



## **Summer in China Study Trip, 2015**

**Case Study written by Teneka Miller**



HSK students, from different countries and cultural backgrounds, successfully completed HSK 1 and HSK 2 and then attended the Summer in China Study Trip. We visited Beijing and Heilongjiang University of Chinese Medicine (HUCM) in Harbin. This was a fascinating experience which allowed us to embrace Chinese food and culture whilst putting our newly learnt Mandarin skills to the test. We made friends with Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) doctors, local residents and university students. We learnt about TCM and wellbeing, got a taste for what it would be like to live, study and work in China, and gained a great insight into the amazing history of life in China.

### **Beijing**

The summer programme began in Beijing where we explored Chinese culture by visiting beautiful parks including Beihai Park and the Summer Palace. During these visits we learnt about the history of Chinese dynasties and about the royals who once occupied the Summer Palace. In addition, we saw many locals dancing and exercising whilst enjoying the beautiful nature and hot summer weather. This gave us an insight into contemporary culture in China.

Whilst in Beijing we had the opportunity to visit Tiananmen Square, the largest city square in the world where thousands of people gather everyday to see the raising of the flag at sunrise. You have to arrive early to get a good view from the front.



Our cultural exploration also included shopping at the Silk Market and visiting Old Beijing's Hutong. We definitely used our Mandarin skills to gain a true experience of Chinese culture as we bartered to buy things for a cheaper price.

'It's too expensive, make it cheaper'

‘太贵了’ (tai gui le)

Chinese tea is a big part of Chinese culture and so one day we stopped by a Tea House where we were able to buy, make and taste many types of Chinese tea. It was great to learn how to make tea from flowers and pure tea leaves. We tasted many of China's favorite teas, such as fruit tea, jasmine tea, oolong ginseng tea, and of course the most popular pu-erh tea. We also learnt that drinking Chinese tea has many great health benefits for different organs of the body.

Another memorable experience was climbing a total of 1,697 steps to reach the top tower on the Great Wall of China, upon reaching the top we were overwhelmed with joy and excitement. However, when walking back down our legs were shaking! I would highly recommend climbing the Great Wall of China, this was a truly amazing experience. Full of energy after climbing the Great Wall, we visited the Beijing Olympic Park to see the world famous 'Bird Nest' that was built in 2008 for the Beijing Olympic Games.

## **Harbin**

In Harbin we explored more of China's exiting culture at HUMC. Not only did we learn Mandarin, we also had the opportunity to visit a local hospital in order to meet Chinese doctors and lecturers, and learn about Traditional Chinese Medicine. Culture exchanges with the university students included singing, dancing and taking part in the university sports day.

Enjoying Chinese food was a big part of our experience; we tasted so many delicious Chinese dishes, and quickly learnt how to eat our meals with chopsticks!

The Summer in China Study Trip was an amazing experience. We were welcomed by everyone we had the pleasure to meet, including local residents, university students, lecturers and TCM staff and doctors. We formed many new friendships, gained invaluable new skills and learnt about various aspects of Chinese culture.