



Anne-Claire's story April 2010

Anne-Claire's report on her first visit to Lao Wang's Orphanage, 24-25 April 2010

Travelling: Shanghai-Yingshang County, Anhui Province

Long trip to go there, but such a nice ambience! During the Saturday journey to Hefei, we had the opportunity to talk about Chinese, Italian and French culture and history, and even about philosophy: what an interesting exchange with Angela and Connie! And the dinner, even late, was also a pleasure of sharing our views, but also our dreams.

Arriving at the orphanage

After a good breakfast and two hours driving, we were warmly welcomed by the children, almost like rock stars: they were all standing along the road and in the main courtyard, waiting for us, and clapping when we got out of the car! Then we had, what I called afterwards all day, a "Ni Hao party": every child was coming to us saying "Ni hao" and obviously waiting for a hug, a kiss, a handshake or a slight caress on the cheek or on the head or any tender gesture. The little ones also offer their hands to guide us and show us the place. What I felt was that being awaited and tenderly guided by a child is really a gift! I was happy and noticed how easy it was to share with those children and spend some time with them.

Unloading the lorry

Suddenly, all the able children moved to the entrance: the lorry was arriving! Everybody came to help to carry down all the donations. It was amazing to realize how things can apparently be not organised, but in reality be very efficiently done. I was also particularly moved and touched by the fact that the oldest were helping the youngest and that the disabled children were helping too. Then we distributed snacks and sweets to every child

and to the Ayis for the children who were not lucky enough to be able to walk. Everybody was queuing quietly, without any rush or competition. What a lesson, I thought to myself, as my own children are so often fighting each other even if they have much more than those children.

Visiting, playing, sharing

Afterwards, we spent a lot of time going from a place to another...hugging and taking the little ones in our arms, playing with the older children, singing songs, trying to play basketball (but it was raining...). I experienced three key moments: the first one was when I saw the little girls who came with us offering beautiful folded paper birds they had made to the children of the orphanage. The second one was when we did a game with a lot of children, doing a circle dance and laughing so much! But the moment I liked the best was when an ayi began to sing and dance and Angela danced first with a child, then with the ayi: so many children were around them, smiling and clapping their hands...such an happy time! The simplicity of enjoying being together, even without being able to talk so much, was the second gift I received that day. The beautiful smile of a disabled child, alone in his bed, without the ability to move out of it, was my second lesson on trying to enjoy every second, whatever our conditions.

Mifan Mama, things done and things to do

But the time in Lao Wang's Orphanage was not only to rediscover the beauty of the human being. It was also, for me, the confirmation of how useful it was to give more to these children. They seem so happy that we take care of them! It made me realise how important it is to support these children. All the donations given previously were used and the ones we brought were used immediately too, like the Crocs shoes, for example. It was also the opportunity to understand better their needs: still some rice of course, but by now they needed more baby milk and mostly more diapers!

The departure

Time to go! Difficult to leave the place but it is a long way to go back to Shanghai...7 hours to

think it over and

7 hours to get prepared to return to our sweet and happy life... What a weekend!

**I received more than I
gave...**

Written by Anne-Claire (home country: France)