Spring Festival Class Trip

In China, with the new lunar year comes a fresh start. Leaving behind all of the negatives and misfortunes of the past year and looking forward to the blessings that are ahead. Our fortune started off on a great note as we all had the opportunity to spend the first three days of the New Year touring the cities of Suzhou and Hangzhou. We departed Shanghai early and arrived at Tiger Hill in the morning. Our tour guide led us through the park explaining to us the history of many scenes. All of these were trumped by the magnificent pagoda that was at the summit of the hill. This massive stone structure climbed far above the trees and was a wonderful piece of history to take in.

We then made our way to the Humble Administrators Garden. This beautiful collection of stones, ponds, bonsai trees, and classic buildings was a peaceful break from the hustle of downtown Shanghai that we all have been a part of for the past 7 weeks. Our only drawback was that the garden as well as most historical sites throughout China were packed. Our guide did a wonderful job of directing us to some of the less populated areas but this did not keep many Chinese tourists from snapping pictures of us. Many times we forget that some people here many have never seen a foreigner let alone 35 Purdue students!
Next stop was Hangzhou. The travel was well worth it because when we arrived at the Jing Sho Feng Shui Cave we were left in awe. This cave was packed with neon in every direction making for a unique natural scene. Our guide pointed out that many of the rock formations were named due to their resemblance to dragons, elephants, and other various animals. Some of them were a bit of a stretch but still very interesting.

The highlight of our class trip was a boat ride on the West Lake of Hangzhou. This was one of Mao’s most admired locations and he visited this scenic spot over 50 times in his life. Being out in the middle of the beautiful lake, cutting through the water with the wind in our faces, surrounded by the morning mist was the most fitting way to close out our trip.

From there, many groups split off in their separate directions for the remainder of our break. Locations included Xi’an, Huashan, Thailand, Singapore, The Philippines, the Yellow Mountains, Hong Kong, as well as a group that stayed in Shanghai to squeeze out every second of the city before we make our move to Minhang.

By: Kevin Girardi

**Yellow Mountains (黃山)**

We met up with our tour guide for the four day/three night excursion and the eleven of us settled in for the bus ride to the Yellow Mountains. For our first night, we took a cable car up the mountain, hiking only a short time before dinner and our hostel. The next day, the mountain was rainy and misty, but we hiked anyway, reaching the bottom of the mountain and exploring a historical village located nearby. That night, we had a family-style meal together and all got to try foot massages.
The next day, we traveled to another nearby location, Qiyun Mountain. After taking the cable car to the top, there was less hiking to do, but much more local culture. This mountain houses several active Daoist temples. We passed through a small mountain village, stopping for lunch before continuing to one of the “lower” peaks of the mountain. After taking in the amazing view, we wound our way back down through the village. After our final night in the hotel, our group split up – a small number staying in town for the day and the rest heading back to the Yellow Mountains to see it on a clear day, without the mist. After a long day of exploring and another six hours on the bus, we arrived safely (but exhausted) in Shanghai.

By: Sara Lyons

Welcome to Minhang

We are now all back from our various spring breaks and back to school. On Saturday we moved to the Minhang campus, which is about an hour of travel from the city. This is where we are taking our engineering classes. Between the 35 of us we are taking heat and mass transfer, thermodynamics II, and materials science. Most of us are taking 2 of these courses and a few brave souls have taken on all three.

When we first got to Minhang, there were a few surprises. It was raining pretty hard when we first arrived. We then all collected into the non-heated entrance and waited for our room assignments. Four students were placed across campus and the rest of us are in the same building. The university did not really understand that we already had roommates so we are still working a few of those kinks out. To our welcome surprise, we had sheets and did not have to purchase our own.

Sunday was a day to get acquainted with the campus, buy necessities for our dorms, and possibly purchase a bike. The campus is very large and biking seems to be the only logical solution for most students.

Most of us started class on Monday. We had the harsh realization that our classrooms did not have heat and indeed felt colder than the outside. After either a two or five hour class, we were ready to warm up and hit up one of the five dining courts, all of which trump our dining court at the downtown campus. We have now learned our lesson and wearing layers are a must until it gets warmer out.
We are now busy and back in our studies. We have two tests next week so school is really starting to kick into high gear. Minhang is a bit of an adjustment from both the downtown campus and Purdue, but so far we are all enjoying it out here.

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By: Abigail Lebowitz

**Travel**

For 8 adventurous study abroad students, there were multiple destinations during their Spring Festival travels. Trevor, Ben, Brendan, Mike, Katie, Abby, Jeremy, and Jon all spent time in Hong Kong as well as Bangkok and Phuket, Thailand. The highlight of the trip was island hopping on a boat around the Phi-Phi Islands off the coast of Phuket and riding elephants in nearby jungles. Brendan describes the trip as, “magnificent,” and said, “It was a unique and incredible experience to see yet another culture.” Katie wrote, “Our trip to Thailand was everything I had hoped for when envisioning Spring Break while studying abroad. One thing I hadn’t anticipated was for our travels there and back to be just as much an adventure as our actual destination, but it made the whole trip that much more memorable.”
Another group of 5, Rohit S., Rohit P., Nauman, Abhi, and Sameer also took off for Thailand to catch some sun and warm weather before it was back to China. Nauman said, “The food and foot massages were out of this world. Our favorite food was at P-Kitchen a local Thai restaurant. Our favorite mode of travel was on a tuk-tuk. More or less scooters with seats strapped to the back. Swimming in February was amazing. Khaosan Road was nuts. And don’t even get me started on the coconut juice.”

The Xi’an 5, Kevin, William, David, Brett, and Jeff broke off from the group and took a 16 hour train ride to northern China. There, the Terra Cotta Warriors, the Deadliest Hike on Mount Huashan, and the city wall waited.

Many groups and individuals traveled all around Asia. Amazing sights were seen, delicious food was tasted, and countless friendships were made.