

In Guangxi: The Beauty in Nature and Traveling Solo

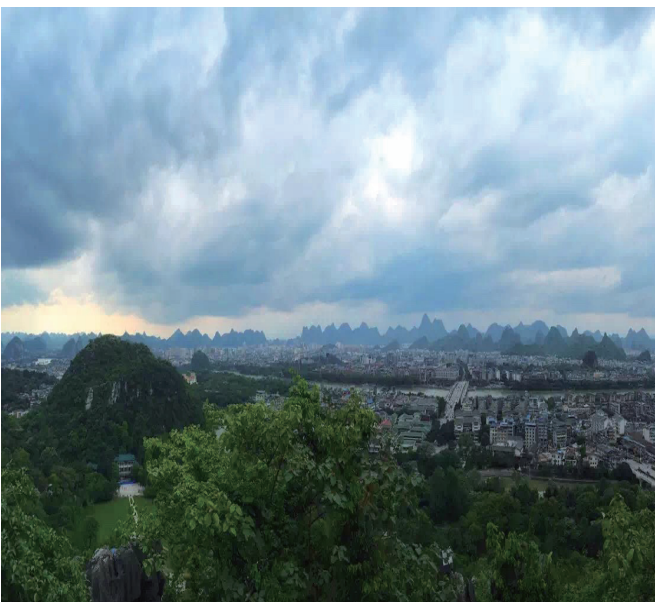


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When you are so busy with your life and work, do you always feel tired and bored? If so, I do suggest that you start a crazy travel journey and find some new beautiful beliefs along your trip. A monotonous environment and working status can make us feel as though we lack fresh air. But whenever you go to a strange place, you enjoy a feeling of relief and freedom; feelings which can offer you the great opportunity to behave casually, following your heart's desires.

I describe myself as an energetic person who loves to experience different things. I decided to go to Guangxi by myself to have a better personal understanding of the outside world. After I booked

the transportation tickets and a bed at a youth hostel, I was on my way. The first station is the village of Tiantou, which is famous for its charming terraces. The village was so untouched that there weren't any road maps or symbols, which made me very confused about which direction I should go. However, fortunately, I met a dog by chance who kept me company while walking around the village. Most surprisingly, it not only brought happiness through the beautiful field scene, but also correctly led me when I got lost along the way. It was a great pleasure for me to enjoy such an interesting field journey with a cute dog.

After leaving the village, I chose the city of Guilin as my next destination. There're plenty of well-known parks in the city, so I had no idea which to choose first and only walked around. When I happened to find the park of the Seven Star Crag, I chose to enter. To my great surprise, the mountains and rivers in the park fascinated me so much. I climbed to the top of the mountain and had an overview of the whole city. The breezy wind was like an old friend who comes up to you to tell you the history of the old city.

Without any specific plans, I met the lovely sights of the local nature. But this was not the most meaningful part of the travel. When I took the train to Beihai city, the most southern part of Guangxi Province, I felt that a heartwarming story was about to begin. As soon as I arrived at the youth hostel, other solo travelers had also just made their arrival. Excited about the seaside scenery, we chatted freely and decided to travel to the sea together.

Immediately, our travel group had become quite big, consisting of eight youths from different parts of China. There's nothing better than lying on the beach under the comfortable sunshine. Although moments before we were only strangers, we quickly became good friends and familiar with each other's interests. The sweet sound of the sea waves and the colorful image of the sea let us forget about reality and imagine the future. Telling jokes and sharing personal stories, we understood and enjoyed the amazing time with each other. It's the most memorable part of my trip and we still keep in touch. Some people showed concern over the uncertainty of everything, but I am willing to try and accept the

treasures that life leads me to.

There's a saying that goes "the realistic world pushes people to lose faith." However, I would like to say nature can give you a beautiful faith towards life back. When you enjoy the time without any burden or pressure, the nature relieves you from the busy working. At certain points, some people may say they can't find the time. But truly there can always be time made for nature because you can regain that time later when your mind is refreshed and your work is therefore more efficient.

The meaning of travel is not to escape from the reality but to meet a better way to understand life and find your warm belief towards the world. Only such an experience can help you to tell the difference and so the difference can tell about the many colors of life. We are all on the way towards an ideal destination, so it is important to just keep experiencing new things and keep a grateful attitude towards everything you encounter.

Reported by Diana Yan



HSBC Students Enjoy Annual Spring Outing at Fairy Lake Botanical Garden

Saying goodbye to winter and a hectic module, PHBS students and staff welcomed spring with open arms on Wednesday the 27th of April 2016 as they embarked on a beautiful journey accompanied by Dean Wen Hai to the Shenzhen Fairy Lake Botanical Garden.

After reaching the garden, everyone felt fresh and rejuvenated thanks to the serene beauty of the garden. The variety of flora and fauna attracted almost everyone. Soon all PHBSers had a joint photo session with the accompanying honorable Professors and Dean Wen Hai, which was followed by some interesting sport activities that students thoroughly enjoyed playing. The sports activities included team balloon blowing competition and a boating competition. Almost everyone participated in the boat paddling competition in the beautiful megamenus lake situated in the garden. Some students also went ahead to explore the beautiful lake and garden by going on a small trek around the lake, which also houses a tea shop and is also home to the beautiful Hongfu Temple. Dean Wen Hai and some staff members joined some students on a trek to the beautiful Phoenix Tree Peak, after which their group also went to the forest of petrified trees, which have been brought from Xinjiang, Liaoning and Inner Mongolia provinces of China and are remarkably preserved in an artistic manner. There is also a museum located in the garden which houses various animal fossils from the dinosaur era.

With butterflies flying around in the garden with all their beautiful charm and the breathtaking views the garden has to offer, the spring outing turned out to be more interesting than what students had anticipated it to be. After spending more than half of their day at the garden everyone halfheartedly bid adieu to the beautiful and soothing views and headed back to the campus.

In the end some ecstatic students shared their views regarding this trip and proclaimed this trip as one of their most memorable PKU trips so far. Lagle Laidoja a PHBS first year international student from Estonia, shared her views on this trip. "It was wonderful to have a day in nature. I really liked the view from the Pagoda and the butterfly garden" she said. Wang Jianyue, a 1st year Chinese student and a Management major at PHBS said that it was a wonderful trip, exploring plants and chatting with friends other than thinking of reports all the time.

In the end, everyone thoroughly enjoyed their trip to the botanical garden and took the opportunity to renew their energy and breath a sigh of relief from their hectic schedule.

Reported by Fayeza Yahya

Nanyan Abroad: A Trip to Germany for Model United Nations

Delegates from different countries, mostly in their 20's representing a country they barely know! Defending their nation at every end without the use of force but rather in a dignified manner. Sounds hypothetical isn't it? But it is not.

The picture I have drawn in the above paragraph is a real life event, a real simulation of United Nations known as Model United Nations, otherwise simply known as MUN. Every year, student organizations from different educational institutions from all around the world organize MUN's, events in which students from other countries participate as delegates representing countries which they do not actually come from in their respective committees. There, they discuss important issues, ranging from finance to justice to human rights to refugee crisis and so on.

After reading this, many of you might think "Hey, what's the reason behind all this?" Well, the main aim behind all this activity is to promote peace, understanding and harmony amongst the youth and to instill in them that war is not the solution to every problem faced by the human race.

I got a chance to attend a MUN in Germany in April as a journalist this year and I must say it was truly an eye opening experience. Not because it was in Germany, but because of the amount of positivity seen amongst the young generation who are eager to make the world a better place. Of course, the way they presented their view point like professional delegates also made me spell bound.

The five-day MUN that I attended was in every manner a true learning experience for me. The participants were well prepared and did thorough

research over their designated countries and the issues they needed to discuss in their committee. Not just that, but they also presented their view point in a professional manner like actual diplomats, defending their country and asking for aid whenever needed. During the sessions every delegate was given a chance to present their side of the story and propose possible solutions to the problems being discussed in the session. The delegates also formed teams with possible allies, where they tried to persuade each other of their stance and in the end passed resolutions over the discussed issues. Through such activities the participating youngsters were actually improving not just their interpersonal skills but also their negotiations, writing and critical thinking skills.

This was the 10th MUN organized by the student's organization of Munster University and it was in every aspect an extravagant event. From venue selection and booking to food and hotel bookings for the participants to updates and logistics support, everything was managed brilliantly. It is also important to note that students not just improve their interpersonal skills through such events but also learn from others. For example, the way the event was organized and the effort put in by the Munster University students deserves accolades as it showed their skills and hard work in the area of event organization and management, as organizing such a major event is not an easy task.

In the end, the overall experience is worth it as it's not just an opportunity to meet people from various backgrounds and different parts of the world, but it is also gives students the opportunity to represent their institutions at such a massive stage and also enhance their own skills and realize their true potential.

Reported by Fayeza Yahya





PKU Internationals: Friends Beyond Borders

Without a doubt, traveling is great-- you get to see new places, try new foods, experience different ways of life. However what is even better is traveling to a country with a local friend to host you. This past February, I had the opportunity to visit my good friend Adrienne in her hometown of Sydney, NSW, Australia. Not only did her family host me during my two week stay, but they also gave me access to a side of Sydney that your average tourist does not get to see. We went on obscure hiking trails, saw all the best views of the harbor off the beaten track, and I got to eat at all of their favorite restaurants around town.

My experience is not exclusive. The international community at Peking University Shenzhen Graduate School is vibrant, warm, and geographically expansive. The bond forged between foreign students experiencing China together is strong and often times produces lasting friendships that go beyond the duration of an exchange or the borders of a country. Below we hear more from students who visited friends in their home countries.

Reported by Megan Mancenido



Merve Sungur in Portugal with Mariana Coimbra & Mariana

"I visited Portugal to see some friends I met while at PHBS. I had three close friends from Portugal from different semesters. When I went there I introduced them to each other and it was really nice to share all our memories from China. Besides academics, one of the most valuable things that China gave me is that now I am an international person with many friends all over the world that I can visit. Portugal is a very nice warm country with welcoming people and delicious food. I also met my friend's parents and stayed with them in their house which is a really nice experience that you learn about people from different countries and exchange cultures.

We also attended a festival in the north of Portugal. It was an unforgettable event for me in which I spent 4 days with my friends and enjoyed the nature music and *cerveja* (beer in Portuguese). Meeting with my best friends in their country and learning more about their culture is an amazing experience and in the future I will try and visit as many friends as I can that I met in PHBS."



Felix Van Camp in Tunisia with Khayem Chemli

"Tunisia is one of the most welcoming, warm countries in the world. The people are progressive, kind, open-hearted and generous. I had the opportunity to visit many friends in the country, like Khayem Chemli, Marwa Mejdoub, Safa Saidani and Rasha Altaher. All of them introduced me to their families who could not wait to stuff me with the most delicious food. The hospitality of the country cannot be overstated. Everybody I met was keen to help me experience the culture and the sights to their fullest potential, no matter if they were related to somebody I knew or not. I was surprised to find that almost everybody I met was quite good at speaking English, despite their national languages being French and Arabic.

I had the luxury to be hosted by my very good friend Khayem Chemli (PHBS), who, quite literally, gave up his bed for me. He lives in Carthage, one of the most splendid cities of the ancient times before the Romans burned the city to the ground and salted the earth. Everywhere around the city you can find ruins that show off how great a civilization these people had, some of which is still in use. One of the examples would be an old amphitheater, which they still use today for music festivals and concerts. He also took me to the coast, where I experienced some of the best clubs I've ever visited, amazing food, great beer and some of the most fun waves I've ever swam in.

To conclude, Tunisia is nothing short of amazing. The people and food are some of the best I know and the scenery and all around entertainment that is available will keep you amazed for the duration of your stay."



"Republic of India, the second most populous country on earth with almost 1.3 billion people and a melting pot of peoples and customs from around the Indian subcontinent. On January 5th 2016 a Brit, a Belgian and an Indian sat in a Boeing 777 high above Myanmar and Bangladesh indulging in a favourite Indian pastime of enjoying 'a peg' of whisky, awaiting what surprises Mumbai had to offer. As one of the planet's largest megacities, three days would hardly be enough time to get a true feel for the place although through some erroneous map reading by our Indian friend we ended up traversing half the city one particularly warm evening. Be it the wealth of Malabar Hill to the south, the slums to the north or the Elephanta Caves to the east there is something for everyone in Mumbai. The mixture of colonial architecture, pre-colonial buildings and modern towers gives an insight into the somewhat complex relationship between modern India and its history.

We travelled north to Udaipur, a city famed for its beautiful lakes and filming location for the 007 film Octopussy, for a three day jaunt to start our travels in Rajasthan – a state largely free from colonial influence. From the city of the Monsoon Palace, Jagdish Temple and Jag Mandir we drove northwest to Jaisalmer – and the desert. This was perhaps the most memorable period of the trip, the city itself is rather unspectacular but the surrounding wilderness is not. We rode camels deep into the Thar Desert and camped out on the sand dunes for the night – something I can't experience around London or Guangdong Province! From here we returned east to Jaipur and stayed with our Indian friend's family, a welcome break from sharing hotel rooms and enough food to feed a nation!

The final chapter of our trip led us to Agra to see the Taj Mahal – a sight yielding emotions difficult to portray in words – and on to Delhi. Delhi has a fascinating mix of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial India. The Mughal Empire's Shahjahanabad oozes with energy and life, the British Empire's New Delhi reflects the grandeur of Lord Curzon's ambitions and the Republic's Delhi Capital Region expose the disparity between growing wealth and extreme poverty. India is a vast country that cannot be fully explored in one trip but I can safely say our trip converted me from nonplussed to enthusiastic about India and its various guises. To conclude – give India a go."



Finlay Grogan in India with Harsh Khedar and Felix Van Camp

International students try out Chinese calligraphy for the first time

On the evening of May 25th, the event “Creating a Calligraphy Charm”, aiming at bringing the international students better appreciate the beauty of Chinese culture, was held in H214 by the Campus Community Advisor Program. Creating a Calligraphy Charm takes pride in inviting many international students who are interested in Chinese culture this semester.

The Campus Advisors (CAs) recruited the help of Gloria Bing from the School of Transnational Law to lead the teachings of proper technique and form. The event started with an introduction of the evolution of Chinese characters, after which the international students were taught the five basic strokes that construct Chinese characters: horizontal stroke, vertical stroke, left-falling stroke, right-falling stroke and dot.

With snacks and drinks served, students enjoyed experiencing the charm of calligraphy. The second half of the event contained the teaching of some basic Chinese characters that are of common use. The event ended up with the teaching of the Chinese character *fu*, meaning luck and good fortune in English. In Chinese, and it is common to see people to stick the character *fu* upside down on the door to pray for good luck.

“Although my grandparents are originally from China, I know very little about Chinese. I felt nervous when I started writing with the brush pen but gradually I could write a ‘standard’ character. I think this is a very meaningful event for me to know my ancestors’ tradition”, said Teodora Anita, an Indonesian exchange student at PHBS.

To close out the event, Gloria was invited to choose her five favorite Calligraphy Charms in the room, and those selected received a traditional Chinese knot with which they can decorate their room. “Creating a Calligraphy Charm”, held in 2014 for the first time, is now held twice annually at PKU Shenzhen and has become a traditional event targeted at involving the international students with the Chinese culture.

Reported by Emerald Li

