

Project Yang Tzai - yuKnights' Reflections July 2011

What have you learnt from this 2-week Overseas Expedition to Yang Tzai Village?

1) Nur Syazwani Bte Sadan

I learnt the simplicity of living life. The most simplest of actions can make someone's day. The simplest foods (which we wouldn't eat back in Singapore) are the very food we look forward to at the beginning of each day. For instance, the boiled potatoes for breakfast.

Other than that, I learnt to appreciate and embrace nature. Waking up to a red sky in the morning never fails to make my day. Indeed, what a beautiful start to a beautiful day. I learnt to appreciate the beauty of nature and to preserve it; not to mar Mother Earth with the trash we dispose.

Most importantly, the trip instilled in me a sense of love for humanity. The people of Yang Tzai were very warm towards us, though they barely know us. Educating the children of Yang Tzai was a pleasure as it polishes up my Mandarin and allowed me to share my knowledge with the adorable little kids. They were a pleasure to teach as they are really sharp and they acquired knowledge very easily.

2) Aidil Suffian

The power of working together with a similar aim in mind. It can achieve wonders. Individually, we all have our flaws, our insecurities, our doubts over our ability but together, we override and compensate for each of these flaws through the sheer power of teamwork.

The simple act of a smile. We often take for granted this smallest of gifts, one which the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) has mentioned to be important enough to be considered a sadakah. A small smile goes a long way in securing kinship with strangers and easing any uncertainties of one being unwelcome.

Positivity is also key. A solid and optimistic mindset helps one overcome daily challenges and problems. A positive frame of mind is also the first step in preventing health ailments, as certain studies have shown.

3) Nur Ashyura Bte Sukiman

Self confidence- to have more confidence in myself in carrying out tasks/activities that seemed to be daunting initially

Patience, Making decisions when the time calls for it

Putting yourself in other people's shoes

Trust my team members more – trust that they are as committed and will give their best in the given tasks

Learnt that things do not always go as planned. And it is always good to prepare a back up plan and give more space and also work with what we can with. Learnt to think on the spot and also be a bit more flexible in terms of changes in plans.

Learnt to look at the hikmah behind events.

Learnt to be calmer in facing adversity. And also learnt to maximise my team members' potential in different areas.

Despite language being a strong barrier, it is still evident that messages can still be conveyed through sincere gestures/actions.

Learnt to stop grumbling on what I don't have but instead count my blessings and appreciate at what I have.

The people we mix around with is very important. They can be a source of constant positive influence.

Through the jemaah, recitation of quran together, IS, taskirah, I felt I was closer to Allah and it has really opened up heart to a lot of matters that I was previously ignorant of.

4) Muhammad Asyraf Bin Ahmad

Various lesson from every member of the team through their tazkirah, actions, attitude and so on.

The hospitality of a muslim. The smiles, the salam offered and the help offered, the food, the service and many more.

Humility. In awe of the vast and majestic creation of Allah. The lesson and problems faced being a leader are major learning points about self.

Lessons from a convert. Ivan have been inspiring in many ways through his action. Though a man of little words, his actions are worth to be contemplated on.

5) Nur Fithriah Anas

I have learnt that everyone has a part to play. No man is an island.

Everyone must play their part in order for the project to be a success.

I have learnt to take things in my stride. To deal with confrontations objectively rather than emotionally. And even though I may be the Expedition Leader, I am with many imperfections.

Being able to adapt to changes and react to them accordingly is an important aspect one must be accustomed to for such projects.

The importance of a strong iman in times of difficulties and poor health. At the end of the day, only Allah can relieve you of your problems by giving you solutions and comfort in the form of the team, through their care and concern and their words of wisdom

6)Muhd Hafiz B Hanafia

I've learnt to always be prepared for the worst. I was quite shocked that many of us had fever, flu, cough and sore throat. We even had to go to the hospital twice to seek medical attention. Alhamdulillah, everyone returned safely to Singapore but frankly, I didn't even expect all of these to happen in the first place. They did and I am glad that we manage to get through everything.

Second learning point is to be happy and thankful for what we have in our life. The people in the village clearly are not as lucky as we are. What I can see from their faces is happiness despite living in simplicity. We should try and let go our anger and unhappiness. Be happy. Life is short for us to be holding on to so many problems and negativity that will just weigh us down.

Thirdly, the importance of family. We worked together, we eat together, we pray together, we play together. This unity is similar to the kind of bond that a family has. When someone is sick, there's always one team member to look after (buddy). When scheduled for duty in the roster, we saw how there would be members helping out. I just hope that before we get all angry or irritated with what our parents say or do, think about this family bond.

6) Nur Hanis

Anticipate any hiccups while running a program/event despite good planning and preparation

It is beneficial to have a few back up plans

Initiative from team members is important

Any setback should be a learning point for the team

7) Nurjihan Binti Mohammed Noor

Tolerance & Acceptance

With nineteen other people with different characteristics and different personality, there are bound to be clashes, especially when my ego is way up there, and I think I am the best (which I am, kan? HAHA) But this trip made me sit back and watch more than me stepping forward. Yes, I nag quite a lot, but I was quite mellowed down compared to my average level of ego. I noticed more strength in others and stretched some to their potential. I tried and tested certain ways of tegur-ing and learnt how different people react to different ways of teguran. Slowly I accepted that people are different and that there is more to them than I expected them to be. With acceptance, everyone is more tolerable and love just found its way in each and every one of the yuKnights members.

Simplicity

Life at the village was simple, yet everything was happy. Happiness was found in Allah's Creations, be in with the people, or the environment. Likewise, the two weeks of overseas expedition saw myself appreciate the

simplicity around me. I seek solace and peace with the mountains, and I seek love and happiness with the people around me, the villagers, the kids, and the members of yuKnights. The distance away from the comfort level in Singapore had me seek independence, yet at the same time, dependent on yuKnights.

8) Muhammad Khairul Nizham

**I have learnt to be grateful
The importance of being resourceful
Happiness is a state of mind and it is not based on the amount of success and material wealth we have.**

9) Rasiah Kamsani

**Seeing the villagers' living conditions made me feel more grateful with I have. Being away from my family made me treasure them even more and I became a more independent person
The trip made me a more patient person as some of the programmes may not go as planned and things may not turn out to be what was expected but to just accept things as they are and move on
I felt closer to Allah through the nightly reflections and that it was by Allah's grace that I was able to help out at the village
I felt the silaturrahim between the team members when we lived and worked together for the whole 2 weeks and realise that in such a big group, every person still plays an important role**

10) Shafiqah

Teamwork

Alhamdulillah, Yuknights worked together and we managed to make decisions peacefully without hurting anyone's feelings. We ensure that everyone's voice and opinions heard and respected.

Committed

As a welfare member, I learnt to be more committed and responsible for every Yuknights member's health and safety. Alhamdulillah, I am happy with my job scope which enables me to be more committed and love what I am doing (serviving the rest and taking care of them when they were not feeling well) I think a person has to love his or her job in order to be committed and this is a very important point that I have learnt during this China trip. Praises to Allah.

**Appreciate people around me and value them better
Even though they live in a very rural area and lead a very simple lifestyle, I learnt to appreciate whatever they have done for my team and me. The hospitality they provided was beyond great and I was really touched. I**

learnt to value people around me as well especially my team mates who have been so supportive.

11) Shahidah

I have learnt patience from living with a group of girls and painting one of the classrooms, from waiting for girls to finish showering so that I could shower to the necessity of painting double, even triple, coats of paint.

Not everything will go to plan, so it is always good to have a back-up plan. During the carnival (giving out donated clothes) and painting the exterior wall (improvising on its design)

Despite the language barrier, the people of Yang Tzai were very friendly, were always happy and would always be the first to greet us. This taught me that living a (what seemed to me) poor life does not necessarily restrict our happiness in life, but rather the extent of our gratefulness will determine that happiness.

That I can open up to people and be much more friendly when I make the effort to.

12) Zameer Nasir

Despite the differences in latitude and altitude, Muslims in China are the same in terms of their attitude as exemplary Muslims which we can and should try emulating back at home.

Despite the huge gap in income per person, the villagers are generally happy with life. As Singaporeans, our lifestyles are very different because we are generally living in a knowledge-based economy in which our income is driven by our level of skill and knowledge. Looking back at the lifestyles of the villagers in Yang Tsai is refreshing and I tend to be grateful for any single luxury which I could have overseen back when I am in Singapore.

The bonds shared by each team members and with the villagers are precious.
