



China Tour 2018 Report



**Student China Educational Tour to
Shanghai, Zhengzhou, Luoyang,
Xian & Beijing
The Geelong College - 2018**

Those of us lucky to participate in the 2018 China Trip were treated to the splendour of the Middle Kingdom old and new. Our wondrous journey began in Shanghai with a welcoming banquet of traditional dumplings followed by a magnificent view from atop the Shanghai Tower, the second tallest building in the world.

We travelled the next day to Tong Li, a picturesque canal town outside of Shanghai. It was a taste of Venice in the Orient as we boated around centuries-old buildings. The students enjoyed the opportunity to practise their conversational Mandarin with the local residents. Our final experience of Shanghai included exploration of its colonial past on the Bund and a wander through China Town (a pristine pocket of the city).



A fast train, over 300 kilometres per hour fast, whisked us to Zheng Zhou and the nearby home of Shaolin Kung Fu. Our students were able to sample the martial arts made famous by Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan. That same afternoon we ventured to Luoyang where the magnificent Buddhas of the Longmen Grottoes on the Yi River awaited us. We were awe-struck. The grandeur and vast scale of the statue carvings provided a glimpse of imperial China's dynastic might.



The next stop was Xian, gateway to the Terracotta Warriors. Emperor Qin Shi Huang, who instigated the construction of the Great Wall, was well guarded in his after-life by the densely packed ranks of a remarkable subterranean army. We all marvelled at the intricately sculpted and life-size figures, complete with military insignia and individual identity. The last day in Xian was spent cycling atop the broad ancient city wall circuit, an invigorating ride of 14 kilometres, before journeying to our final destination, Beijing.



The national capital presented a clutch of sightseeing treats at the end of an already astonishing series of spectacles. On the first day our own long march of over 20 kilometres wound through the Temple of Heaven, some Beijing Hutongs (old narrow alleys), Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City. To complete the Beijing flavour we feasted on Peking Duck that evening. Over the last two days we walked the Great Wall at Mutianyu and visited the imperial Summer Palace. Both venues were shining examples of masterful Chinese engineering, craftsmanship and artistry.

Throughout the journey we were treated to lunch and dinner banquets of delicious regional Chinese cuisine. We enjoyed a fantastic acrobatic circus performance and a concert featuring traditional folk dress and music. Our affable, knowledgeable and highly professional guide, Steve, ensured that our travels and cultural visits were conducted with ease and efficiency. He always provided insightful background information and constantly encouraged the students to converse in Mandarin and participate in cultural activities.

The educational value of a visit to the nation of a studied language far exceeded anything that may be achieved within our classrooms. The students were presented with dozens of opportunities to sense and experience multiple aspects of Chinese culture. They responded with enthusiasm and appreciation. We hope the trip will foster heightened levels of motivation and endeavour in their future Chinese studies.



Fabio D'Agostin and Sophia Shen