

Blog 34: A Spontaneous Trip

It was the first day of the China National Holiday Break and our whole family was getting excited for our trip to Taiwan! I woke up at 4:00 in the morning. The weather was icky and filled with moisture from the late night's rainstorm and the taxi was outside waiting for us in the pitch black darkness. On the way to the airport, I found myself daydreaming about what Taiwan would be like with all the new and definitely delicious dim sum I read about in the Taiwan sightseeing booklet.

My mom and dad have been planning this trip for months getting plane tickets, booking hotels, planning our "sightseeing schedule" and getting the special travel documents for my mom and grandma. The China National Holiday is the high season for travel. At the airport, there were a ton of people. My grandma and I were patiently sitting on a bench and waiting while my parents were in the line to retrieve our boarding passes. We sat there guarding the two large backpacks and two heavy luggage stuffed with the summer apparel needed for this warm island. Waiting for them to come back holding the tickets was like waiting for the ice cream truck to turn the corner! Finally, I saw their shoulders droop as they slowly trudged over to the bench where we were sitting – with empty hands.



"Where's the ticket?" I asked.

"Well, guess what? Grandma and Mom can't go!" replied my dad.

"What do you mean?" My face filled with millions of question marks as I asked.

"To put it in an easy way, your mom and grandma only have the purple booklet; they don't have the Taiwan Visa. The entry permit (purple booklet) and the Visa are two separate travel documents. We didn't know that!" My dad answered.

"I have no idea what you're saying, but oh well. What should we do now?" I desperately asked. Our whole family sat down in a corner knowing for sure that no one wanted to go home and my dad and I don't want to go to Taiwan by ourselves.

"Well, we'll figure something out." Mom murmured to herself.

It was 8:00 am; my parents walked over to the nearest empty counter and were busy on their cell phones. Not long after, they turned around and exclaimed: "We're going to YunNan!" YunNan? I had no clue about exactly where YunNan was, but I know it's

better than going home. There were still many questions to be answered such as what in the world we'll be doing there, but I knew one thing for sure: it's going to be a crazy holiday! At 9:30am, four of us magically boarded the flight to YunNan. Before boarding, my mom rushed to an airport bookstore and bought a tourist book for YunNan. Will she have enough time to do her homework this time? ☺

After this incident, I did a bit of research on Taiwan and China's relationship. Taiwan is an island which has been independent since 1950, even though it's not exactly recognized as a country. China has claimed that Taiwan is part of the People's Republic of China, but Taiwan thinks the opposite. For that reason, passports are not recognized by either side. Mainland China visitors must hold a light purple "Entry permit to the Taiwan Area" booklet. My mom and grandma got their purple booklets long before the trip, but they overlooked the Visa!

