



VIRTUTE ET LABORE

St Margaret's and Berwick Grammar School
International Tour Testimonial
Christine Meyer and Sophie Tivendale, China Tour 2015

In the midst of the excitement leading up to the China tour, we hadn't expected to experience such an amazing two weeks of new culture, new food and new places. We landed in Beijing and spent our first four days exploring the amazing city via bus, foot, boat and even rickshaw. The highlights of Beijing were definitely the Summer Palace, Lama Temple, seeing the iconic pandas at the zoo and 798 Art District. Our love for shopping was fulfilled with the Silk Market as we became confident in our bargaining skills. Travelling to the Great Wall was an unimaginable and incredible experience that will stay with us forever. Venturing up to the Great Wall via cable car and tobogganing down not only provided astonishing views, but was a unique way of seeing one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

We boarded a plane to Xian, arriving there at night where we saw the beautiful city at night. The next day we had a relaxing morning before an adventurous day at the Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum, the Great Mosque and the City Wall. The weather was not the warmest, which prohibited us from one activity, however we made the most of what we was offered and still had an incredible time. That night, we were privileged to enjoy a dumpling cooking lesson, followed by the Tang Dynasty Dancing and Singing Performance. It was great to see more of the Chinese Culture through this performance.

Nervous but excited for our few days spent in a Chinese family's home, we went to Hangzhou and spent an afternoon at Xuejun High School, then went home with our Chinese host family. It was a positive and eye opening opportunity to live in a different home and spend time at a completely different school. This has definitely improved our knowledge and perception of Chinese culture. We really valued learning how people live in China in comparison to back home in Australia. Whilst staying with our host families, the majority of us spent time at the West Lake in Hangzhou as well as some fun activities including karaoke, getting our nails done, shopping, high ropes courses and big group dinners. It was sad saying good bye to our Chinese friends and their families, but look forward to seeing them when they visit us in Melbourne.

On our travels to Shanghai, we visited the Wuzhen Water Village for a tour and view a traditional Chinese shadow puppet show. Once we arrived in Shanghai, we checked in at our hotel and went to an implausible Acrobatics Show which left us in awe and was nothing like we had ever seen before. While in Shanghai, we had a lunch with a view in the Pearl TV Tower's rotating restaurant. It was nice to have a buffet with a mix of Western and Asian food, as many of us needed a break from the constant supply of rice. We explored Shanghai at night on a boat which was so beautiful and a lovely way to end the China Trip.

It was such an unforgettable experience that we will never forget and have made so many new friends and memories. We also greatly appreciated the teachers for sharing the experience with us.