

Laura Corrigan `13

August 24th, 2010

The area around EWHA is so cool and perfect for any college girl! It is covered from street to street with people selling all sorts of delicious treats on the street. There are stalls lined with beautiful scarves, headbands, and shoes being sold for prices that seem too good to be true. Once you step into little storefronts, you bow your head down a little and attempt a formal hello in Korean, “Annyeong Haseyo. The hills up and down each block make each street more exciting because you never know what you will find as each hilly block leads to more wonders to be discovered. It is such an adventure each time! I am constantly making mental notes of places to return to and try to remember, but it is impossible!!!

The ECC, the main campus center, is completely underground covered with solar paneled windows making it glow at night. It is a sight to see! It holds anything you could ever imagine in a student center! (Starbucks, phone store, movie theatre, bookstore, cafes, bakery, restaurants, print store, classrooms, study rooms, and traditional sleeping rooms!!!!)

My first outing in Seoul was with a girl I met who goes to EWHA. We took the train to the [Gyeongbokgung](#) palace. I was shocked by the efficiency of the train. It was so clean and there is even wireless phone connection so you can actually talk on the phone while on the train!

The palace was beautiful and in such good condition. I went to the free museum as well and learned about the different dynasties and how the Korean alphabet and language, Hangul, was invented. I got to see the traditional dress and quarters for the royalty! It was all extremely interesting and I loved the cool air of the museum compared to the humidity outside.

What a great first day. All of my previous anxiety and regrets melted away as I had a deep sleep that I needed!

September 28th, 2010

We have a week off of school for Chuseok, Korean Thanksgiving! We decided to fly to the little island named Jeju south of this country. The first day, we drove down to the most southern tip of the island. The terrain was very mountainous and there were numerous shades of blue water everywhere. We stopped at a beach that had such warm cream-colored sand. We returned here the next day lying there waiting for the sun to melt into our skin like butter and kiss us goodnight. I finally felt like I was on vacation. It is weird because I feel like I am on a long vacation in Seoul, but being in Jeju, I finally got to relax and not think about anything at all. I went swimming in the water and swam to the sand bar 25 meters out. The lifeguards are also different here and they talk through megaphones! One kept saying things in Korean and I tried to teach him “Come Close-er!” He kept repeating it and got big cheers from other foreigners once I taught him. It was really funny!

The next day, we went to the only waterfall in all of Asia that lets its cool waters fall into the ocean. We had to walk down this path full of large spider webs between jumbo plants that had stems that reached my waist. We had to grip onto rocks that were slimy and had massive bugs that scurried away at the sight of our bare feet quickly leaping from one rock to the other. The waterfall was magnificently hidden between two cliffs and cascaded between the smoky rocks like they were checkpoints in a race. That



was my favorite day. This island is so tropical and natural with few developments further preserving its beauty.

October 8th, 2010

Last Tuesday I went to my favorite café to do my homework before I left and went to Insadong, another part of Seoul. It is my new favorite part of Seoul. There were many antique shops and beautiful hand crafted stores. I definitely need to return! After this we went to a fish market! We walked down this shady staircase and there were live fish everywhere. Octopus, sharks, stingrays, you wouldn't believe it! People buy the fish and then there is a restaurant right above that cooks it there for you!

The next evening we went to the Han River. It is so beautiful at night. There are fountains and lots of people just hanging out by the river. We bought sparklers and mini firecrackers and set them off by the river. It was so much fun!

The following Friday that I did not have class, I went with my friends to the Seoul National Art Museum. We got lost on the way in the pouring rain. I was soaked and was so cold. We got to the museum and ended up in the contemporary exhibit which was kind of strange and not what I expected. There was a lot about war and political unrest. After this, the weather cleared up and we went to a market right across from the train station. It was so fun and we tried lots of different traditional snacks and teas. There was even a performance on the stage of traditional dancers and singers. We even accidentally ended up in the back stage tent and got to take pictures with all the traditional dresses people. It was a good end to a damp start of the day. I love the quirks and surprises I face every day. I never know what to expect.

November 1st, 2010

We stayed in a Jim Jil Bang! It is a traditional bathhouse. We went our separate way from our male friends and entered this large spa area. Girls get a pink pair of shorts and shirt to wear and boys get blue. This place wasn't like anything I have ever seen! There were Jacuzzis, hot pools, cool pools, freezing pools, and open showers. We all had to go naked which I was a little nervous about at first because it is not that normal to do in our culture but we tried to embrace it. I got a full body scrub for an hour by the old Ajuma's working. They scrubbed all my dead skin off and massaged me from head to toe. I had the most amazing facemask on the whole time that smelled of cucumbers and left my skin feeling like a baby. I have never felt so relaxed in my whole life. Afterward, we showered and then put lotion on and dried our hair. There is even a convenience store in the Jim Jil Bang. We went to the sleeping room upstairs where you sleep on a traditional mat. This whole scene was bazaar. You could sleep anywhere you want, outside the sauna room, in the sauna room, in rooms of different temperatures, in a common room or family room, you name it. It was so strange to see! In the morning there were little children running between us and touching our toes and running away. We were the only westerners there and I think they were surprised to see us! That was such a traditional experience that we couldn't have expected. After we had breakfast in the World Cup Stadium that was above the Jim Jil Bang. It was such a unique and unforgettable event that I know I will laugh when I look back on it.

November 20th, 2010

I know it sounds cliché but time really is flying. I am trying to slow down the seconds, forget to cross off days on my calendar, and remove the batteries from my clock, but nothing seems to work. Of course, now that I am settled I will be leaving so shortly. I don't want to goooo! Since I last wrote on my blog, I have been to a silent rave in a musician park. It was amazing. Everyone had headphones and was listening to music but from the outside you cannot hear anything.

I have also been to my friend Julie's family restaurant again and once again the food was superb. nom nom. I also went with some Korean and International friends to eat seafood. We had Sanache. Live octopus. We had to chew it as it wriggled between the chopsticks. If you eat it without chewing enough it can get stuck in your throat! I am so glad I tried it. (It was delicious surprisingly!) We had oysters and clams and lots of shellfish. It was so much fun and really hilarious to see everyone try all this new food with chopsticks!!

November 24, 2010

Yesterday, we went to the beautiful Seoul lantern festival. They had glowing lanterns on the rim of the bridges and passageways. A rainbow of lights was reflected from the bobbing floats on the stream. The lanterns appeared like glowing fireflies buzzing in the air. It was magnificent. Afterward, we met with all of our friends and went to a norebang (Karaoke). It was really fun and some random Koreans joined us at one point in the room singing with us too! Every Korean person is so friendly and open to invite us to whatever they are doing. It is such a welcoming country! From my days visiting palaces, sipping tea in traditional houses, or just exploring other neighborhoods, it is always an invigorating experience.