

## Spring Time in Gothenburg

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“Never judge a man until you’ve walked two moons in his moccasins.” It’s a sentence from one of my favorite novels. Finally, I realized the true meaning of this sentence until I’ve leaped over the “seven hours gap” to Sweden. You have to dive yourself into an unfamiliar environment first; then you would have a chance to reflect on your past life.



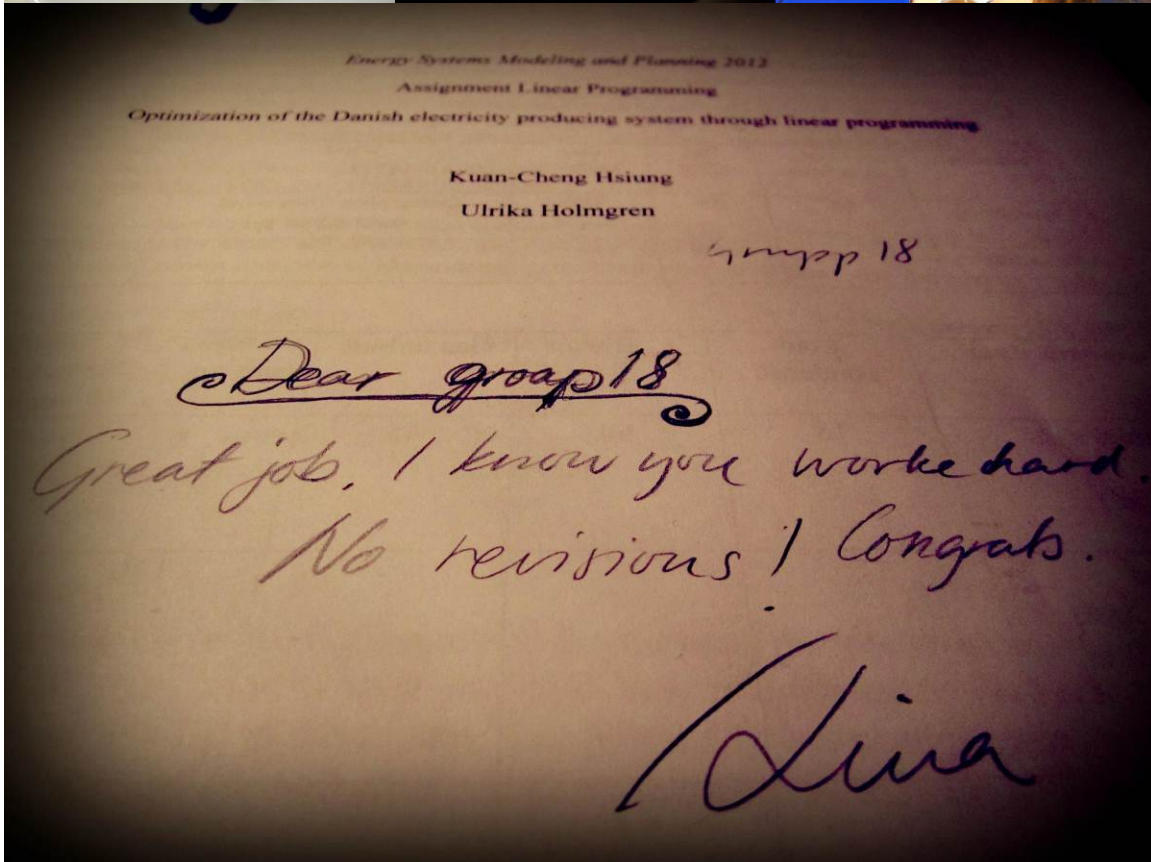
The first winter snow of Gothenburg fell on the second day of my arrival. I still remembered clearly how happy I was when I saw the snow. I was so excited that I grabbed my camera immediately and ran out of my flat just to feel the snow falling on my shoulder. However, good time doesn’t last a couple days. I certainly did a lot of preparation work before my flight. That is, everyone knows that Nordic area is extremely cold during wintertime. Therefore I bought a thick coat additionally and took all the long clothes with me. But soon I found out that the weather in 2012 wasn’t as cold as usual. The temperature was about 10 degree higher than last year! Besides, there are heaters in every Swedish family. Basically I just need one jeans and one thick coat to keep me warm when I’m walking on the street. I didn’t bring any shorts, any

sports shoes and any t-shirts! This is life. How can you predict this situation when you were packing your luggage?



Time flies. As I was overwhelmed by school business, February and March sneaked away from my side at a tricky pace. I had made some foreign friends then. Most of them are exchange students from different countries all over the Europe. To be honest, I would say it's easier to make friends with exchange students than to make friends with local Swedish students. For one thing, Sweden is a highly multicultural country. Nearly half of the students in my class are international students. For another, local students are prone to have social circle with people speaking the same language, which is Swedish. Though every Swedish student can speak great English, they still prefer to use their native language in private.

I always consider myself as a lucky person because I was able to make close contacts with some local Swedish friends. We had a language exchange time once a week; sometimes we would have parties together; and of course we worked on the assignments together! In school they not only gave me helps in life, but also taught me a lot of things about Swedish culture. And this is what I treasure the most.



One day when I was on my way to the department, I noticed there were many students wearing the same working uniform, gathering at the school parking lot and seemed like they were preparing for a big festival. The parking lot was crowded with people, raw materials, beers and music! I was so curious and asked my Swedish friend. She told me that Chalmers students were preparing for an annual carnival parade called "Cortège" on Walpurgis Night (April 30). Students from each department would spend more than two weeks to make their own wagon. Topics are taken from last year's significant events. Chalmers students would make each wagon in a satirical and comic

way. Furthermore, the parade will start from school and make its way through the city center, where around 250,000 people see it each year!



On April 30, we had an afternoon barbecue party in the biggest park of Gothenburg. I believe everyone has heard of that Western people love to have picnics and sunbath. But you must look at this picture to believe how crazy people love the nature. You could barely find a spot here!





After the joyful BBQ, we went back to school to wait for the parade. No matter how busy you were at the time, everyone stopped his or her work to watch this annual event. The parade is just similar to our Dragon Boat Festival. We put away winter clothes after the Dragon Boat Festival; People in Gothenburg use this parade to welcome the coming of spring!



Everything was in Swedish. Fortunately, my friends explained each of them for me. Otherwise I would have missed a lot. Some topics were really sarcastic and interesting, such as "Norway smuggled butter from other countries", "U\$A in Iraq".



Spring finally came after three months of waiting. At the same time, my exchange student life was about to the end. To me, four-month is a bit too short. As if I just fit into a new environment and get familiar with everyone, then I have to say goodbye to all of the people. But I wasn't sad. All I can do is treasure every moment and try to collect as many memories as I could.

On the way home, I noticed that the sun was still on the sky. Maybe I'll never have a chance to see a real 24-hour sunlit day. But the scene still marked a stunning scene in my mind, so bright and so vivid.

