

Ewha Abroad

Male students at Ewha

By Rhee Jane, Han Jun-hee

Although Ewha is traditionally a women's university, exchange students of all genders are welcome. Out of 19,359 undergraduate students in total, 325 are exchange students. Among these are 44 male exchange students, comprising 13.5 percent of Ewha's exchange students. Two male exchange students shared their stories of attending Ewha.



A journey of experiencing different cultures and diversity of thought

Yu Shi-hao is a 26-year-old senior majoring in linguistics at Shanghai University in China. He is currently conducting research in sociolinguistics, which analyzes how aspects of language construct one's identity. Yu came to Korea in February 2021 and is planning to return to China in December. He resides in the I-House, which he praised as being comfortable and convenient.

Yu explained that since Ewha is one of the oldest universities in Seoul, he believed it symbolizes having the highest standards of female education in Korea. Also, realizing that Ewha is recognized as the best women's university in Asia, he wanted to study abroad at Ewha to expand his knowledge and academic skills. At the same time, Yu hoped to learn more about Korean culture and experience a new life in Korea.

"Before coming to Korea, I wished to experience different cultures, meet students from different countries, and improve my language skills to be a better global citizen," Yu said. "These expectations were fulfilled in Korea as I met students from many different countries, visited Korean historic sites, learned about Korean culture, and studied Korean. These events have led me to a better understanding of the global community."

Yu mentioned that he has visited Gwanghwamun, Namsan Park, Itaewon, Gangnam Lotte Tower, and Han River so far.

He also added that he loves the night view of Seoul.

As a linguistics major, Yu shared his insights on Korean. He remarked that the pronunciation of Korean is exquisite, but there are some consonants that are hard for speakers of other languages to learn. Also, the grammar is different from that of English or Chinese. What Yu found the most interesting while learning Korean is the endless grammatical markers, which make it easy to create new sentences once learned despite the difficulties of remembering them.

Currently, Yu is taking four courses this semester: Beginner Korean, Elementary Korean, History of Human Language, and Language and Culture in the Digital Age.

As a means to learn Korean, Yu is taking Korean language courses, while taking a major course taught in English this semester at Ewha. During his free time, he visits various Korean attractions and art exhibitions with his friends. He also responded that he is now accustomed to the atmosphere of cafes because he has spent lots of time visiting cafes and eating Korean food.

Since exchange students hang out together, Yu has met other students from different countries as well. With face-to-face classes being postponed due to COVID-19, Yu emphasized that the activities of Ewha P.I.E. (Path of International Exchange) has been

more meaningful. As a member of Ewha P.I.E., Yu has had the opportunity to meet students in small groups amid the pandemic. Yu reminisced about eating grilled beef intestines and visiting Namsan Park and a coffee shop in Sinchon.

Yu elaborated that Ewha professors and students are warm and sincere, helping him to solve many difficulties in life and studies. Therefore, as an exchange student at Ewha, Yu said that he did not feel any sort of discomfort about a campus mostly full of female students.

"Outside of class time, professors would ask me about my studies and check if I had any difficulty with the courses," Yu said. "One of my classmates showed me the sights of Seoul during the vacation and informed me about Korean customs."

As an advice to fellow exchange students, Yu recommended taking a stroll in the small garden above the Ewha Campus Complex (ECC), where you can see the most beautiful view of the campus. He also recommended experiencing the view of Namsan Tower and the night view of Seoul from halfway up the campus.

"The biggest charms of Ewha are its diverse student communities, inclusive cultural environment, and rigorous academic requirements," Yu concluded. "I am very happy and honored to have a chance to study here, and I wish the best to Ewha and Korea."



Yu Shi-hao, an exchange student from Shanghai University, loves the small garden above the Ewha Campus Complex (ECC).

Photo by Shen Yu-yan and Juanita Herrera Padilla



Follow your interests and do not be afraid to try new things

Nathan Chiciudean, who will turn 23 this December, just finished his second year majoring in mathematics with a minor in economics at the University of Sussex before deciding to study at Ewha. He arrived in Korea on Aug. 10 and plans to continue his exchange until July of 2022.

Although Chiciudean's major is not closely related to Korea, he always had Korea in mind when enrolling in the student exchange program.

"I just like Korea and in fact, I had a few Korean friends back in England," Chiciudean said. "Koreans are really good at playing the game League of Legends (LOL), which I love playing as well. Also, I like to take care of my appearance and dress up, and the societal atmosphere of Korea is not at all critical about that compared to that of England."

Chiciudean was accepted to Pusan National University as well but chose to study at Ewha because it was located in Seoul. When he told his friends and family about his decision to study at a women's university, he said that they all thought it was quite interesting.

He takes three classes: Linear

Algebra I, Statistics for Economics, and Macroeconomics. All of these classes are held online and surprisingly conducted in Korean as well.

Chiciudean is not fluent in Korean, so he had planned to register for English courses. However, due to a misunderstanding, all of the classes he signed up for were classes taught in Korean. He is working things out with the school, but this is a very important reminder for other international students to make sure to double-check the information about lectures when signing up for them.

Although not fluent in Korean yet, Chiciudean is eager to pick up the language as soon as possible. He also shared the method that works best for him when it comes to learning a new language.

"I want to learn Korean quickly so I am planning to practice it every day for the next couple of months," he said. "Learning from textbooks does not work for me – I just like to jump right in. I tried to make Korean friends in England so that it is easier for me to learn the language. I also recorded my friend saying some short phrases in Korean. I frequently listen to that and repeat so that I get a hold of the

phrase."

Chiciudean is currently residing in a *goshiwon* near Sinchon instead of Ewha's I-House dormitory. Apart from the fact that I-House did not have enough space left for him to stay in, he did not feel comfortable with its restrictions. To him, rules such as being unable to invite people over to dormitories were an unfamiliar concept.

During his free time, Chiciudean likes to hang out with friends. As a member of Ewha Peace Buddy, he has made friends with his Peace Buddy leader and some friends of hers. Hongdae and Itaewon are the places he usually goes to spend time with them.

"Since all my classes are online, I have not gotten a chance to meet many Ewha students in person," he said. "Making new friends through Ewha Peace Buddy and with people at *PC bangs* who play LOL have been my only options."

He hopes for the pandemic situation to improve so that more opportunities for international students to meet Ewha students open up.

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Nathan Chiciudean, a third-year student from the University of Sussex, studies mathematics and economics at Ewha. Photo by Han Jun-hee