During the last two weeks of Term 3, six Year 10 students represented Kurnai College on a 17 day study tour of China. The students visited locations such as Shanghai, site of the 2010 World Expo; Suzhou, Nanjing and Beijing. This is the second time students have undertaken such a trip after a similar trip took place in late 2010.

During the trip many new experiences were had by the touring party including the consumption of turtle, chicken feet, seaweed, snail and dumplings for breakfast; bargaining (and being ripped off) at Chinese markets and seeing the division between the rich and poor (which was much more obvious than in Australia). At first some students were nervous to some of these new things, but in the end everyone in most cases enjoyed all these new experiences.

The students visited landmarks such as the Old City of Shanghai, the Jin Mao tower – the second tallest building in Shanghai, the Chinese Dinosaur Park, the Summer Palace and the Great Wall of China as well as many other gardens and temples.

They also visited Kurnai College’s sister, Kou’an Middle School in Taizhou. There were many differences experienced in the school environment and curriculum including much larger class sizes, a school day running from 6:45am to 9:00pm (however with lengthy breaks for lunch and dinner), and a higher compliance to the expectations set for work ethic. While attending school the group were highly popular amongst the students at the school, being asked to pose for photos constantly and never found themselves short of attention. The students experienced classes such as English, Maths, music and chemistry in Chinese as well as the daily exercise regime. One major difference experienced was the much higher level of discipline shown – no student spoke unless spoken to in class, students would stand up when addressing the class, students would not misbehave and every student in the class would be respected by their peers without exception.

All students who attended greatly enjoyed the experience of the trip, which for most of the students was their first time out of Australia and all are still in contact with their host families.

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