

Traditional Chinese Medicine in Changchun and Emersion

Ever since I can remember, I have had an interest in Chinese culture and language. In elementary school, after watching the Disney movie Mulan, I began to study Chinese Kung Fu with Sifu Steve Cottrell. Soon after beginning Kung Fu lessons, I also became interested in the Chinese language. However, as I became busy with academics and sports at All Saints Episcopal School, I had less and less time to dedicate to studying Kung Fu and Chinese. Even though other activities poured into my life over the years, I maintained a special place in my heart for these foreign studies I began at a young age. Finally, after having studied the language for four semesters at Sewanee and taken a few Asian Studies courses, I have had the amazing opportunity to experience the Chinese culture and language by living in Changchun and partaking in an emersion program. This thesis will explore both the difficulties and benefits of living with a Chinese family and working in a Chinese pharmaceutical company. But first, I would like to thank the professors and staff of Sewanee: The University of the South for supporting me through my studies and awarding me the Biehl Fellowship which made this experience possible. I would also like to thank Haiyan Wang and his family, for making phone calls, finding the internship for me, and inviting me to live in his parents' home as their American Granddaughter.

On Memorial Day, May 30, 2011, my parents drove me to the Dallas-Fort Worth airport; I sat in the backseat full of anxiety and excitement. Although I had been planning my adventure for months and had contacts in China, I still had no idea what was to come. The anxiety left me slowly as wonder and gratitude for the opportunity that lay ahead overwhelmed me. After flying on American Airlines from DFW to Chicago and then Chicago to Beijing, I had a hard time believing it was really happening. I arrived at the Beijing Capital Airport at around 12:00 midnight on May 31st and made a phone call. "Dad! I'm in China!!". "Yes, honey, I know." "No, Dad! I'm actually in China! Can you believe it?". I had never been so excited in my life. I was

already making Chinese friends at the airport and Hilton hotel. The very next morning, on June 1st, I flew from Beijing to Changchun, with a different attitude. The anxiety returned and I cried the entire two-hour flight.

I experienced my first taste of culture shock at the Changchun airport when walking to the Baggage Claim. Families pushed and shoved; it was as if I was not a person, just a bothersome object in someone's way. I walked into the smelliest, dirtiest bathroom I had seen in my life up to that point. Why is there no toilet seat? How do I flush it? Why is there no toilet paper?. I had been cut in front of about five times before I finally got my turn to go. I walked to the sink to wash my hands. Why is there no soap? I guess I'll wait and hope I don't catch a disease. I walked out of the bathroom and see my suitcase moving along the ramp. As I am racing to grab my luggage, a woman steps right in front of me so I have to wait another five minutes to grab my bag. I thought "Do people here have manners? I guess not." I was shocked by the rudeness. I thought "maybe all of these people hate me because I am white and are being extra rude to make me cry." Of course I originally thought my trip to China was all about me. I only took a few steps before I saw four Chinese holding a sign with my Chinese name "Ai Lun" printed in Chinese characters. But in my opinion, the sign was not even necessary. There were not too many young American girls looking for their Chinese host families at the Changchun airport. In fact, this was the first time I had ever been the only white person in an airport or an institution of its equivalent. And I was scared to death.

It was only seconds before my host family had taken everything I had brought with me, carried it outside and stuffed it into the van. My Chinese grandmother "Nainai" and Chinese uncle "Ma Shushu" sat in the far backseat, while my Chinese grandpa "Yeye" sat in the front seat next to the driver. I thought to myself "Why are the husband and wife not sitting next to each other? That's strange." However, I did not ask any questions. I sat in the middle next to

Miss Sunny Cui, my internship coordinator and secretary to the Chairman of Yongxin Pharmacy Chain. Thank God she spoke English- at this point, I could not understand any Chinese that people spoke to me. I was not expecting people to speak ten times faster than I ever had in my classroom. When Yang laoshi, my Sewanee Chinese professor, spoke that quickly, my classmates and I looked at each other and laughed. Miss Sunny and I talked about my flight, jet lag, and what food preferences and/or allergies I had. Our conversation was interrupted by the incessant honking and braking on the road. Are people allowed to drive in the middle of the road and up on the sidewalks like that? I thought I was going to have a heart attack. The entire time, however, my Chinese grandmother “Nainai” was patting my back and could not stop smiling. She and I had not yet spoken a word to each other, but already I could tell she adored me. At the same time, my Chinese uncle “Ma Shushu” was reading through a Pictorial History of Sewanee: The University of the South, my gift to this generous family. Ma Shushu read “University” and “Church”; and I will never forget his unique laugh after speaking a word or two of English. He would read with great curiosity and look upwards when searching for words; after speaking with confidence, he looked me in the eyes, asked “Okay?” and chuckled “Ha!Ha!” as his face turned red. Although I had little appetite because of the nervousness and jet lag, the six of us ate traditional Chinese food for dinner. Afterwards, I calmed my nerves by smoking a “ChangBaiShan” cigarette and drinking fragrant Green Tea. That night, I fell asleep quickly and dreamed of the two months that lie ahead.

Living with this generous Chinese family and exploring Changchun, a city of approximately 7 million people, impacted my life slowly as I grew over the two months. Within the first week in Changchun, my Chinese grandmother “Nainai” laid down the rules which included how well she would treat me. “Ai Lun, Ni zhuzaiwodejia li, ni chi hao, he hao, shuihao, zaiYongxinxuexihao, mei bing hao, maluanquanhao. Ni Keyijiaopengyou, bukeyijiehun, bukeyishuijiao.” Thankfully, I had learned all of this limited vocabulary and understood her.

“Ellen, when you’re living at my house, you will eat well, drink well, sleep well, study and learn well at Yongxin, don’t get sick and be safe on the streets. You may make friends but don’t get married or go to bed with anyone.” My Chinese grandmother believed it to be her responsibility to not only feed and house me, but to keep me completely safe. The first few days I went to work, the live-in maid walked me to and from work. I appreciated that I was to be kept safe, but I had difficulty adjusting to being treated like a young child, having my hand gripped tightly as if I was going to walk into a busy street and be hit by a car or kidnapped. However, I expressed my frustration of the situation speaking broken Mandarin and with aid from an English-speaking native Chinese friend, Franklin Huo. One afternoon, Franklin met my Chinese family and expressed to them how I was feeling; I held back the tears in my eyes as Franklin translated my family’s feelings towards me. The reason they had given me the biggest room in the house was out of hospitality; the reason they were so strict was because they loved me very much and wanted me to be safe; and the reason my “Nainai” took me to the Chinese wedding and other family gatherings was so that I could experience the Chinese culture. Although I had been frustrated at my own inability to communicate fluently, I felt extremely grateful for having met Franklin, someone who translated the language but also cultural aspects I could not understand.

In Changchun, I also wanted to visit museums and cultural sites. One Saturday, Ma Shushu and Ma Ayi took me to the Emperor’s Palace in Changchun, where Pu Yi served as the Puppet Emperor to the Manchurian Regime. There were English scripts and descriptions- I read about Pu Yi’s reign and the corruption behind it. There were other Westerners at the museum but none could speak Chinese at my level; from this I felt some superiority, but also the fact that I felt more comfortable around Chinese than Westerners serves as a growth-mark in my immersion program. I bought a book *My Husband Puyi*, and read his story within a week.

One of the last trips I went on with my Chinese host family was to the Changchun Zoo. While I originally asked to go see “wodedongwu de pengyou” (my animal friends), I later experienced frustration against cultural irritants. As “Yeye”, “Ayi”, and I walked towards the first exhibit, I read signs in both English and Chinese requesting that guests don’t feed the animals or bang on the glass. However, both children and adults stuck their fingers through the cage, attempting to pet and feed the hopeless chimpanzee. I became angry and started to walk towards the Meerkats. However, I looked to my right and a mother was holding her toddler’s legs apart as he pooped on the sidewalk where everyone walks. I tried to walk away without throwing a fit but became even more irritable. I walked towards the next exhibit where a man threw a full 20-ounce water bottle at the gorilla, hoping they would engage in a game of “throw and catch”. I thought, am I dreaming? Do people here not care for animals or pay any attention to the simple requests? I couldn’t believe it.

While I learned much during my cultural trips and building relationships with family members and friends, I had work to do. In fact, when introducing myself to locals at parks and stores I said “wo xuexi zai Yongxin Da Yao Fang”, meaning “I am a student/intern at the Yongxin Pharmacy Store.” My primary purpose as an intern at the Yongxin Pharmacy Store was to study Traditional Chinese Medicine. While working behind the counter, I conducted interviews, asking my co-workers and the Chinese doctor questions about herbs, medical precautions, diagnostic techniques, and the philosophy behind prescribing and using. In order to prepare myself, I read two books on Traditional Chinese Medicine before the end of the spring semester and wrote reviews, that I subsequently turned into Dr. Goldberg. I brought with me Tom William’s *The Complete Illustrated Guide To Chinese Medicine*, in which I took notes, while my coworkers annotated and even corrected it! For example, the book suggests using vodka when making herbal tinctures; however, the Chinese, at least those I spoke with, use Baijiu (Chinese spirits) to create the herbal drink.

“Scientific thought began, in China as elsewhere, with attempts to comprehend how it is that although individual things are constantly changing, always coming to be and perishing, nature as a coherent order not only endures but remains conformable to itself. In the West the earliest such attempts identified the unchanging reality with some basic stuff out of which all the things around us, despite their apparent diversity, are formed. In China the earliest and in the long run the most influential scientific explanations were in terms of time. They made sense of the momentary event by fitting it into the cyclical rhythms of natural process.” Sivin (1965):110.

Taken from the introduction to the Analects of Confucius, Nathan Sivin, distinguished historian of Chinese science, makes his point in regards to all scientific pursuits in China, including medicine. The concept of time and cyclical rhythms plays a central theme in diagnostics and the philosophy behind treatment; the Five Elements and FengShui both exemplify nature as a coherent order. Examining natural processes in and out of the body could perhaps explain why a doctor treats “pattern of disharmony” rather than symptoms; in Chinese medicine, two patients with the same disease or sickness can receive very different treatments because the diagnostics are based off of the “pattern of disease”. Likewise, two patients with very different symptoms and/or disease may receive the same treatment if displaying similar patterns of disharmony.

Chinese medicine views the human body as a microcosm of the universe in that a holistic view diagnoses a person as a whole. How a person interacts with others and the environment determines the quality of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. These interactions are guided by the Yin and the Yang and the relationship between the two. A perfect balance between the Yin and Yang brings dynamic equilibrium and constant readjusting of energy forces. Imbalances in the Yin and Yang system are caused by excessiveness and/or deficiency. For example, a system with too much Yang is characterized by Heat symptoms and a system with too little Yang is characterized by general coldness. Excessive Yin is a system

characterized by Cold symptoms and Yin deficiency is characterized by Internal Heat symptoms. However, the Yin and Yang are intertwined, depending on one another; therefore, Yin has the potential to become Yang and Yang has the potential to become Yin. Characteristics of Yin include dark, cold, feminine, inside, down, earth, and left. Characteristics of Yang include bright, warm, masculine, outside, up, heaven, and right. When a system contains too much yang, heat must be expelled. When a system contains too little Yang, the body must be warmed. Restoration of the Yin Yang balance may be brought upon by herbal treatments, acupuncture, Qi Gong exercises, or simple lifestyle changes.

Ba Gua, an eight-sided arrangement called the “Sequence of the Earlier Heaven”, was developed from the Yin and Yang, along with Wu Xing, the Five Elements. The Eight Trigrams of Ba Gua include Heaven, Lake, Fire, Thunder, Wind, Water, Mountain, and Earth. Each is defined by three horizontal lines, either complete or broken; the complete lines represent Yang energy where the broken lines represent Yin receptivity. Heaven, characterized by three complete lines, is the most powerful and energetic; where Earth, characterized by three broken lines, represents ultimate receptivity and nourishing qualities. Ba Gua gives birth to the 5 elements (Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water). Ba Gua was birthed by the 4 homes or quarters, north, south, east, and west.

The Five Elements: water, fire, wood, metal, and earth all contain both Yin and Yang. Each element characterizes a Zang and a Fu organ and is explained by two cycles. The Sheng Cycle displays the elements in a circle and shows how they support, produce, and/or promote one another. The Ke Cycle, on the other hand, displays the elements in a star-like structure and shows how the elements mutually control one another. Water is cool and yielding, representing the Kidney and Bladder. Fire, dry and hot, represents the Heart and Small Intestine. Wood, growing and flexible, represents the Liver and Gall Bladder. Metal, hard and conducting,

represents the Lungs and Large Intestine. Finally, Earth, productive and center, represents the Spleen and Stomach. In each listed pair, the first to appear is the Zang or Yin organ, and the following the Fu or Yang organ. Cyclical rhythms of natural process appear in the ZangFu daily cycle. Liver (1-3), Lungs (3-5), Large Intestine (5-7), Stomach (7-9), Spleen (9-11), Heart (11-13), Small Intestine (13-15), Urinary Bladder (15-17), Kidneys (17-19), Pericardium (19-21), Triple Burner (21-23), and Gall Bladder (23-1). Although the daily cycle does not reflect a direct following of either the Five Elements Sheng or Ke Cycle, it is significant to recognize that the ZangFu organs are paired together. The Pericardium (19-21) and Triple Burner (21-23) are not often mentioned but are part of the daily cycle; the pair is associated with Fire and the Heart.

Like the Yin and Yang are constantly readjusting to strive for perfect balance, the basic substances, Qi, Jing, and Shen, should also be in harmony with one another. When we are born, we inherit Qi from our parents then obtain Qi from the energy of the universe in the air we breathe and food we eat. Qi warms, protects, energizes, and transforms the body. When Qi is in disharmony or deficient, breathing exercises, Qi Gong, are suggested, along with acupuncture to restore proper energy flow. Jing, often described as the vital force, governs growth, reproduction, and development. When Jing is in disharmony, one may suffer from memory-loss, kidney-related problems, and/or allergies. Shen is the most refined level responsible for human consciousness, keeping the mind sharp and alert. When Shen is dysfunctional, the mind cannot work properly; anxiety, personality disorders, and emotional disharmony may persist. Blood and Body Fluids, interact with the above three substances and are vital in body nourishment and moisture.

A Traditional Chinese doctor is able to recognize when one or several of the above is out of balance. The disharmony may present itself from changes in sleep patterns to a wiry pulse; or from weight gain to coughing up phlegm. Dang Shen, codonopsis root, acts as a Qi tonic in the

presence of Qi deficiency. He Shou Wu, polygonum root, acts as a Blood Tonic in the presence of Blood deficiency. Both HongHua, safflower, and ChuanXiong, Ligusticum root, invigorate the blood when blood is stagnant. When Qi is stagnant, Chen Pi, Citrus Rind, is used to regulate Qi and RenShen, Ginseng root, is used to tone the Qi. In the presence of Yang deficiency, Du Zhong, Eucommia bark, may be prescribed as a Yang tonic. And finally, SuanZaoRen, Ziziphus seeds, may calm Shen when the Spirit is disturbed.

The disharmonies of Yin and Yang, Qi, Shen, and Blood, may be caused by external or internal factors. The external causes of disharmony (Wai Yin) include Wind, Cold, Damp, Fire and Heat, and Dryness and Summer Heat. Work, diet, exercise, sexual activity, and unforeseen events may also act as external causes of disharmony. Emotions, or the Internal Causes of Disharmony (Nei Yin), are each associated with a Yin organ; Joy with the Heart, Anger with the Liver, Sadness and Grief with the Lungs, Pensiveness with the Spleen, and Fear and Fright with the Kidneys. While it is healthy to express emotions, unmanageable emotions might be due to a disharmony in the ZangFu or vice-versa. For example, too much intellectual stimulation negatively affects the Spleen and results in Pensiveness.

Herbal medicine may also be prescribed to eliminate these types of disharmony, and can even determine whether the disharmony is an exterior invasion or internal cause. GuiZhi, Cinnamomum stems, expels and disperses cold when it is an exterior invasion while Rou Gui, Cinnamomum bark, warms and expels internal cold. Sheng Di Huang, fresh rehmannia root, and Shi Gao, Gypsum, are both used to drain Fire and Heat depending on the extremity of the case. However, Chai Hu, Bupleurum root, expels and disperses heat when in the form of exterior invasion. Tu Fu Ling, smilacis rhizome, clears heat and toxins in the presence of interior heat and toxicity; and finally, Cang Zhu, Atractylodesroot, transforms damp in the presence of interior damp.

I spent my first two weeks learning the names of herbs and how to identify them by properties of color, taste, density, and with what other herbs they were associated. On June 14th, I observed and took vigorous notes on how “Zhongyi” the Chinese doctor observed the patient and used diagnostic techniques. First, the Doctor looks at the patient. Looks at Orifices, places on the face where an internal organ opens and displays its condition. The Liver opens up in the eyes, the lungs to the nose, the stomach to the mouth, the heart to the tongue, and the kidneys to the ears. Along with pulse taking and measuring blood pressure, the orifices are very useful in traditional Chinese diagnostics. He may then take blood pressure but first takes the patient’s pulse, using three fingers. The three fingers correspond with three positions- on the left wrist, Heart, Liver, Kidney Yin, and on the right wrist, Lung, Spleen, and Kidney Yang. When the pulse is too slow, there is too much Yin represented in the system, likewise, when too fast, too much Yang. When taking pulse and blood pressure, the doctor will ask questions about lifestyle and symptoms. He then looks at the tongue, where different locations represent different organs; also, different coat colors and patterns of lines indicate one’s pattern of disharmony. The doctor, if he finds it necessary, will prescribe either a type of acupuncture or herbal treatment. While the ladies behind the pharmacy taught me the names and purposes of the herbs, the Chinese doctor “Zhongyi” made the ideas of pressure point massage therapy and acupuncture clear to me, although I regretfully never practiced with needles on a patient.

Interviews were also a vital part of my research, although sometimes difficult to translate. I wrote questions in English, translated them into Chinese characters using my Oxford Chinese-English dictionary. I then translated the answers from Chinese to English by the same method and wrote summaries.

On June 15th, I brought with me 15 questions regarding treatment and precautions. I’ve included the answers and summaries of this, and following interviews, and direct points of

research. Acupuncture is only used when the patient is sick and has undergone questioning and examination. If the condition is severe, emergency treatment is required rather than Traditional Chinese medicine. Chinese herbal medicine is prescribed when a patient is sick, unless an emergency situation. As a precaution, Doctors do not use acupuncture on pregnant patients but can prescribe herbs in these cases. Women take Western medicine for birth control but a Chinese doctor can see pregnant patients. There are herbs that can terminate pregnancy. There are also herbs that help control menstruation, PMS, etc. There are even herbs to help promote a healthy pregnancy. Acupuncture is not performed on pregnant patients and certain pressure points threaten pregnancy and mother. When regarding women's health, just like in Western medicine, precautions should be taken.

There are very few cases where a patient will refuse animal products due to religious beliefs. I hypothesized that Chinese herbal medicine, out of all types of traditional medicine, would be the most effective remedy; however, the doctor answered that there is no single best remedy. Acupuncture and Acupressure are good for pains, but a doctor must be present. Herbal medicine is convenient because it does not require a prescription. I also hypothesized that Chinese medicine is superior to Western medicine in that side effects and allergic reactions to medicine are rare. The doctor's answer supported this theory; there are no allergic reactions to acupuncture but side effects do exist, especially on the first trial. Allergic reactions to herbal medicine exist but are rare; one can overdose, but the consequences are not fatal (usually nausea) if the drug is not potent or toxic. Herbs that are potentially harmful require a prescription. I observed four toxicants at work, three of which include a gram limit even when prescribed. These are often used to treat aches, pains, cold, and rheumatism.

Because I am interested in Medical school, I asked questions about Western medicine used in China. A Traditional Chinese doctor does not suggest Western medicine or prescribe antibiotics. Most Chinese seek Traditional Chinese medicine unless it is an emergency situation. I also asked about the process of studying Chinese medicine and becoming a Zhongyi; After graduating from college, one studies Chinese Medicine for four years. He or she may practice under another doctor like an apprentice but the process is different from American doctors and their residency. Depending on licensing and competitiveness, I may consider this process after I graduate from Sewanee. I am interested in practicing both western and eastern style medicine- very few doctors in China use both types of medicine simultaneously.

I asked questions to include a socioeconomic perspective. Most Chinese have medical insurance that will include both traditional eastern medicine and western medicine. There are about the same amount of both private and public hospitals in Changchun. Public hospitals in China have both Traditional Chinese Medical doctors and Western medical doctors; but all doctors are Chinese, no foreigners. Private hospitals have both types of medicine as well. Many patients visit public hospitals versus private hospitals; however, neither are very expensive, about the same price. Traditional Chinese medicine is relatively inexpensive; some herbs are very cheap while others are expensive. Valuable, precious herbs, usually animal shell or scale are expensive. (Observed two at work; one used to bleed faster, other eliminates toxins.)

I was curious in how the traditional Chinese doctor went about prescribing herbs; the “Zhongyi” at Yongxin often used a book for reference to prescribe the correct amount of a drug. I was also curious in why several herbs are required instead of one or two. As it turns out, a single drug by itself rarely does the trick. Each has a single role or function; so when four, ten, or even twenty different herbs are combined, the symptoms and disharmonies are treated and/or eliminated.

On June 21 and 22, I decided to interview both my coworkers behind the counter in addition to Yongxin's Zhongyi. It was helpful to speak with a few of the women to get their opinions and not just a doctor's (male) perspective. Firstly, I asked questions about the store's reputation and competition methods. Most pharmaceutical stores in Changchun have both traditional Chinese medicine and western medicine. Yongxin used to only sell traditional Chinese medicine, but now competes by offering a wide variety of products along with good service. Their methods of competition include varying prices of good-quality products, holding sales, and having advertisements on both television and the radio. I brought home with me the summer Yongxinjiankangzhi – a magazine with coupons, store information, and information on staying fit and healthy. From the listings and phone numbers on the back of the pamphlet, I realized there are at least 35 chain stores in Changchun and approximately another 55 or 60 in Jilin Province.

One of my hypotheses was that as Western-style medicine grows more popular in the East, Westerners are starting to seek more alternative medicines from the East. There are few reasons I can conclude from these interviews to support this. Firstly, people in China are looking to different, less expensive alternatives for certain types of Chinese medicine; because of natural disasters including excessive dryness (drought) and the Jilin flood, Chinese herbs have become more difficult to cultivate and therefore more expensive. When I asked if the average price had risen in the last year, I learned that almost all the herbs in Yongxin's inventory were approximately the same as the year previous; Renshen and a few types of berries had increased in price. However, everything in the inventory is more expensive than in 2000, but due to economic reasons, which reach beyond the scope of my research and this paper. Most herbs are locally grown, in or near Changchun. The shelf-life is approximately 5 years, longer than I expected. Although the traditional medicine remains popular, people in China often seek Western-style medicine in cases of emergency or when a symptom needs to

be treated quickly. Western-style medicine eliminates the symptoms immediately but traditional Chinese medicine treats the pattern of disharmony and is therefore effective in chronic conditions and those that do not require immediate action.

When considering the path of becoming a Chinese doctor, one must think of his salary and growing reputation in the future. People in China are honest in speaking about money among other subjects that are somewhat taboo in the US. The Zhongyi, doctor at Yongxin, told me he makes 5,000 RMB a month but only knows superficial knowledge of Western doctors. It seems though that more Chinese students interested in medicine choose the path of Western style because of the money and growing popularity. Therefore, many traditional Chinese doctors feel an authenticity about them; The Zhongyi at Yongxin was not modest or humble about his pride in being a traditional Chinese doctor. Chinese doctors' reputations grow as they age both due to the cultural respect for elders and the long life of experience in the career.

From the very limited knowledge I've obtained in school about the Cultural Revolution, I hypothesized that perhaps Traditional Chinese medicine was negatively influenced by the radical changes and even vandalism that took place during the 1960's. However, Western medicine was not even introduced to China until 1966; it has taken even more time to grow popular. The Manchurian incident occurred in 1937, where Japanese invaded Changchun and set up a Puppet Manchurian Regime. I also hypothesized that an outside invasion would have affected or influenced Chinese medical practices; however, nothing was said about either of these events. In order not to offend anyone, I appreciated the answers that were given and did not force any information- I was a guest-student, not a criminal investigator. I figured because of the introduction of Western medicine in 1966, there would be a different level in popularity between generations. However, both Chinese and Western medicine are popular among all ages and are safe for all ages. Of course, children take smaller doses.

Finally, I wanted to examine the working conditions of an employee at Yongxin, just to understand a glimpse of life in China. After speaking with the women, I learned that most of them work around 48 hours a week. Depending on what specific job each employee carried out, there were different levels of education and experience required and represented. For example, to become a pharmacist working with Chinese herbal medicine, one studies herbal medicine in college for three years after graduating from high-school. I was also curious why almost all of the Yongxin workers were women. I learned if pursuing the medical field as a career, most women become nurses and pharmacists and men usually become doctors. In general, when it comes to employment in Changchun, many men work for automobile companies; the biggest industry in the city is automobile followed by pharmaceuticals.

In addition to everything I learned at Yongxin, in experiencing the social scene, I learned how to communicate without spoken language. There are only so many things about culture and language one can learn from books and in a classroom. However, as I read Kevin Sinclair's *Culture Shock: China* to learn about local customs and etiquette before and during my China adventure, I asked questions about what I had read and witnessed things I had studied in class. One thing I learned is that, although considered an Atheist country, there are many different beliefs and religions practiced throughout China. Even while many Chinese people do not claim to be religious or affiliated with an established religious institution, I found that the cultural behaviors themselves reflect a deeper religious or philosophical approach. For example, I was able to celebrate a folk custom with my host family within the first week of my arrival. Every year, on the fifth day of the fifth month of the lunar calendar, Qu Yuan, a famous poet from the Warring States Period, is remembered by eating Zongzi, sticky rice with filling, wrapped in bamboo leaves and often dipped in sugar. Dragon Boat Races, another popular southern

tradition, are attended by many to remember the poet; I watched some with “Ayi” at home on television. Just as Catholicism celebrates the lives of Christian Saints, the Chinese remember the lives of those before them, enriching their culture. I was also able to attend a Christian church with my Chinese host family in Changchun. Although it was very different from any church service I had ever attended and I had difficulty in following the readings and songs of praise, I was pleased to see such a large crowd and such enthusiasm. It is inspiring to see people worship and practice their faith on the other side of the planet. This semester as I take Dr. Brown’s Asian Religions class, I hope to further examine the Chinese culture studying Taoism and Buddhism; I believe I can contribute to the class by sharing my knowledge of the philosophy behind Traditional Chinese Medicine and FengShui. Finally, on religion in China, it was a humbling experience to realize how much I don’t know- different religions are prosperous in different parts of China- something I never would have guessed.

One of the most important skills I learned in China was how to communicate without spoken language. I have never thought so much about hand gestures, eye contact, and mannerisms that I even use in the United States. Two keys to success during my trip were to smile and be patient. There were many situations where I was powerless and had to do my best to keep up with Chinese language, customs, and etiquette. I knew I would not understand everything the first week, and I didn’t. In fact, I feel that the two months went by too quickly to study everything to the extent I would like to. However, I have a special place in my heart for the Chinese people- especially the ones who I struggled with to communicate; through patience and kindness, we were able to build relationships.

My experience with the Chinese culture is that the people are very friendly and social, not pre-judging others based off money, experience, and prestige. They seem to accept people for who they are. When they see that one is sincere, honest, and good-hearted, they return the

friendliness. I experienced Chinese culture at the parks, where families bring picnics, people walk their pet dogs, and hundreds of men, women, and children dance and listen to music. One day at Nan Hu, a park built by the Japanese who invaded Manchuria, my Chinese family asked if my family did things like what we were doing at home. Regretful, I said that we did not. I deeply appreciate how the Chinese culture is focused on family and how social relationships are built at public places like the parks, where people enjoy the company of one another. I felt welcomed into the community at these parks when I joined in the dancing and even Chinese Kung Fu! Instructors and others who were practicing gave me extra attention to make sure I danced, fought, and exercised properly.

Although I was rather disturbed by some cultural representations of everyday life- mothers taking their toddlers into the street, spreading apart their legs, and letting them poop and pee where everyone walks- I found it funny that people burp and fart without saying anything like "Excuse Me". I was shocked when "Yeye" my precious 80-year old Chinese grandpa put down a German beer during dinner and let out one of the loudest burps I had ever heard. I could not stop laughing; however, now I think about why some people in the West act so properly. Who are we trying to prove? Yes, using manners and being polite shows a level of education and respect, but I have learned that properness is not synonymous with kindness.

After having experienced these mannerisms and customs in China, I question some of those we practice in America and in the West. For example, why do we tip? Often because it is expected; waiters in Western restaurants often accept minimum wage and expect tips left by customers to compensate for such an inadequate salary. However, in China, tipping is not expected. Tipping, in fact, can be perceived as invoking a relationship where one is superior to the other. In fact, politeness or "properness" is not encouraged; the response to Thank You "Xixie" is "Bu Keqi" which literally means "Do not be polite". We say "thank you" to express

appreciation, even when the act is expected, but the Chinese do not serve one another to seek appreciation, they practice kindness and service because it is invoked as a necessity in the culture from a very young age. This is expressed as complete obedience to parents as a child and caretaking of parents in old age. The elderly are respected by all; I witnessed members of the younger generation giving up their seats on a bus to members of an older generation. However, I believe that the older generation is considerate to those who are younger. They are cherished because of their wisdom and in return, share their wisdom and experiences with others. Also, in the mornings, elderly practice dancing, simple exercises, and Taiji, to keep fit and healthy; they do not wish to become a burden unto others.

For the last part of my trip, after I completed two months of working and studying at Yongxin, I spent three days in Beijing. Friday, July 29th, I rode the overnight train from Changchun to Beijing. I almost had an anxiety attack in the train station because I had never seen so many people in one confined space. On top of that, security responsibilities and actions were lower than my expectations; not all passengers who entered the gate had their baggage inspected. And the guard who read the computer screen could not have inspected the bags more carelessly. I arrived at my gate just in time- Ma Shushu, Ayi, Shifu, and Shuqi accompanied me onto the train to say goodbye. This was the second hardest goodbye I have ever said, behind that I had made an hour previous when leaving Nainai's house. I slept for eight hours, gripping tightly to my bag, hoping nobody would steal my money or my stuffed animal Mr. Dolphin! I woke up in Beijing and experienced an entirely different perspective of China!

I was immediately offended when I arrived at Beijing. After departing from the train, I struggled to carry my 23KG bag along with my computer bag and backpack full of books on Traditional Chinese Medicine. A man offered to help me after walking only a short distance

towards the exit. I appreciated the offer- I am young, cute, and struggling with my luggage. However, when we arrived at the exit approximately 10 minutes later, he asked for money. How much? 100 RMB! I thought he was crazy and handed him 50 RMB; but no, he was holding my luggage hostage. I did not want to put up a fight and gave him the 100 RMB; that is only about \$15 after all. But I was still angry that a Chinese man, after I had made so many Chinese friends in Changchun, would take advantage of a young, foreigner girl by pretending to help her with luggage. He assumed that I was vulnerable and rich, like many Chinese assume of all foreigners visiting their country.

I spent my first day in Beijing with Deng Ayi, my friend's mom. My friend MengGe and I had planned for me to meet her mother in Beijing so I had someone to accompany me to the hotel and show me around the city. I thought, if only she had met me inside the train station so that that jerk man could not have ripped me off. But she was very kind; she invited me into her home for breakfast and to rest. She and I spent the day bargaining for pearls and beautiful silk clothes and ate traditional Chinese food.

After a satisfying rest at the Hilton, I went on my first day tour to visit the Ming Tombs and Great Wall from the Badling entrance. I was unimpressed visiting the Ming Tombs- only one tomb, out of 13, was excavated and all of its belongings were behind glass. But there were beautiful views of mountains and excellent photo opportunities from the tops of buildings. I should have not been surprised that our tour guides are required to take their guests shopping. Afterwards, we visited the Jade Factory where we were taught how to discriminate between real and fake jade, and the different qualities. Previously, I convinced myself not to buy anything from these government owned factories; but the opportunity was just too perfect! That same afternoon, Sally, our tour guide, gave us two hours to climb and explore the Great Wall. After entering, I explored on my own, continued to practice my Chinese speaking with locals, and

took fabulous pictures. I was the last in my group to meet up with the tour guide; members stood in the shade, bored, and ready to go home. I thought, don't these people want to get their money's worth? It's the Great Wall- not something you get to see everyday!

I spent my third and final day in Beijing visiting the Summer Palace (Yiheyuan), Forbidden City (Zijincheng), and Temple of Heaven (Tiantang). This day tour was much smaller, five people in my group versus 17 the day previous. When visiting the Summer Palace, I learned that the lake built is the largest man-made lake in China. When built, laborers moved the earth to build a mountain which houses one of the most famous Buddhist temples in China. After taking pictures and visiting with local Chinese, my group went to the Pearl Market, another government-run institution, where we were taught how to distinguish real from fake pearls and, of course, encouraged to buy China's famous freshwater pearls. I was told that 70% of the world's salt-water pearls and 90% of the world's fresh-water pearls come from China. I bought a black fresh-water pearl necklace after speaking Chinese with the store assistants. I chose the black-colored pearls because they represent power and strength. White pearls represent purity, longevity, and health; pink, happiness, and purple, romance and love. Forbidden City was breathtaking; I wondered how buildings so massive were built 600 years ago! Local Chinese took advantage of the heat and humidity by selling ice-cold water for 5RMB outside where a line of sweating tourists wrapped around the city's walls. Finally, at the Temple of Heaven, I saw groups of men playing Chinese Checkers, something I witnessed everyday in Changchun. Although I found Beijing and its beautiful sites different from my experience in Changchun, I felt at home whenever I saw the interactions and communal activities between local Chinese.

I think it's important I visited Beijing, not only to witness the unbelievable man-made structures, but to compare different areas of China. When in Changchun, I felt special because I was The Foreigner, The American Friend; in Beijing, to the Chinese, I was just another white

female who bought their goods and visited the incredible sites. However, I hated this feeling; so I fought it! On my visiting tours, I spoke Chinese with both locals and tour guides. At the Beijing Capital Airport Hilton, I spoke Chinese and made friends with all of the workers- they acted as my Chinese family for the three days I spent there. While in Beijing, I saw more foreigners than local Chinese and heard more English than Mandarin. I questioned myself if I was still in China; the China I know is Changchun.

Leaving Changchun was one of the most difficult things I have ever done. After overcoming the difficulty in communicating as a result of both language and age barriers, I became very close to my host family. A few days before I left, I told the Chinese maid "Ayi" that "wo de xinhuai le. WohuiMeiguo, wo de xinzhezaiZhongguo. WohuilaiZhongguo, wo hen gaoxing." Meaning "My heart is broken. When I return to America, my heart will continue to live in China. When I return to China, I will be very happy." On my last day in Changchun, a friend, Lu Xin Yu, called me to exchange email addresses. She said, "You are my first American friend. Because I know you, I feel different; I feel differently about my other friends." These words continually remind me that my experience in China did not just change my life, but also with those whom I built relationships.

I knew returning to America would not be easy. Nothing at home in Fort Worth has really changed, but I have changed. Because I have changed, I must learn how to adjust so that I may be a productive member of society, not someone who has experienced something wonderful and cannot face the reality of returning home. After living in a foreign country for two months, I have realized how much people in Fort Worth and at Sewanee care for me and love me. While living in Changchun, it was easy to forget where I came from, because it was a journey moving forwards and involving building new friendships. The first few days home, I embarrassed myself by responding to questions in Chinese. In fact, I searched through DVDs at home to find one

with a Chinese language option or Chinese characters as subtitles. Thank God for Bruce Lee Kung Fu movies.

I have been able to share stories and part of my experience with people from all walks of life at home. Responses include “I am so proud of you- that’s a big deal!” and “You lived in China this summer?!Omg do people there speak Spanish?” But the most memorable conversation was that with my friend MengGe, who is originally from Beijing but studied at my high-school and now studies Math at Caltech. She reminded me of how fortunate I am to have had this experience; “We are so busy in college and summer vacation is the time to grow between semesters. Some students spend their summers by the pool with friends, drinking away their problems and possibly everything they learned during the school year. But you were granted a scholarship to be emerged into a culture on the other side of the world.” I took this to heart because a year ago, I was the former. This experience has served and will continue to serve as a growth-mark. My Dad and I have talked about self-reliance and its purpose in building confidence. When travelling to a foreign country alone and living out of one’s comfort zone, one cannot always depend on people, places, and circumstances. I had to depend on the strength, wisdom, and perseverance God granted me through prayer. I am so grateful for the opportunity and all those whom made it possible.