

Hello, Here is the report

In June, 2024, I had the privilege of traveling to China, focusing on Beijing and Jinan. This trip, supported generously by our donors, was an eye opening trip to China hoping to enhance our understanding of Chinese culture and history through direct experiences and meaningful interactions with the people who spent their life there.

**On June 19**, we left Sacramento and departed on our journey to China, first we took a bus from here to SF and then from there we flew to Beijing. Before we reached Beijing there was a significant obstacle we had to overcome; the first flight we took had returned back to SF half way through. Now if we panicked our whole itinerary would have been delayed by at least a day but thanks to Mrs. Ren and the travel agent we got our next flight in about 7 hours after we came back to SF. This experience taught me to always stay calm no matter the situation and always think of various options you take to solve a situation. We reached Beijing and then rested at the dorms

**On June 20**, we embarked on our first outing to a high school, which proved to be an incredibly engaging and enjoyable experience. Upon arrival, we were warmly welcomed by the students and staff. We then proceeded to the dance studio, where we donned traditional attire and were introduced to ethnic Chinese dance by the teachers. Learning about their cultural dance techniques was fascinating, especially understanding how the expansive fields they lived in influenced their use of large steps and sweeping hand movements. Lunch was a delightful surprise—far exceeding my expectations of typical school fare due to my experience with lunch in the US. Just as we were about to leave, we noticed the students playing outside and wanted to join them so we convinced Mrs. Re and the others and then we played basketball for a while before bidding farewell to the school. We then returned back to our dorms and rested for a bit, had dinner and then had a lesson on Chinese culture which was interesting.

**On June 21st**, we had an incredible day visiting Peking University. The campus was stunning, with its peaceful lake and beautiful surroundings. We delved into the university's history and explored the impressive library, which was much larger and more remarkable than we had imagined. The tour was both informative and eye-opening, giving us a real sense of what makes Peking University such a renowned institution. The blend of historical charm and modern amenities made the campus a fascinating place to explore, and we left with a strong impression of its unique atmosphere and significance.

After our visit, we returned to the dorms to rest for a bit before heading to a hotpot restaurant for lunch. This was an exciting experience for me, as it was my first time trying hotpot. It was definitely very spicy, but I loved it. I'm looking forward to enjoying authentic Chinese hotpot again on my next trip to China.

Following lunch, we went to the National Museum of China. The museum was massive and filled with fascinating exhibits covering China's extensive history. From ancient artifacts to contemporary displays, it was a captivating journey through time. However, before we could

enter, we encountered a problem: the person who booked the tickets had entered the wrong passport numbers. As a result, I and two other students were left behind, but thanks to Shi Lao Shi, the issue was quickly resolved, and we managed to join the group on time. The tour guide made the museum visit very engaging and enjoyable.

Later, we dined at a traditional Chinese restaurant where we tried various dishes I had never tasted before. That restaurant turned out to be my favorite from the entire trip. We then explored a street market a bit before returning to the dorms. It was quite a day and one of my favorite days of the trip. Of course, I must mention that we also had a lesson on Chinese culture focusing on the Forbidden City, which we were scheduled to visit the next day.

**On June 22nd**, I unfortunately began to feel a bit sick. To make matters worse, one of the guardians accompanying us made it seem like it was somehow my fault that I got ill. It was definitely irritating, but I chose to ignore it. Thankfully, after taking some Advil, my fever started to improve.

We then had breakfast and made our way to the Forbidden City. As we approached, I was struck by the sheer scale and grandeur of this historic palace complex. The Forbidden City, once the imperial palace of Chinese emperors, is a massive sprawling area with nearly 1,000 buildings and over 8,000 rooms. Its architecture, with its golden roofs and intricate carvings, is a stunning representation of traditional Chinese artistry and design.

Our guide provided fascinating insights into the history and significance of the Forbidden City. We learned about the various dynasties that ruled from there and the elaborate ceremonies that once took place within its walls. Walking through the grand halls and courtyards, it was easy to imagine the opulence and power that once characterized this place. Despite not feeling my best, the majesty and historical significance of the Forbidden City were truly awe-inspiring and made for an unforgettable experience.

After our visit to the Forbidden City, we made our way to the Great Wall of China. The drive offered beautiful views of the surrounding countryside, building anticipation for the iconic landmark. As we arrived, the sheer scale of the Great Wall was breathtaking. Stretching across the rugged terrain, the Wall's ancient stones seemed to whisper tales of its historical significance.

We chose a section of the Wall that provided both an impressive view and manageable hiking. Climbing the steps, some of which were steep and uneven, was a challenge, but the panoramic views of the Wall snaking over the mountains made it all worthwhile. Standing atop this remarkable feat of engineering, it was awe-inspiring, the whole scenery made me feel much smaller and looking at this grandiose structure felt enlightening. Then we returned back to the dorms and ate dinner at the cafeteria.

**On June 23**, We went to this place where we played multiple traditional Chinese instruments and we also tried on traditional clothes, then from there we took the train to Jinan. After arriving in Jinan we met our host family. My host family was a very kind and welcoming family, they did

everything to make me feel more at home. After reaching to my host family's house I dropped my stuff and then we went to a street restaurant to eat dinner, it was very tasty, it was first time trying grilled meat cooked in the chinese way, they had all sorts of meat we also tried a lot of them so yeah that was tasteful experience.

**On June 24,** we had the privilege of touring an extraordinary high school in Jinan that truly took my breath away. The campus was remarkable, featuring its own museum, art gallery, and science center, each offering a distinctive and engaging experience. Every room we entered revealed something new and exciting, making it clear that this school would be an ideal place for me if I ever chose to study in China. The principal's warm welcome added a personal touch, helping me feel right at home. After the tour, we enjoyed a delicious lunch at the school cafeteria, which indeed was super delicious. We then headed to the basketball court, where we played a full game with the students. I definitely regretted wearing pants that day, but overall it was fun having something in common with kids living over 5000 miles away from us . The highlight of the trip was our time in the orchestra room. Listening to traditional Chinese music performed live was a deeply moving experience, especially since I had been enjoying Chinese music for over two years. Hearing it in person was both beautiful and breathtaking. We were also given the opportunity to try out each of the instruments, which was a delightful and memorable experience. I would not have traded that experience in the orchestra room for anything else.

**On June 25th,** We had a tour at the jinan museum, and then we were left to our host families, all of us then made a plan to have lunch and I had lunch with my host family and the host families of my friends, we then went to the nearby mall and did some shopping over there. From there we went to this very famous lake nearby, we first explored the surroundings of the lake and from there we went to a boat that took us all the way to the other side of the lake from there we then took another boat that took us out of the lake to a river, it was first time seeing a boat lift. After that it was just me and the kid of my host family, we both explored the market and then we went to an escape room where we met the others. The escape room was definitely a very fun experience and much better than the ones here.

**On June 26th,** our visit to Confucius City unfolded as a journey through the profound legacy of one of history's greatest philosophers. We started our exploration at the front of the Confucius Museum, a place where the rich tapestry of Confucian thought and history is preserved and celebrated. The museum's exhibits provided a deep dive into the life and teachings of Confucius, showcasing ancient manuscripts, artifacts, and interactive displays that brought his wisdom to life. We marveled at the intricate details of the exhibits, each offering a window into the cultural and philosophical context of Confucius' time. After immersing ourselves in the museum's vast collection, we meandered through the city's historic streets, where we encountered various statues and monuments erected over two thousand years ago. Each statue stood as a testament to Confucius' enduring influence, capturing his likeness and the reverence he commands. As we observed these ancient sculptures, we reflected on the impact of Confucian philosophy on both historical and contemporary thought. Our day of exploration

concluded at Confucius' grave, a place of deep reverence and reflection. My favorite part was the chocolate ice cream shaped as the entrance of the museum.

**On June 27th**, we left Jinan and came back to SF

Overall, The trip to China in June 2024 was a transformative experience that profoundly enriched my understanding of Chinese culture, history, and philosophy. Engaging with local students, participating in traditional dances, and savoring authentic Chinese cuisine provided a hands-on perspective that deepened my appreciation for the country's rich cultural practices. Visiting monumental sites like the Forbidden City and the Great Wall offered a tangible connection to China's imperial past, while exploring Confucius City and its museum highlighted the enduring impact of Confucian philosophy. The journey also taught me valuable lessons in adaptability and problem-solving, as we navigated unexpected challenges like flight delays and ticket issues. Overall, this trip broadened my horizons, fostering a greater respect for the complexities of global cultures and histories, and leaving me with lasting memories and a renewed sense of cultural appreciation. Also P.S if you did manage to read it this far thank you for reading this.