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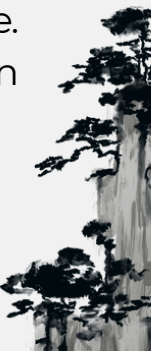
TESTIMONY: WHY STUDY IN CHINA?



Pablo González López 龚倾宇 was born and grew up in the mountains of Madrid. He has a deep interest in culture, language, and religion and philosophy. Pablo speaks Spanish (native), English (bilingual) and Mandarin (HSK5). He holds a BA in Creative Writing and Study of Religions from Bath Spa University (UK) and an MA in Chinese Philosophy and Culture from Fudan University (China). His research topics include comparative theology, inter-religious dialogue, and the relationship between religion and politics. al or cultural project I undertake.

Before coming to China, I left Spain at 18 to study a BA in Creative Writing and Study of Religions at Bath Spa University in the UK. While there, I worked as a tour guide, which allowed me to engage with my new environment and meet people from all over the world. I thrive in these kinds of transcultural settings. Every summer during my BA, I participated in the Woodenfish Foundation's program, where I experienced monastic living in active Chinese Buddhist monasteries. My interest in ethics and human-to-human interactions drew me to Chinese philosophy. Slowly but surely, China captivated me. Spain is a beautiful country that nurtured my growth, but there's something natural about seeking out the unknown in the pursuit of personal development.

The first time China felt like a real option was when a fellow Woodenfish staff member mentioned the Chinese Government Scholarship. Without scholarships like these, coming to China would have been impossible for me. After completing my BA in the UK, I felt my next step was pursuing an MA in Chinese Philosophy and Culture at Fudan University.





Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, I had to complete my degree online, balancing time zones, which was tough but worth it. It pushed me to develop resilience and showcase my capabilities.

When China reopened, I knew it was time to move here and finally learn Mandarin properly. Guilin, a city with minimal Western influence, welcomed me with open arms, offering the perfect environment to immerse myself. In China, I try to be a sponge—absorbing everything without preconceived notions. Chinese culture is rich and multilayered, and there's always more to explore. I've met incredible people and had amazing experiences, though it hasn't been without challenges. Living in a place where English is not commonly spoken has been a humbling and transformative experience.

Looking to the future, I don't have many certainties in such a rapidly changing world, but I know that everything I've learned in China will stick with me wherever I go. I would never regret coming here—the experiences and skills I've gained are invaluable. Living in China teaches you to be prepared for unpredictability and challenges, which is a crucial skill for life. Wherever I end up, I'm sure China, Mandarin, and my connection to this place will remain part of my life.

To anyone in Spain or beyond considering studying in China, I'd say it's normal to feel scared—China can seem daunting. But don't hesitate to reach out to those who have already made the journey and take advantage of the opportunities available. For my Mediterranean peers, I found that, aside from the language barrier, Chinese culture felt closer to home than British culture ever did. Learning Mandarin and living in China is humbling, but once you push through the challenges, it becomes incredibly rewarding in ways that are difficult to describe. My advice? Dive in with an open heart.

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