

CARLETON COLLEGE

A TRIP TO CHINA ALONG THE SILK ROAD,
WITH ART HISTORY PROFESSOR KATIE RYOR

October 8-24, 2007

WITH AN OPTIONAL THREE-DAY EXTENSION TO BEIJING

DETAILED ITINERARY

Updated 12/7/06

Meals provided indicated as Breakfast (B), Lunch (L), and Dinner (D)

October 8: _____ **Departure from U.S.**

October 9: _____ **Arrive Xi'an via Beijing**

We arrive Beijing international airport and take a connecting flight to Xi'an.

*Hyatt Regency Hotel, Xi'an*****(D)*

October 10: _____

Xi'an

As the eastern starting point of the Silk Road, Xi'an was a vibrant center of cultural, religious and economic interaction between East and West. Today, we start our exploration of this ancient city with a visit to the **Shaanxi History Museum**. Guided by **our local history expert**, we first explore the treasures of the museum collection and then head to an off-limits section of the museum – the mural chamber—where he introduces us to some authentic Tang Dynasty (618 A.D. to 907 A.D.) masterpieces. After lunch, we visit **Small Goose Pagoda**. Then, we proceed to the **Great Mosque** in the center of city. In the Chinese style courtyard, we meet an Imam of the mosque and talk with him about the influences of Chinese and Muslim culture on each other. Then we have time to walk around the **Muslim quarter**, where we discover a way of life that derives as much from the ancient cultures of Central Asia as it does from China.

Tonight, we enjoy a distinctively Xi'an dinner at the **Lao Sun Jia** Restaurant, which has been in operation for many decades, and served very many political elites including the late state leader Deng Xiaoping and former U.S. President Bill Clinton.

*Hyatt Regency Hotel, Xi'an*****(B, L, D)*

October 11: _____ **Xi'an**

This morning, we drive outside of Xi'an to see one of the most remarkable archeological discoveries of all time: the army of **Terracotta Soldiers** that guards the

tomb complex of China's first emperor, Qin Shihuang, who died in 210 B.C.

After lunch, we pay a visit to **the tomb of Emperor Qin Shihuang**. Returning to town in the afternoon, we visit the **Forest of Stone Steles**, home to China's largest collection of calligraphy, all engraved on stone tablets by famous ancient masters.

*Hyatt Regency Hotel, Xi'an*****(B, L, D)*

October 12:

Xi'an

Today, we drive 120 km west to the **Famen Temple**, which plays a sovereign role in Chinese Buddhism. The Temple Museum houses some of the most of the precious treasures from the Tang Dynasty removed from the Underground Palace, including gold and silverware, colored glaze ware, porcelain and silks.

After lunch, we drive to the **Qian Mausoleum** a joint tomb of Tang Emperor Gaozong (Li Zhi) and Empress Wu Zetian. The design of the tomb site replicates the city of Chang'an and is in accordance with tradition by being on a north-south axis. We also visit **the tomb of Princess Yongtai** in the Qian Mausoleum, who was the seventh daughter of Emperor Zhong Zong and granddaughter of Gao Zong and the Empress Wu Zetian, but put to death by her grandmother when she was 17 years old. Later in the afternoon, we drive back to Xi'an for dinner and a restful evening.

*Hyatt Regency Hotel, Xi'an*****(B, L, D)*

October 13:

Xi'an to

Lanzhou

This morning, we study Taichi with our master in a local park before breakfast. Afterwards, we leisurely stroll along the **Ming Dynasty City Walls** that still encircle the old city and then visit the **Big Goose Pagoda**. After a flight to Lanzhou, we enjoy have dinner at local restaurant.

Lanzhou Sunshine Hotel (B, L, D)

October 14:

Lanzhou



After breakfast, we visit **Bingling Temple**. Also known as Bingling Grottoes, it is a series of Buddhist caves first built in 420 AD. These caves, which stretch for 200 meters, include the caves of Western Qin, North Wei, Sui, Tang, and Song, Yuan, Ming, Qing dynasties. The cave complex grew gradually over many centuries, and the work of both the Song (960-1279 AD) and the Ming (1368-1644 AD) Dynasties remain the most stunning. The

temple became a Tibetan Monastery during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368 AD). All the statues, sculptures and murals exhibit superb craftsmanship and have great artistic appeal.

This evening, we visit a local family and have a **cooking lesson** with locals on how to make noodles.

Lanzhou Sunshine hotel (B, L, D)

October 15: _____ **Lanzhou** _____ **to**
Dunhuang

This morning, we visit the **Gansu Provincial Museum**. The museum is divided into two sections - natural resources and historic exhibits. It houses collections of various color-painted potteries of Neolithic Age and treasures of ancient grottoes. In addition, the museum is home to precious linen and silk fabrics, books, wooden and bronze vessels, a great many bamboo slips with writing from the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220), frescos and so many other items.

We travel to Dunhuang on an afternoon flight and check in to hotel. Dinner tonight is at a local restaurant.

*The Silk Road Dunhuang hotel*** (B, L, D)*

October 16: _____
Dunhuang

This morning, we visit the **Mingsha Sand Dunes**, which Marco Polo referred to as the "rumbling sands." Then we visit the **Crescent Moon Lake**. Climbing to the top of the dunes, we take in a spectacular view of a green oasis surrounded by an endless desert landscape. The sands don't smother the lake because the earth moves in a way that creates winds that blow the sand away from the water.

Then, we drive to the spectacular **Mogao Grottos**, which mark the height of Buddhist artistic development in China.

Before dinner, we enjoy a camel ride to a less visited part of the Singing Sand Dune.

*The Silk Road Dunhuang hotel*** (B, L, D)*

October 17: _____ **Dunhuang to**
Turpan

Today, we visit the **Modern Grottoes Art Project**, where we learn how modern artists are trying to develop a new form of Grotto art. This project is a private ongoing art project located near the **Western Thousand Buddha Caves**, a series of large art murals on canyons as well as in caves.

We drive back to hotel for dinner, and then take an overnight train to Turpan.

Overnight on the train (B, L, D)

October 18:

Turpan

Upon arrival in Turpan, we deposit our luggage and have breakfast. We start today by visiting the Imin or **Emin Minaret**. It is a part of the Imin Mosque located near the site of the ancient Uighur capital of Gaochang to the east of Turpan. It was originally built around 1777 during the reign of Emin Khoja, Turpan's Uyghur ruler of that time. The minaret is a 44 meters, strongly tapered



circular structure sitting on a 10 - meter base. It is built with sun-dried bricks arranged in 16 different geometrical and floral patterns. The architect is believed to be the Uyghur Ibrahim, and the design is like that of pre-Safavid Iranian or Afghani style. Since restoration work was completed, visitors are no longer allowed to climb up the 72 steps of the minaret. The mosque has a large dome, which is supported by wooden beams and wooden pillars.

Afterward, we visit the **Bezeklik Caves**, another set of Buddhist cave temples carved out of a cliff face. On our way to the caves we drive past the Flaming Mountains, which derives their name from their blazing red appearance and were made famous in the 16th century Chinese novel, *Journey to the West*.

Then we drive to visit **the ancient city of Gaochang**. Built in the first century B.C. and originally called Gaochangbi, it used to be a garrison town and later became a key point along the ancient Silk Road.

*Green Oasis Hotel *** (B, L, D)*

October 19:

Turpan to

Urumqi

After eating breakfast and checking out of our hotel, we drive to visit **the ancient city of Jiaohe (Yarkhoto)**. The ancient ruins are a truly memorable sight to behold, as the city sits on a 30-meter cliff and used to be a flourishing state capital at the intersection of two rivers. Today, the river has dried up but the high and long city walls of this ancient city remain, along with Buddhist monasteries, watchtowers, huts, and wells.



In the late afternoon, we drive to Urumqi. We dine

in a local Uighur style restaurant featuring Xinjiang delicacies such as lamb. After dinner, we stroll through a nearby night market and take in the sites and sounds of this former Silk Road city.

*Sheraton Hotel Urumqi ***** (B, L, D)*

October 20: Urumqi to Kashgar

This morning, we enjoy the outdoors on a boat ride and hike in the area of **Heavenly Lake**. This afternoon, we visit the **Xinjiang Regional Museum** in the morning, whose collection speaks to the diversity and wealth found along the Silk Road thousands of years ago. Constructed in 2005, the museum is famous for its several fascinating mummies, and also features a diverse collection of terracotta figures, pottery, porcelain, weapons, silk, and scriptures. This evening, we board a flight to Kashgar.

*Kashgar Barony Hotel *** (B, L, D)*

October 21:

Kashgar

Kashgar is the largest oasis city in Chinese Central Asia. Kashgar is also the heart of Islam within China, and we pay a visit to the **Id Kah Mosque**, the largest mosque in China. Beautifully decorated, it attracts up to 10,000 worshippers for Friday prayers.



This afternoon, we visit the **Sunday bazaar**, a massive gathering of farmers and merchants from across the area. This colorful and lively market provides a great opportunity to pick up some of the Silk Road's most interesting souvenirs, from hand-made leather boots to traditional musical instruments and bags of fresh spices.

*Kashgar Barony Hotel *** (B, L, D)*

October 22: Kashgar

Today, we visit the **Abakh Hoja Tomb** and **Muer Pagoda**. The first site is an ancient Islamic building nestled among poplar trees in the northeast of Kashgar. With glazed tiles shining in the sun, its tower points to the azure sky and marks the 17th Century family cemetery of Kashgar's Islamic leader. Afterwards, we visit the Muer Pagoda, built during the Tang Dynasty over 1000 years ago as an important Buddhist site for local people.

In the evening, we enjoy a **Tajik dance performance**.

*Kashgar Barony Hotel *** (B, L, D)*

October 23: Kashgar to Urumqi to Beijing

Today, we fly back to Urumqi and connect to our flight to Beijing.

*Novotel Xinqiao Hotel**** (B, L, D)*

October 24:

Beijing

Today, transfer to the airport for your flight back to the U.S., or join the optional post-trip extension in Beijing. (B)

THREE DAYS BEIJING EXTENSION TRIP

October 24: Beijing

This morning, we meet in the hotel lobby and head for a local park for some Taiji Boxing exercise. Our master shows us how to execute a few graceful, flowing exercises, helping us discover one of China's most highly praised arts. After half an hour's practice, we return to the hotel for breakfast before departing for our day-tour program.

Our exploration of Beijing starts from the **Beijing Planning Exhibition Hall**, which was designed to introduce the evolvement and future layout of Beijing as a historical and modern metropolis from an urban planning perspective. Our expert here briefs us on the overall design of Beijing City.

Upon exiting the Exhibition Hall, we take a short drive to the **National Opera House** (designed by a French architect – Paul Andrew), which is still in its last stages of construction. Our expert explains to us the significance as well as the dispute over this project.

We then move on to **Tian'anmen Square**, a perfect blend of the traditional Chinese style architecture like Qianmen or Front Gate, and the Russian style parliament hall – Great Hall of the People. We also get a distant view of the modern National Opera House from the square.

After lunch, we take a short walk to the **Forbidden City**. The Forbidden City is without a doubt the masterpiece of Chinese traditional architecture. Hidden behind high walls, the City was home to successive emperors of the last three Dynasties. Consisting of a labyrinth of 999 rooms and numerous alleys, this massive compound served as the government as well as the living quarters of the royal family. Beside the public area, we also visit the northwestern corner of the complex, where a restricted section of the Forbidden City is open especially for us. In this section, all the internal

decoration and ornaments are remained unchanged. During the tour, our expert points out for us the concept and underlying roles of design for both the layout of the compound and the style of important halls and courtyards.

We then walk up the coal hill where we take in the panorama of the Forbidden City and its neighboring area in the golden light of sunset.

We return to the hotel in late afternoon. Tonight, we enjoy a traditional dinner featuring **Peking Duck**.

*Novotel Xinqiao Hotel**** (B, L, D)*

October **25:**

Beijing

The Beijing of bygone years still remains in certain areas of the city, where traditional courtyard residences and small lanes make up neighborhoods not much changed since the Qing Dynasty. We rise early in the morning to explore the old Beijing residential area – called **Hutongs** (bystreets) - and courtyards. Riding on the back of a Sanlunche (pedi-cab), we needle our way through the narrow alleys watching local people bustling around at the beginning of the day. We drop into one or two families where we have a warm and intimate chat with the family member, and our host tells us about how the courtyard functions and impacts their life. This is also a good time for our expert to tell us more about the traditional civil residence from the architectural perspective.

We head to the **Fragrant Hill Hotel** to examine the ingenious architectural design. We have a nice brunch in the hotel before move on to Dajue Temple. **Da Jue Temple** is located in the Western Hills and was a favorite of the Empress Dowager Cixi.

After walking around the temple, we enjoy a private **tea ceremony** in the pleasantly shaded courtyard in the temple. Tea culture has been an important part of life in China for thousands of years, and is perhaps one of the most well known exports of the Middle Kingdom.

Later we drive to the **Summer Palace**, a beautiful example of Chinese garden architecture featuring scenic lakes, long painted corridors and gracefully arched bridges. The Palace is considered “a paradise of hills and waters.” We return to our hotel in late afternoon. After freshening up, we drive to Hou Hai and have a dinner at a local restaurant.

*Novotel Xinqiao Hotel**** (B, L, D)*

October **26:**

Beijing

More than 2,500 years old, the **Great Wall** was built to protect Chinese civilization

from unruly northern tribes. In the early morning, we visit the **Juyongguan section**, which is located 2 hours north of downtown Beijing and is the most precipitous part of the Great Wall. In ancient times, it was a vital strategic pass and the gateway to Beijing from the north. After visiting the well-renovated section, we head to the Commune by the Great Wall. Upon arrival, we take a tour of the unique architecture designed by 12 of the most talented young architects in Asia, with names such as Bamboo House, Suitcase House, Forest House and See and Be Seen House. After examining the unique architecture, we hike for 45 minutes up to the **Commune's private section** of the Great Wall, which, wild and unrenovated, retains the feeling of ancient glory. After our hike, we have a gourmet lunch on the terrace of the clubhouse and enjoy the view of the winding wall in distance.

We return to the city and arrive in the **Dashanzi Contemporary Art Zone** in mid-afternoon. Dashanzi is a vibrant art community in Beijing located in the industrial zone of the city. Here, old factories and warehouses, which were built by the design of architects from the late Soviet Union in early 1950s', have been converted into creative galleries and private lofts for artists. The community exemplifies the move towards expression for artists in China in a variety of mediums, including performance art, photography, painting, sculpture, and multimedia. At the entrance, our expert meets us and leads us through the studios. At sunset, a cocktail party is arranged for us in one of the chic warehouse cafes.

Tonight, we enjoy a festive farewell dinner.

*Novotel Xinqiao Hotel**** (B, L, D)*

October 27: Beijing to Home

Transfer to the airport for your flight back to the U.S.

(B)