

# An Eye Opener: Western Misconceptions of China

By Rohan Doshi

Ever since I have arrived in China, every day has been an eye-opener. Through a combination of lectures from my teachers and my experiences with real Chinese society, I have come to the conclusion that the western world doesn't have an accurate representation of Chinese culture and society.

Before I came to China, I imagined Chinese food to be similar to what I would find in an Americanized Chinese fast food joint. However, this couldn't have been further from the truth. Chinese cuisine has a heavy emphasis on seafood. Noodles are a staple in the north while rice is a staple in the south. Chinese cuisine also heavily features many vegetable dishes adorned in a variety of sauces, all of which is very different from the soy-sauce soaked Americanized version of Chinese food. Food is one of the more trivial misconceptions.

Next, I believe the West needs a more accurate portrayal of China's socio-economic status. Coming to China has really finally made me understand the hype around China's booming economic growth. High rises are constantly being constructed, representing the continuing growth of China's economy. Shanghai's endless sea of skyscrapers easily rivals that of New York. The ports are bustling and busy. Shanghai, to me, is the economic pulse of the world. As a personal opinion, China's greatest asset is its people. Clearly, the hundreds of millions of Chinese people that are being mobilized are driving the economic engine of China and the world.

Lastly, I believe that China's One Child Policy has too much unjust criticism from western media. One western critic is noted to have said that this policy is the greatest human rights violation since the Holocaust. Unfortunately, so much emphasis has been placed on the possible violation of human-rights that only a little thought has been given to the practicality reasons that urged the adoption of this policy. After you come to China, you realize one thing right away: China has A LOT of people. To be precise, China has 1.3 billion people, more than any other country in the world. And based off of population models, this population will soon be spiraling out of control. When there are too many people and too few resources to sustain a certain quality of life, issues emerge such as war, unrest,

famine, and crime. This in turn lowers the overall quality of life for the Chinese people. From this perspective, China is justifying this policy by thinking it is for the greater good. Personal sacrifice for the general peace is a very Chinese mindset stemming from the Confucian school of thought. Essentially, you must view an issue from both points of view before making a judgment.