These experiences have given me the confidence to embark on new challenges, throw myself outside of my comfort zone, and think through problems in a much more critical manner. The value of studying abroad outweighs the costs, but no one truly understands that until they experience it first-hand. I thankfully got the opportunity to experience it first-hand, and it has made me the proud person I am today.

All of the obstacles I anticipated to studying abroad — finances, graduation expectations, and good old-fashioned nervousness — turned into signs that led me to new experiences. Each program and location, from long-term to faculty-led summer to language intensive and finally my internship with the American Exchange Center, have provided me with the knowledge I was seeking. Whether it is in Scandinavia, India, Taiwan, or Xi’an, these opportunities have provided me with the knowledge to say, 謝謝您 — or respectively, thank you.

Studying abroad expands your mind in an irreversible way. Simultaneously, you realize just how small you are but also how many opportunities exist in the world. Once your mind has been exposed to the larger world, you will not be able to live in your little bubble back home ever again.