

# **Josie's story from China**

## **Part One**

This is the true story of Josie. Josie is not her real name.

Josie was born in 1965 in China. One day, when she was very young, Josie's grandparents brought her to a parade. There, she saw angry people fighting. She heard that her neighbour was to be punished, just for expressing a different opinion.

Josie's father stayed at home all the time. He grew white fungus for sale. He grew the fungus in a dark room. Josie's father never left the house. Later, she learnt that this was his punishment because he had also expressed a different opinion when he was younger.

These things happened during the Cultural Revolution that took place in China between 1966 and 1976. During the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese government banned many books. Josie and her mother used to copy books and read them in secret. If they were caught, they could have been sent to jail. Luckily, they were never caught.

From 1981 to 1987, Josie studied Literature and Finance at a university in China. She attended many classes, even if they were not in her course. She was very eager to learn. She rode an old bicycle and lived with six other girls at the university dormitory. She ate at the canteen and did not have to pay university fees. By 1989, Josie had graduated and was working at the Bank of China.

Since April 1989, Chinese students had been asking their government for democracy. More and more people joined the demonstrations. Many of them were in

Tiananmen Square in Beijing. On 4 June 1989, the government sent the army to force all the protestors to leave Tiananmen Square. Many people were killed or hurt.

Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke cried when he learnt about this. He promised that no Chinese student in Australia at the time would be forced to return to China.

Josie did not like what had happened in Tiananmen Square but this was not enough to make her hate the Chinese government. From the time she was young, she had been taught that the government gives the people good lives. Josie had enjoyed a good life and her education had been free.

Although she did not like how the government treated individuals, she thought that maybe the government had to stop the demonstrations. Maybe this was so important that the government had to send the army into Tiananmen Square. But if the government had given the people good lives, why did so many Chinese leave for the West? Could this be because people need freedom?

Josie was not sure how to think about Tiananmen Square. What she was sure of was this: she wanted freedom. She wanted freedom to learn and experience new things. So Josie and her parents used almost all their money to buy a one-way plane ticket for her to Australia, to pay for her visa and a little extra for living expenses.

To be continued in Part Two.