

The Dalton School: Mao's Yan'An Red Base

1. What interests you about China?

As I begin studying Chinese for the 9th year, Chinese culture, history, and diversity continues to fascinate my curiosity and imagination. China, as one of the world's oldest civilizations and now its largest nation, presents a compelling and endlessly interesting government and political system. After traveling to China twice, both to learn Chinese and teach English, I have loved learning about the intricacies - and potential uncertainties - of the Chinese political system. While in China, I remember distinctly my teacher speaking to a driver about the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident; though hesitant to offer his own stories, the man quietly whispered about his experiences in Communist China. Another time, my own Chinese teacher offered stories of China during the Cultural Revolution, as students, invigorated by Mao's extreme ideology, turned on their teachers. As a Model UN delegate, I look forward to taking part in the transition of China to a Communist regime under Mao and formulating the policies that so formatively affected China's development and future.

2. What interests you about Communism?

After living in a society based entirely on capitalism and liberal democracy, I am interested in learning particularly about the development of Communism within China. In my past studies of Chinese culture, I have always been interested in China's political system and whether democracy could ever function on such a large scale. Thus, after learning about Mao's success in developing support for a communist society, I grew interested in understanding how Communism became such an integral part of China, and particularly how it was transformed from Mao's ideology to the modern, more market based political system pioneered by Deng Xiaoping.

3. Explain your experience doing role-play, in Model UN or any other activity (including acting, etc).

Since my freshman year of high school, I have been a delegate on a wide variety of Model UN committees. I have participated on historical simulations (JFK's Executive Committee of the National Security Council, the Taiping Rebellion, and a Historical General Assembly) as well as modern, or even futuristic, crisis committees, including a committee on the Reunification of Koreas and a Maoist Separatist Group. Last year, at a conference run by Dalton (my high school), I served as a chair of a crisis committee simulating the National Security Council in 2015. Throughout my Model UN experience, I have won a total of 6 Best Delegate awards, 3 Outstanding Delegate Awards, and 1 Distinguished Delegation award.

4. Do you have a particular interest in a certain time period, type of government, etc.? If so, why?

If given the opportunity to travel back in time, I would journey to the Age of Discovery, sometime in the early 1500s. At this point much of the world was undiscovered, at least from a European perspective, and the potential for remaking the entire global order would exist. I think it would be fascinating to participate in the discovery of uncharted lands as well as help to establish new societies in sparsely populated area of the globe. The incredible brutality took place when Europeans colonized the Americas is also undeniable and I think it would be interesting to see what might have happened had the colonists worked with the existing native societies.