

I've been in China

I'm sorry, but I have to write it only because I'm still realizing that it happened. I came back from Shanghai since two weeks now and telling my Chinese adventure to my family and my friends made me to understand and to realize how far I went. Everyone asked me: "How is China? Is it beautiful?". Well, I can't answer "yes", I don't know, "beautiful" is such a small and simple word to explain what China was for me. It is beautiful, for sure, but it is not too, it is strange. Yes for me China was strange and made me feel incredibly happy, sad, excited, angry, suspicious, amazed and astonished. A complete melting pot of emotions and feelings since the moment when Global Governance told me that I was one of winners of the two scholarships that Shanghai Jiao Tong University was offering to us and I realized I had the opportunity to arrive far, far away. At the beginning I was quite scared (also my mom was), but now I think I will never be thankful enough with my university and with my two-weeks university in China for my Chinese adventure.



So, thank to Global Governance, I had the scholarship for a course about Chinese Studies at SJTU, one of the best universities in China, but I arrived in Shanghai two days before the beginning of the course having some time to explore alone the city and overcome the shocking first impression of the "Far East". My arrival was a freezing shower. Imagine me, small and tired for the 20-hours-long flight, on the metro going to my hostel with my huge suitcase, my stop arrives, I'm ready to get off when the doors open and... hundreds of people trying to get in without let me go out... Help!!! I was strong enough and

thanks to my incredible power (joking) I could exit. Ok, I was in the street, ok 40°C and maybe a hundred percent of humidity, ok everything is in Chinese, ok I don't understand anything, ok I can ask someone, OMG no one speaks English!!! Help again. Yes this was my freezing shower, but I expected that and I learnt to make people to understand using gestures and the three Chinese words I knew. I was successful sometimes, in particular when I discovered that some of the gestures that we use, like numbers, are different for them.

Shanghai is incredible. It is super modern and full of skyscrapers where its 30 millions of inhabitants have to live, but just around the corner of those huge buildings things are different, there are the parts of the city that are not modern at all, with streets full of people working , very small shops full of an incredible amount of stuff and the never missing street food. Actually, these were the parts of the city that I liked most, just because for me was amazing to observe the lifestyle of people living there, from the



outside and sometimes from the inside, and I can say that it was an absolutely priceless experience.

Streets were always full of electrical motorcycles, with from two to four people on them, but I think I saw two persons with helmets in twenty days and I can't remember a single moment in the streets without the sound of horns. People are complicated, or maybe not, the challenge is to relate with them in the right way, in the case you can do that they are incredibly kind, smiling and welcoming. I've met two Chinese girls in the first two days and they treated me like a real sister.



The course at university was very interesting. The first week we stayed at the Jiao Tong, while the second one we visited Xi'An, Lanzhou and Dunhuang, I arrived till the Gobi desert, I saw the sunrise there on the top of a camel!!!

Attending the course with me there were an Israeli girl, a Belgian, two southKorean, two Southafrican, two English and one Japanese. Imagine all of us around a table during the meals with the Chinese professors: the whole world sitting around the same table. All of us had a lot things to tell and to

share and I loved not only to discover China, but also to discover the Countries from where my friends came from. Well, easy to imagine, being only in ten, was natural for us to become a real family after two weeks.

I saw realities very different from ours and I learnt a lot, I did an unimaginable amount of questions and I tried to satisfy my curiosity and doubts as far as possible in the veery limited time I had.

Well, it was an amazing introduction to what China is, impossible to understand completely in only two weeks just because its history, philosophy and culture are too complex and large in time and space to be capture in such a short time.

I'm incredibly super happy of my experience because I tried to observe even the smallest details of people I had round me, trying to understand their world and their reality, such a strange, complex and amazing reality.



Thank you GG, Thank you SJTU and... 谢谢中国 (Thank you China)

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