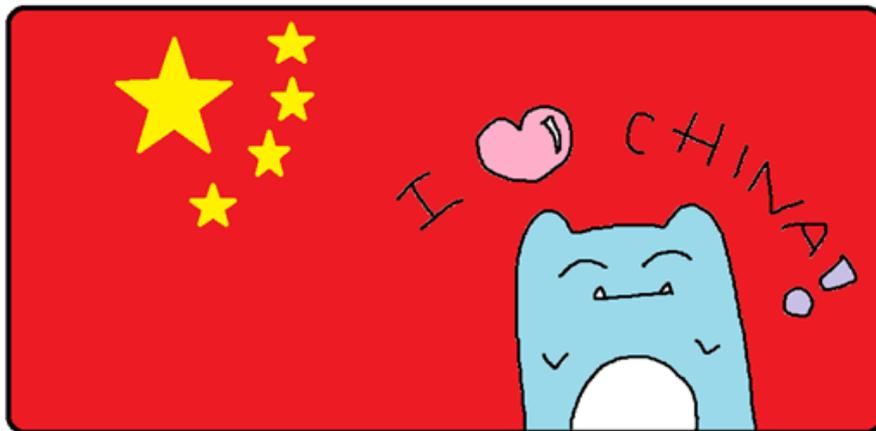




# McKinnon Primary School

## Sister School Visit



**15<sup>th</sup> September – 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

**Mr William Meng**

**Ms Simone Eirth, Ms Suzanne Khatib, Mr David Kefaloukos**

## Day 1

On Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2019. All of our adventurers (17 students and 4 teachers) met at the Melbourne Airport, Qantas Domestic Terminal 1 at 4 am. We started developing our independence from the very first minute. We lifted our own luggage to the check-in counter, we had a quick goodbye-kiss with our parents and we were so proud of ourselves as no one had difficulties to the separation with parents.

Then, we went through the security check. It was another challenge for us. We had to put everything into the tubs and quickly packed them up at the end of the conveyor belt in about two minutes. In addition, we had to remind ourselves many times about the passport and boarding passes.

After we arrived at the boarding gate, we went through our detail study focuses, essential agreement and the student booklet. Then, we lined up for boarding and everyone held their own backpack, passports and boarding passes. Everyone was waiting for their turn quietly and it was an excellent representation of our school image.

After we got on board the QF 400, we had a nice breakfast and we chatted with the friends who were sitting next to us. We were excited about this coming trip.

We had a short stopover in Sydney. During that two-hour transit, we took the shuttle bus to change the terminal from domestic to international and we went through the immigration customs and another security check. Everyone was switched on, listened to teachers' instructions and followed teachers closely, so we managed this whole series of transitions very smoothly.

During the flight QF129 (Sydney – Melbourne), we had two meals and enjoyed the in-flight entertainment. In addition, we carefully completed Chinese Arrival and Departure cards independently. Then, we caught up some sleep on the plane to get ready for our trip.

After we got off the plane, we went through the immigration clearance, collected the luggage, and then met our tour guide, Apollo. He would stay us for the first four days in Shanghai and Nanjing. When we waited for the bus in the car park, we felt very hot and humid as September in China is still the end of the summer, however, it is early spring in Australia.

We went straight ahead to the restaurant and enjoyed our very first Chinese meal on the special rotating table. We learned many table manners, such as how to spin the table, how to get the food from the rotating table, how to show your hospitality to other people and chopsticks skills.

After dinner, we went to the hotel. We were so excited to stay in a modern fancy hotel with our friends. We had a quick debrief and everyone started lifting the luggage into the room and unpacking the luggage. Wow! We could clearly see children's growing independence on the first day! Unbelievable!

## Day 2

After we received the morning call from the reception, we all got up on time. Then, we headed down to the dining hall to have breakfast. There was a lot of Chinese and western food to choose from and all of us were being open-minded to try different food and many of us had more than three plates. It was so yummy!

During our trip, we would share the bus with Ivanhoe East Primary School, so the teachers tried really best to mix 'n' match all of us so that we could build up relationship and cohesion across schools. Also, Mr Meng played a lot of popular songs on the bus to make our trip fun, positive and memorable. We all enjoyed singing songs with Mr Meng, so we gave him a new nickname, DJ Meng. In addition, Mr Meng promoted the slogan of our trip, "#noregrets" as he wanted to make sure everyone could fully enjoy the trip and all of us absolutely loved this slogan.

Finally, we arrived at our very first attraction of the trip, Yu Garden. Yu Garden (simplified Chinese: 豫园; pinyin: yù yuán. Garden of Happiness) is an extensive Chinese garden located beside the City God Temple in the northeast of the Old City of Shanghai at Huangpu Qu, Shanghai Shi. It abuts the Yuyuan Tourist Mart, the Huxinting Teahouse and the Yu Garden Bazaar. Yu Garden was first built in 1559 during the Ming Dynasty by Pan Yunduan as a comfort for his father, the minister Pan En, in his old age. Pan Yunduan began the project after failing one of the imperial exams, but his appointment as governor of Sichuan postponed construction for nearly twenty years until 1577. The garden was the largest and most prestigious of its era in Shanghai. We really enjoyed the traditional Chinese architects in the garden.

Then, we were divided into teacher groups when we went to Chenghuang Temple. Each teacher had four or five students to look after in their little group. Chenghuang Temple is the City God Temple or Temple of the City Gods (Chinese: 上海城隍庙; pinyin: shàng hǎi Chéng huáng miào), officially the City Temple of Shanghai, is a folk temple located in the old city of Shanghai. Residents of the old city, as well as nearby areas, visited the temple to pray for good fortune and peace. We took a lot of pictures there and bought a lot of street food from the retail shops, such as bubble tea and lollies. We had so much fun!

After that, we headed off to the Shanghai Wildlife Park. First, we went on a safari trip. We sat on the bus and saw different animals walking around us. You could always hear the questions and comments on our bus, such as "Where is it?" "I cannot see it" "Oh there, there" "See, it is over there, right there", "Oh I can see it" and "So cute". We were so busy with taking pictures and seeking animals in those 30 minutes.

It was time for lunch! We went to the Flamingo Restaurant to enjoy our set lunch. During lunch, we were still discussing our favourite animals that we saw just now on the safari trip.

After lunch, we decided to see the giant pandas. The wildlife park is too big and the panda's house locates on the other side of the park. Thus, we all sort of ran to the

pandas' and could not wait to see them. When we arrived at the panda's house, we all took thousands of selfies and pictures with them. We loved them so much, did not we? As we finally saw the panda in real and they were so cute and adorable, all of us decided to buy some panda-related souvenirs during the trip.

Considering the next day, we would go to a different city, Nanjing and we would have a late night tonight, so we decided to go back the hotel to call our parents and pack up the luggage. When we arrived at the hotel, we were eager to contact our parents via video calls to share what we had done in the past one and half days. All of parents felt happy for us and we all felt we had a positive start and looked forward to all the excitement await for us. Then, we headed back our rooms to organise the suitcase and the daypack. The teachers were so amazed to see every student packing so quickly and neatly as well as they were all very proud of our organisation and time management skills.

After another classic Chinese dinner, we went to the bund. We were sitting on the cruise while we were appreciating the wonderful night view of the bund in Shanghai. The Bund or Waitan (Chinese: 外滩; pinyin: wài tān, literally: 'Outer Beach') is a waterfront area in central Shanghai. The area centres on a section of Zhongshan Road (East No.1 Zhongshan Road) within the former Shanghai International Settlement, which runs along the western bank of the Huangpu River in the eastern part of Huangpu District. The Bund usually refers to the buildings and wharves on this section of the road, as well as some adjacent areas. Building heights are restricted in the area. It is one of the most famous tourist destinations in Shanghai. We enjoyed the lively and colourful Shanghai city skyline very much!

After we came back to the hotel, almost all of us went to the convenience store to buy some water and snacks to get ready for tomorrow.

### Day 3

Another early morning, we woke up at 6 am. We had another careful inspection of the room before we checked out the room. We brought the heavy suitcases down independently and lined the suitcases tidily on the ground floor. Then, we had our final breakfast in Shanghai. There were a lot of recommendations can be heard in the restaurant, such as “Try this, that tastes delicious”, “Oh my god, you have to try that, that is so yummy” and “I love it and I want to get another one.” We were happy to see everyone step out of their comfort zone and start trying new things because it was something that we highly promoted in this intercultural trip.

Today, we were going to go to the second city on our trip, Nanjing. Thus, we went to the Shanghai Station by bus first and then we took the bullet train to Nanjing. There were a lot of transitions throughout the process, such as unloading the luggage from the bus, walking between the parking lot to the station, going through the security check and looking after our own train tickets. Maybe because we had done a lot of similar things so far on the trip, now we became more experienced when we handled all these processes. Again, all of our teachers feel surprised and satisfied when they saw us coping with these pieces and pieces smoothly.

Luckily, we bought some water and snack last night, we saved a huge amount of money as the food sold on the bullet train were too expensive. We had a great time to chat with friends, enjoyed the snacks and looked at the sceneries when we sat on the bullet train. There are totally 60 or so pairs of trains in normal days running between Shanghai and Nanjing. Over 50 pairs are high-speed trains and most of them run with duration of 3.5 to 9.5 hours. High-speed rail (HSR) in China consists of a network of passenger-dedicated railways designed for speeds of 250–350 km/h (155–217 mph). It is the world's longest high-speed railway network and is also the most extensively used.

Two hours later, we arrived in Nanjing. Nanjing (南京; nán jīng; literally means 'Southern Capital') is the capital of Jiangsu province of the People's Republic of China and the second-largest city in the East China region, with an administrative area of 6,600 km<sup>2</sup> and a total population of 8,270,500 as of 2016. We had a quick lunch at McDonald's before we headed off to the sister school formal ceremony. Everyone enjoyed the “Western” food as it gave us a little taste of home.

After the short break at McDonald's, we attended the formal welcome ceremony held by the Jiangsu Government. During the ceremony, we heard a lot of speeches about sister school relationships, international education and developing international-mindedness. Also, we saw the principal of our sister school, Mr Wu, in the ceremony. He gave a marvellous speech about how to maintaining and developing the sister school relationships on behalf of other principals from Jiangsu Province.

Then, we headed off to the hotel. After checking in, unpacking the luggage and we met back again in the hotel lobby to get ready for dinner. We were pleased to see everyone meet together at the designated place on time. We experienced a lot of traditional and authentic Nanjing food in today's dinner and everyone again demonstrated open-mindedness and risk-taking during dinner time.

As we have behaved so well and demonstrated such growing independence during the trip, teachers bought everyone a treat, McFlurry. Fortunately, we were the only customers in that McDonald at that time. We sat in the air-conditioned room and chatted with our mates happily. We had so much fun!

Going to the convenience store seems to be part of our routine. We all brought some water and snack at the lower cost in the convenience store to get ready for the next day's activity. After we came back from the convenience store, we went straight to bed to conclude another busy day.

## Day 4

As usual, we got up and met with teachers in the dining hall on time. You will not believe it, there were hundreds of breakfasts to choose from. Everyone loved the variety of food and our favourite food were wonton soup, noodles, buns and many more others. Everyone felt energetic having this such big breakfast feast.

After breakfast, we went to the Dr Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum. Dr Sun Yat-sen (/ˈsʌn ˈjæt ˈsɛn/; 12 November 1866 – 12 March 1925) was a Chinese politician, medical doctor and philosopher who served as the first provisional president of the Republic of China; and the first leader of the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party of China). He is referred as the "Father of the Nation" in the Republic of China due to his instrumental role in the overthrow of the Qing dynasty during the Xinhai Revolution. When we arrived at the Dr Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum, firstly, we took the buggy train to the middle of the hill and then, we started to climb the stairs. There are nearly 400 stairs and each stair is 70cm high. No one gave up and in twenty minutes, we reached the top of the hill and we saw the Dr Sun Yat-sen memorial hall. When we stood on top of the hill, we saw the magnificent view of the Nanjing city skyline.

After visiting the Dr Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum, we had another yummy lunch. We could see everyone gradually mastering table manners and chopstick skills. Then, we drove to the next destination, Nanjing Old Town. There is an old city wall and many retail shops in the old town. Everyone enjoyed this place as it is a good combination and balance between past and present. When we walked in the old town, it made us feel calm and peaceful.

After visiting the Nanjing Old Town, we went down the street to the Confucius Temple. The name "Confucius" is a Latinized form of the Mandarin Chinese "kǒng fū zǐ" (孔夫子, meaning "Master Kǒng"). Confucius (/kən ˈfjuːʃəs/ kən-FEW-shəs; 551–479 BC) was a Chinese philosopher and politician of the Spring and Autumn period. The philosophy of Confucius, also known as Confucianism, emphasized personal and governmental morality, correctness of social relationships, justice and sincerity. The Confucius Temple is very similar to the Chenghuang Temple in Shanghai as there are a lot of street food and busy retail shops around the temple. We had roughly three-hour free time here with our teach groups. We bought a lot of snacks and souvenirs as well as took many pictures along the streets.

After visiting the Confucius Temple, we had a delicious dinner. Today is the last day that our tour guide, Apollo, stayed with us, so we took a couple of pictures with him before we went to the hotel. After we arrived at the hotel, we contacted our parents for the second time and shared them with our excitement. Then, we went to the convenience store to get ready for the next day and headed back to our rooms for packing up. Another marvellous day passed and we could not believe a third of the trip has gone! We had enjoyed every single moment of the trip so far!

## Day 5

It seemed that everyone had been getting used to the fast-paced travel. Everyone got up at 6 am, lined up the luggage on the ground floor, checked out the hotel rooms, and went to the dining hall for breakfast independently. After having breakfast, we headed off to our Changzhou, where our sister school locates.

Around 11 am, we arrived at our sister school. We were invited to have lunch in the school canteen first. The food provided in the school was different from our normal lunch. The lunch was served in a bento box and there were vegetable, meat and rice in different sections of the box, which was a good balance of various nutrition.

Then, we had a comprehensive school tour led by the students. Our sister school, Changzhou Miduqiao Primary School was established in 1841 and it has a long history. Many alumni of our sister schools are very famous in China. Our sister school also values global education and international mindedness, so it is very similar to our school vision and mission.

After we came back from the school tour, we finally met our homestay buddies! They had already sat there and waited for us. Even though we lived in different parts of the world and we spoke different languages, none of these factors became our boundaries to make friends. We exchanged gifts and started a nice chat.

After we left school, homestay families arranged a vast variety of activities for us to maximize our Chinese cultural experiences, such as visiting some famous attractions in Changzhou, cooking Chinese food, tasting Chinese cuisine, playing Chinese games and even experiencing Chinese hairdressing services. We absolutely enjoyed cultural immersion and we were looking forward to the next a few days with our homestay families.

## Day 6

The delicious breakfast had already waited for us in the morning when we woke up. After we had a tasty breakfast at home, we went to the school with our homestay buddies.

The first activity in the day was attending the whole school assembly. There are 5,000 students in our sister school. We were amazed at the number of students when we stood on the playground during the assembly.

The assembly started with the principal announcement given by Mr Wu. Mr Wu sincerely welcomed all of us and appreciated our sister school relationships between two schools.

Then, Ms Eirth gave another speech to extend our gratitude to their organisation, host and all the learning experiences that they planned for us. In addition, Ms Eirth also talked about the benefits of sister schools and reciprocal visits.

Next, Ella Groom, our school captain, and Jerry Long, our LOTE captain gave a fabulous speech on the importance of maintaining sister school relationships and their experience of this China trip. Everyone listened attentively to their speech and gave them a nice round of applause.

After that, our sister school students presented two marvellous musical performances for us. Then, we also sang the Que Sera song for our sister school students and teachers as a conclusion of the assembly.

After we had a short break, Mr Meng had a lesson with us and our homestay buddies in the school lecture theatre. We discussed and compared the similarities and differences between schools in China and Australia. By engaging in this special lesson, we did not only have a better understanding of the two school systems, but also, we had deeper relationship with our homestay buddies.

After the lesson with Mr Meng, we had another special Kungfu session with the PE teacher. We learned some basic skills and techniques and it was another great way for us to engage with Chinese culture.

After the Kungfu lesson, we had lunch in the school canteen. Then, we had another several elective Chinese cultural lessons in the afternoon, including paper cutting, paper carving, Chinese knot, embroidery and pyrograph. We explored Chinese culture through all these art-related learning experiences.

Then, we came to a well-known local art gallery. We learned Chinese calligraphy and Chinese painting from two famous Chinese artists. In this session, we understood the Chinese calligraphy and Chinese painting were interrelated and we also examined the similarities and differences of art practices between eastern and western culture.

Then, we went back home with our homestay families. We had a lot of fun again with them again, such as going to famous restaurants, playing a soccer game, playing outdoor basketball and playing musical instruments.

## Day 7

Today was a free day with our homestay families. Surprisingly, all of us went to the Dinosaur Park at a different time of the day. We experienced a lot of thrilling rides. Even though most of them were very scary, we were all brave and sat on the rides as we all remembered the slogan of our trip “#noregrets”.

After we left the Dinosaur Park, we then did some different activities with our homestay families to enjoy the last couples of hours. We all felt the time flies quickly and the three-night homestay experience was too short and we all wanted to extend it.

Five hours later, we arrived in Beijing, the capital city of China. The first stop in Beijing was the Taoranting Park. The park has a total area of 59 acres (240,000 m<sup>2</sup>), and water area accounts for 17 acres (69,000 m<sup>2</sup>). It was built in 1952. We walked leisurely in the park and appreciated the beauty of nature presented in the park. In addition, some of us bought bubble blowers. We had heaps of fun when we blew the bubbles and we laughed a lot!

Then, we drove to the hotel. This was the last hotel that we stayed in China and everyone was looking forward to it. When we arrived at the hotel, everyone was impressed by the presentation of this modern hotel and after a short unpacking time, we were off to the restaurant for dinner. Then, purchasing water and snack from the convenience store concluded our day.

## Day 9

Today was a beautiful sunny morning. We, as experienced independent travellers, had already known our routine, getting ready for a daypack, self-checking against the daily checklist and having breakfast in the dining hall.

After breakfast, we went to the Summer Palace. The Summer Palace (Chinese: 颐和园 pinyin: Yí hé yuán), is a vast ensemble of lakes, gardens and palaces in Beijing. It was an imperial garden in the Qing Dynasty. Mainly dominated by Longevity Hill (万寿山; Wàn shòu shān) and Kunming Lake, it covers an expanse of 2.9 square kilometres (1.1 sq mi), three-quarters of which is water. We took two boat rides in the lake and visited some of the most famous sites in the summer palace.

Then, we had lunch in a Chinese restaurant and we all loved one dish, Jing Jiang Rou Si. Jing Jiang Rou Si (simplified Chinese: 京酱肉丝; traditional Chinese: 京醬肉絲; pinyin: Jīng jiàng ròu sī), Sauteed Shredded Pork in Sweet Bean Sauce, is a traditional dish in Beijing. Its main ingredient is pork tenderloin, which is stir-fried with soy paste or sweet soya paste to season the flavour. The dish is served with shredded leek (only using its white stalk) and doupi (dried tofu layer) to wrap. A vegetarian variant uses fried tofu puffs in place of pork. It may be prepared and consumed wrapped in doupi, or rarely with bing.

Beijing is famous for hutong. after lunch, we had a very classic and authentic hutong tour. Nan Luo Gu Xiang (Chinese: 南锣鼓巷) is a narrow alley, that gives its name to an old part of the Beijing city centre, that has traditional architecture both new and old. The neighbourhood contains many typical narrow streets known as hutong. It is located in the Dongcheng district. The alley itself is approximately 800m long, running from East Gulou Street in the north to Di'anmen East Street in the south. Nanluoguxiang was built in the Yuan Dynasty and received its current name during the Qing Dynasty, around 1750. In recent years, the area's hutongs have become a popular tourist destination with restaurants, bars, live music houses, coffee shops, fast food and souvenir shops, as well as some old siheyuan associated with famous historical and literary figures. We enjoyed a rickshaw ride through the narrow streets and got an insider look at life in a traditional Hutong neighbourhood.

There is no doubt the next activity is the biggest highlight of the whole trip, shopping at the Silk Street. Silk Street (Chinese: 秀水街; pinyin: xiù shuǐ Jiē, Xiu Shui Street, literally meaning "beautiful water Street"), aka Silk Market or Silk Street Market, is a shopping center in Chaoyang District, Beijing, that accommodates over 1,700 retail vendors, notorious among international tourists for their wide selection of counterfeit designer brand apparel. The Silk Street attracts approximately 20,000 visitors daily (from 9 am to 9 pm) on weekdays and between 50,000 and 60,000 on weekends as of 2006. This 35,000-square-meter complex houses 1,700 retail vendors and over 3,000 salespeople spread over seven floors with three levels of basements. Many of the stalls have, over the years, gained local and international reputation. We all loved this shopping experience because we enjoyed the bargaining process and the happiness that we gained from the price negotiation.

Then, we had dinner in the restaurant and went back to the hotel at 10 pm. We quickly went to bed as we needed to get up super early tomorrow for the Great Wall.

## Day 10

Today, we got up at 5.30 am. After we had a quick breakfast, we went to the Great Wall. The Great Wall of China (Chinese: 长城; pinyin: Chang cheng) is the collective name of a series of fortification systems generally built across the historical northern borders of China to protect and consolidate territories of Chinese states and empires against various nomadic groups of the steppe and their polities. Several walls were being built from as early as the 7th century BC by ancient Chinese states; Qin Shi Huang (220–206 BC), the first Emperor of China, later joined them together. Little of that wall remains. The most currently well-known of the walls were built by the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). There are eight sections in the great wall. We took the cable cars from the bottom of the hill to the seventh station of the great wall. Then, we climbed the last section of the Great Wall. The last section is very hard to climb as it is super steep, so it has another name “Hao Han Po”. Chairman Mao Zedong climbed the Great Wall and left the words on the wall in this section “Who are we if we cannot reach the Great Wall?”

We all felt very exhausted after we climbed the Great Wall, so we had a quick lunch to recharge ourselves. Then, we went to the Beijing National Olympic Stadium. Beijing National Stadium, officially the National Stadium (Chinese: 国家体育场; pinyin: guó jiā tǐ yù chǎng; literally: 'National Stadium'), also known as the Bird's Nest (鸟巢; Niǎo cháo), is a stadium in Beijing. The stadium was jointly designed by architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron of Herzog & de Meuron, project architect Stefan Marbach, artist Ai Weiwei, and CADG, which was led by chief architect Li Xinggang. The stadium was designed for use throughout the 2008 Summer Olympics and Paralympics and will be used again in the 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics. The Bird's Nest sometimes has some extra temporary large screens installed at the stands of the stadium. It was designed by the Basel-based architecture team Herzog & de Meuron. We also bought some souvenirs from the National Stadium retail shops.

Then, we went to the Chaoyang Theatre to watch the Chinese acrobatics show. The Chinese acrobatics is a pearl in the treasure house and ranks among the best arts in the world, The history of acrobatic show has been existent for more than two thousand years. Since the middle of this century, great efforts to foster and develop national arts and acrobatics have gained a new life. Action-packed with outstanding feats, beautiful choreography, colour and excitement — the show is one of the favourite nightlife venues in the wondrous "City of Peking". From contortionist acts to high wire stunts, this performance has it all. Now is your chance to witness the most extreme acrobat skill in China, at the theatre known to be the best acrobatic show in Beijing. Chaoyang Theatre is proud to present, "The Flying Acrobatic Show". Performed by highly-trained Chinese acrobats & circus performers, known as the Beijing Acrobatic Troupe.

As we got up really early this morning, we went back hotel a little bit earlier tonight.

## Day 11

Today was our last day in Beijing. We packed up all the suitcases and day packs and got ready for hotel check-out.

After we left the hotel, we went to the Temple of Heaven. The Temple of Heaven (Chinese: 天坛; pinyin: Tiāntán) is an imperial complex of religious buildings situated in the southeastern part of central Beijing. The complex was visited by the Emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties for annual ceremonies of prayer to Heaven for a good harvest.

As we all loved shopping, our tour guide, Jenny, added another shopping opportunity for us at the Pearl Market (Hongqiao Market). We took advantage of this final shopping time to buy some souvenirs for our family and friends. As expected, we all had heaps of fun from this fun shopping experience!

Then, we had lunch at the Donglaishun Hotpot Restaurant. Hotpot (Chinese: 火锅), also known as a steamboat, is a Chinese cooking method, prepared with a simmering pot of soup stock at the dining table, containing a variety of Chinese foodstuffs and ingredients. While the hot pot is kept simmering, ingredients are placed into the pot and are cooked at the table, in a manner similar to fondue. Typical hot pot dishes include thinly sliced meat, leaf vegetables, mushrooms, wontons, egg dumplings, tofu, and seafood. The cooked food is usually eaten with a dipping sauce. We loved hotpot because it was different from our normal Australian cuisine.

After lunch, we went to the Jingshan Park. Jingshan Park is an imperial park covering 23 hectares (57 acres) immediately north of the Forbidden City in the Imperial City area of Beijing. The focal point is the artificial hill Jingshan, literally "Prospect Hill". Formerly a private imperial garden attached to the grounds of the Forbidden City, the grounds were opened to the public in 1928. The park was formally established in 1949. It is listed as a Key State Park and is administratively part of Xicheng District in downtown Beijing. On top of the hill, we had a magnificent bird view of the Forbidden City. The Forbidden City (Chinese: 故宫; pinyin: gù gōng) is a palace complex in central Beijing, China. The former Chinese imperial palace from the Ming dynasty to the end of the Qing dynasty (the years 1420 to 1912), it now houses the Palace Museum. The Forbidden City served as the home of emperors and their households as well as the ceremonial and political centre of Chinese government for almost 500 years.

The last stop before we left Beijing is having dinner at Quanjude Peking Duck Restaurant. Peking duck is a dish from Beijing that has been prepared since the imperial era. The meat is characterized by its thin, crisp skin, with authentic versions of the dish serving mostly the skin and little meat, sliced in front of the diners by the cook. Ducks bred specially for the dish are slaughtered after 65 days and seasoned before being roasted in a closed or hung oven. The meat is often eaten with spring onion, cucumber and sweet bean sauce with pancakes rolled around the fillings. We had precious first-hand experience to observe how to cook and eat the pecking duck. Everyone enjoyed eating the pecking duck.

Even though it is too hard to say goodbye, the last day still finally came. After we went to the Beijing International Airport, we checked in the luggage independently and looked after our boarding passes as well as travel documents. We farewelled to our tour guide Jenny and we went to the security check. After the complex processes, we arrived at the boarding gate and everyone checked their daily tasks listed in the student booklets were up to date.

## Day 12

After 11-hour long haul flight (QF108), we arrived in Sydney. Then, we went through the immigration and baggage clearance as well as took the shuttle bus to transfer the two terminals, we finally arrived at the domestic terminal to wait for our final leg of the flight. We had some refreshments in the terminal and chatted with our mates about this whole China trip experience and none of us believed the twelve days could pass so quickly and we all wished we could extend this trip a little bit longer.

Before we got on board the flight QF459, Ms Eirth encouraged us to have a reflection of our trip, such as “What is your biggest highlight?” “What have you learned from this trip?” “Why do you like your homestay experience?” “What advice or what tips do you have for homestay experience?” and “What surprised you the most?” All of us responded positively.

At 7.35 pm, we finally arrived in Melbourne. Parents had already waited for us and we gave them a big cuddle. In addition, we had a photo with them before we left the terminal so that we can secure this precious memory in our mind.

17 children, all of the teachers are very proud of you! It is our biggest pleasure to spend 12 days with you in another country in your life! You all have demonstrated huge growing independence, open-mindedness, intercultural awareness, risk-taking, interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills. You are stars! We all hope this China trip can leave a deep memory in your life!

For the rest of the school, we highly encourage you to consider this trip in the next two years! It is really great fun and you will immerse in a different culture in a fun way!

**#Chinatrip2019**

**#noregrets**

**#fantastic**