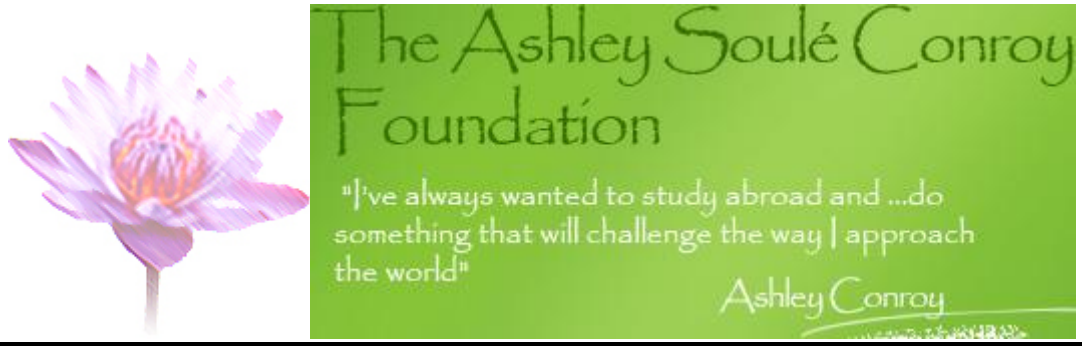


# Tram Nguyen

Program: The Alliance for Global Education

College: Colorado State University

Major: Biological Sciences

Country: China, Spring 2009

It has been a very interesting, albeit trying, experience as I still continue to struggle to adjust to life here in China.

China is everything I expected it to be, yet nothing as I envisioned. It is a land of stark contrasts-- from the soaring skyscrapers to dilapidated shacks; from world-renowned restaurants to little holes in walls serving local cuisine; from deeply-held traditional beliefs to nonchalant western ideals.

Shanghai is intense, vibrant…alive --- a city that never sleeps, never waits and never stops. You are pulled into this whirlwind in which you seemingly cannot escape. It is exhilarating, enrapturing… and exhausting!!! Living in Shanghai has opened my eyes to things, people and experiences that I would never have encountered had I stayed in the comforts of my hometown. These experiences have gradually, but steadily, impacted me. I find myself more and more letting go of my neuroses, my inhibitions, my doubts and worries. I am more willing and eager to try new things…to put myself out there and just go for it. Having always been very focused, cautious and detail-oriented, this spontaneous and carefree attitude-- this newfound zest for life-- has been a very refreshing, albeit, very shocking change, to experience in myself. At times I feel like a different person, and huh, I kinda like her! Joking aside though, I am living in the moment, and I have never felt more alive in my life. I hope this feeling never ends…

I cannot thank you enough for your help in allowing me this opportunity. I feel that I've grown more here in these few short months than I had throughout my entire college years.