

The Circle



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Foreign eyes on Melaka again

By Loong Wai Ting

Ask any student, which one they prefer: long vacations or short trips? Chances are, most would opt for... "Vacations!" The truth is, students prefer to have long breaks outside campus, away from thick textbooks and tedious lectures, and explore their surroundings.

But if you can't have holidays smack in the middle of the semester, then what better way to wind than down a field trip? A trip fuelled with interesting people of different backgrounds, different ethnicity and with different interpretations of what constitutes a good trip.

For the journalism, film and television (FTV) and marcomm (Marketing Comm) major students of the Mass Communications Department at UCSI University, what more could we ask for, when our Associate Dean spearheaded a special one-day tour around the historic city of Melaka.

For the locals, Melaka is where history started. But, through the eyes of the international students, Melaka is not just another ordinary state in Malaysia; it's a place of peace, relaxation, good traditional food and best of all, a place to learn more about local culture in the real sense of the word.

We had five international students in our entourage, three from China and two students from Nigeria. Language was no longer a barrier for them. In fact, simple words like tandas (toilet in Malay) proved not to be a problem for the African students to master!



The film and television majors with their assoc dean

Melaka also boasts its unique Peranakan or Baba Nyonya culture. The visit to the Peranakan Museum managed by the Chans, that was located at Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock, was an eye-opener for both local and international students. If it wasn't for the rushed show around about the museum by our guide, the students would have stayed a little longer asking questions about the colourful, distinctive culture. The guide seemed to be on a tight schedule, while we, on the other hand, had a lot of time to spare!

What's a great trip if food were not on the list, right? So, while in Melaka, 'the gang' was brought to sample local Peranakan delicacies

located just a stone's throw away from the Peranakan Museum. Famous Nyonya cuisines like Ayam Buah Keluak, Ayam Pondeh, Asam Prawns with pineapple, red fish asam pedas and the signature cendol, were all there for the tasting.

Food like gula Melaka and dodol, seemed to interest the students from China.

The shady, small and yet cosy cating places transported us



The students with their assoc dean in the flor de lama museum

back to a time when rich Babas in their splendid tunie shirts and trousers and beautiful Nyonias in their beautifully hand-made Kebayas, walked the street.

Another highlight of the trip was the visit to the Taming Sari Gyrotower. The seven-minute ride seemed a short one for us. The journalism students were busy clicking breathtaking shots from 110 metres above the ground! The FTV students were equally busy and wasted no time capturing the magnificent view on tape.

From the tower, the Flor De La Mar stood majestically amidst century-old buildings that had been converted into business shops. The ship now converted into a Maritime Museum was originally a Portuguese trading ship on its way to Portugal. "It really resembles the one I saw in Pirates of the Caribbean,"

earlier centuries which never failed to amaze students, wholly captured our imaginations.

Apart from enjoying ourselves, the field trip was a great way for us to apply what we had learned in class. If classes are boring, hands-on training while holidaying is the next best way to learn and improve oneself. Besides, this was also a great way to interact and share ideas among us and our UCSI University communities of both local and international students.

We journalism majors are firm believers of St Augustine's famous quote, "The World is a book. For those who do not travel, they read only a page." Our field trip to historic Melaka had been a roaring success for us. It had made our stay at the campus come alive!



The journalism majors with their assoc dean