

International

A short journey allows one to view The Great Wall, which climbs up mountains and dips into the valleys for endless miles. However, these are not the impressions that allow me to call China a truly unique and wonderful place. The people and their rich culture, which has existed for centuries longer than the United States short history, provides China with a uniqueness that separates it from anything found in the West. It is hard to single out a certain aspect or describe the feelings that Chinese culture exudes. I first started realizing its uniqueness riding on a crowded dirty bus, and watching a father hold his child lovingly and play with her with great pride. The Chinese have such a different idea of what is important in life than that of a person from the West. Western culture has become so involved with "having it all" that it has lost the close family bond that is so important to the Chinese. They pass love, value, and tradition down through generations of children.

As I was told by the returning students from China last

semester, "China is something you have to see for yourself. It is incredible." That statement is too true. Life in Beijing is entirely different from everything in the states. Once I recovered from the initial shock of having none of the conveniences, I was accustomed to having, like sit-down toilets, mattresses, warm rooms, and supermarkets, I began to realize that life in China is an experience that I will carry with me, in a special place, for the rest of my life.

Beijing, China is a rather grey, dirty, and smelly city which borders between New York and a third-world country. It is also a Communist city; in fact, it is the capital for the most populated country in the world. Downtown, there is the fabled Forbidden City, which was the exclusive domain of the emperors of China for centuries; Tiananmen, with Mao's ever-present picture, stands apart from the dusty streets filled with apartment buildings and businesses.

Scott Grearv



Dormitory and Athletic Field

Beijing, 1990

Oh China! I hear the Middle Kingdom, between Heaven and Earth! Since stepping from the plane, my senses have been assaulted in all ways. China is unique; not like our world; and to truly appreciate it requires the openings of all avenues of sense to it.

At first one feels only the bitter cold; the biting wind; the cold cement rooms. You feel the dust stirring your face; you also feel 6,000 years of civilization bearing down on you.

You smell China. The scents of this country are many and diverse. You smell the filth (attributable to bad plumbing) and you smell the roasting meat on street corners. You smell the air, so fouled by coal smoke and automobile fumes as to be unhealthy. You smell the great food-different every time, but almost always the best you have ever had.

You taste China. From the bread made by the Uygur minorities to the pigeons on a stick to the Kentucky Fried Chicken purchased downtown. This is a country

of many tastes and flavors.

The sounds of China are always with you. The yells of school kids, the noise of the bus horns, the distant whistles of the trains, and the howl of the wind assault your hearing 24 hours a day. The echos in your dorm are magnified by five stories of cement stairwell. The ringing of bicycle bells and the shouting of vendors is with you always. And the loud speakers are everywhere.

The visual experience is with you most of all. China is a drab, dirty, almost dull gray country. When one sees bright color, the appreciation is strong. Many thanks to Mr. Kodak for making memories possible. The immensity of Beijing defies description. One can explore its streets and allies and never stop seeing unique things.

We are in a place alien to our lives at home. The great diversity and mass of population, combined with more history than anywhere on the planet, combine to make this truly one of God's special places.

John Edmonson



A local market in Beijing