

Dear China,

It hurts my heart to see your country having to battle the Coronavirus.

Because my daughter, Carrie Jones, lives in China, I have been blessed with opportunity to visit both Beijing and Shanghai. I have walked on the Great Wall, visited the Forbidden City, and spend some days in Fuxing Park as well as many other sites. As lovely as those places are, it is the Chinese people that captured my heart and made my visits special. Some of your people I met through my daughter but many just introduced themselves when I was out walking alone.

I was taken to the countryside to visit a young man's grandparents so that I could see a traditional home built by his great grandfather. I was taken into someone's home to experience making Chinese dumplings. In Fuxing Park I was pulled into the dancing and tai chi and made to feel so welcome even though I was walking through the park alone. A woman introduced herself and ended up taking me to a special market to look for a Chinese baby doll for my office. I had a stranger grab my arm to escort me across an especially busy street corner in downtown Shanghai. Another stranger moved me from a table alone in a restaurant to the table with her and her friend and later took me several places to help me get to know the city better. Several people helped me get out from under a scooter after I managed to turn it over on myself learning to ride. I treasure a glass filled with origami swans that someone made for me during one of my visits.

Over and over again your people made this foreigner feel welcomed and taken care of. The kindnesses shown to me by the Chinese people are far too many to list. Even in a crowded market when my grandson was just few weeks old, when the baby and I got separated from my daughter and son-in-law, everyone seemed to know who I was looking for and directed me back to them.

The idea of such loving and welcoming people facing this terrible virus makes me so sad. Know that you are being sent love and well wishes that the virus is soon eradicated.

Know that the many kindnesses shown to a foreign visitor are not forgotten. Know that China has a special place in my heart.

Nelda Carpenter,

A grateful Texas visitor

