

GA China Study Tour July 10-26, 2011
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Two facilitators and 6 participants attended the Global Alliance (GA) China Study Tour 2011. I was fortunate to be selected by the affiliated organization Association for Preserving the Historical Accuracy of Foreign Invasions of China (APHAFIC). I thank them sincerely and especially Dr. Nancy Lo, president of APHAFIC for her recommendation of my selection.

The tour consisted of 5 cities Harbin, Shijiazhuang, Nanjing, Beijing, and Shanghai. We began in Northern China in the City of Harbin. Arrived separately on July 9 at 9:00 pm China time and experienced a bit of culture shock as I had no Chinese language skills, but all that changed when the group arrived. 8:00 am went down to breakfast and met the group. The director and President of Global Alliance Peter Stanek his wife Jean, two college student/teachers females from San Francisco, Endora and Perla, Emily, Chinese language teacher, English teacher Steve Wong and a UCSD Chinese American student named Brian Chu.

We began our tour of Harbin with a visit to the Unit 173 Museum, these were the Japanese researchers who performed a whole host of experiments on Chinese Communists and civilians. Their work was incredibly barbaric/brutal. The Japanese Army set up a huge compound with hundreds of buildings and prison area with laboratories and they used human subjects to study the possibility of biological weapons later these weapons were used against the Chinese population during their resistance efforts against the Japanese.

This museum is a testament to the capacity humans have to inflict cruelty in a scientific manner. Scientific method applied to war and destruction of human life. The Chinese have documented a hundred or more locations where Japanese use these weapons in the China War on military and civilian populations. They occasionally find the remnants of unexploded ordinance in various regions of the country.

Next the group flew to Shijiazhuang, population 9 million in the city and 20 million in the greater area, which is located 900 miles south west of Harbin and just about 200 miles south of Beijing. Shijiazhuang was a location of a strong Japanese presence and fighting during the war. We saw a giant park/cemetery called the Martyr's Monument. It is a monument to the CCP heroes of the War and the Revolution. There were two massive sculptures hundreds of feet high, made of stone, and depicting fierce patriotic/military themes of World War II and the Revolutionary era, uniforms weapons, and struggle, fierce depiction. It is totally a propaganda depiction and glorification of the struggle, reminded me of the Iwo Jima sculpture in Arlington. This huge park had giant buildings near by and a wall around. No headstones or graves were marked. It seems there were mass graves here. The CCP was very active fighting the Japanese in this region North-

East Central China. Inscription on the sculpture: “Sacrifice for your country and you will never be forgotten. The martyrs of the revolution will never be forgotten.” We also participated in lectures regarding forced labor. This was very informative.

Outside of Shijiazhuang we visited the village of Meihua to see a museum. The drive took us through the country side which did not have one inch of unused land. There was tons of agriculture and even a nuclear power plant. In the village there was a museum and showed the horrible atrocities that the Japanese perpetrated in the town. Basically, the Japanese invaded central China South from Manchukou and west through Beijing and eventually to Shijiazhuang. Near Meihua the KMT and CCP was in the region and had been fighting and killed a number of Japanese. Afterward, 500 Japanese retaliated against the town by marauding, raping, and killing any people they found, and approximately 1500 civilians were murdered. The museum consisted of pictures and descriptions of individuals and how they either resisted or were killed, examples, people tied to wagon wheels and shot, as well as people thrown in wells or bayoneted... There were lots of testimonial witness accounts. One more interesting display included a picture of the last Global Alliance seminar group that visited 3 years ago.

Before we left the town of Meihua we were surprised with a survivor presentation and a delegation of the local town leadership, kind of like the city council (Party leaders). The survivor was 7 years old, the Japanese killed her father. She had to hide for three days, and saw many dead bodies. She was able to escape to a neighboring village. It was a very heart wrenching presentation and I remember feeling so bad for this woman. She was raw with emotion, did not cry, but was very passionate in sharing her experience. The rest of the group members were moved by this experience also.

On the way to Beijing we also visited the museum site of the Tunnel Warfare of Jiaozhuanghu. This was a great experience, during the war there was a lot of activity in the Hebei province. CCP was active and they used lots of tunnel complexes to fight and hide from the occupying Japanese. This one was 1500 kilometers underground as well as a great modern museum with excellent modern displays.

In Beijing, we met with Chinese Lawyer, Ms. Kang Jian, representing forced laborers in law suits in Japan. The goal of the law suit is to obtain compensation, apology, and recognition of the past deeds of the Japanese government. This was a very interesting experience.

We also visited the history department at Beijing University. It was a wonderful campus, great mix of both traditional and modern architecture. We met two professors and a graduate student. The main professor, was an expert on World War II in China and presented a wonderful lecture on the Japanese invasion and the course of the war in China. The lecture was very informative and well worth the time. While in Beijing the group also visited the traditional tourist locations, Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City and a near by section of the Great Wall.

July 20th we arrived in Nanjing and visited the Nanjing Normal University, where we met another Canadian group similar to GA, known as Association for Learning and Preservation of History of Asia (ALPHA), this was a large group about 40 people. We joined them for a lecture on the horrible atrocities that were perpetrated by the Japanese invasion. The Normal University was located in the “Safety Zone” where tens of thousands of civilians tried to take refuge with the great humanitarian Minnie Voltran. We heard a lecture and an extremely heart wrenching survivor Grandma Terry. She was also depicted in the Rape of Nanjing film produced from the work of Iris Chang.

The most impressive location in Nanjing was the site of the Nanjing Massacre Museum. There were hundreds of displays, artistic representations of the meaning and loss of so many lives. It was truly a moving experience. The magnitude of the loss of 300,000 souls really touches the visitor as they encounter the most impressive museum of its type that I’ve ever seen.

In Shanghai we saw the location of the strong resistance that preceded the Nanjing invasion. There was a small museum along the canal where the Japanese were delayed and the Chinese put up a heroic defense.

Shanghai was a fantastic modern city and it was a most fitting end to our trip. It was an incredible complex city that represented the contrasts and diversity of China itself. My last comment about China seems appropriate, “Big China” it is the future of the world. The experience to visit was wonderful and I am grateful to the GA and APHAFIC for this great opportunity and I am pleased to share my new knowledge and learning with my students at Point Loma High School.

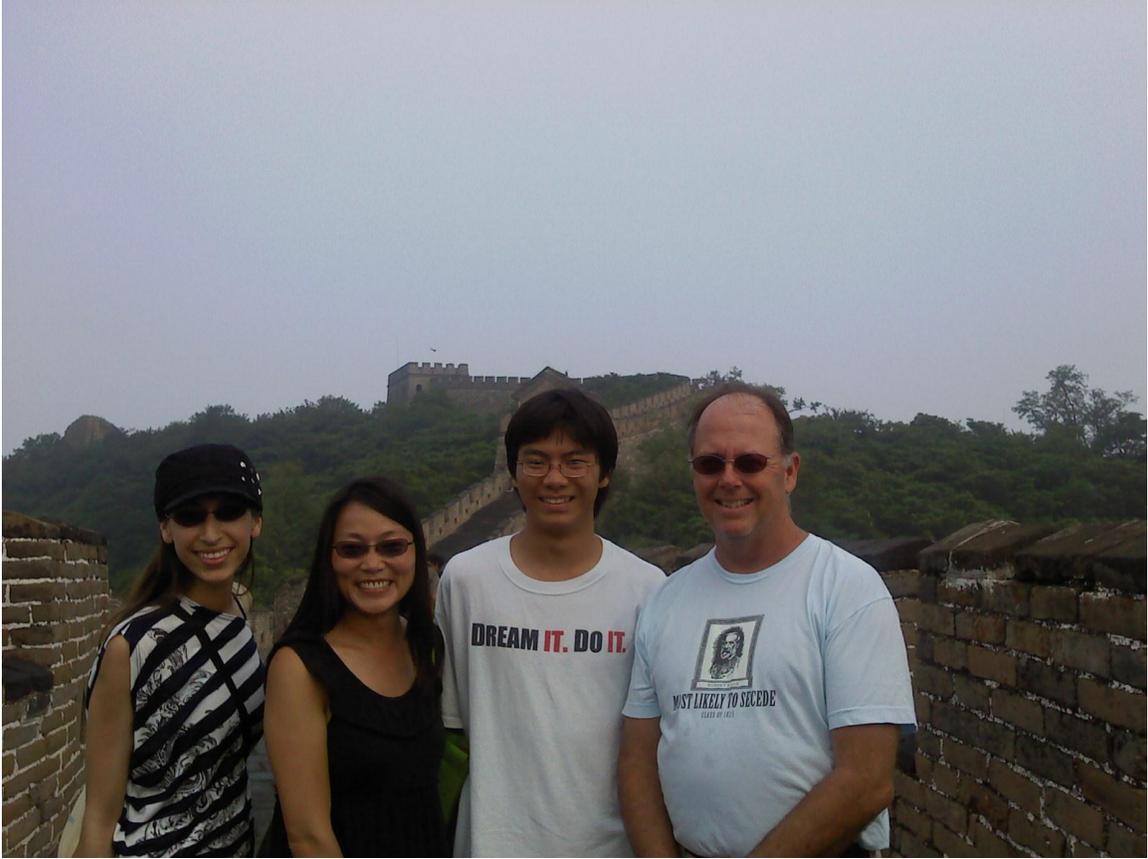
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Picture 1: Pat (in the back row) with the rest of China Study Tour group : Peter Stanet, President of GA (second from left), Jean Been Chen (fourth from left) (provided by GA)



Picture 2: Statue of Iris is in the Nanjing Museum, near a remembrance rock garden...



Picture 3: Visiting the Great Wall: (left to right) Perla, a Student Sonoma State University ; Emily, Mandarin Chinese Teacher Bay Area; Brian Chu,History Student UCSD; Pat, History Teacher Point Loma High School.