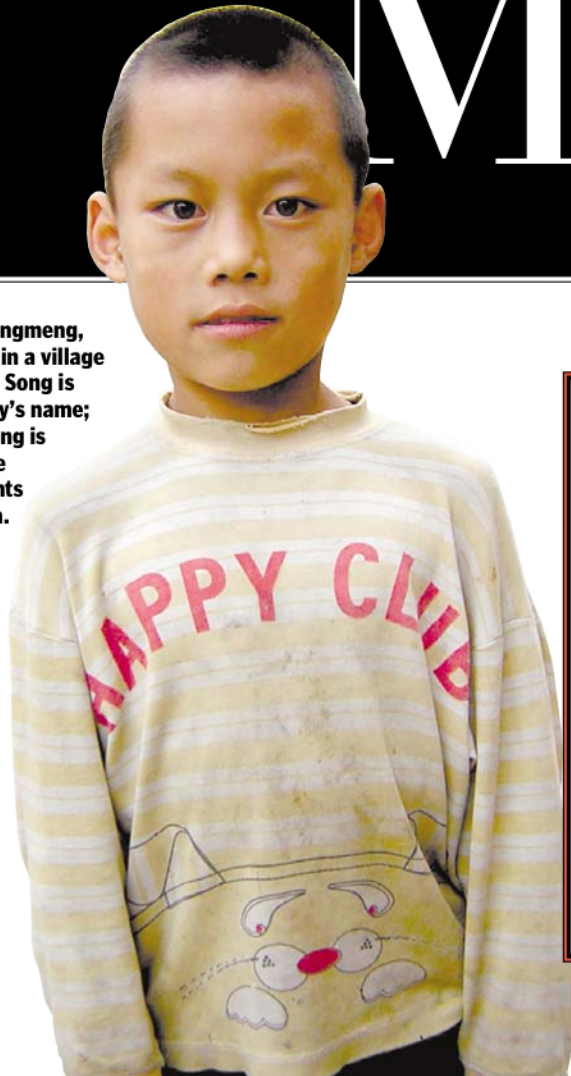


# KidsPost

## My name is ... Mengmeng

Song Mengmeng, 11, lives in a village in China. Song is his family's name; Mengmeng is the name his parents gave him.



**CHINA**  
6,500 miles  
FROM WASHINGTON

*This is the first in a series of KidsPost Journeys around the world to show readers how children in other countries and cultures live and play. Today we JOURNEY TO CHINA. Next month, discover the world of pyramids, camels and sand in Egypt.*

BEIDIAO YUTAI, China  
● **Song Mengmeng**, 11 years old, lives with his twin brother, Song Wenwen, and his mother and father in Beidiao Yutai, a village of farmers in the countryside of northeastern China.

The family would be considered poor in the United States. Mengmeng's father does not have a lot of money. Mengmeng does not have a lot of new clothes or fancy toys.

But he and his family have plenty to eat. They live in a spacious house made of stones and cement, with blue-painted wood around the windows. They have a dog and a cat to play with. Ducks swim around in a tiny pond outside their house.

"My brother and I are different, even though we are twins," Mengmeng said in Mandarin. "I have bigger eyes, but a smaller head. He has smaller eyes, but a bigger head. And our voices are different, too."

Mengmeng and his brother usually get

up early. On school days, their mother wakes them about 5:30 a.m. The twins wash their hands and face right after getting out of bed. But they brush their teeth only at night.

After getting dressed in jeans and sweatshirts, they like to have hot porridge for breakfast. Sometimes their mother also gives them steamed bread or some *jianbing*, which is a pancake made out of cornmeal. It is so thin it looks like a napkin.

Then Mengmeng and Wenwen set out for school, each carrying books in a bag on his back. They have to walk about 40 minutes to their school in a nearby town, Lian Cheng. Classes begin at 7:50 a.m. and last until 4:30 p.m.

Mengmeng and his brother usually eat lunch at their aunt's house, because she lives close to the school. She makes whatever the boys like. Mengmeng's favorite is pickled vegetables. This time of year, Mengmeng also

carries a few chestnuts in a pocket of his jeans so he can snack whenever he feels like it.

At school, Mengmeng studies Chinese, math, science, English and social studies. Sometimes he has art and physical education, too. But he doesn't like art because he cuts himself with the scissors. "I hate that," he said.

Mengmeng's favorite is a class the teacher calls "exploration." In one lesson, Mengmeng and his friends study "the secrets of the soil." They learn how the corn and wheat seeds that his father plants grow into food.

After school, Mengmeng has about an hour's homework every day, mostly Chinese and math. Then his mother cooks some dumplings or fried eggs for dinner. "Whenever my father tries to cook, he burns everything," Mengmeng said.

—Edward Cody