This summer I had the opportunity to travel to Chiang Mai, Thailand for three long months. The main objective of the trip was to successfully intern as a human rights research intern at Mekong Migration Network and gain an in-depth knowledge of the immigration laws in the Mekong subregion. The arrest, detention and deportation (ADD) of migrants in the ASEAN nations is widespread and despite recent efforts by governments to regularise migrants, the process remains ad hoc and frequently runs contrary to human rights. By interning full time at the foundation, I aimed to contribute to advocate for the reform of policies to avoid situations in which migrants are subject to ADD and their human rights are hampered. Another expectation from the trip was to understand and relish the Thai culture, social norms, and cuisine.

I could see the expectations of the trip turning into a reality one week into the internship. The atmosphere of the office was really friendly and almost everyone belonged to a different country and brought with themselves different cultures. Despite such international environment at the office, all of us were bound by a common string and that was the love for protection of human rights. Very soon I made friends with the other interns and all three of us made plans to explore the town together. The best part about working in Chiang Mai were the people. We all sat on the same table and had lunch together which gave us more chances to bond. Every Tuesday, Pi Pao (Thai administrative colleague) would bring raw vegetables and cook Thai food for all us to be able to savour the local delicacies and also try it at home if we want to. I was involved with the legal team and would research important clauses of the labour laws of different countries and write reports on the ones that raised sensitive issues.
Apart from the office fun, I also enjoyed the extremely cheap Thai street food during evening hours. The little stalls would sell a variety of thai delicacies; all one has to do was to order and sit and wait on the chairs assembled in an irregular fashion right beside the stall for the hot and steaming food. An absolute gem is the bubble tea there. The tapioca pearls mixed with absolutely all flavours one could think of were the most refreshing drink one could have before a long day of work.

The natural beauty of Chiang Mai is very satisfying. One could just sit and enjoy the sunset and the sunrise for consecutively and never get tired. Since it is not as busy as Bangkok, the national capital, the town seemed to be in sync with the natural clock. With the sunset, the hustle of the city settled too. I had a favourite spot, where I would cycle to every once-in-a-while after work, just to sit and have a cup of freshly brewed coffee and spend some time in solitude while I enjoy the sun go down.
Besides all this, during the weekends we planned to do fun things like Mae Sai river rafting and a trip to Doi Suthep. The beauty of the Buddhist temple carving was out of the world and spoke volumes of the love of art, the Thai people possess.

All in all, it was a beautiful summer and I enjoyed every bit of it. I would like to thank the QMUL Expeditions Fund for helping me aid my trip and supporting me in my endeavours to achieve a successful career in human rights law.