



**Executive Master of Arts for
Family Entrepreneurship | eMA FESH**

**International Learning Expedition 2015
Japan & Taiwan**

**Friedrichshafen Institute for
Family Entrepreneurship | FIF**
Zeppelin University, Germany

Japan August 22 – 30, 2015

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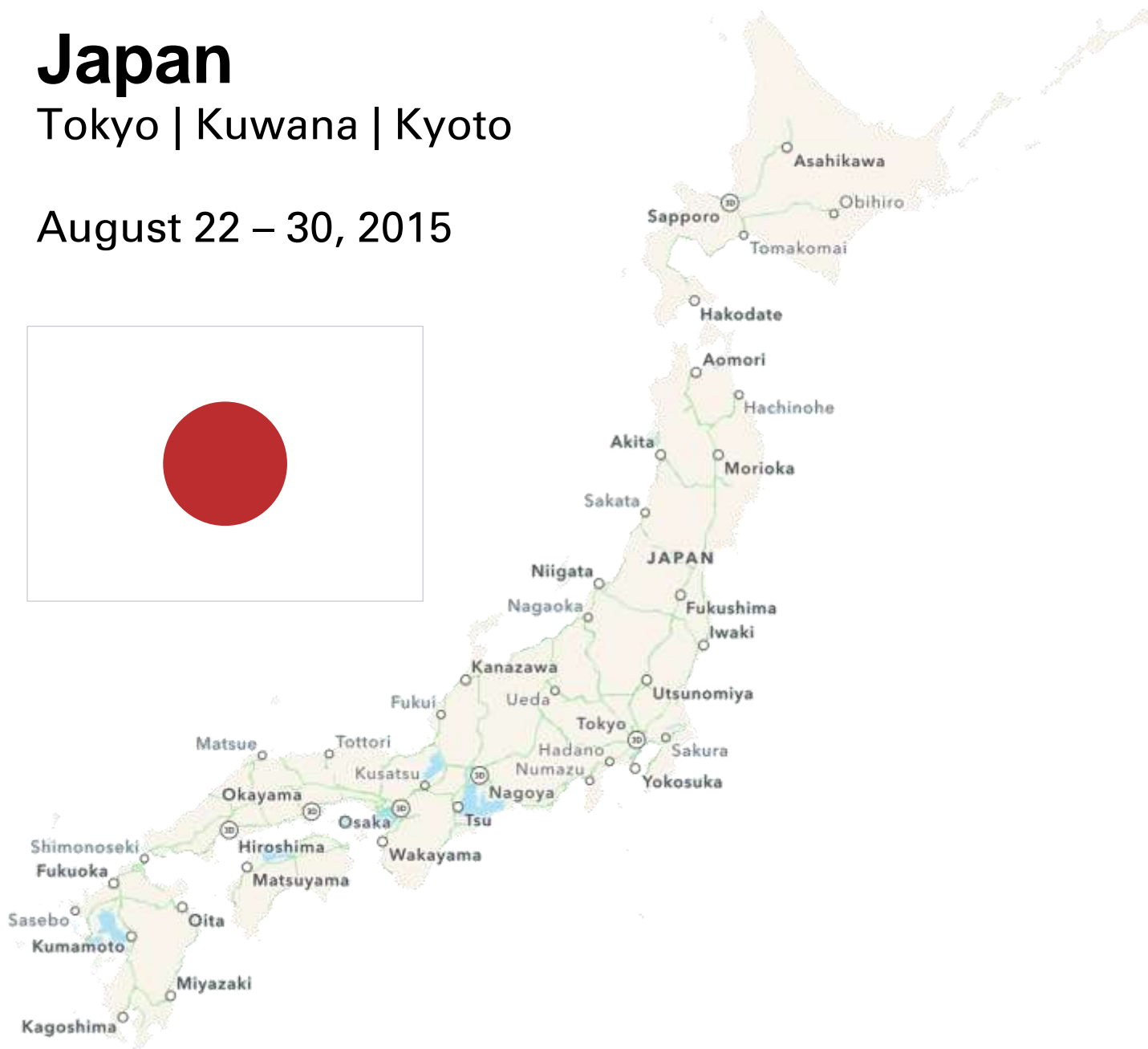
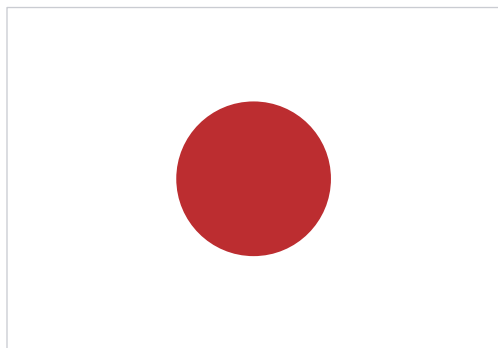
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Japan

Tokyo | Kuwana | Kyoto

August 22 – 30, 2015



German Embassy

Japan | August 24, 2015

The German Embassy in Japan gave us the opportunity to experience both the differences and similarities of Germany and Japan in the political, economic and social context. In the situation of being a successor in our own family business, the meeting in the German Embassy gave us a deep insight into various facets of Japan and its economy. Mr. Schuldt and Mr. Sickert showed us the chances and difficulties of Japan to succeed in the global market and the hard work behind it. In Japan, there are a lot of family businesses which have been existing for hundreds of years. We learned a lot about the demographic change in the society and the technological progress during the last decade. Another important topic was the philosophy of continuous improvement which is anchored in the society and the economy. Large projects like the Olympic Games in Tokyo in 2020 or the robotic strategy were deeply discussed. Controversial topics like the accident in Fukushima or the 20-year lasting recession were also in the focus of the meeting. We would like to thank Mr. Schuldt and Mr. Sickert for their openness to answer all our curious questions. (Patrick Settele)



Nihon Almit Ltd.

Japan | August 24, 2015

Our visit at Nihon Almit Ltd., a solder manufacturer from Tokyo, was the first visit to a Japanese company for us. We visited the solder wire and paste production as well as the R&D center. We also got the chance to have a discussion with the company's President Makato Sawamura, who told us some anecdotes about how he stepped into the family business. At the beginning, we were picked up by Yasuhiro Nishiyama and Takeru Nomura at the German Embassy in Tokyo. We were invited to an excellent traditional Japanese restaurant a little bit outside of Tokyo. It was enlightening for us to experience the great hospitality from Nihon Almit and every one of us was speechless about the wonderful food for lunch. After lunch, we visited the production and R&D center and it was very interesting for us to see how much energy is dedicated to quality management by Nihon Almit. Not only in the production area, even in the R&D laboratory, it was obvious how much effort is put into quality and service for the customers. Our visit to Almit left every one of us inspired and gave us a truly added value, which we can transform into our own family businesses in Germany. (Fabian Mendel)



PERI Japan K.K.

Japan | August 25, 2015



At PERI Japan K.K., we talked about the difficulties and opportunities of a German company in Japan. In the fragmented building sector, they work with general contractors to get a wider scope in the market. In the beginning, they had to analyze the market to be able to choose the best business model. In fact, the standards for foreign companies in Japan are much higher than for domestic companies. After years of learning how to collaborate effectively with the traditional carpentry companies and struggling with the regulations in the constructing industry, now PERI K.K. belongs to the TOP 20 companies in the Japanese building sector. After our appointment in the head office, we visited the building site of the new harbor of Tokyo. The area is characterized by unbelievably clean and quiet building sites which was very impressive for us. We would like to thank Ms. Arai and Mr. Leiminger for the opportunity to visit PERI Japan and for all the insights they gave us and for the fabulous dinner we had one day after with Mr. Leiminger. (Patrick Settele)

Family Business Network

After experiencing a tour with an all-time smiling monk through the Zojō-ji temple in the middle of Tokyo, which has been organized by the Family Business Network, we also had the chance to take part in a traditional Japanese tea ceremony. Afterwards, we were taken to a building called „Hollywood Beauty Plaza“, where we were expected by even more FBN members.



The appointment started off with a presentation by Prof. Dr. Goto from the Japan University of Economics on the topic „Overview of the Centennial firms in Japan“, which left us with a lasting impression about the long tradition and the consistency of Japanese family firms. Then, Mr. Muramatsu held a presentation on the topic „Innovating my Company“. Mr. Muramatsu is an adopted successor of the family firm „Maruhachi Muramatsu, Inc.“, of which he is the President today. We had been aware that it must be something typical for the Japanese corporate culture to adopt successors to secure the existence of the family firm, but it was extremely interesting to get this proofed by someone who is an adopted successor himself. Also the fact that Mr. Muramatsu prefers the mere preservation over the growth of his company illustrates a maybe typical Japanese mindset that we encountered several times during our trip. Subsequently, we had the chance to participate in a Q&A session, where the most interesting topics were caught up again. Closing up with a typical Japanese buffet and an open talk with other family entrepreneurs, we left the appointment with great impressions and new ideas.



(Achim Eckert)

Nippon Oil Pump Co. Ltd.

Japan | August 26, 2015



During the Learning Expedition to Japan and Taiwan in August and September 2015, we also visited Nippon Oil Pump Co., Ltd.'s Headquarter in Tokio. NOP is one of the leading companies in the fluid power industry with the potential to become the number one niche player in the industry. With its unique trochoid pumps, NOP is already an international market leader. During the discussion about how business in Japan works in general and especially about the importance of family businesses for the country's economy, we learned a lot about mergers and acquisitions. NOP was founded in 1919 as a family business and has been sold by the owner family in 2004. Since then, three private equity funds owned the company. Finally, in 2013, the Wendel group from France purchased NOP and indeed acts as an owner with long-term orientation. Mr. Nakao himself has a lot of experience in leading businesses and developing them to profitable companies. His working experience is very interesting and helped us to learn more about the context and running businesses with a private equity owner.

(Barbara Rührup)



Victorinox Japan Inc.

Japan | August 26, 2015

During our Learning Expedition, we also got the chance to visit Victorinox Japan Inc. which is a subsidiary of Victorinox AG in Switzerland. In the industry, Victorinox belongs to the sole supplier of multi-purpose knives to the Swiss army. Furthermore, it is the biggest manufacturer of pocket knives in the world and they have a substantial line of luxury watches, apparel, and travel gear. During the meeting, we discussed the topic of how general business in Japan works. The students learned a lot about the challenges and opportunities of setting up a foreign subsidiary in Japan. We gained an invaluable insight into the Japanese working culture and on how to establish and maintain such a culture in Japan, if you are a foreign business.

(Beat Röthlisberger)



J. Walter Thompson Japan

Japan | August 27, 2015

J. Walter Thompson is one of the world's best-known marketing and communications agencies, which is developing advertisement and brand strategies for more than 150 years. With more than 200 offices in over 90 countries, JWT makes it possible to find the right solution for each culture. For example, JWT identified the opportunities in the Japanese habit to celebrate everyone and everything and created a chocolate greeting card for the start of university with Nestlé KitKat. The meeting with JWT's Senior Planning Director Hironaga Yai, and Digital Business Director Marco Koeder provided us with great insights into the Japanese culture and thinking. The potential of innovation was and still is a huge opportunity for Japan. Up to now, most of the innovations are just for the Japanese market. Cultural barriers prevented success beyond the country's borders. But step by step, the mindset is changing. The government, universities, companies and the young generation have started to understand that it is essential to cultivate an open attitude towards different things and people. A change is necessary and the future could be even more successful with the great knowledge towards technology and engineering. (Ann-Kristin Müller)



Maruyoshi Fishry

Japan | August 28, 2015



Being invited to a small family firm at the countryside of Kuwana, Japan, we experienced the complete opposite compared to the companies we had visited in Tokyo. We were guided by Mr. Mizutani through the little venus-mussel manufacturing company. He is leading the family firm in the fifth generation. His son has started working in the business some years ago. Therefore, we had the rare chance to speak to both generations of the family business.

It was surprising when Mr. Mizutani told us that the main aim he set for his family firm is not growth but much more the preservation of the family business over a long time horizon. He also said that his company is operating in a small but highly competitive environment where many fishers had to close up their firms because of the retrogressive gain from the sea. He is happy to be one of the remaining fishers in Kuwana. Remarkable also was the fact that 4 of the 12 employees were workers from China. There is a governmental program in Japan that conveys Chinese workers to Japanese companies for a certain time period. This was especially interesting after hearing about historical issues that Japan had with China in the past few hundred years. The appointment finished with a warm farewell and small hand-made Japanese presents.

(Achim Eckert)

Taiwan

Taichung | Taipei

August 31 – September 4, 2015



Atlantic Chef International Co., Ltd.

Taiwan | August 31, 2015

Atlantic Chef International Co., Ltd. is a Taiwanese knife manufacturer and exporter. Funded in 1975, the family firm has been successfully established over 30 years. The knife production of Atlantic Chef started 30 years ago as an OEM company in a garage. At that time, the Taiwanese market boomed. Some years later, Atlantic Chef established an own brand and an own sales office with the ambition to create a premium knife brand in China. In the meantime, the company has grown to 170 employees. The former Taiwanese competitors are no longer in the market and Atlantic Chef is now the only knife producer in Taiwan. Atlantic Chef is using only German quality steel and in combination with advanced production methods, it is their success formula.



We were cordially received during our visit in the Taiwanese main office and the knife production facilities in Taichung. We had the opportunity to see the production facilities that were shown to us by the CEO's daughter. Afterwards, we had a discussion with the two brothers leading the family company today. They pointed out that they count on long business relationships with personally known partners as well as on trustful and continuous cooperations. We were impressed by the level of professionalism and the open attitude with which the owner family received us. (Lotte Leuze)



KPMG is a large international professional service firm that offers audit, tax and advisory services. KPMG has member firms that operate in over 155 countries around the globe. A key takeaway from the meeting at KPMG in Taipei is that great R&D spending within a country does not automatically lead to innovation and hence economic growth. Even though Taiwan is spending a comparably high percentage of its GDP on R&D, its R&D output ratio is very low. A key contributor to the R&D output ratio and hence innovation are start-ups. However, these often require support in financial terms as well as business and technical experience, which they lack in Taiwan. As a result, KPMG engages in a so called “TechVenture Club”, a start-up accelerator, to provide start-ups with funding as well as mentoring.

Another interesting takeaway from the KPMG meeting was clearly to hear about how it is not unusual for wealthy Taiwanese men to have several women, with several children. As a result this may lead to a highly complicated succession process in family firms once the senior passes away. (Moritz Meyer)



Serve the People Association

Taiwan | September 1, 2015



We had the chance to visit a migrant shelter of Serve the People Association (SPA) outside of Taipei. SPA is an organisation and a platform that helps migrant workers from Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines to fight against terrible working conditions some of them face on a daily basis in Taiwan. Led by Lennon Ying-Dah Wong, a passionate Taiwanese social worker, SPA offers migrant workers a temporary house while providing them support in finding new jobs and assisting them with legal issues such as changing the employer or applying for another work permission in Taiwan. Currently, SPA manages three shelters in Taiwan, one of them is situated south of Taipei accommodating 33 Filipino migrant workers. In their living room, we met Lennon and around 15 extraordinary Filipino migrant workers, who openly discussed the situation they are currently facing: the fact that they had left their country due to economic reasons to support their left back families and the daily exploitation by their employers. We were very privileged to meet them, to get a clear understanding and a feeling on their working and living conditions in Taiwan. (Linda Lehner)



Get together: Start-up scene

Other than experienced during the first week of our international learning expedition in Japan, start-up drinks with Manuel Edghill and others active in the Taiwanese start-up scene has been a more informal meeting. The meeting turned out to be a get together and networking event with round about 23 young entrepreneurs running either their own start-up or being part of the succession process of their family businesses. Accordingly, several conversations within the group occurred without following a structured agenda. Talking to entrepreneurs such as Foodpanda's CEO (Rocket Internet), Taiwan was confirmed to be very start-up-friendly and an emerging economy in general. Because of this reason, Taiwan has a very interesting business environment for international young professionals and even Taiwanese who grew up abroad, are more and more heading back to their origins. According to the attendees' opinion, South East Asia in general has a huge potential because of economic growth and large populations. In the end, we experienced a very informative evening with international young entrepreneurs. (Jonas Beck)



HTC Corporation

Taiwan | September 2, 2015



HTC is a publicly traded organization and a manufacturer of smartphones and tablets based in Taiwan that employs ~16,000 employees (excluding outsourced labour) and generated US\$ 5.8 billion in revenues in FY14. HTC's income amounted to US\$ 20.7 million in FY14 following a significant loss in FY13.

At HTC, we received the opportunity to learn about their research & development as well as their newest products. HTC produces and sells state-of-the-art hardware and may be seen as a pioneer for several of the newest technologies within the mobile phone industry. The meeting has also highlighted the importance for promotion of brands and their new products. HTC is still in the process of creating an emotional brand in several markets to compete with established strong brands such as Apple.

In addition to the discussion, we had the ability to see the state-of-the-art production of HTC, which is equipped with a high number of robots to assemble the hardware and to test it. HTC invests a significant amount into continuously automating their production facility. Due to their manufacturing capabilities, they also produce hardware for other brands. (Moritz Meyer)

SHL Group

Taiwan | September 2, 2015

On our trip through Taiwan, we had the possibility to visit SHL (Scandinavian Health Limited) which is currently the world's largest privately-owned designer, developer and manufacturer of advanced drug delivery systems. Followed by a very interesting presentation of the company founded in 1989, we visited the production facilities. The plant tour guided us through the molding, assembly and toolmaking departments. For our group of young family entrepreneurs, it was a great experience to see the high quality production in combination with the fulfilment of the hygienic requirements in the pharmaceutical industry. We perceived SHL as a very modern, innovative and efficient company. At the end of our visit, we got the chance to have a discussion with Mr. Ulrich Faessler, the Managing Director of SHL. The challenges of doing business in Taiwan, the SHL story and a lot of other interesting topics were highlighted. The whole visit was a great, inspiring experience to everyone of us and offered new and exciting perspectives. We received a very warm welcome and enjoyed our stay a lot. Therefore, we would like to express our special thanks to Catherine Sa, Vivi Huang, Ulrich Faessler and all the others who made this possible. (Roman Roggermaier)



Joe Henley

Taiwan | September 2, 2015



Joe Henley as a freelance writer and editor specializing in music, travel, sports and lifestyle moved to Taiwan almost 10 years ago in order to strive for a life-changing experience. Growing up in Canada, he suffered from a lack of self-confidence in his youth, but Taiwan helped him to develop a completely new and self-confident personality. Meeting up with Joe was very informal with a relaxing atmosphere in the park. Living in Taiwan and in the middle of the Taiwanese society for more than 10 years now, Joe also learned about Taiwan's downsides on which he also writes about in his song texts, publications as well as in his debut novel. Guest workers treated in a way that reminds of slavery and multiple marriages for Taiwanese men is just a limited selection of mostly obscured issues in Taiwan. Being a very interesting personality, he gave us another insight in the Taiwanese society and is a great example for how a single decision can completely change your life. (Jonas Beck)

Taiwan Display Inc.

Taiwan | September 3, 2015



Our meeting at TDI (Taiwan Display Inc.) in Taipei was very enlightening. We were invited to the TDI headquarter in Taipei and met Jeff Hsu, President of TDI, who told us various anecdotes of his career in the smartphone business. TDI, a subsidiary company of JDI (Japan Display Inc.) is one of the biggest LCD-Display suppliers in the world. With more than 16,000 employees, they are producing displays for customers like Apple, Samsung and BMW. For our group of young entrepreneurs, it was a truly added value to listen to Jeff Hsu and his experiences in the display and smartphone business. Especially the discussion about the fast changing smartphone market and future projects was very exciting for all of us while we got to know many new future innovations around LCD-Display production and smartphone republications. Another very interesting point was to discuss about the differences between the Taiwanese and Japanese culture and their way of doing business. Still after the meeting, our group was discussing many aspects which we just heard from Mr. Hsu. Every one of us learned something from this meeting at TDI in Taipei, which we can transfer to our own businesses in Germany. (Fabian Mendel)

Plastron Precision Co., Ltd.

Taiwan | September 3, 2015



At the end of our International Learning Expedition, we visited the company Plastron Precision Co., Ltd. in Taiwan. Next to the production of board to board connectors, Plastron develops memory cards and HDMI. We had the honour of meeting with the Plastron owner family to get impressions of what it means to run a business in Taiwan. The meeting was locally organized and managed by the CEO's daughter, Zoe Chen. She did an amazing job of planning a perfect agenda for us. First, she presented general information about family businesses in Taiwan. This made a discussion about the differences regarding German family firms possible. Moreover, Zoe's speech provided us with a lot of insights about the political, economic and societal background of Taiwan. After an enjoyable break, we shared our personal experiences about how succession takes place in our family businesses. At the end of the meeting, and before a delicious dinner, everybody of us got an individually and lovingly chosen present from Plastron. It was a pleasure for us to meet Plastron and therefore, we would like to say thank you again for your warm hospitality. (Anne Helweg)

A black and white photograph of a hand holding a small paper boat on a body of water. The boat is white and has the word 'ENTREPRENEURSHIP' written on it in black, capital letters. The water is dark and has ripples. The hand is in the upper left corner, and the boat is in the center. The background is a blurred view of the water and the hand.

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