

Week Seven (July 24 - July 30, 2016) Report

Updated August 5, 2016

Students began week 7 on Sunday July 24, 2016. It would be their last day in Wuhan and the students met with Suki in hopes of going to the Hubei Provincial Museum. Students were originally scheduled to visit the museum during week 3 but were unable to attend due to repairs and flooding in Wuhan. Despite careful checking, the museum was closed again with additional extensive repair work needing to be completed. Fortunately, the students were able to visit the Hubei Museum of Art instead. The Hubei Museum of Art is four stories tall and home to both modern and traditional art pieces, with temporary exhibits on the foundation of the Wuhan Art School. The first floor contained various landscape paintings done in watercolor and a collection of animated short films. The second floor housed a collection of modern art pieces which the public could interact with, as well as an adjoining exhibit made up of miscellaneous works, including a collection of lacquer work from the Qin



Yellow Crane Tower Entrance



Yellow Crane Tower Mural

and Han dynasties. A temporary exhibit on the foundation of the Wuhan Art School was located on the third floor and featured wood prints, illustrations, and other propaganda works used to support the Chinese efforts from 1937 up to the late 1970's. Many of the paintings depicted Chinese families, streets, or other scenes, while others included landscapes. The students enjoyed lunch on Hubei Street, where they tried the tang baozi, "soup dumplings", and fried rice. After lunch, the group walked to the Yellow Crane Tower Scenic Area. The Yellow Crane Tower is a sacred Taoist site and is currently located on Snake Hill along the Yangtze River, having been rebuilt many times over since AD 223. The tower is considered one of the "Four Great Towers of China" and is made up of five stories which feature large murals depicting legends of how the tower came to be. The group summited the Yellow Crane Tower and then headed eastwards to the White Cloud Pavilion, where they toured the small art gallery inside. After stopping to purchase a few souvenirs, the group then headed back to campus, with some

students opting to stay behind and do more shopping. The rest of the students enjoyed a farewell dinner at Papa John's before retiring for the day.

On Monday, students began packing to leave for Beijing the following day. A closing ceremony was held later that afternoon, where students received certificates for completing the Culture and Language course from the China University of Geoscience's Dean, Dr. Su Hongtao. The pottery that students had made earlier in the week was also delivered and passed out by Suki during the ceremony. In the evening, a couple of students headed to Jen's Coffee Bar, a popular bar visited by ex-pats, to say goodbye to their new friends, while others stayed in and worked on weekly reports and daily journals.

The students said their goodbyes to Wuhan and their new found friends on Tuesday morning before boarding a small bus and heading to the train station. After a 40-minute bus ride, the students arrived at the Wuhan Railway station where they would take a bullet train for a 5-hour ride back to Beijing. Snacks, drinks, and hot food such as tofu,



Vanilla Bean Bourbon Ice-cream

vegetables, and rice were served on the train in the dining car or on a food trolley; several students had their breakfast and lunch in the dining car. The group finally arrived in Beijing in the early afternoon and either took a subway or a bus to their respective hotels. After a busy day of travel, the majority of the students enjoyed a western dinner of cheese burgers, fries, and ice-cream at the "LANE" restaurant located in their hotel. Dinner was followed by a short walk around town and a stop to gather supplies for the following days from the local supermarket. The other two students met an old friend of Jacob's for a Yunan style dinner. Afterwards, the two were given a small tour of the local area, including a microbrewery where they watched people from another bar learn how to use swords, practice fight with lightsabers, and wield pole axes, before heading back to their hotels for the evening.

On Wednesday morning, both students and accompanying faculty met at the Grand Metro Park Hotel before heading out to the Great Wall. Wen Guo, the student that first greeted the UH group at the airport, had rented a comfortable bus that would take the group to the Badaling section of the Great Wall of China. The Badaling section was

built during the Ming dynasty, spans a total of 7.3 miles, and is lined with 43 watchtowers, 17 which are open to the public. It is the most complete portion, as well as the most visited



Top: Students pose for a group pictures before climbing the Great Wall. **Bottom:** Students pose for a picture on the Great Wall.

part of the Great Wall. Upon reaching their destination, the company split into two groups, with Dr. Wang and his son David, Dr. Bao with her daughter and nephew, and the majority

of the students climbing the wall together. Frequent stops were made to take photos and observe the scenery; here the students were also informed about the Chinese saying which states that “you are only a real man once you have climbed the Great Wall.” Wen Guo, Feng Jie, and the rest of the students walked on ahead to the 6th tower before turning around due to ongoing construction, and rejoined the main party at the 5th tower. On the descending climb, many students had their names carved onto key chains noting the day they climbed the Great Wall and “became men.” Not wishing to hike the rest of the way down, the group decided to take a roller coaster back down. The coaster was not nearly as fast as back home, and allowed for stunning views on the way down. Here the group separated once more, with most of the students having lunch at California Beef Noodle King USA. After lunch, the students spend some time shopping for souvenirs before heading back towards the bus. Later that evening, the group had famous Peking duck, “Beijing Roast duck,” courtesy of Dr. Bao. Many smiles and gifts were passed out after dinner to commemorate the student’s visit to China. As the students were saying their goodbyes, bad weather set in. The students decided to take the subway just as heavy rain and strong winds started to pick up. Everyone made it back to their hotels safely but were thoroughly drenched.



Wanda and Jennifer enjoy the slide down the Great Wall

On Thursday morning, the students met up with Dr. Wang and Dr. Bao at the Geological Museum of China. The group was then given a tour of the museum organized by one of Dr. Wang’s former CUG colleagues and headed by an English speaking guide. The Geological Museum of China was opened in 1916, and boast a wonderful collection of more than 200,000 specimens, including the world’s largest rock crystal. The museum is a showcase for minerals and fossils found throughout China and is regarded as one of the best in Asia. The first floor showcased rock formations and Earth surface processes. The second floor featured rocks and minerals, including a one-of-a kind Azurite display, while also describing rock structures and their formation. The third floor was home to a large fossil exhibit and described the Earth’s evolutionary history. Here the group saw well known fossils such as *Shantungosaurus Giganteus*, *Sinosauropteryx* (the first dinosaur to be found with feather-like structures), and the Peking Man.



Statue in the Forbidden City

The fourth floor displayed a special exhibit highlighting the 100th year anniversary of the museum. This exhibition included a small display on the early Chinese geologists

and featured dinosaur eggs, various minerals and gemstones, and traditional Chinese stone carvings. After the museum tour, the students departed into separate groups back to their respective hotels. Some of the students decided to explore the Phoenix City shopping mall later that afternoon, stopping to have a healthy lunch at Element Fresh. That evening, the students staying at Grand Metro Park Hotel also had a desert and cheese party and watched “Into the Storm” together. The other students met with an old friend of Jacob’s who runs a music label business. They visited some local establishments and enjoyed a few punk rock shows and other local band performances. On their way to their back to the hotel, the students also explored the Hutongs, narrow alleyways common throughout Beijing.

The students slept in on Friday and used the morning to catch up their journals, work out, or watch movies before heading out for a late breakfast. The students staying at the Grand Metro Park Hotel visited “Bread Talk”, a local bakery located inside the Phoenix City mall, and Starbucks for some quick snacks. The students used the remainder of that afternoon to do some shopping before heading out to a different mall to get pedicures and treat, Jennifer, the senior grad student to Mexican food. That evening, the group rode taxis to Sanlintun bar street but were unable to find their desired restaurant, and instead had dinner at “ACE”, a London style bar that served a mix of English, American, and Mexican food. Getting taxis back to the hotel proved very difficult so the group rode the subway back instead. The other two students used Friday to visit the Mausoleum of Mao Zedong. The Mausoleum is constructed from materials gathered from all of China and is made up of multiple rooms, the first home to a large statue of Mao and used as a place to place flowers. The famous crystal coffin designed from quartz glass is housed in a separate room. Next the pair went to the Forbidden City, home of the Chinese



Temple of the Heavens

Imperial family for approximately 500 years. The city is made up of 980 buildings that span around 180 acres, making up the largest group of preserved wooden structures in the world. The duo then visited the Temple of Heaven, a sacred temple from the Ming dynasty used only by the emperor to pray and worship the gods. This concluded the day's activities and the two students returned to their hotel for much needed rest.

On Saturday, July 30, the students packed and prepared to leave China, saying goodbye to the friends they had met. Two students visited the Yonghegong Temple, a famous monastery formerly used as an imperial palace but later converted into a Buddhist temple. This temple mixes both Han Chinese and Tibetan aesthetics and is composed of five main halls. The Yonghegong Hall, "Hall of Harmony and Peace", is the main structure and is home to a 13-meter tall sandalwood statue of "Buddha of the Three Ages." Later that evening several students got together with Lin and Wen for a farewell dinner at Papa John's. The group returned SIM cards purchased earlier in Badong and said their final goodbyes. Most students took their last subway ride back to their respective hotels and headed to bed as the following day would be the long return flight back home.



Yonghegong Temple