

YBB 山东方城支教生活札记(二)

不同的生活环境和文化

—— 2010年“青少年同在蓝天下”(YBB)队员日记摘要

"[L]eaving Fangcheng was harder than I thought. Despite the fact that there aren't even real toilets or showers and sleeping on those bunks is equally as comfortable as sleeping on the floor, I had a difficult time parting with a place that I spent an amazing two weeks at. I had an even harder time parting with the people. Their thoughtfulness and dedication struck me emotionally."

—Christina Yuan, 德州 Jasper 高中9年级学生。

Saturday, 07.31.10—Today was our first day in Shandong. We had to be ready to leave at 7:30 in the morning. Our bus ride was approximately 8 hours long. During the ride, we had to get a general idea of each class we would be teaching. We also passed the time by introducing ourselves and getting to know the college students we'd be working with and also by playing card games.

When we arrived in the middle of the afternoon, we met with Weng Lao Shi. The first thing we had to do was clean out our dormitories, which were infested with cobwebs. The bunks were not in the best conditions, and the bathrooms were even worse. Well, we're going to be living with this for another two weeks. We might as well get accustomed to it now!

The food is also something that will be difficult to get used to. Everything is served in large metal bowls. It is not all that appetizing, but at least it's something. Today we ate at a restaurant down the street. For the rest of the week, we'll be eating in the school cafeteria. I don't know if it will be much better.

Today was quite exhausting. I will be going to bed soon. Tomorrow morning I will be taking a cold shower. I wonder what that will be like.

Wednesday, 08.04.10— Quite a few people are starting to get sick! People aren't taking proper sanitation precautions, like washing their hands. I guess it's hard to worry about a million things at once! I'm getting used to the conditions here, though. It really isn't that much of a problem at all anymore.

Saturday, 08.07.10—[Today] We visited the birthplace of Confucius. There were three small villages that we walked through. I was ready to lie on a comfortable hotel bed when it was over. We had dinner before going to the hotel, though. It was so much more appetizing than the food we were served at the school cafeteria. We also got real seats! After an amazing dinner, we finally arrived at that hotel. It was heaven compared to the dorms at Fangcheng. There were actually flushable toilets and real showers, along with soft beds and pillows. One could not imagine how thankful I was. After a warm shower, I visited a friend's room to play card games and drink bubble tea.



Christina 和她地方的学生们



Colby 在给他的学生留言

"[F]irst, we learned just as much from the students, if not more, than we taught them. Not only did we learn how to live beneath our means, with minimal resources in a rural environment, but we also learned to thrive in these conditions. ...Second, I realized that Chinese culture is much more emotionally expressive of sadness than American culture."

—Colby Ye, 德州 Jasper 高中10年级学生

Saturday, 07.31.10—The bus dropped us off in the middle of a pothole-ridden road. After arriving at the school, we set down our suitcases and settled in, as well as we possibly could, in the office. Pretty soon, we were shuttled off to a local restaurant for lunch. The food was really quite different. It was nothing like anything served in any other restaurant. One dish was an entire, cut-up, chicken. Another dish was entirely animal entrails. We were also given large pancake-esque bread "paties". They were entirely flavorless and very thick. The inside was soft and almost chewy. During lunch, my sweat [from the incessant heat] had somewhat dried, but all I was left with were odd-looking white salt marks on my grey t-shirt.

After returning to the middle school's office, we moved up to the second floor office to enjoy the air conditioning. The cleaning process began soon after, with all high school and college students working to rid the dormitories of the trash that had been spewed throughout the rooms. Seriously, the rooms had reached a new level of dirtiness. We carted off all the trash, with multiple trips, mind you, in an enormous rusted wagon, and scrubbed the

plywood bed boards with wet rags. Someone slopped water all over our room's floor, so we had to sleep the first night in tents with water all over the floor. Cleaning took an extremely long time, but pretty soon, we were finished. At the very least, the rooms were liveable.

After dinner, I immediately set up my mosquito net and clothesline and jumped in the shower as quickly as I could. There is no word or phrase (not even a sentence or paragraph) that can describe how good a cold shower felt at that moment. The worst part was that we started to sweat immediately after we finished showering. It was such a waste of a good moment. Either way, however, showering was probably the best part of the day.

Monday, 08.02.10— I woke up in the middle of the night with a terribly itchy feeling. My knee was swollen with mosquito bites and my right hand had inflated like a balloon too. After frantically scratching, I fell back asleep for a little while. When I woke up [for real], my hand was still swollen. However, I completely underestimated the severity of the situation. I went through my daily morning routine, with my hand still swollen, thinking that my hand had just been attacked by a gang of mosquitoes in the middle of the night. However, noticing that my hand hadn't shrunk in size by the time classes had started, I consulted the adults. At this point, I began to develop red rash-like symptoms on my right hand. It wasn't quite itchy yet, however. In the middle of English class, I had already developed a nasty-looking rash on my right wrist, so the teachers pulled Kevin and me out of class to take us to the local hospital.

The hospital was more like a clinic, since the level of care wasn't near as advanced as treatment in a legit hospital. Regardless, it was a relaxing break on the first day of class. When we arrived, we first spoke to one of the doctors, who instructed us to get a blood test first. The walls of the hospital were rusted and grimed up, but the nurses who pricked our fingers still followed sanitary procedure, swabbing our fingers with alcohol before drawing blood. The blood test went well, so the doctor only prescribed a few pills for us, along with a packet of magnesium sulfate. We were to dissolve the compound in hot water, soak a towel in the solution, and soak our hands in the towel for 30 minutes 3 times each day. The afternoon didn't bring about any change in the condition of my hand,

though I managed to assist in the teaching of the afternoon subjects, like "Travel Around the World." By the end of the first day, I felt extremely useless and tired. My hand begun itching like crazy, and all I could really do was slop cooling oil over my hand every other hour. It's a funny thing, really. I realized that I lost much of my initiative to do anything simply because of my debilitating injury. My hand was a constant bother for me. The swelling sensation just seemed to never go away. It became such a pain that I was constantly distracted from teaching and what was truly important.

Friday, 08.13.10— At the end, however, everyone was more and more sad. Some of the students started crying while they were still in the athletic fields, where we held the performance. I had to put up our props and help clean up the stage area first, before I headed back to the classroom to mourn with the students. However, once I arrived back at the classroom, the grieving was already in full swing. Shangjia and Boshuang had given "speeches" telling the students how they had to continue the learning process that we had begun, in order to reach their full potential in the future. I realized several things in this depressing moment. First, we learned just as much from the students, if not more, than we taught them. Not only did we learn how to live beneath our means, with minimal resources in a rural environment, but we also learned to thrive in these conditions. The first few days were rough, especially with my seemingly diseased hand, but we got "used to it." Other than learning to cope with a rough physical environment, we also learned

an immense amount from the students themselves. We experienced what the students experienced, and we learned about their daily lives. Even more, we were able to get close and up front with their lives, since we were living with them. We learned about the differences between the Chinese culture and American culture, and we even discerned the little irregularities in the local culture. Second, I realized that Chinese culture is much more emotionally expressive of sadness than American culture. The students were literally bawling on Friday evening because of our imminent departure. Even the boys were weeping. One boy, a studmuffin with an earring in his left ear, was crying especially hard. It would have been such an odd sight to see in America, a group of 8th grade boys bawling. At my farewell party before I moved to Boston, my friends were all sad to watch me leave. However, I don't remember anyone crying. This isn't because my friends don't care about me. Rather, they focused on the future and wished me good luck instead of reminiscing about all the memorable moments from the past. Perhaps this is the key difference between Chinese and American culture. Maybe Americans are more future-oriented than Easterners. Or, maybe Chinese people are just much more caring than us Westerners. I don't know, but the difference was quite noticeable to me.

Saturday, 08.14.10— With the realization that this would probably be the last time I'd ever see our beloved kids again, tears welled up in my eyes. For me, it was most difficult to stop my tears watching the students from the back of the bus.



tie, Jeremy, 王斌, 和史晓媛(从右到左)

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C&T 青少年科技学院 2010 洛城秋季班扩大招生 名额有限, 从速报名

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本学院位于洛城, 是一所加强青少年文化课程和培养学生创新能力的特色教育机构。学院以现代化计算机科学为基础, 采用中西方相结合的教学理念, 以培养具有创新和领导才能的青少年为目的, 帮助青少年充分地将来进入大学和走上社会做好准备。

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