

Mary Ann Hansen
2004 Freeman Field Study, China
Journal Entry: A Mosuo Evening

My most memorable experience of the trip was the evening we spent in the Mosuo village. It was a peaceful place, but full of activity. My stomach did not feel quite right, so I decided to sit quietly in the house while most of the Mosuo villagers were entertaining our group in the courtyard by singing and throwing Eileen in the air, etc. The women of the host family took care of me. They offered me sunflower seeds and tea by the open fire. All too soon I had exhausted ALL of my Chinese vocabulary and gestures. I went to seek help from Liz who gracefully came into the house to assist. Little did she know what would evolve! It turned out that Liz, myself and our "host mother" were all the same age. So we took a "same-age photo." We bonded immediately. Eventually somehow, Liz ended up dressed up as a Mosuo woman, and she went outside lead our whole group in a stirring rendition of "If I Had a Hammer." My stomach was feeling much better, especially since it was Liz and not Mary Ann who underwent the Mosuo transformation.