

Blog 20 ---P.M.2.5

Usually, I don't pay attention to the daily news. But recently, my ears were full of one fancy, technical term: P.M2.5. So what is P.M2.5? The PM stands for particulate matter, in other words, particles in the air. They're very tiny! They can only be seen under an electron microscope. Its average size is about $1/30^{th}$ of the diameter of a human hair! Sure is small and pretty easy to breathe into your lungs... Got to be careful! The weather forecast often gives the PM2.5 numbers on local televisions for air quality forecasting. The normal reading should be less than 75. I just checked Fort. Lauderdale's PM2.5 ----- it's only 14! But Nanjing's number has reached 400 recently. In some cities, such as Beijing, the number briefly shot up to a PANIC level in one day----- *above 1,000!!!*

Without listening to the news, I have already noticed that Nanjing's winter sky is painted with hazy and gloomy gray. When I look into the sky, the sun is shyly hiding behind a translucent curtain. I can stare at the sun without sunglasses. It looks like a lonely and helpless yolk of a boiled egg. In Florida, my mom often reminds me to put on sunscreen every morning before going outside. But now, she swapped the sun lotion with the dusk mask...

A lot of things can be the source of PM2.5: motor vehicles, coal burning, smoke from chimneys of factories... All these things go on everyday. It's not like all of it falls from the clouds... Why has the numbers been climbing higher and higher these days? According to the news, the blame is on the wind. For the past several days, there was no wind at all in the most part of China (especially North-East). Under this weather circumstance, particles are unable to fly away. After days of particle accumulation, the fog was TOO dense to be ignored. It caused quite some inconvenience in everyone's daily lives: highways closed up; the bullet trains got delayed; hospitals were on the edge of bursting with respiratory patients; schools moved P.E classes from the outdoors to the indoors; factories were forced to cut production.

It made me paused when I heard the news reporter say that we have to wait for the wind to vacuum the particles and clean up the sky. Wind is not the solution to pollution. It should be decision makers' and everybody's responsibility. If I can

give one suggestion to the decision makers, I would suggest that people should use public transportation more often than private vehicles. In our family, my mom and I ride our bicycles to school and the farmer's market. During the weekend, we take subways and busses to get around the city. When my mom first came to Nanjing, she missed her huge Toyota minivan, but now, she's already used to life without a private car.

Just for your information, by the time I finished this blog, the wind already did its job and the sky was clear. ☺ The following are some before and after pictures taken by my father from his office window.

Before~



After~



Before~



After~

