

THE SILK ROAD
300 B.C. - A.D. 100



MY CHINA STORY

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Upon my master's graduation in 2014, from KNUST, Ghana, a classmate of mine that we shared the same dream with travelled to China to do his PhD in Jiangsu University in the area of Control Science and Engineering. While he was studying in China, I was doing my compulsory national service at Ghana Statistical Service (GSS). Prince would call to tell me how interesting China is and how all discussions we had on China surpassed his expectations. In his words, you need to be here to learn what China really means. This is a place to be". All I can do was to laugh over it because I had no fund to sponsor my study in China. Since I could not afford to study in China, I started applying for scholarships. Interestingly, Jiangsu University gave me an opportunity I had always wanted all my life. Gaining a presidential scholarship to study at Jiangsu University was a dream come true. It felt like living in a dream.

My China experience is a long-lasting one as it has been the first time I met with Chinese culture with very warm welcoming "Ni hao!" in Jiangsu University. After then I never want to break up my ties with this language and culture as it amazed me with every piece of information I learned in time. In my first couple of weeks of living in China, I met many people and as well as hearing many introductions, I had to introduce myself, over and over again. Many Chinese people have English names they use in order to go easy on us 'laowai'



(foreigners), but I try my best to address people by their Chinese names as I love the wonderful meanings they have. In fact, I am learning a plethora of new Chinese words just by learning people's names and asking what they mean. So far, I have met people with names that mean strong, happy and wind, to name a few. I even met someone whose name meant that his parents hoped 'he would study hard'. I must say that, I made a lot of friends from all different countries on campus and we had a lot of fun. Life is composed of

memories we are left with during the limited time we are given. I wish when the time of

leaving Jiangsu University comes, I will be left with memories which I will be sharing with people around me enthusiastically throughout my life.

Working with Jiangsu University



In autumn I apply to work with Overseas Education Center (OEC) as mathematics foundation teacher and invigilator. The most interesting aspect is when my supervisor asks me to teach his Chinese students, I really enjoy such moment of friendships and

love during our teaching and learning periods. I walked into class and with all the clout of a scared little puppy I tried to get everyone to settle down and focus on me. I had no idea what I was doing. The two forty-minute classes turned into a never-ending Q&A about Africa and myself in regards to anything you would remotely consider personal. It got the job done I suppose but damn it was rough getting there. One interesting thing I notice was that Chinese students are very fast in grasping mathematics concepts as compared to other international students.

During my time of invigilation, I caught a lot of undergraduate international students cheating in exams, generally I think when it comes to examination Chinese students comport themselves and obey all the necessary examination rules.



My Faculty

Faculty of science in Jiangsu University is just like home, the lecturers, students, non-teaching staffs and graduate students live, learn, and work together. These multigenerational communities provide personal and enriching interactions that shape students both intellectually and socially. Every one is ready to help you achieve your goal. I really enjoyed my classes with all the lecturers I came across and also the counselling and motivation from my supervisors.

Chinese Food



I really love and enjoy Chinese styles of cooking: braising, stewing, and sautéing over the flash-fry method that foreigners usually associate with Chinese food. As a result, dishes are quite tender and the original flavours of the ingredients are kept intact.



Fried Fish 油煎的鱼(Yóu jiān de yú)



Cantonese Poached Chicken: 白切鸡 (Bái Qiè Jī)



Steamed Fish 蒸的鱼(Zhēng de yú)



(Nanjing Duck)



(Rice with duck)



Sichuan Spicy Shrimps 四川辣虾



Chinese Tea

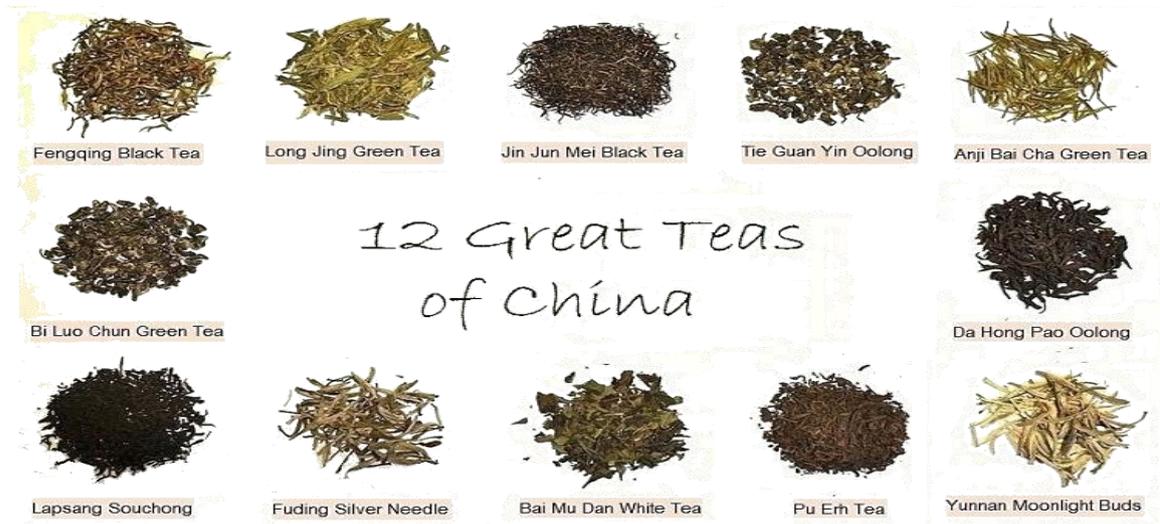


I love Chinese tea; Chinese culture tea refers to how tea is prepared as well as the occasions when people consume tea in China. Tea culture in China differs from that in European countries like Britain and other Asian countries like Japan, Korea, Vietnam in preparation, taste, and occasion when it is consumed. Tea is still consumed regularly, both on casual and formal occasions. In addition to being a popular beverage, it is used in traditional Chinese medicine as well as in Chinese cuisine.

Chinese people are believed to have enjoyed tea drinking for more than 4,000 years. Legend has it that Yan Di, one of three rulers in ancient times, tasted all kinds of herbs to find medical cures. One day, as he was being poisoned by some herb he had ingested; a drop of water from a tea tree dripped into his mouth and he was saved. For a long time, tea was used as an herbal medicine. During the Western Zhou Dynasty, it was a religious offering. During the Spring and Autumn Period, people ate fresh tea leaves as vegetables. With the popularization of Buddhism from the Three Kingdoms to the Northern and Southern Dynasties, it's refreshing effect made it a favorite among monks in Za-Zen meditation¹.



Figure 1 Some Popular Chinese Tea



Challenges

Some of the challenges are as follows: adapting to a new culture is viewed as requiring a dynamic shift in personal identification. The process is a dual process including cultural and psychological change. Many of us international students have reported the adaptation as a positive experience, though the process might be challenging. The cultural adaptation is perceived as a process that enhances international student's intercultural communication competence. The prominent variables that influence international students' ability to adapt to life in China include (a) cultural distance, (b) cultural shock, (c) social support, (d) stress and anxiety, (e) language barriers, and (f) classroom transition. In addition, most international students, the decision to study abroad generally involves a large personal, social, and financial investment. Therefore, we felt the pressure to succeed is as a result of this investment. It could be more challenging for international students who have language also the challenge and the pressure may cause anxiety for some international students.

Recommendations

Many international students feel that people at the university do not understand their culture. The differences between cultures may lead to experiences of interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts among international students. Therefore, international students must find a balance between two cultures. High social connectedness among international students lead to less psychological stress and an easier adjustment to the new social environment. In addition, the loss of a social support system among international students can have a significant negative influence on the psychological well-being of students, including depression and loneliness.

Finally, have you heard the story of the carrot, the egg and the coffee bean? If not, google it! (Or watch Action Jackson recount it by clicking [here](#).) The story is a metaphor for what kind of person you can be when going through life. In short, an egg, a carrot and a coffee bean are put into separate pots of boiling water and left to cook for a period of time. At the end of that time, the result is that the carrot went in hard but then came out soft and weak. The egg went in soft on the inside, but then came out hard both on the inside and out. The ground coffee bean was different however. It went into the water and changed the water, releasing flavor and fragrance. So, although the carrot, egg and coffee bean each faced the

same circumstance, for the coffee bean, the very thing that brought adversity (the boiling water) brought out the best in it.