I guess the most popular of the four was the cucumber salad. Maybe because Germans like vegetable or fruit salads. And in general German people prefer saltier food than Chinese people. The cucumber salad we made that day was of Chuan style, which is famous for its hot spicy flavor, and is relatively saltier compared to some other regions of China, such as Canton area where people have Yue cuisine school. I guess the degree that German people like salty food may be the same with people in northern China. The sweet rice balls were also popular. Jennifer asked us H for the recipe of sweet rice balls.







#### ◆ The Good-bye Party

Before I came home Professor Schmied and Jessica held a good-bye party for us. To our surprise, they invited the girl who did this exchange program last year W and her German husband. She met her husband in CDK. She showed the wedding pictures to us. She and her husband dressed in traditional Chinese wedding costume. She was gorgeous in the red Chinese dress on the picture. Both of their parents supported their marriage. Now she is pregnant. I am happy to see such family which is a combination of Chinese and German culture. Professor Schmied even joked that we could make use of the rest time of one week to find a German boyfriend.

After the dinner, Professor showed his collection of gifts and souvenirs from all around the world. His traveling map shows that he has set foot in many countries in the world. He shows particular interest in Chinese culture. On his office door, there is a Chinese version of his name and title "Professor Josef Schmied". A pair of red couplet is on his office which makes his office door look like a door of traditional Chinese house. On the wall of his office room, there is also some posters of Chinese tea of Yunnan and the Palace Museum in Beijing. He also has some statue from Africa on his desk. It is made of many African kids with big bellies hugging each other together. He is a professor with a broad horizon out of his curiosity about the whole world. That's why he has been sending his students to Southeast Asia and to Africa.

He organized kinds of Evenings of different countries in CDK which makes him well-known. Some of my friends in other faculty know his name because of the Evenings. Thanks to him that we can have the opportunity to study in Germany for a period of time with students from various countries.



### ● **Travel within Europe**

From travelling we have also benefited a lot. It gives me a chance to see the European part of world. I have never thought of that I could have the opportunity to visit those sites and cities I had read on books or on the internet. I have never thought of that I could travel by myself in those countries using totally strange languages to us. I have never imagined that I would meet so many interesting people during our journey.

Thanks to a friend of us who does part-time job as a tourist guide in Germany. He planned the route of our Christmas journey according to the cheapest flight tickets. Our route of the journey was Vienna, Budapest, Milan, Venice, Florence, Rome, Barcelona, Paris. During the journey we found some difference of the German people and people of other European countries. Among the countries we visited, German people are definitely the most reliable ones. Spanish people and Italian people are much more extroverted and passionate. We spent the new year's eve in Barcelona, and experienced how the passionate Catalonia people are. We got twelve grapes from the hostel owner. Eating twelve grapes when the clock strikes at the beginning of the new year symbolizes having happiness the whole year.

Travelling is not just seeing natural sceneries, learning about the humanistic knowledge behind the historical sites, but also about knowing interesting people of different backgrounds Especially those people who helped us in different ways, they may have done something trivial to them, but what they have done have become diamonds in my memory. A still remember an elegantly dressed lady who looked fifty years old but had something in her eyes as an innocent girl. We met her in the metro of Vienna. She came to us and offered help when we were hesitating about our way.

But she led us to the wrong way. Then she admitted that she was also new here. But she could not help helping us. She said that she had a daughter of similar age with us who worked in Africa as a volunteer. She may also need help in a strange place. She was a little embarrassed for leading us to the wrong way so she gave us each a exquisitely packed chocolate. She said that she was looking for a job in the city but she was too old that nobody liked to hire her. When she said this she was like a little girl again. I really wanted to say “you are young, beautiful and charming, not old at all”, but I reserved my words because I was shy to express such direct compliment though they were words out of my heart. When we were in Venice searching the way to our booked accommodation, we asked a pair of couple. They took out their phones to search the way on Google Map as many people we asked for help do, and found the way together with us. Then we thought we found the way and they went on their walking. After they left for some while, they came back and told us that they saw the hostel on their way. I chatted in a hostel in Budapest with two Israeli Russian boys. They invited me to drink hot wine they made. They were born in Russian and were grown up in Israel. They studied science but had much knowledge about other countries of the world, including China. From their words I could know their relatively objective opinions about China.

### ● Summary

Through this exchange experience, I have obtained friendship, broadened horizon, cross-cultural communication skills, and even living skills, etc. Although I have to face the big pressure from finding a job and finishing my M.A. thesis, I am not regretful that I chose to do this exchange program. Coming to a country that was totally strange to me, I had to learn how to communicate with people and how to make friends. I can speak daily German now. I know how to make friends with people of different cultural backgrounds. I have seen an important part of the world, Europe. From some other point of views, I have seen my own country and reflected on our nation. Living in a certain of area for long time would make your thoughts and values fixed on some routines. Being exposed in another culture or even more cultures, gives you more perspectives to think about the world, and your life. During my days in Germany, I have thought about my life and dominant values in China for many times. What kind of life should I lead? Chinese society has less variety in its values comparing to western countries. I thought that I was influenced by western values since I studied English as an undergraduate. Actually it is until now that I really begin to see the world. I believe this experience will benefit me for a lifetime.