

China To Me Is A Peaceful Haven

By: Alicia (Xiaoqi Jin)

When I was young, I thought China was the twisting rivers and rolling hills covered in lush green vegetation that I saw in textbooks. Its picturesque views, rich civilizations and breathtaking beauty had left an indelible impression upon me long before I traveled thousands of miles. Ironically, as a Chinese person, I had no idea what China meant to me. The truth is, it was more like an abstract riddle or unattainable Arcadia.

In the process of learning its centuries-old history and splendid culture, the picture of China as a peaceful haven did not take shape without striking a blow. I remember the first time I accessed the knowledge of the Nanjing Massacre, it utterly shocked me to my core. The Chinese Military Tribunal for War Crimes in Nanjing stated in a verdict that “During the period from December 12 to 21, 1937, it was estimated that more than 190,000 Chinese prisoners of war and civilians were shot with machine guns in large groups by the Japanese Army, and their bodies were incinerated...In addition, more than 150,000 people were killed in small or scattered groups, and their bodies were collected and buried by charity organizations. Altogether, more than 300,000 people were murdered.” During World War II, death and suffering visited hundreds of thousands of innocents in China. It was hard to imagine those horrendous scenes——rivers were tinted with blood, thousands of bodies were dumped into pits, Japanese troops killed babies for fun and countless women suffered from rapes and brutal tortures...Nanjing was hell on earth at that time with all these bestial aggressions and horrible massacres. Nevertheless, it seemed absolutely unbelievable for me because Nanjing features peace and quiet nowadays. This striking contrast between the past and the present day demonstrates that those ineradicable scars of China do not strike the country down, instead, they harden, strengthen and produce a hardy and independent people. Learning from history, our government gives increasing priority to national security and civil rights as well. For me, the image of China increasingly came alive in my mind as I absorbed more.

After going abroad, I realized the momentous significance of China as an oasis more profoundly. On my last day in Bali, I was waiting for an international flight when the pillars of the building started shifting, and the people around me started evacuating the airport. I saw the columns in the building moving, the ceiling tiles coming down, water pipes and sewage pipes breaking in the bathroom; I was scared to death. There was no doubt that it was at least a 7.0-magnitude earthquake, and unfortunately it struck before I left. At that very moment, I was anxious to return home if given the opportunity. Actually, I had never cherished the memory of my homeland like this before, and I could not help weeping. Luckily, the flight sent by Chinese government came to my rescue, and I landed in China safely. Thanks to China I had a narrow squeak with an earthquake, and it occurred to me what role China has played in my life——a peaceful haven, which I used to ignore before.

Someone may be blind to what safeguards them for their whole life and takes all for granted; however, one day if they lose such asylum and support, they will rethink

radically. For every Chinese person, China is a sanctuary, a shelter, and a peaceful haven. By and large, I feel confident and proud of being a part of the Chinese people.