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2011-12 Postcards

Postcards from Abroad

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## Hong Kong Report 2

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*Hall Life*

A powerful level-8 typhoon just swept past Hong Kong yesterday (September 29) and all the classes were cancelled. Suddenly, Hong Kong, one of the most vibrant cities, was almost dead; most of the public transportation stopped running and all the street markets and malls were closed. The city became deadly quiet, and I surprisingly could see more classmates and floor-mates around the residence halls area. Interestingly, the atmosphere reminds me of the life back in McMinnville, where the town is usually quiet and peaceful and people will not travel too far during the weekdays. On the contrary, the life in Hong Kong in general is all about time and efficiency. The biggest cultural shock that I have experienced so far is the sense of time in Hong Kong. When I walk on the street, every single person is either jogging or running. Similarly, the university students at HKBU are also trying to run ahead of time: students on average go to bed at around 3 and 4 o'clock, it is very common to see a group of dancers practice in the lounge room at 2 in the morning, and the dorm sometimes has events starting at midnight. Likewise, it is rare to see groups of students sitting in the cafeteria and chat for hours, like we always do at Linfield; instead people in Hong Kong often grab the food and finish the meal as soon as possible. Indeed, I am shocked and amazed by their energy level as well as the pace of life in Hong Kong.

Comparing the life in college and university is quite different, namely Linfield vs. HKBU. For instance, it takes me about five minutes to go to classes from my room at Linfield; at HKBU, it usually takes about 20 to 25 minutes by walking to the other campus and takes about an hour by MTR to the Art campus here. Besides, the curriculum at HKBU is distinctive; all of my classes here are 3 hours long but we only meet once or twice a week. There is usually no homework except few readings; hence a larger percentage of the final grade depends on the scores from quizzes and tests. Last but not least, professors tend to emphasize more on group work rather than individual's, such as group presentations and in- and out-of-class group discussions. I suppose this might be a Chinese way of teaching the importance of "other" and the interconnected nature of the web of self. In all, the experience of studying abroad in Hong Kong helps me learn how to live and enjoy my life outside of a college/university "bubble" as a adult in the world.

By Moni Tang