

*Wednesday, March 22nd - Monday April 3rd*

Jingdezhen is where Christy lives and works this year. It's an industrial city, a quick plane ride from Shanghai, and has a long and proud history of making some of the world's finest porcelain and art. If you think of an ancient Chinese blue and white vase, produced from the Imperial Kilns, you're probably thinking of something that came from Jingdezhen. We spent just under two weeks here; Christy getting back into her working routine me making a nuisance of myself and learning as much as I could about her current home.

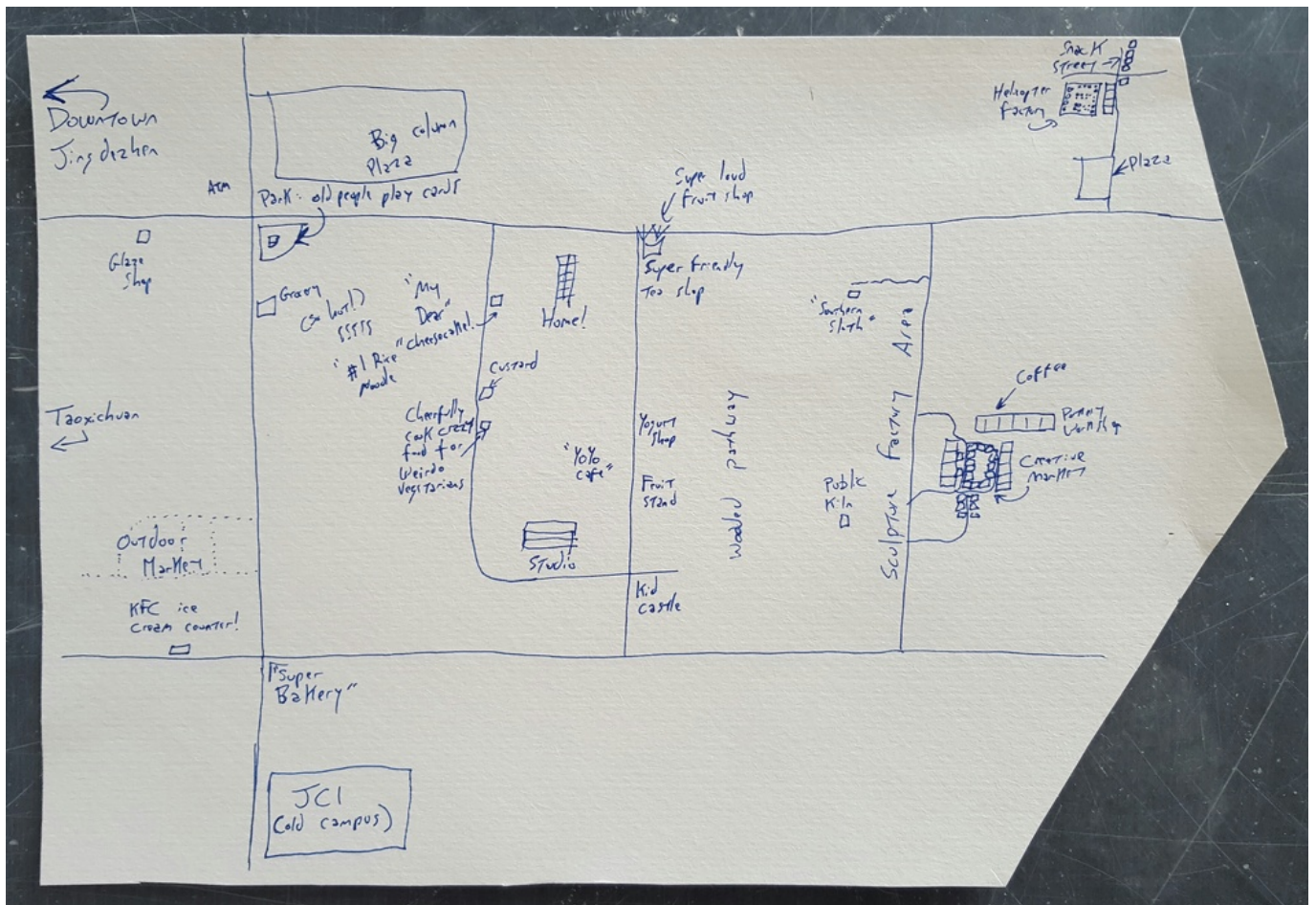


*A plaza in Jingdezhen - it can be hard to know where to look.*

You may have heard us joke that Jingdezhen is a small town in China; it only has 1.5 million people in it. The scale of China is hard to believe until you wander the streets and look up.

Way up.

Normally I keep this blog in chronological order, but here the pace was different. We weren't actively exploring all the time, breaking things up into nice blog-post sized excursions. Instead, I was more curious about her day-to-day way of life and Christy was happy to show me the stuff she'd tried to explain about her world, and also happy get back to her studio. So expect a few blog posts with the same date range as I ramble on.



A handy map of the parts of Jingdezhen that Christy showed me. As with most of these images, you can click on it to make it bigger.

Christy rents a room in a small apartment and shares space with her landlord Aimee, a young artist who also works in clay. The rent includes space in Aimee's large studio, so they see a lot of one another, although Aimee is frequently busy with other projects. Fortunately she is super friendly and fun, speaks great English and is generous with her time. The apartment is a few blocks from the studio and both are in some of the many tall complexes that make up the area.





*View out the apartment window. The apartment is in the ground floor of a building similar to its neighbors.*

Aimee has a friendly dog named Dasheng ( Dasheng) and when we first arrived she was also dog-sitting for a friend, so the young Dalmatian puppy Hippo greeted us enthusiastically. Hippo is everything you'd expect from a puppy: super energetic, super cute, and loads of trouble.



*Hippo and Dasheng*

It had gotten cold again when we arrived and central heating/air conditioning isn't really a thing there. Instead there are many wall units which tend to be used sparingly. Wearing your coat inside is pretty much par for course. I did not have the clothes for this, so we walked to an open air market a few blocks away where they sell everything from kitchen utensils to clothes to produce and meat. Plastic tubs with a hose constantly running in it while the fish swim around are not uncommon, the markets are bustling, narrow places where pedestrians, bicyclists and the ubiquitous scooter drivers all dance around one another. The rule in China is simple: bigger wins. Pedestrians do not have the right of way,

even on sidewalks nor signed (rare) crosswalks. Everyone watches out for each other and a common technique is to play frogger through lanes of traffic: step out between cars and wait between lanes as cars pass by, then move forward again when feasible. The speeds are also very low, think like 15mph. Again there was a very rough generational gap (many exceptions), with older folks more used to walking through traffic while younger people more inclined to try and use walk signs. The general chaos is added to by scooters everywhere, threading through traffic on roads and on sidewalks. They're mostly electric so almost silent except when (frequently) honking their horn. Which here tends to mean "heads up, I'm near you" or "I'd like to pass" or "coming through regardless of your presence." Traffic signals are generally obeyed(ish), but we watched the occasional scooter thread directly against traffic (going the wrong direction) because the rider deemed it convenient. Awareness of one's surroundings is kind of important.



# 3超聚热铠

**保暖秘籍** 加厚聚热暖绒全覆盖  
浓密厚实的聚热暖绒，亲肤保暖，舒适无比。



**1 超厚**  
紫蜜儿保暖内衣采用超厚2.0mm热绒作为保暖内层，在4.0mm的贴身贴合后，面料厚度达到4.5mm(非挤压状态下)

**2 超柔**  
衣服柔不柔软，贴不贴身直接决定着穿着是否舒适。紫蜜儿保暖内衣，既具有超柔软的穿着感受，还具有弹性好、有一定塑身效果的特点。

**3 超密**  
紫蜜儿保暖内衣采用了超浓密聚热绒！与普通保暖内衣相比，更加浓密的绒毛，也具有更为超强的保暖性能！

**zixier® 紫蜜儿**

The Fire Suit!

Back to the market: I ended up with some super thick, crazy synthetic long underwear aka: The Fire Suit. It was very warm and kept me toasty! It's also black although I think orange on the inside.

We started cooking our own food again. Things like ovens and microwaves are less common there, we had two gas burners (plus an electric rice maker, frequently in use!). I can't believe we didn't take a picture of eggs & tomato, the standard Christy lunch at the time, but she did document me eating milky rice, a very tasty treat.



*Mmmm, milky rice.*



Think milk, rice, sweetener and some berries. Tasty! At some point my horror of tea eggs was brought up when Aimee was around; they're a snack you see commonly sold in the form of a bunch of eggs floating in black liquid. The eggs are usually cracked and stained, I had no idea what they even were when I first saw them floating malevolently in 7-Eleven (they're in Taiwan, too). Aimee decided to show us how to make them and, after steeping overnight, we had some tea eggs!



*Tea Egg - less horrifying when not sitting in a vat of evil looking liquid.*



*Guess who doesn't like hard boiled eggs to begin with?*





*Guess who does?*

Christy has some severe dietary restrictions and hadn't been eating out much in China, mainly because trying to communicate those restrictions in a language she doesn't know

well and in a culture that doesn't have much exposure to the concept of food allergies can be a huge hassle. So she cooks a lot, often simple, quick meals with a few ingredients picked up nearby. Because of the density here, almost all of the ground floor, street facing units are small stores. Many restaurants, a few tea/coffee shops and several small groceries, typically specializing in a couple of items. We would stop at one to pick up yogurt and water (brushing your teeth is fine but between pollution and biological concerns many folks don't drink the tap water or at least boil it first), and stop at another to buy fruits and vegetables. Another had import items, if you wanted some non-local beer or popcorn they might have it. I ducked into various bakeries and tried their wares (note: Chinese people like their baked goods with filling. This filling is often something a westerner may find surprising. Like pork floss.) All of these could be found in the handful of blocks between her apartment and art studio.



*Walking to the studio as more towers are being built in the distance. The work there started in the morning and continued until well past dark.*



There are some bigger grocery stores, longer walks away on busier streets, but a lot of food we could just buy a day or two's worth and then pick up more the next day. Small city living with a weirdly New York City feel. Almost no American cities are as dense as this and I really like having tons of stuff to walk to. But I also really like having a porch and yard and lots of windows and no shared walls. It's difficult to have both.



*We'll end with me eating some kind of sunflower baked good. Which was ok; it didn't contain any surprise meat or seafood substances, but also didn't hold a candle to anything from the later discovered "Super Bakery"...*