

Shanghai, Our Home.

Dear Shanghai,

March 8, 2020 - "You're all set - here are your boarding passes to Shanghai, Pudong Airport," said the LAX airline agent as I choked back a swell of tears.

"Mom! Are you CRYING?" my 12- year old daughter shout-whispered. (They love to call me out during movies, The Voice, and national anthems – my emotional weak spots.)

"You are! Are you sad to leave grandma and grandpa?" And of course, that was part of it. We'd been staying with my parents in San Diego for the past 4 weeks, and on the east coast before that with my husband's family. But the tears were for Shanghai – for all our beloved city has been through these last few months, and for the joy I felt welling up in me at the thought of finally returning HOME.

Our home of over 15 years, birthplace of our daughters, our company, and our extraordinary friendships. Shanghai is more than a vibrant, invigorating city brimming with creativity, innovation, drive and amazing food (and cocktails) – it has the biggest heart of anywhere I've ever lived which includes amazing cities like New York, Boston and San Diego. The community you find in Shanghai – foreign and local – is unparalleled for its diversity, gung-ho spirit, and pure energy. It's been game on since day one!

I arrived here in 2006 on a one-year assignment as a designer with Kate Spade. One year turned into two, and I met my incredible business partner and co-founder of Loop Swim, Itee Soni, who is originally from New Delhi. She convinced me (as is her way!) to start our own brand, building the most sustainable and ethical supply chain possible. Along the way, we've met such incredibly talented kindred spirits here in Shanghai and watched the sustainable design community grow and thrive. Even if you don't think you have a single entrepreneurial bone in your body, Shanghai will convince you otherwise! It's the perfect place to take that leap and turn an idea you've nurtured into reality. You'll find unparalleled support, access to experienced mentors and enthusiasm from this open-hearted and generous community.

As we departed for CNY holiday on January 25th, we could not imagine all that would unfurl in the following weeks or how swiftly China would organize to fight this virus. Heroic tales of the medical community pulling together, citizens self-quarantining so that others would not become ill, even forgoing trips home for Spring Festival. Perhaps it should've been no surprise that what we've experienced in our Shanghai community has been replicated throughout China: the belief that by coming together, we will succeed.

We are thrilled to be home, and our hearts swell with pride for the community spirit that is helping ensure we are living in one of the most united, dynamic and safe cities in the world today.

With love, Heather Kaye and Family.

