

Features

Connections students to China

Cultural study tour a whirlwind of learning and seeing the sights

Published: Sunday, July 5, 2009 8:07 AM HST

Ten middle and high school students from Connections Public Charter School (CPCS) participated in a "China Cultural Study Tour" through Beijing, Xian and Shanghai from May 28 to June 6. The trip was led by Grace Chao, a teacher at CPCS.

The study tour was hosted by the Peking University Philosophy Department and arranged by Professor John Cheng of the Philosophy Department at the University of Hawaii at Hilo,

Each student from Chao's "Mandarin Chinese I" class or "Going Global" pilot social studies class had to write an essay stating his or her purpose for the trip, and receive two teacher recommendations in order to participate.

The group included Trexson-Pierre "La'a" Aiu-Horie (10th grade), Caroline "Carly" Antilla (11th), Amira Gloor (10th), Isaac Gloor (8th), Dakota Helfrich (8th), Rebecca "Becky" Kyota (8th), Zachary Mello-Miranda (9th), Melissa Stenger (11th), Briana Tucker-Archie (9th) and Dominik Walczuk (11th).

The group of 10 students, three teachers and three parents from CPCS stayed in the Peking University guest dormitory and joined Cheng's "UH-Hilo China Study" group in whirlwind excursions through historical sites in Beijing.

The two Hilo groups climbed the Great Wall, attended a calligraphy lecture with master calligrapher Yan Xin at the Peking University Philosophy Department, and "marched" through Tienanmen Square to visit the Forbidden City. The Hilo groups also attended an evening Beijing acrobatics show, rode a dragon boat on Kuen Ming Lake at the Summer Palace, and walked through the underground Ming Dynasty Thirteen Imperial Tombs.

The two Hilo groups received a rare opportunity to visit the brand new U.S. Embassy in Beijing, where the charge d'affaires, acting U.S. Ambassador Daniel W. Piccuta, gave a 30-minute talk to the Hilo groups.

Piccuta spoke of building U.S.-China bilateral relations in environmental protection policies, economic growth and trade, and mutual understanding through cultural and friendship exchanges.

The CPCS China Cultural Study Tour left Beijing and the UH-Hilo group on June 2 to travel to Xian by



Click Photo to Enlarge

Grace Chao, kneeling, third from right, and the Connections Public Charter School students she took on a trip to China pose for a photo on the day the group left for Beijing. - Pam Thatcher/Connections Pcs

overnight train. While there, the group rode bikes on the 9-mile-long Xian City Wall built during Tang Dynasty, and visited the Terracotta Soldiers and Xian Museums.

The final destination before leaving China was Shanghai, where the charter school group shopped in the old business district of City Temple -- Cheng Huang Miao -- and enjoyed the beautiful night scenery of new Shanghai by boat on the Huangpu River.

This trip was made possible through the generous contributions by CPCS teachers, staff and families, the Hilo community and proceeds from the sale of Robert "Steamy" Chow's book: "As I Recall."

Copyright © 2009 - Hawaii Tribune-Herald

[\[x\] Close Window](#)