

**The CHINA WorldTeach Experience:
“Life Beyond the Classroom” as a Asian-American Volunteer Teacher**



By: Roy Chan

WorldTeach Program: Hengyang, Hunan Province, China

School: Hengyang Number Eight High School and ChengZhang Middle School

Year: 2009-2010

1) The traffic is crazy here in my city at Hengyang, Hunan Province, China!!! Cars don't wait for anything. There is no such thing as “people have the right away” when crossing the streets. Even when the traffic lights are working, I cross the street at my own risk....you know how in America when the traffic lights are out everyone treats it like a stop sign. Well, here in my new city, they apparently do the opposite and just pretend that there's no traffic-controlling device at all. It is always a constant joy to watch weaving cars and honks, honks, and more honks.



The main intersection of Hengyang, Hunan Province, China.

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2) Restaurants and schools in Hengyang, China often do not have toilet paper or soap in their bathrooms. I often have to carry my own toilet paper almost everywhere. In addition, most restaurants don't even have napkins to clean your mouth or hands.



WorldTeach China volunteers enjoying a small lunch at Changsha, Hunan Province, China

3) In my city, everything that I eat is spicy. If I tell the cook to add no spice, many of them would look at me oddly and quickly ask “*Where are you from?*”



Tasty spicy tofu and fish at Hengyang. Hengyang is the home of fish and rice in the Hunan Province of China.

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4) In the latest 2010 statistics report, it states that more than 60 percent of Hengyang’s population lives in slum conditions. I can easily find poverty within a 5 minute walking distance from my school in Hengyang, China



Two rural Chinese boys await for a bus at Hengyang, China



Many Chinese residents live in poor condition at Hengyang, China

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5) Hengyang people often enjoy the sights and sounds of burning garbage and fireworks almost every day. In fact, it is common to see Chinese people playing with fireworks in the middle of a Chinese street just to hear the sound of it.



Fireworks burn in the middle of a main intersection at Hengyang, China.

6) In my town, there are lots of chickens and roosters that wander around the roads in Hengyang, China. People often carry chickens. Sometimes the chickens are in a cage and sometimes the people just pull back their wings and hold them in their hands. Often, I've seen many guys on a motorbike carrying a dog or a rooster in a shopping bag. Sadly, my city enjoys eating and killing dogs for dinner...and the same goes to rest in the Hunan Province of China.

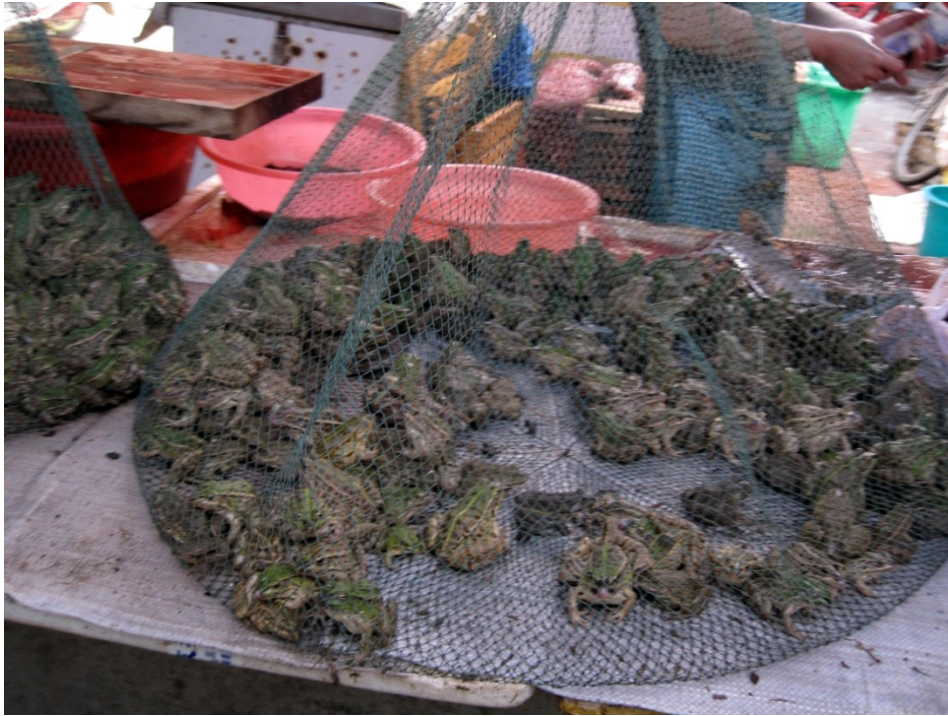


WorldTeach China volunteer *Mandy Au Yeung* holding a dead rooster at Ningyuan, Hunan Province, China

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7) Aside from dogs and roosters, the most famous living species to buy and sell at Hengyang, China are frogs.



A Chinese man selling frogs at Hengyang, China

8) According to Chinese locals, the most popular food to eat at Hengyang, China is rice noodles. Below is a picture of local rural Chinese women from Hengyang, China preparing to sale and ship off rice noodle.



A Chinese woman organizing and preparing rice noodles at Hengyang, China

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9) I find that kids at Hengyang, China are the cutest group of children’s ever.



Chinese children’s singing a song in a park at Hengyang, China.



A little Chinese girl dance to a song in a park at Hengyang, China.

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10) Many babies and toddlers in China have slits in the back of their pants. Why? To go to the bathroom, of course! It's not uncommon to see a toddler squatting on the sidewalk and relieving himself/herself. I understand the economics of it (diapers are an unnecessary expense), but I often wonder how the mothers of children under 2 are able to ensure they don't get peed and pooped on.



A Chinese toddler from Hengyang, China tries to stay warm during the winter holidays

11) One of the best aspects of living at Hengyang is being right next to the Xiang River, the largest river in the Hunan Province of China.



The beautiful Xiang River at Hengyang, China.

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12) In all Chinese schools, students are required to partake in Physical Education for less than 15 minutes per day.



Students exercising in “ChengZhang Middle School” at Hengyang, China.



Chinese students warming up prior to their physical activity in “ChengZhang Middle School” at Hengyang, China.

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13) One of the most famous vegetable dishes at Hengyang, China is “Eggplant.”



A Chinese eggplant dish served with beef at Hengyang, China.

14) One of the most famous snacks at Hengyang, China is “stinky tofu.”



Fresh sticky tofu cooked and ready to be served at Hengyang, China

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15) My favorite dish I had eaten at Hengyang, China is “Egg mixed with beef.” Yum!



16) Frequently, drivers in my city like to honk their horns as a sign of respect to inform people “to watch out and get out of the way.” In America, we typically use our horn if someone is about to hit their car.

17) In my town, our city had successfully built the world’s fastest train in the world. On January 3, 2010, I had an opportunity to ride on the fastest train in the world from Hengyang, China to Guangzhou, China. The high speed rail travels more than 337 kilometers per hour (~200 mph).



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18) Everyday, people in my city often likes to smoke everywhere and anywhere. Restaurant? Of course! My apartment when they're fixing the lights? Naturally! Crowded bus? Of course! When some guy is sitting on top of an air conditioner/heater and refueling it with water? Yes, yes, yes!

19) In a small town like Hengyang, everyone wants to take me out to their hometown and to show me how wonderful there city is. Also, many of my students really want me to meet their mother (which I find quite odd).



A boat sitting in the Xiang River at Hengyang, China

20) One thing that I have learned at Hengyang, China is that ant bus can always fit more people than expected. You may think there's no more room, but you'd be wrong. There's always enough room! So make space ladies and gents!!!!

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My high school students and I celebrating Christmas day on December 25, 2009 at Hengyang, Hunan Province, China.



THANKS FOR READING!!!