



Taiwan 2017 Visit

Te Aroha To the World

10 DAYS OF LEARNING TO BE GLOBAL

A Study in Mindfulness of Others

by Heather Gorrie - Principal

Executive Summary We visited 6 schools in 10 days traveling with Waihi College hosted by Waihi Academy.

We were treated as special guests of the Taiwanese education sector. We were offered the most amazing and respectful care I have ever experienced.

We met so many incredible and passionate people who believe we have much to offer them from our knowledge of change-focused education. Our curriculum document was praised as a model of potential for their own desire to create self determining quality educational practice.

We were reminded of the power of people and the critical view of what can be created when we are mindful of others and planning educationally to create better people.

We have secured additional groups for 2018

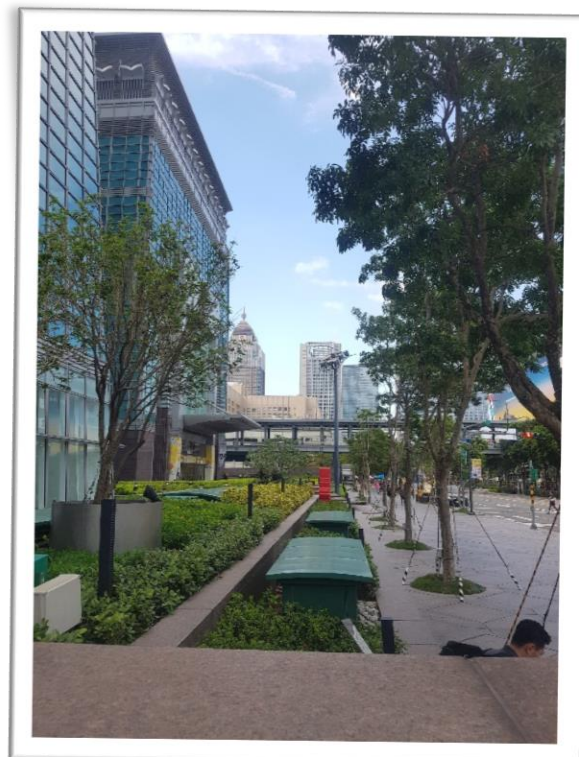
We have the opportunity to explore the possibility of student and teacher exchanges providing our own students and staff with the chance to travel to Taiwan and attend the schools we visited as their students visit us.

We were able to establish a working relationship with Jasmine from Waihi Academy based on mutual respect and understanding. She was a pleasure to work with and we have great respect for her talents as an educator, business woman and translator. As a role model, she was even more incredible modelling the true essence of moving between worlds as a global citizen.

The trip was an exhausting schedule of 12 to 14 hour days but profoundly interesting and has the potential to provide us with a new educational dimension for our students that supports them becoming global citizens in the truest sense.

We learned a great deal, experienced even more and are richer people for being reminded that mindfulness of others is the greatest understanding we can teach our own New Zealand students going forward if they are to be successful global citizens.

This may well be the opportunity to make Te Aroha College GREAT as we grow to a greater understanding of globalization.





Our Days in Detail

Day 1

The flight was long, a bus with wings with a stop in Brisbane. It never ceases to amaze me how we can get on a tin bird in the evening and arrive the next day in a different time and space. A space where we were collected by our drivers and the group photographer. This signaled the start of a very different experience than your tourist visit.

My expectations of Taiwan were all based on my knowledge of Hong Kong. A concrete jungle crammed onto an island. How else would 23 million people fit onto an island that is less than a quarter the size of our own North Island. As we arrived in the early light of dawn on Saturday morning I was surprised to see a green oasis looming up out of the gloom. Taipei rose like the mountains behind it as we flew in. Not however, the claustrophobic confines I had expected but a sprawling modern city full of green, wide streets and tree filled parks. The temples stood quietly in the hills as onlookers to modern wealthy city scape.

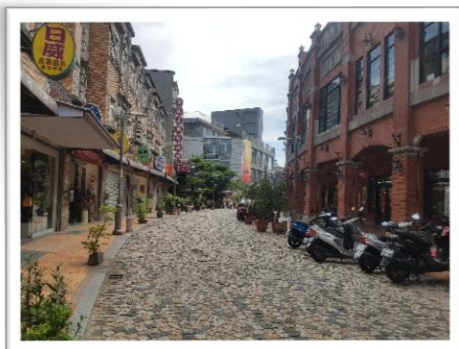
I was struck by highly modern roadways and motorways and very limited pollution and as we moved to the suburban streets an entire city transport system based on the humble motor scooter. Taipei was clean, green and modernised. The hotel sat next to a school. A well funded beautiful school where the state provided for all. There were no homeless and within the city blocks were extensive gardens and allotments all growing food. The city was strikingly clean, no rubbish, no graffiti and a feeling that old was rapidly being replaced with new like a carpet of change rolling over a historic landscape. It took looking close to find the influences of historic Asian architecture. Instead, tower blocks rose up as

planned communities in their own right, complete with parks, gardens, shops and cafes. Each area developed as a self contained and functioning community. What also struck me was the peaceful and respectful nature of drivers, the people, everyone, true mindfulness of others. Although congested everyone moved freely without inhibiting anyone else.

As we toured the old city the shopping areas were not market style but newly constructed cobbled streets surrounded by green trees and gardens reminiscent of European towns but filled with Taiwanese and Chinese treasures and cafes devoted to selling tea.

We then moved on to Taipei 101 and into a financial district reminiscent of a utopian film set or in a darker respects Gotham city in the daylight. The big banking world names adorned each building and each building in its own right was an architectural masterpiece. Wide streets with bands of green and tree lined ways. This cityscape could have been anywhere in the world. Pristine and clean and all developed in the past 20 years, it became easy to see where the wealth of Hong Kong went as it was returned to China. The city view from the top of the tower showed the breath-taking expanse of Taipei neatly fitted in the terrain.

Dinner was across town with friends and business associates of our party. A community affair in a local restaurant. A beautiful meal was provided of local vegetarian dishes. We were honored guests and an eight course meal rolled out all served with local tea. Communities here are built on beautiful meals where there is time to share. Cultural celebration and maanakitanga through food and togetherness. This was another reminder of how the art of mindfulness of others was portrayed and how a culture of business communities were built through interrelationship. From this event we were offered the opportunity to go to South America to visit another global language school run there by the same business group.



DAY 2



In contrast day two began and the national museum viewing the Chinese Treasures collection of porcelain and jade from each of the great dynasties of China, summed up best by a time line that showed China's continued world influence from well before any western civilizations rose. It also showed a culture of regeneration and maybe provided an explanation to the very nature of the regeneration of what we had seen from the rooftop '101' of Taipei.

This was broken by a two hour formal lunch at the museum with the first of our schools. In an incredible multi course meal in a special room in the restaurant, we were treated to the most incredible meal of local foods. This gave a greater insight into the importance of sharing over food and making time to appreciate that a meal was something far more for the Taiwanese and encapsulated an entire culture and history. I was clearly reminded of what we have lost in our busy lives dictated by the unnecessary rushing of time. Talk was of schooling systems and comparisons of educational beliefs and most importantly the hope of a shared desire for educational improvement. The Principal's son presented a different dimension as he was finishing a compulsory four month military service for boys only and was about to embark on University in New Zealand.

A return to the museum lead us to the 'Jade Cabbage'. The greatest treasure in the museum. Ironic that such a humble vegetable should hold such importance, but as the staple of a people it held far more significance than the surrounding beautiful porcelain treasures.

We were then taken to the residence of Chiang Kai Shek, an unusual contrast to the past histories as a modern troubled history of Taiwan was revealed.

Then it was a tour through the night markets and the city life at night. Equally as safe and peaceful there were very few Europeans and this was more the stereotypical view of an Asian city full of sights sounds and smells.



cycling around the island and walking across it We were provided with a tour of a breath taking campus where money was no object. We were also offered the opportunity to select and send our own students to this school on scholarship and the hope of reciprocal visits. The potential of flight and dive school was of significant interest as was our out door programmes and interest day where curriculum could be taught in contextual ways. Our front-end curriculum values and the way in which we developed this aspect of teaching and learning was of critical interest as the Principal clearly sought to shift his school from a pressure cooker environment of examination to one where student worth was also measured by civic contribution. The term GREAT set around

Day 3



As we drove to the first of the schools high in the mountains above Taipei we were greeted by newly formed suburbs set in the trees of highly priced housing. All architecturally modelled on influences from around the world. The school itself was set on a mountain side. Kang Chiao was ostentatious and modelled off English aristocratic schools. It was an unexpected sight and the first of many surprises through our education tour. Hosting over 2000 students, the International school focused on similar values to our own of crating well rounded young people. The centerpiece in its curriculum was a series of annual year level based outdoor adventures. These included a mountain trek, a swim across sun moon lake,

the school represented their core values. **Global Participants, Responsible Citizens, Effective Communicators, Active Achievers and Thoughtful Leaders.** We were again provided a beautiful lunch and a great deal to consider from this visit.

We then went on to the second of our presentations where we met a class of teacher trainees at the local university. We got to hear the story of a teacher trainee who had been hosted at Thames High School. We presented our school videos and our curriculum design and completed a question and answer session. This was a very different view of education but showed the reverence and importance of teacher training in Taiwan and the very Global view they hold.

The evening was spent in the next province meeting our Guide and Translator's family. This was an incredible eye opening visit as we were given a tour of the allotment garden that kept the family sustained and provided a way of appreciating and understanding Jasmine's own life journey. The meal was again a traditional vegetarian event of time and tea.

The accommodation was on the top floor of the university and provided an extensive view of the surrounding city. Once an



industrial city now a tech city responsible for most of the world's cell phone componentry it was in a full state of regeneration.

DAY 4

The day began with a cultural welcome at The Principals school. We had met Mai last

gifts. Again we were made very welcome and we will host students from this school in 2018.

Lunch was in the mountains where we were joined by Mai and the next principal we were meeting. The second school of the day was a special character school with a curriculum designed on the study of tea. This was a 50 student school well off the beaten track in the highlands. We were again treated to warm welcome and a full tour of the school and we signed sister school agreements. Through an interpreter students asked questions about New Zealand and they too will be visiting us in 2018. We were treated to a full tea ceremony hosted by the students and their tea master and



term when she had visited New Zealand. A junior high of around 600, this was the local school where our translator had attended as a child. We were welcomed as honoured guests with a series of cultural and modern performances. We toured the school and were greeted with a 'Kai ora' by every class. Although in contrast to the first school attended this was a standard state school. Technologically strong, every classroom was wired with teacher voice speakers, smartboards and computers. The back drop was rice fields and suburbia. We completed a question and answer session with the 20 students who were learning English. We gave a full presentation of our schools and our curriculum and signed sister school agreements and exchanged



at 37 degrees it was a very different world from Te Aroha.

We were then hosted by the local bread maker who had established a community business that supported the locals with skills and trades. Culturally much of what we were seeing was similar to Maori desire within New Zealand for a self determining education system that valued traditional culture as a strong function of educational success. The local bread shop was a pivotal part of creating futures and valuing people.

We were again afforded yet another beautiful meal in the city.



The next day started with a bullet train ride to Kaohsiung. With a cruising speed of 285 km per hour this was an incredible way to essentially travel the length of Taiwan. As Taiwan was celebrating the Moon festival it was a day where people were out and about and not at work. We had lunch with the next Principal and Mai who had gone to school together and then we were taken to our hotel.

Up 36 stories our room looked out over Taiwan's second biggest city and the view was enough to stop any New Zealander in their tracks, as was the sign that said in case of fire use the parachutes provided! In what turned out to be the one and only 2 hour block of free time we were taken to a local mall and escaped to the waterfront in search of a decent view of the second highest building in Taiwan. The local pet shop on the way provided an entertaining stop as it was clear we were very much in a different world. Again we walked on safe wide streets through parks and clean environments. Very different from our own cities in New Zealand.

Dinner was a buffet where we met the next school leader from the south. A very enthusiastic man, Joe, even with broken English communicated a world of education that he was utterly passionate about.

Day 6

We began the day at a senior high school in the city. This was a specialist trades school offering a wide variety of trades education to 10,000 students. The facilities were astounding offering modern trades training with the latest technology on a major scale. Again we presented to a group of 200 students seeking to travel abroad before heading south. We also were shown a presentation from a group of students who visited New Zealand.

In one of the few conventional western meals, we had lunch at a small café where vegetarian pizzas were served. This ironically was a welcome change to eight course meals.

After lunch we visited Ping Tung County Lai Yi High School. As an indigenous southern school this was quite different from what we had seen. Catering to 600 students this school focused on supporting indigenous culture as a key part of its curriculum. Greeted at the gate with a full cultural performance and smoke ceremony this was a welcome like no other. We met with regional ministry representatives and school leadership and looked at how our cultures have an historic link back to the voyages of

Maori. The time was concluded with a sister school signing ceremony and exchange of gifts. Student question and answers finished off the visit.

Dinner was held at a local restaurant where we again met local officials and worked on how we could work profitably together in the future.

We were then transported to the summer house of one of the business associates of the Waihi Academy. This was in itself a cultural experience as we found a paradise in the mountains in what was far more than a Kiwi batch. We experienced hospitality beyond belief and woke up at the foot of the Taiwanese mountains in the most beautiful environment. Breakfast was fit for queens and we were soon back on the road. Wild monkeys on the roadside were a treat for New Zealanders much to the mirth of our driver and photographer. Duck farms however proved elusive.

Day 7

We were taken to an indigenous park in the mountains and treated to a history of cultural development. Interestingly many of the stories paralleled our own Maori culture as did the local dialectic. The show was impressive but not as impressive as the welcome we had received from the local secondary school. We were then whisked off to an enviro primary school and were guests of the students as they showed us their school and welcomed us with songs and local cultural dance. Proudly explaining that they produced all their own power and this ran their school we were toured through. We were then treated to local coffee. On the way back to the summer house we were guests of another of the associated businessmen supporting the Waihi Academy. This was a tea ceremony in the most amazing of treasure rooms in his private residence. We then returned for a second night in the summer house and had yet another stunning vegetarian meal.

Day 8

We left the summer house returning to the city where we were shown through a guard house dating back to the Dutch occupancy and then toured through the oldest temple in the city. The tour guide was the international manager from the trade school and willingly shared her international experiences and the importance of developing relationships with them going forward. Lunch was at a local famous prawn restaurant and another multi course meal. Fish never tasted so good after days of vegetarian meals. We were then

taken to a local mall for a few hours shopping before heading back to the city hotel. Dinner was again a formal affair where all the people we had met in the south hosted a formal dinner followed by a presentation for 20 local principals to discuss our New Zealand curriculum design and desire for greater international relationships in the future. It was apparent that we were formal guests of local education ministries and that New Zealand was seen as a potential leader in change management to make schools and learning more student focused. Work we have done for the past 10 years is of great value to them. It is ironic to be valued more internationally than we often are in New Zealand for our innovation and quality teaching practices.



In what was the longest of days spanning 48 hours we were taken to meet further business interests of the Waihi Academy and then toured around a mountain tea festival. As four Europeans in an entirely Asian environment, many of the photos taken were of us rather than the event. This was a culturally stunning time of sights, sounds and a view into the creative world of modern agriculture and sales in Taiwan.

We were then back on the high speed train heading north. Stopping in one of the regions just prior to Taipei we were again treated to yet another dinner then driven toward the airport stopping at a house along the way to be welcomed, fed and have showers before finally getting on the plane at midnight. So ended an amazing adventure and the start of many more for our school.



Schools Visited :

Kang Chiao International School

Er Chong junior High School

Emie Junior High School

Chung Shan Industrial & Comercial School

Lai Yi senior High School

Tai Wu Elementry School 3

