

Eun Song (Vicky) Yoo

Soul Indulging Trip to China

Being selected for the representative of Sacramento, Jinan-Sacramento Sister City Corporation kindly opened the door of opportunity for me: a trip to China. I have always learned about the Chinese culture through my teachers and read about the history through books, but seeing the great nation with my own eyes was such an extraordinary experience for me. For the whole 10 days I have been in China, many wonderful memories were made with new friends and family.

First thing that was completely different from my home California was the sights. Since China is the number one country with the largest popularity, streets were filled with people. There were also many transportations that I could not easily spot back home such as buses and taxis. Aside from the city life, all the landscapes we traveled to were breath-taking and captivating that my camera was restlessly working. I was amazed by how detailed and colorful the buildings were. I felt like I went through a time machine to go back to the past because of ancient style architectures. When I was at the Great Wall of China, I felt proud to be walking upon such a historical and legendary place. Every step I took was created by the hard works and efforts of many men. I never knew being at a place could tell so much about the culture of a country.

Meeting new people and creating new friendships were one of my favorite things about this trip. I did not fully know anyone prior to this trip which worried me of affecting the trip's experience. However, after this trip together of going through this spectacular experience and sharing many laughs, I feel as if we are a family. Also, making new friends overseas was such a great chance for me to make connections with the world. I was amazed how breaking the ice

with anyone could be so easily practiced. It was fun to talk to people, foreign or native, and get to know who they are. It was somewhat fun, because you never know who you are going to encounter. Another experience that I had was very similar as meeting strangers, but it became a memory of mine that I will cherish to the grave. For about six days, I was designated to stay with a host family in Jinan who were all native Chinese. I was very nervous and excited at the same time, since I did not know them at all but I get to meet new people. The moment my host family and I saw each other, I felt like they were really my family. I never felt so comfortable during my whole stay. I was so touched by their generosity and kindness that I was almost overwhelmed with happiness. Even though we spoke different language, the barrier was broken with something that everyone in this world shared: love. Making dumplings with each other, teaching each other their own culture, laughing about something funny and caring for each other was the highlight of my stay in Jinan. I was disappointed that I could not spend more days with my host family when I had to leave Jinan. Through this trip, I realized how fast a friendship can develop in such a short period.

Last but not least, what would a culture be without food? Eating Chinese food in the actual country was divine. Every meal was very delicious and mouth-watering. Best part of eating was that I got to try new things. The restaurant dishes like Peking duck were very well made and appetizing. Street foods were something that stood out the most to me because they were very unique. I have never seen tomatoes covered in candy on a stick, drinkable yogurt and other distinct treats which were quite tasty. Not just the food, but I also went to a tea demonstration place. It was very interesting because we learned about how Chinese people liked to drink their tea and that was a huge part of their culture. I never knew how many meanings that a tea ceremony could contain. It was as if I drank sips of Chinese culture.

Going overseas to China was an adventure for me. Some of my best parts were looking at the remarkable scenery that made my heart flutter with excitement, meeting new people who became my family, and indulging my soul with delicious food. But there are so much more that cannot be described with words. I am so happy that this experience is something that I will cherish forever and I, most importantly, had fun. Even though this trip lasted for only ten days, I feel like I have absorbed so many things that go beyond the pictures and texts of a book. This opportunity was eye-opening for me to love traveling and make the best out of it. As St. Augustine says, “the world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page,” and my trip to China was a total success and one step closer to completing the book.