

## Blog 50 Discover China Trip Week (part three)

On the fourth day, we climbed one of China's top five most famous mountains: Mt. Taishan and spent the last night up on the mountain top. It was one of those times when worth and value had really hit me hard.

Mt. Taishan's main peak is 1545 meters high. When we got there, the bus took us to one of the mountain's gates, leaving us with less than one kilometer's distance to the mountain top. But for that one kilometer, we had to climb over 1600 staircases, like climbing a ladder, shooting straight for the sky. When we stepped out of the bus, the first thing that hit me was the gust of cold wind prickling every inch of my skin. After about half an hour of climbing, my muscles and knees felt like chewed up stuffed animals, limply supporting my body weight inching towards the edge of buckling in and giving up. At this time, we saw a small souvenir booth at the side of the trail selling Chinese style mahogany colored bamboo hiking sticks and thought why not? My classmates and I bought a stick each (only 10RMB). It really helped me up and down the mountain. I even took it all the way back to Nanjing where it's now settled near my desk as a souvenir.

Early in the night, we all plopped onto the rock hard bed and stayed there, curling up into a ball as the midnight air seeped into the room. At four o'clock in the morning, when the sun was still making its way to our side of the world, my roommate and I clambered out of bed with dark eye circles and tangled up frizzy hair. We threw on our coats and raced to the lobby. Everyone there was dreary eyed, moaning and looked like zombies awakening from the dead. We trudged our way up to the platform where at least a hundred people were already standing, heads bent, eyes closed. We all blended into the crowd (as well as blonde hair and blue eyes could ever blend in with black), squirming our way to the front of the crowd. Everyone was thinking the same thing. "Where was that lazy ole' Mr. Sunshine?" Yep, we were up for the sunrise -- all of us!



As the seconds ticked by, I could feel my toes seemingly detaching from my feet, then my feet from my ankles, my fingers from my hands and lastly, my ears from my

head. Yawning every other minute, we kept our eyes pried open and our legs stomping in place, occasionally bringing back some blood into my frozen body parts. Gradually, A faint red glow began to spread throughout the navy blue sky like spilled red water. From the distance, I could here the faint echo of a scream that sounded like “MAMAAA!!!” I turned to search for the owner of the voice when suddenly, I heard “OOO” and “AAA” and whipped my head around to find the big orange mass of light emerge from the distant horizon. Finally, the crowd embraced the arrival of Mr. Sunshine with cheers and camera clicks. At least I knew that it was the clearest sunset I’d ever seen. Within only ten minutes time, the pitch black sky had turned from dark blue to baby blue, red, gold, yellow, and back to a bright, blazing blue. Colors painted the sky and illuminated the area around us. Everyone’s eyes were lit with wonder, staring at the painting emerging on the sky canvas in front of their eyes. Each and every one of my classmates was in awe and as I looked around, I could feel a faint smile creeping onto my mouth.

Our Discover China trip in Shandong province had really flew by faster than I’d have ever imagined. I wanted to spend more time with all my friends in our pool of freedom and happiness but I knew nothing like that could really last forever. This week had really brought us classmates so much closer together. I can’t imagine ever having to leave these people by the end of the year; these people that had become more like my best friends I’ve known since before I can even remember.