

Returning to China is like going to a different planet. It has it's out of the world aspects like not really knowing where I belong and just a completely different atmosphere where it's uneasy to breathe. However, like many experiences where you become familiar, memories and feelings are created and bond truly unforgettable. My journeys to China have been more frequent lately as I am growing older, I am now aware of the immense potential what china has to offer and can see my future in the land of possibilities.

I am a banana. For people that have not heard of this term, basically it means I am American born Chinese. Growing up in a pretty non diverse Asian community and with an Asian household, the two different cultures have made who I am today. Many say its best of both words being "ABC", having a strict upbringing to strive for a semi perfect education path and with the combination of a out of the box imagination creates a well rounded individual. The biggest sacrifice being Asian American is probably not really fitting in as a child. As many children don't feel as they fit anywhere growing up, it's particularly tricky for Asian American kids to find their place because with moral standpoints with family teachings versus American culture conflict. Going to Asia, twice in the span of two years, first time for three months as a coming out of high school experience and just recently a short eleven days. I realize I don't belong in any country however, that doesn't matter at all. I love both places. America is my true home, but china is my future.

My parents came to America twenty years ago for a better life for not only them, but for the future of our family tree. Coming over for my parents was nothing to easy for them as they left their whole entire life to start a brand new one as they were merely adults themselves. When they come back to their home town of the rapidly expanding Shanghai, they themselves have a difficult time processing of how in the world the culture and atmosphere has changed since they were kids. As for my parents, home is in the States as they created life and accustomed to the lifestyle in the States. Going back to china is in a way scary for them as they were not present in the

## 回國軼事

# Returning to China



圖中:浦瑛,女兒陸穎 Dianna Lu (本文作者) 和浦瑛中學老朋友上海輕音樂團著名歌手錢惠萍在上海相會

一次偶然與女兒聊天她真誠地對我說:媽媽 20 年前,您們爲了您們的前途來到了美國,也給了我們很好的生活與學習,但未來我很想去中國,那里有更多的機會與天地讓我們爲我們的未來去打造。  
女兒 2012 年去中國江蘇沐陽教英

文一個月,回家後談了她的想法與對中國的認知,雖然她眼里的中國與我們看到了不同,但她們的人生與追求應該由她們自己選擇,做父母的我們除了鼓勵就是祝福了,女兒眼里的中國和感受與您分享  
浦瑛

last twenty plus years of when China is developing into a top tier country. I am more aware of navigating and the lifestyle than my own my mother that I have stayed in China for a longer time recently than she has and have traveled to more places than she has. For me, I am more likely to bring my future back to china as I feel like it's a challenge that I could be very proud of for my family as my parents did twenty years ago.

Education is power. Without proper education, money is wasted, but most importantly time. Time we don't get back, money cannot buy time. Power is what runs the world nowadays. China can go in two ways. At this rate of how rapidly the country is growing economically without really taking time to really process what stress it's putting on the young generation

and the lower class, the country will go down the garbage. We need balance. There's no such thing as a perfect world, everything has a good and bad side in every situation. We cannot depend on the upper class and the wealthy for everything, more so we need to work together. In the end of the day, we are in this together. Money is sparkly. It grabs attention, a sense of awareness, eye catching. However, it only can get so far. Money makes people stupid. That's a fact, it has its pros, but without a sense of awareness and in the hands of the uneducated, that's where chaos is spent and wasted. China could be the most powerful country in the world as of now it's the most populated country in the world with so many brilliant minds and hard working individuals that will do anything to

survive. Yet, nowadays with such an economic boom, more and more unnecessary luxuries are being spent, buildings are being built with no one to purchase or live in. Millions spent on empty towers for what? For the people with money? Where are the people with the money? It's the people with power in china that need to lead.

Last year I spent about three and a half months in china. For a month I traveled to Shuyang, Jiangsu, where I taught basic English to about thirteen to fourteen year olds. As for me, I just graduated high school, naive to the world outside of my hometown, I adventure off to the unknown. Being a student up to that point, I had no idea what it takes to be a teacher. Not only was I in other country at the point, I was in the opposite side of what I have been for my whole life. Staying with my home stay family has reflected on how blessed my life has been and how easy my life has been compared to the students and family I experienced in Jiangsu. The school was an utter culture shock mentally and physically as it was a developing area itself.

The students at Yinghe School, Shuyang were brought upon themselves. They saw an opportunity in itself as Americans were coming to their hometown and were their few chances to be in the presence of outsiders. At first, like most situations where the unfamiliar break the form of conformity, the students were not as diligent and willing to learn. Time and bonds were formed in the span of us Americans being present. We saw how eager and willing the children were after we spent just a couple of weeks with them.

If the upper class spent more time with their own country it would seem it would balance out any distraught in the system. We cannot forget about the middle to lower class as it makes up for majority of the society. And by doing so education is the most important goal in a human life.

Parents, teachers alike who educate the next generation have power to change for the better. Every person on this planet has potential. China needs leaders to help the middle and lower class to rise to their full potential and with so many people, the country could really make an impact on the world than it already is doing.



My body is quivering, making my knees jelly and top heavy. Well, I am carrying fifty-six pounds of how I will be surviving for the next nine months. Holding both of my parents hands like they were sending me off to preschool, I squeeze my clammy hands in theirs and don't want to let go just like old times. Dry mouthed, mind racing, mommy don't let go. Hugs and kisses are exchanged. Daddy is telling me the obvious list while Mommy is bawling. The future is hauling me one way while the present another. Time is pulling my family away from me like magnets. I turn my back looking at the foundation that makes me who I am and make a b-line towards the security lines. Mommy and Daddy are watching from afar. I will be okay. I give blank stares at the conveyer belt scanning my baggage. I turn around and give my final wave to the parentals, the last glimpse of my safety net. My heart races and vibrations are pounding from my eye sockets to toes. Light headed, I look down at the boarding pass are tears swell up. I am unable to read. I told myself I wouldn't cry. Why am I such a baby?

I am the crazy person at the airport. Great, now I am hiccupping uncontrollably. Numb feet suck. Blurred faces are staring at me with smudged concern expressions. I drag my useless legs faster. The struggle is real. The gate is ahead. The floor looks good enough. My body plops as I coil into a ball. All I see is darkness while I hug my knees, imagining what happened thirty minutes prior. A flashback of Lauren throwing the surprise goodbye party is playing in slow motion in my mind. Her eyes filled with sorrow, but she breaks out a smile. I naturally smile in my glum state. Next time I will see them, they will be almost done with freshman year. Last week was graduation; shit, I will be done in four years again. Why is this happening to me? The intercom stops my train of thought. I take a peek. I need to get up, I casually unfold, sniffing, popping my aching knuckles. I rock heel to ball back and forth, swaying from the load of my carry on. Stop Dianna, you will fall. Finally, I shakily hand over my boarding pass. The attendant grins and says confidently, "You'll be fine. You're going to have a great time." I can't help and flash her my teeth and say, "Thank" hiccup "you." I make my way through

the funnel towards the air-trapped flying contraption in one piece.

Of course I am in the very back of the plane. Fantastic, I am sitting in the middle. I throw my bags above me, shoving the crap into the small confined space I am left with. I scooch around my fellow stranger buddies, trying my best to be polite. I park in my seat and my emotions tell me call Mommy. Ring ring. The waterworks brew before I can even say hello. Everything I hear on the other end are the same sounds my sinus passage is creating. I giggle and whisper, "I miss you." She says, "I love you. Take care. Don't have sex with strangers." Alright, mom. I tell her I will call when I land in Chicago. The intercom disrupts again. I buckle up and take a really loud breath. Fantastic, I still have sixteen hours and seven thousand miles to go in till I land in China. Take off.

## Bittersweet Bye Byes Dianna Lu 9/16/2013

Departing from my life for the first time was so rough. I didn't cry or even really think about what I was about to embark on in till the very moment I was at the airport, which made all the emotions punch me in the face. A good chunk of my life was spent in the pool. I swam competitively for a solid ten years. Swimming six hours a day took the majority of my time and energy. I decided to quit my senior year, as I was captain the year before. I was shunned from the team, and I had to make friends my last year of high school. It was a roller-coaster of a year. I had to quit given that I was swimming the same times as I was at the age of fourteen. The terminology is called a burnout. I am a fairly a positive up beat, motivated person. But I stayed four years too long and I ended up not really knowing what I wanted to do in life. Honestly, I wasn't ready for the responsibilities of college either. I always thought it would be awesome to travel, so I took the initiative to go for it.

In high school, I wanted to leave Cleveland with a dreadful passion. Akron was a surprise for me. I didn't apply to any in-state universities my senior year. I was committed to a school in southern California up to May. I decided I wanted to stay close to home and family for the years of just taking them for granted. I never knew what I had in till it

was ripped out of my hands.

I had the opportunity to teach English to over five hundred bright minds. More so I can never thank them enough of how the enlightened me. Teaching was never in my repertoire. Being on the receiving side for my whole life, us students don't really understand how much effort teachers put in. I and eight other fellow Americans had to traverse many barriers that none of us could ever prepare for. Majority of the people in the town I was in have never seen color people. So the first obstacle course we had to embark was just to get the kids to take us seriously. The teachers of the school were more so disciplinarians than educators. Thus, it was quite interesting when we played learning games when they were used to sit in their little wooden chairs for eight hours straight. Funny and cruel story, us teachers played limbo with the bamboo stick

the teachers used to beat the students with. The student's faces when they saw us bring it in class in an overly ecstatic manner were just priceless. We had no curriculum to follow making our teaching styles vary from how we were each brought up.

I went to high school where the motto is not to learn for school, but for life. Critical thinking and being a well-rounded woman was what they wanted us to strive for. Creating me to be freakishly independent and in a way a feminist naturally. The girls in the school in china were my main focus without putting much thought in. Ninety-nine percent of the girls were crazy shy. They would herd like sheep when it came to any activity. Eye contact seemed to be what they were most afraid of. I wanted to show them it's okay to smile to just have friends with boys. The cultural shock on both ends was just uncanny. A lot of nightmares happened. However, when I saw the kid's faces lit up and smiled for the first time, it gave me motivation that I needed to open up and share information that was once taught to me.

I grew up as a prep school bitch, not really caring about the outside world. I am very much a homebody, family and friends are by far my top priority in my life. While I was in China, I extended my family with four wonderful people. I stayed

with a local family by the school. My host family is beyond generous and the sweetest human beings on the planet. Their entire house is as big as my dorm room here, yet they gave me my own bedroom with a fan while the whole family slept in the other room. Food and water is a daily struggle they had, but I was fed and was satisfied for the most part. They did more than they could afford and yet they kept me, a complete stranger with utter hospitality I didn't even necessarily need. Honestly, I felt downright spoiled by them giving me candies and scraping everything they had to keep me chipper. The life I lived was beyond what they could ever think even existed. People hear and see what the other side of the world is like, but it's not the same as actually being in their shoes. Knowledge is power. I would say a lot of people take their education for granted. I briefly went near the shoes of what the other part of the world. To put it blunt, it fucking sucks. I witnessed what the other world is like, and I like most people are bitter about the dumbest things. If our "leaders" spent more time and money on education rather than whether or not to attack Syria, we probably wouldn't even have the dilemma in Syria in the first place. Most global issues could be uplifted by a butt load if humans are informed. Quick examples that come in mind: water, sanitation, and racism. Bam bam bam. Arrogance needs to die. It's easier said than to be done for sure, though it's never bad to be considerate about the world. After all, we are in this together.

The "innocent" perspective seems surreal to me that I was ever like that. I know I was so overwhelmed because the fear of the unknown and I couldn't ever mentally prepare myself for what I have overcome. Now, I have a completely different outlook on life from the amazing people I have met. I have changed from the experiences I witnessed and grew fundamentally stronger as an individual. Learned things I didn't even know about myself. I cannot even begin to thank the people who I have encountered during my life changing experience. I preach to be smart, generous and thoughtful in any situation. Nothing else really matters. I truly believe I can persevere with that thought in mind and heart. It's a game changer from here on out.