design services, Mask Making, Wafer Manufacturing, Wafer Bumping, Assembly and Final Testing. Visiting the actual production line for wafer fabrication is an excellent exposure for the student leaders to relate their knowledge from the school to the corporate world. The Engineering section is very protective of their intellectual property rights. We are only allowed to observe certain production areas from a corridor specially catered for visitors. The production is similar to other MNCs in Singapore but the investment of money and land area is much greater than any semiconductor plant in Singapore.

After staying for five days and four nights in Shanghai, we took a train to Beijing. None of the students had ever taken a twelve hours train trip. We experienced a normal class train and a first class train. Different types of service were offered. The first class cabin was well equipped with all the necessary amenities. The service by the attendant is comparable to air-stewardess. Also, the facilities like lounge and cafeteria are much cleaner than a normal coach. We reached Beijing the next day. Although the train ride was 12 hours, we arrived at Beijing the next day feeling satisfied with the service.

Beijing is the heart of the Chinese heritage possessing much historical architecture that is unique. This includes Tian An Men, The Great Wall and Summer Palace. It is also the center of many highly regarded universities and companies. Peking University and Beijing CEC Huada Electronic Design Co., Ltd. are some of the places that the students visited.

In Peking University, there were student-to-student interaction sessions where students from Peking University and NTU communicate and exchange information. The students were postgraduates from the software and microelectronics department of Peking University. From the interaction, the student leaders were able to gain a new perspective of the education system in China. Some of the students expressed their keenness to come to Singapore for their postgraduate education. There are three main reasons for their choice. Firstly, Singapore’s excellent universities offer an education comparable to some of the best universities in the world and at a much more affordable price. Secondly, Singapore is just a few hours by air from their homeland, which makes it very convenient for them to travel to and from home. Thirdly, Singapore, in which more than two-thirds of the population is of Chinese descent, is an easy place for Chinese-speaking students to live in.

The visit to Beijing CEC Huada Electronic Design Co. Ltd was very much different from the rest of the company visits. In Huada Electronic, there is a face-to-face interaction with the Vice-Resident of the company. He offered valuable advice that was very inspiring for many of the student leaders. He also noted that having an edge over the other people and the ability to contribute to the company is essential for young Singaporeans who intend to venture abroad. He also mentioned that it will not be advantageous for Singaporeans to look for jobs in China as the Chinese company can employ graduates from China at a lower salary. It will be good if Singaporeans can set up a team and venture into China. The China economy will need multi-disciplinary companies.

This China exchange program was indeed a rewarding and fruitful trip. Though this trip lasted only ten days, we had many encounters and gained valuable insights. From the companies that we visited, we learnt about the whole process of production for the semiconductor industry, from the production of ingot to the production of microchip. From the universities that we visited, we noted the differences in China’s education system and student’s lifestyles compared to Singapore’s system. In a nutshell, this trip has fulfilled its objective as an educational trip in future.