



**INTERNATIONAL
EXCHANGE**

NAME

MING CANADAY

LENGTH

ONE YEAR

PROGRAM

**BOREN LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP
- CHINA**



Turning a Corner: Reflections on China from a Language Student

Studying Chinese on a David L. Boren scholarship, Ming Canaday connected with her roots.

Yet her experience studying Chinese started much earlier. She was raised in a Chinese orphanage. As a child with scoliosis who used a wheelchair, her future prospects were limited.

That all changed after getting adopted by an American family and coming to the United States at the age of eleven. At that point much of her Chinese was lost and replaced with English.

When Ming began to study Chinese independently as a teenager, it was her way of reconnecting with that country that she had left behind.

After enrolling in the University of Oregon and majoring in International Relations, she was selected to participate in the Boren Chinese Flagship Initiative, which enables students to integrate Chinese language curriculum with the rest of their studies. Flagship scholars choose to complete a capstone year abroad in China either as college juniors or seniors.

Ming was curious about the world, and fixed on the goal to make a real difference in the lives of people with disabilities in China.

The Boren scholarship, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense, helped her pay for her capstone year abroad on the Chinese Flagship Program, covering nearly all the costs of two semesters at Nanjing University.

By the time she went abroad, Ming had poured a lot of her own time into learning Chinese. She had memorized flashcards. She had also watched movies and television series.

Once abroad, Ming took courses on Chinese history, society, and culture, she made massive strides in her Chinese language abilities. Interacting with other Chinese students, her housemate, and her next-door neighbor, she also learned many modern-day phrases and colloquial expressions used by students her age. Completing internships gave her access to professional level Chinese.

With creativity and communication Ming made small adjustments that enabled her to fully participate in the program. One class was moved, when the original room was not accessible. For other situations, such as a step to get into a restaurant or close to 400 stairs to get to the top of the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum, she found strangers and friends willing to lend a hand.

While she sometimes felt like she was losing her independence, she stayed motivated to push through and she is glad she did.

Currently Ming works for a senator's office to fulfill the government service requirement for her Boren award, while also completing a fellowship with respectability USA in Washington, DC.

