

## Blog 16 – My Bargaining Power

One week ago, my fifth grade friends and I took a 3-day fieldtrip around Nanjing. It was my very first time going on an over-night fieldtrip and staying at a hotel with my friends. We visited many famous sites around Nanjing including the Presidential Palace, the Confucius Temple and Sun Yat Sen's Mausoleum. The field trip was extremely exiting! All the sites we visited were entertaining, but the one place that made me smile until my lips were crackling, it was the one and only, unforgettable Dirt Market.

The Dirt market is just like a typical building filled with street vendors that sell little artifact-like crafts and souvenirs. The teachers gave us each 20RMB allowance to spend on an artifact for the school. They told us to pair up with someone who is fluent in their Mandarin so that they could ask questions, get answers and... bargain. Bargaining is a "skill" that is used by most Chinese people. I happen to be one of those students who are able to take on the challenge. Three other girls joined me and together, we began our "artifact hunting." We decided to put our money together so that we can gain more "purchasing power". Then one of my friends pointed to something that caught her eye. It was a bowl of "old" Chinese coins with ancient Chinese characters and patterns of waves carved on it. We took a closer look at the "aged" coin. My friends began buzzing questions at me so that I can translate them for the vendor. My partners and I made an agreement to buy it and if we were going to buy it, we would buy 5. Once I asked how much it was, "15RMB!" He shouted in a typical Nanjing accent. The words ran like lightning from his mouth to our ears and cut through my brain. *15RMB?! No Kidding!* But I didn't panic, I stood on my feet firmly and I finally began my proper mission. ☺ "Hey," I exclaimed, "15RMB?! We can not afford it!" Even though deep down, I was shivering like crazy, I spoke confidently but casually.

"Fine, how much can you afford?" The man sneered.

"How about 2RMB?"

"2? Are you kidding?"

"Well, O.K. I won't go as low as 2, but I won't pay 15. Let's compromise, how about 4?"

"Well, we're getting closer. If you are really serious, I would say 8."

I exchanged a questioning look with my friends then patiently exclaimed:

"Hmmm...I'm buying 5 of these, so do I get a whole-sale discount?"

The guy looked back with an unnoticeable smile.

"5... oh, O.K I think we can have a deal. 4RMB! It IS a whole-sale price."

WOW! Together, my friends and I lowered the price from 15RMB to 4RMB. We were all giggling and satisfied with our mission accomplishment. We took a stroll around the other booths and stopped at a counter that sold the same type of coins. Out of our curiosity, we asked: "How much?" The guy replied with a soft voice: "2RMB."

My heart sank...