QMUL Expedition report
University Immersion Program
Chengdu, Sichuan, China
Summer 2019

(not wearing sunscreen was a major mistake but luckily there was an umbrella)
I want to start by mentioning that my stay at Chengdu was an experience like no other and that it'll forever be a treasurable moment in my life. Chengdu is a large central city within the province of Sichuan, climate during the period I travelled is hot, humid and rain is unpredictable but fortunately I was able to experience my first monsoon season.

The purpose of my stay was to be enriched with culture, language, and knowledge that seeped from China with the means of a University Immersion Programme hosted by Sichuan University. I have never been to China in the past and during my two weeks there I was overwhelmed with their culture, tradition and the way the Chinese go about their daily lives. Our mornings were scheduled so that we could attend language classes or learn the history of Chengdu and afternoons were used for cultural activities such as going to the famous panda exhibition in Chengdu.

After we completed our daily activities, we were giving the liberty to explore the city or nearby cities. We were lucky enough to have visited many night markets and the famous Grand Mall of Chengdu which is believed to be one of the biggest malls in the whole of Asia, it even has their own water theme park. In the nights, me and my fellow QM students did not waste our time in our hotel, instead we went to restaurants, coffee shops or roamed around the area to get the most out of our time. Some students decided to go clubbing and from what they said, the Chinese have their own unique way of partying compared to us Londoners! We thought roaming by ourselves was going to be tough but luckily, we had google translate and maps which is only possible with VPN (make sure to download VPN before arriving in China).

There were many pleasant surprises in this journey, but I was mainly surprised with how many different locations showcased mother nature like I have never seen before, every excursion showed us beautiful sceneries and it was such a relaxing experience.

(this picture is one of my personal favourites that I took and honestly, breath-taking)
I had many expectations before going to China. I was a bit anxious at first since I was going to a country I had no knowledge of, as well as not knowing anyone that was going with me. But being with everyone on a daily basis brought us together and we got along very well that till this we stay in contact. I also was not expecting for the locals and workers in Chengdu to be so polite and kind, although some did not know much English at all. There was one night which we tried their famous hotpot at a well-known restaurant, the workers were so kind and gave us a warm welcome which was not expected.

As expected, many people struggled when it came to having Chinese foods, there were people with dietary needs, some could not handle their spiciness and some were too worried to try it. I personally enjoyed trying their multitude of foods and it was surprising how cheap their meals, drinks and snacks were. Their ramen was delicious
I am truly grateful to Queen Mary University of London for helping me with this opportunity, the grant contributed to my flight and made it more affordable. Over all, it was an unforgettable experience. I definitely felt like a foreigner but not an outsider. The experience has opened my mind to travelling and studying abroad, that I even amended my degree with a year abroad in order to study in Asia. This trip would not have been the same without the people in it, and I have gained so many precious memories and friends to treasure for life. So, to Queen Mary, I thank you for and appreciate this wonderful opportunity I have been able to experience.