



My Internship in

Hong Kong



INTRODUCTION

I was very excited when I arrived in Hong Kong in the end of august 07. I didn't know that much about the city at this time, it was my first time there. I was on the point of discovering a lot of new things: living in a huge city (new for a swiss girl like me!), staying in a residence for students, working in a local office, meeting people, visiting places, trying different kinds of food...

I came to HK to make a 6 months internship in an architecture design compagny. I study architecture in EPFL in Lausanne. After finishing the first graduation called the Bachelor, architecture students have to make 12 months of internship to be allowed to continue the study for the Master grad. I decided then to look for an internship abroad, in order to learn something about an other country, to improve my english and to have some fun of course! I attended the Iaeste presentation organised in my school, and was very interested.

In february 07 I looked for the architecture internship offers on Iaeste website and I applied for 5 of them. When I've been selected for Hong Kong, I felt so amazed! YIPA!!



Living in Hong Kong

THE POLY U STUDENT HALL

Hall, sweet hall... Living in a student hall in Hong Kong is really a very good experience. Sharing a room with an other girl was something new to me, and it was actually very nice. Camelia, my roomy, is from China mainland, and we are good friends now. When you are so far from your home for quite a long time, it's nice not to be alone in your room, and to hear a "hello!" when you come back from work. Of course sometimes a bit more of privacy would be pleasant, but it's also an issue of the challenge: learning to make compromises!

By living with chinese students, I got to know their culture and their activities, that was very interesting. The hall associations, heading by students of the hall, often organise dinner and activities in the common areas. I attended two dinners, and also the games they usually organise afterwards: pretty funny, and also extremely noisy I must say! ;o)

MEETING PEOPLE

Living in the student hall was also a chance for me to meet people, and I've met so many! When I arrived in august, I met the Iaeste students who were still there. Most of them left in september or in november, it was my first "goodbye time" in Hong Kong. I had a lot of fun with them all and I really hope to see them again in Europe or somewhere else.. Who knows? Through them I met Jeff, a local who is now my closest friend in Hong Kong. He introduced me to his friends Bianca, Hester, Konica and Calvin. They are my "local team friends"! Very nice to know local people, they can bring you to all the nicest places and all the best restaurants ever! Then of course, I also met many exchange students from almost everywhere in the world! What an experience!



Living in Hong Kong

CHINESE FOOD

I definitely fell in love with chinese food. Not only with the food, but also with the chopsticks, and the chinese manner to share the dishes. Amazing to try so many different dishes at the same time!

There are so many restaurants in Hong Kong that it's impossible to get bored with chinese food. You can try every day a new restaurant and a new style! Shanghai style, Beijing style, Sichuan style (hot!), and of course cantonese style are the most famous in Hong Kong. For lunch, or tea time, the dim sum is definitely one of the most delicious cuisine I have ever tried.

In HK, you can also find almost all the different asian style, like korean, japanese, thai, vietnamese, indian... I have almost never eaten western style here, and I still don't miss it so far!

HAVING FUN!

Hong Kong is the right place to have fun, especially during the night! Have you ever heard about ladies night? Go to Wan Chai on Wednesday night! Do you wanna see scary people? Or a hundred Santa Clauses in a street? Go to Lan Kwai Fong during Halloween or Christmas! ;0)

Telling about all the crazy nights I had in Hong Kong would be too long, I suggest you to take a look at my pictures!



Working in Hong Kong

MY COMPANY

Simonchee architects is an architecture design company located in central district in Hong Kong Island. In total, 8 people including me work in the office and all of my colleagues are local people, so I was the only foreigner working there. The company is quite small, and it has been a great chance for me to get to know people closer and also to learn about their culture. In addition to the professional experience that I got by working for Simonchee architects, it has been a very rich social experience, during which I learnt a lot about communication, relationships between people and about myself as well.

To help me to understand better Chinese culture, my boss taught me the Fung Shui basic notions. Fung Shui is a very important art in Chinese architecture, and learning about those beliefs was new and very interesting for me. The boss also taught me some Tai Chi Basics, in order to make me try the Chinese peace of mind, and to show me how to relax my body. Very useful, I'll keep practicing!

By working in a local company, I heard Cantonese speaking everyday, but I must admit that I still can't understand it even after 6 months! But now I can sometimes pick up some words, and I'm even able to say a few sentences! Cantonese is a very nice language and I will miss it for sure back to Switzerland, but it is also such a difficult one to learn!



MY JOB

This internship was my first professional experience in an architecture design company. I was very proud to get my first own business card on which was written “architecture designer assistant”.

During the last 6 months I have worked on different projects at different stages of development, so my job was very various. I was also involved in what we called design submissions, which regard actually the checking of technical drawings, and coordination. I had then a lot contacts with different companies and contractors and I really felt involved in the professional world of architecture. Such a good experience for me.

With this Internship, I have achieved all the goals I had for a first professional experience, and even more. I got to know a new culture, a new way of thinking and of course I also improved my english level quite a bit. As you will see through this reading I still make some mistakes! ;o) But it doesn't really matter to me, what is more important it that I feel now much more confident in english.



Hong Kong

Being a tourist in

KOWLOON

Hung Hom: The right place for living: quiet during the night but very active during the day with a lot of restaurants, shops, even cinemas, booling... Hung Hom is also a pretty good location in HK, close to Tsim Sha Tsui and to Hong Kong Island by ferry or bus. I took the ferry every day to go to work, I love traveling by ferry, so nice!

The local transportations in Hung Hom are very good. Many Buses to everywhere and the KCR train can bring you very quickly to the new territories and to Shenzhen.

Tsim Sha Tsui: I really like the Avenue of stars, and the promenade to Hung Hom along the sea side. From there you can enjoy such a great view on Hong Kong Island, which is pretty impressive especially during the night. TST is also a good place for shopping, (Harbour City is the Biggest shopping mall I've ever seen!) having a drink during the night or for dinner (Many restaurants!).

Mong Kok: with its markets and shopping malls, Mong Kok is definitely the shopping place! Be aware, it's getting very crowded in the week end and public holidays! I'm getting so used to the crowd, it's gonna be very strange to be back in peaceful switzerland, in my small and very quiet village...

In Kowloon, I recommend the visit of the Chi Lin Nunnery and the Nan Lian Garden in Diamond Hill. Simply wonderful. Wong Tai Sin Temple is a must seen, very interesting exemple of a temple in a huge city. Kowloon walled city parc is also a pretty nice place to visit.

THE NEW TERRITORIES

If you like hiking like me, then you will love the new territories. I've done many different hiking trips there, and all were good. Some of them were also very exhausting, with so many steps! Making sport in the nature during the week end was just amazing for me. As I'm not used to live in such a huge city, being able to easily go out of the town was great, like a "breath of fresh air".

That's one of the best advantage in HK to me, if you get tired of the city, it's so easy to leave it for a day, to spend some time in the country side, where you can enjoy some fresh air, the nature, the beautiful landscaps and great beaches.

I had a very funny advantage with some other exchange and Iaeste students in the new territories: we went hiking during the day and we planed to sleep on the beach, after having some beers around a fire.. Bad luck, a storm arrived! Pretty difficult to sleep under the rain... So we found a shelter under the roof of a small terrasse in the village closeby. We "slept" there on plastic tables. With the wind, the metal-sheet roof was pretty noisy, and the table were not that comfortable, but we had a lot of fun and it remains a very good memory!

In term of activities I can recommend: Cycling from Tai Wai to Tai O, or in Yuen Long. Visit of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, Che Kung Temple and Tsang Tai Uk Village.



Being a tourist in Hong Kong

HONG KONG ISLAND

The skyscrapers are so impressive in HK island, it was one of the first time of my life I saw such high buildings (I've also been in Singapore before). Central District is the place where I work, so it's also one of the place I know the best. As I always have lunch there, I'm a very good guide if you're looking for a restaurants over there!

As all the exchange students, I know Lan Kwai Fong, Soho and Wan Chai very well! Definitely the places to go to have fun and parties! I had a lot of crazy nights in LKF, which remain very nice memories..

Of course, the Peak is a must seen in HK. I've been there several times to enjoy the beautiful view on Victoria Harbour. Taking the tram is a nice touristic experience as well, but the minibus is much faster!

In the south part of Hong Kong Island, there are also some nice trails for hiking. I recommend the Dragon's Back trail, which is not too tough but the view there is pretty beautiful. Also, the hike finishes in Big Wave beach and I can tell than having a bath in the end of a HK hike in summer is quite pleasant!

Stanley is a nice place to spend a sunday sunny afternoon with friends. The market there is a good place to buy some souvenirs.

I went to the Ocean Parc with my local team of friends for Halloween, it was so much fun! The parc organised a lot of special attractions like ghost houses, and we met many scary monsters walking through the parc.. Wow, Scary! ;o)

THE ISLANDS

Like the new Territories, the Islands are wonderful places to take rest on the beach, to go hiking or to have delicious sea food..

Lantau Island: an other good place for hiking! Tai O village is also a place to visit. You can see there a lot of very funny dry fishes in the market and if you are lucky like I've been, you will see many pink dolphins if you take a boat tour! The Big Buddha is also an interesting place but unfortunately when I went there the weather was so bad that we couldn't even guess the head of the Buddah. A funny experience anyway!

Lamma, Cheung Chau, Peng Chau Islands, are all great for having a walk out of the city and having sea food in the evening.

Tung Ping Chau Island : Going to this Island was an amazing trip! The rocks there are very interesting and make the landscape very special. It's quite long to get there, about 2 and a half hours by ferry, but the ferry is so relaxing, and this Island really deserves a visit!

BEIJING TRIP

During December, I took some days off to go to Beijing, with two exchange students that I met in the Hall. This trip was amazing, we visited so many interesting and wonderful places. Beijing is definitely a must-see in China. As coming back to China for a long travel is in my future plans, I'll go back to Beijing for sure! And I would love to see the olympics there! Amazing new buildings!

MACAU TRIPS

As we had two projects in macau with my company, I went there many times for work, but also for fun with some friends. Visiting the casinos is such an experience, and the portuguese old city is also pretty interesting.

SHENZHEN TRIPS

This city is maybe not the most beautiful one ever, but you can find there cheap shopping, massage, food... The window of the world parc is also funny.

PHILIPPINES TRIP

I went there with my family when they came to visit me in february. Telling about this trip would be very long.. We were in Palawan Island, just two words: Simply Wonderful!



Leaving Hong Kong

CONCLUSION

The 6 last months that I've spent in Hong Kong were just a great and an amazing experience. I learnt a lot about different matters: professional, social, cultural,... I visited so many places, I met so many people, I lived in a very huge city, and learnt to get to know it quite well.

I am really glad of this experience, and for that I would like to thank Iaeste, a very nice association I must say! Iaeste people have always been very friendly and helpful to me when I needed informations and it would have been much more difficult to realise this internship without them.

It's my time to leave now and I feel a bit sad of course, cause I've built a part of life here. But in the other hand, I feel very satisfied within my experience in Hong Kong and I'm also happy to go back home and see all my friends and my family again... I will keep in mind all the memories of my good time here, and I'm sure that everythings I've learnt here will help me a lot in the future.

Thank you Iaeste & Good bye Hong Kong!

See you soon!