



Wei Jun at the summit of Mount Taishan.

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Why did you choose to apply to study abroad in China, specifically at Tsinghua University?

I have always been eager to explore China's diverse culture and try its local cuisines. In comparison to the US and the UK, China has one of the strictest visa policies, allowing only a 14-day stay for tourism. Thus, opting to study in China allowed me a more extended stay. I chose Tsinghua University (THU) because it is China's top university, offering many learning opportunities. For instance, I wanted to visit the National Research Centre for Economic Research at THU. I attended some China politics-related economic lectures, which were eye-openers. There are also student events such as sports and cultural activities that I wanted to experience. For instance, I had the opportunity to try archery, horse riding, and jujitsu. THU also hosts events such as a Gala Night and a New Year's countdown.

What did you find unique about Beijing?

One unique experience was the traditional "搓澡," which is a bath. This involves your friends scrubbing your entire body with a rag. It's an experience unlike any other since we rarely have the opportunity to bond by bathing with our close friends. The experience was filled with moments of laughter, awkwardness, and genuine connection as we

clumsily attempted to scrub each other's backs.

Food from all regions of China is widely available in Beijing. The drinking culture is very exciting and different too. "Live houses" are very common and affordable; they are like pubs and nightclubs. Even if you are a quiet person, you will be cheered on to drink by others. It is common for strangers to merge tables and play drinking games, a practice less frequently seen in Singapore. Tip: Know your limits. The Northern Chinese hold their liquor much better than the average Singaporean.

What did you miss most about NUS while you were on exchange?

Despite frequently complaining about NUS, I missed its bus system. In THU, most students use bicycles or scooters to get around campus. This was challenging for me as I often had to cycle in cold weather. Unlike NUS, THU's attendance policy is also much stricter. Most importantly, I missed the NUS canteen food.

What was the best decision you made during your exchange abroad?

I chose to explore China extensively before the start of my exchange. I visited ten cities and climbed Mount Taishan.

The ten cities were Shanghai, Hangzhou, Suzhou, Changshu, Chengdu, Chongqing, Nanchang, Zhengzhou, Henan, and Kaifeng, each displaying different culture and diversity. For instance, in comparison to Beijing and Shanghai, Chengdu and Kaifeng have numerous night markets lining their roads and streets. Conversely, Suzhou and Hangzhou have many historical sites and rivers. Chengdu was enjoyable because of its vibrant nightlife, where bars and live performances added to the excitement of the city. Climbing Mount Taishan has always been a personal goal of mine. It is a tough climb since it is one of the tallest mountains in China, and the weather conditions turned out to be

challenging when I was there. Despite some hesitation, I decided to stick to my decision to climb the mountain and it turned out to be worthwhile as I got to challenge my limits and, in exchange, I was rewarded with breath-taking views.

What was your favourite dish there, and how does it compare to Singaporean food?

Lamb skewers, often served in large portions, were my favourite. The seasoning was particularly heavy compared to Singaporean food, and the unique flavours made it a memorable dish.



Wei Jun (first from left) at a Tsinghua University student event.