

Journal Reflections and Takeaways by Educators on 2011 Study Tour to Korea and China

I felt so helpless and sad sitting and listening to the research and thinking about what is happening in Lebanon now. It is depressing to see that so little is being done to help these victims, and to see that the world has learned so little about peace and reconciliation. But this is a defeatist attitude which will take me nowhere. Only in finding an action can I hope to make any changes. If I were not in teaching, I think I would despair of influencing anyone or anything.

Jane Campbell

We are now reaching the final steps of our journey in China. The journey has been taxing at times but one seems to get rejuvenated by the amazing stories of a heroic survivor or the passion and perseverance of a justice-seeking individual, fighting for the appropriate compensation and reconciliation. I am so thankful to have received the opportunity to learn about China and its history. China's history is all our history. In the global village we are all connected. We should all be concerned.

Yaw Obeng

My senses were filled with the sickly humidity of the city, listening to painful survivor testimonies, blinded by the graphic artifacts and evidence of the memorial...I was overwhelmed by the wealth of information I could not have known with only my Canadian background. And I was frustrated with how little the international community has faced this issue. Altogether, these emotions have recharged by determination to advocate for peace and reconciliation between Asian countries.

Gaberilla Wong

She is a person, not a subject, not a victim yet a victim. She is not a photograph in a study guide or a research paper or a book. She is not a document. She is an old woman with a painful sadness in her heart. She is frail.

After coming to China and Nanjing, I feel a great responsibility to do something I have been fortunate to come on this trip and receive this knowledge. I can no longer say "I didn't know". I need to find the many ways in which I can pass this information on to others and discover ways to contribute toward a peaceful future. Nanjing can happen to any country. We can't ever assume it won't.

Luz Beatriz Pizano

Humans can be awfully impatient to move towards the future. In our impatience we can forget, miss, or ignore important lessons that will help us when we get there. We can deny uncomfortable facts and believe that we are better off in denial. But denial leads to imbalance no matter how much we collectively hope to move past a traumatic event. This is clearly a lesson we must pass on to our students.

Brent Schieve

The testimonies of great witnesses were "gut-wrenching." Not only did Unit 731 directly impact the lives of those unfortunate enough to be sent there, but it also affected the lives of the family members and even future generations. This place continues to kill innocent people to the present day. How many lives Unit 731 has shattered is beyond calculation?

Robert Smale

It was difficult to listen to Madame Liu's testimony, a former comfort woman. This was not only because of the nature of the victimization but because of her experience and that was particularly difficult to hear... But even beyond that, Madam Liu relayed that the stigmatization was cross generational, being transferred upon her children so that they too have borne social stigma during their lives. It was absolutely astounding to me to see the full reach of the violence perpetrated against these people, to the point that not only are the individuals that were violated still held hostage by the event but so too their descendants - the stigmatization is heritable

Matthew Kavanagh