

Human Rights? For the majority of my life these two insignificant words have meant nothing more to me than two more words within a dictionary full of forgotten meanings. For years I have been sleeping within a cocoon, unaware and uninterested in the issues of the world, indulging within my own community, and absolutely unaffected by what occurs outside my protected shield.

The moment I was required to carry out this 'human rights task', I immediately perceived it as just another assignment. "Just aim for another set of good marks", I thought to myself. However, I was abruptly awoken to know, that the Tiananmen Square Protest was no longer a story that was read to me as a child, but a real issue that many of those people who were unaffected choose to dismiss and forget about. I was forced into a new and strange land of so much unseen and unnoticed destruction, in which I could not help but remould my attitude and gain an opinion and point of view. My caterpillar had broken free from its realm of basic culture and familiarity, only to transform into a butterfly and enter the unfamiliar reality of this world!

The 1989 Tiananmen Square Protest was a demonstration led by students, intellectuals, and labour activists of the Peoples Republic of China. These people believed that the Communist Party of the Chinese government was corrupt and oppressive to urban workers who felt that their livelihood was threatened. Over the long term of this protest, these people took their issue to the street and began a hunger strike and a march while singing the "Internationale" (a *anthem of international revolutionary socialism*). *What astounded me the most about this incident was that these people stood up for their rights, which their communist government had promised, and hypocritically, their government proved to be unfaithful in providing and further more, destroyed many lives. What happened to their rights? Their opinion? Their lives? I am reminded of a disappointing but practical phrase a dear friend once shared, "Communism is influential theoretically, but it remains to be seen practically". What happened to the old saying, "it takes one to make a difference"? Was this not what these helplessly innocent people were doing, when their futures were snatched away from them before witnesses throughout the world? What cruel unjust people suddenly think it is fair to allow authorised tanks to flatten every hope for a better future?*

Whenever I am reminded of this incident, my mind constantly reflects on the video footage of an elderly woman, grasping a younger girl to her chest, weeping sorrowfully for the loss of a loved son. Up to eight hundred people were murdered and ten thousand people were injured on June 4th, when army tanks and infantry were sent to crush the demonstration. Where is the love? Where is the trust? It is within the people, they are the cement, they are the bricks holding the foundation of the country together.

We are incredibly privileged to live in a country that allows every citizen freedom of voice, personal opinion, and their basic human rights. Although that Australia was not included in Tiananmen Square Protest, we still had the opportunity as a country to let their problem become known to the people within Australia. *Some issues are better left and not interfered with, although, they are still of the uttermost importance and need to be considered for the future planning of Australia. We can learn from our mistakes, but we can also learn from and observe the mistakes of others.*

Truthfully, I believe that individually I cannot make a world renowned difference, despite what people may say. Although, if I make an effort to change one life at a time, it is equal to one more chance to make a change within the world. I am aware that there is an opportunity to support non-profit organisations, such as World Vision, although, there is still the question of whether every cent of our money is going to those in need, or whether a wealthy benefactor in a management position, might be gaining a large percentage. I am reminded of the old saying, "think globally, and act locally". This is exactly what I need to do, what we need to do, because, this is what makes the change in the world occur. Within our own communities we can gain support and a voice, by making the small choices and changes.

The Tiananmen Square Protest, was one of many instances in which the human rights of thousands of people were violated. It has left a scar on the minds of those within our modern Australia, and will forever be remembered as an incident in which the rights of many people were unfaithfully taken advantage of.

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