



"See World Differently"

Senior Program

CN12 - Thematic Philosophy Study – 17 Days

Detailed Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day1: Arrive Beijing

Meet our tour guide at the airport and transfer to the hotel.

Enjoy Peking Duck as welcome dinner.

Overnight Guxiang #20Hotel

Meals: D

Day2: Beijing



We go to visit the **Tiananmen Square** and the magnificent **Forbidden City**, where we spend the morning on a tour of this vast palace. On October 1, 1949, Mao Zedong, chairman of the Communist Party, proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China from the balcony of the Rostrum. The Forbidden City (Imperial Palace) was home to 24 emperors beginning with its creation by Emperor Yongle in 1420 until the last Qing emperor, Puyi, left it in 1924. The entire complex consists of 8,706 rooms in which an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 people lived including 3,000 eunuchs, as well as maids and concubines, all within 170 acres. Behind walls more than 30 feet high and within the 160-foot moat, complex rules

and rituals dictated life in the Imperial Palace. Strictly off-limits to Chinese ordinary people (hence the name) the gates today lead to a fascinating display of Chinese history in what is probably the best preserved site of classical Chinese architecture.

After lunch, we visit **Yong He Gong Tibetan Monastery and Guozijian (The Imperial College)**. Yonggegong is the most significant Tibetan Buddhist temple outside Tibet itself, the Lama Temple is a beautiful structure containing a massive statue of Buddha carved from sandalwood (the largest such statue in the world). It has a rich and turbulent history, having survived wars, uprisings and rebellions. Declared as a historical relic in 1949, the building escaped the Cultural Revolution without a scratch.

The Imperial College is called Guozijian in Chinese. The Imperial College is located immediately to the west of the Confucian Temple and, in fact, connects with the temple through a side gate. Generally recognized as the highest official institution of learning in imperial China, it was first established in 1287 during the Yuan Dynasty and subsequently enlarged several times, attaining its present dimensions during the reign of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty. After the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, the Imperial College was completely renovated and the Capital Library was incorporated within its grounds.



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Overnight Guxiang #20Hotel
Meals: B, L, D

Day3: Beijing

We depart this morning for an excursion to the Great Wall with picnic lunch. Though the underlying architecture dates from the Ming Dynasty, the original plan for the Great Wall and some of its construction date back to the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC). We visit **the Great Wall at Mutianyu**, where we take a short and easy hike or use Cable car for ascend and descend the Great Wall.

In the late afternoon, we will visit **Zhijia Temple** and have a **Buddhism lecture**. Vegetarian dinner tonight.

Overnight Guxiang #20Hotel
Meals: B, L, D

Day 4: Beijing to Datong

After breakfast, we drive to visit the **Temple of Heaven**. We learn how to play Taiji from our Taiji Master before we tour around. The Temple was built in 1420 A.D. during the Ming Dynasty to offer sacrifice to Heaven. As Chinese emperors called themselves "The Son of Heaven", they dared not to build their own dwelling, "Forbidden City" bigger than a dwelling for Heaven. The Temple of Heaven is enclosed with a long wall. The northern part within the wall is semicircular symbolizing the heavens and the southern part is square symbolizing the earth. The northern part is higher than the southern part. This design shows that the heaven is high and the earth is low and the design reflected an ancient Chinese thought of "The heaven is round and the earth is square".

Then we drive back hotel and check out. After lunch, we drive to the railway station to catch the train with soft seats to Datong. The train departs Beijing at 15:03 and arrives at Datong at 20:33.

Datong is a major coal-mining and rail center, near the Great Wall.

Once we arrive at Datong, meet our tour guide and transfer for dinner and hotel checks in after then.

Overnight Hong'an International Hotel
Meals: B, L, D

Day 5: Datong to Wutaishan

This morning, we visit **Yungang Grottos** in Datong. Yungang Grottos are one of China's three grotto treasures, built in 453, located at the south foothill of Wuzhou Mountains in Datong City in Shanxi Province. There we will start to learn more and more Buddhism and philosophy. The Yungang Grottos, famous for Buddhist art carved into a hillside between AD386 and 534, are nearby. Datong was founded as a fortress town in the 4th century and was the 5th-century capital of the Northern Wei Buddhist dynasty.



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Industrialization accelerated in the 1920s as railroads and coal mining was developed in northern China.

After lunch we drive to visit **Hanging Monastery** at Mt. Hengshan. The Hanging Monastery is located at the foot of Mt. Hengshan, which is 65 kilometers (40 miles) from downtown Datong City. The monastery hangs on the west cliff of Jinxia Gorge more than 50 meters above the ground. Therefore, it is called the Hanging Monastery. It was built in 491 and has survived more than 1400 years. The extant monastery was largely rebuilt and maintained in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Hanging Monastery is an architectural wonder. A unique mechanical theory was applied to building the framework. Crossbeams were half-inserted into the rock as the foundation, while the rock in back became its support.

Then take about 1.5 hour's bus ride to Wutaishan.

Overnight Yin Hai Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

Day6: Wutaishan

In the morning, come to visit **Xiantong Monastery**, which is a large monastery with 400 rooms. It originally built during Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 AD), and is one of the two oldest monasteries in China as White Horse Monastery (Baimasi) in Luoyang.

Particularly, the most glamorous room in the whole monastery is the Bronze Hall whose interior is aptly totally made in bronze. It says there are over 10,000 bronze Buddhist statues in that hall. Then we keep on visit **Pusading Monastery**. Pusading Monastery is said to be the leading monastery of Gelugpa for it has the brown walls and yellow tiles, which only used for the imperial palace. Also, it is the largest monastery at Wutaishan.

After Pusading Monastery, we visit **Tayuan Monastery** for Sheli Tower, the symbolize of Wutaishan.

In the afternoon, visit Foguan Monastery and peaceful **Nanchan Monastery**. **Foguang Monastery** was built during the Northern Wei Dynasty and had its zenith in the Tang Dynasty plays an important role in the history of architecture. Sculptures, murals, stone buildings, gravestones, and white marble statues of the Tang dynasty represent the then highest achievement of Buddhist art.

Nanchan Monastery is the oldest existing monastery of wooden structure dating from the Tang Dynasty. The monastery includes a gate, hall of the Dragon King, Great Buddha, Hall of Bodhisattva, and other fine examples of ancient timber construction. On display at eh monastery are lifelike color sculptures comparable in style to those in Dunhuang in China' northwestern province of Gansu.

Overnight Yin Hai Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

Day 7: Wutaishan-Pingyao

In the morning, we drive about 4 hours to Taiyuan. Taiyuan is the capital of Shanxi Province and a city with long history and culture as well. It covers an area of 7 thousand square kilometers and has a population of almost 3 million. Mountains are around the city from east to west and in the north as well as the rivers and plains in the middle part and northern part. Taiyuan's main topography is downloading; the plain only occupies five percent of the area. It is the continental climate in Temperate Zone.

Metallurgy, machinery, coal and chemical industry are the major industries of the city. Copper and iron industry is the important industrial base in China. Chinese coal mine mainly from Mineral Bureau of western mountains.



After lunch, we keep on driving to Pingyao. On our way to Pingyao, we visit the **Qiao Family** Compound in Qixian County. The compound is located sixty kilometers (37.3 miles) south of Taiyuan, and some twenty kilometers (12.4 miles) north of Pingyao, this Compound was built in 1756 during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). The buildings continue to be well maintained despite the fact that the Qiao family had ceased to have any influence since the 1940's.

The family enjoyed a prestigious status during the reign of the Emperor Qianlong (1735-96), one of its patriarchs having been a famous trader, whose travels had taken him far off into foreign lands. The family included banking among its activities and this meant their commercial influence spread beyond Shanxi Province, their private banks being a nation-wide enterprise. The compound's inner courtyards and passageways have been designed to form the shape of the Chinese character for the words 'double happiness' (shuang xi). The architecture has virtually an encyclopedic range, displaying a vast array of contrasting roof styles, which vary from gentle slopes to high peaks which swoop down in elegant curves

Then we keep on drive to Pingyao and check into our hotel in Pingyao.

Overnight Li Ze Yuan International Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

Day 8: Pingyao to Xi'an

In the morning, today we walk on the ancient city wall, which is marked with a watchtower every 50 meters (164 ft) and visit several of the ancient courtyards and a complex of old private houses exhibiting their collection of art and furniture, all converted into museums. In addition to appreciating the ancient architecture, we learn about how banking started in China over a century ago here in Pingyao. Of particular interest is the Qing Dynasty **yamen**, or county magistrate's complex.

Then we drive back Taiyuan to catch up flight HU7394 (1550/1650) to Xi'an, the gateway to the West and the starting point of the Silk Road. Xi'an was the capital of many dynasties in the history of China. The history of over 2000 years endows the city the richness of culture, arts, and architecture.



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When we get to Xi'an airport, meet our tour guide and transfer to hotel.

Overnight Sofitel Hotel

Meals: B, L, (**Optional Dinner**)

Day9: Xi'an

In the morning, we visit the **Shaanxi History Museum**, spending two hours studying the treasures that have been unearthed from the more than 1,000 years that Xi'an served as the ancient capital of China.

After a lunch of the traditional noodles for which Xi'an is famous, we drive to visit the **Terracotta Army**, created to guard the tomb of Qin Shihuang, the first emperor to unite China. One of the most remarkable archaeological discoveries of all times, the Terracotta Army is designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We leisurely admire this vast array of soldiers. After then, we drop a visit to the **unopened and private section of Terracotta Army**.

In the evening, after our dinner, we can pay a drop to the night market in Xi'an. The night market in Xi'an is very unique with Moslem characteristics.

Overnight Sofitel Hotel

Meals: B, L, (**Optional Dinner**)

Day 10: Xi'an to Chengdu

In the morning, we hire bikes to cycle on the **ancient city wall**. Then, we drive to visit the **Forest of Steles**, which was the site of the Temple of Confucius during the Northern Song dynasty (960--1127). The Forest of Stone Steles Museum is situated on Sanxue Street, near the south gate of Xi'an City Wall. It was initially established in AD 1087 when some precious stone steles were moved here for safe keeping, including the "Classic on Filial Piety" written by Emperor Xuanzong in AD 745 and "the Kaicheng Stone Steles" in AD 837. With an area of 31,000 square meters, the Forest of Stone Steles used to be the principal museum for Shaanxi Province since 1944. Then because of the large number of stone steles, it was officially named as the Forest of Stone Steles Museum in 1992. There, we are honored to invite a calligrapher to teach us a Calligraphy class.

After then, we drive to the airport for flight CA4202 (1600/1710) to Chengdu.

Meet our tour guide in Chengdu and transfer to the hotel.

Overnight Yinhe Dynasty Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

Day11: Chengdu

Early in the morning we visit the **Panda Breeding Center** just outside of the city. The morning is the best time to observe pandas, as they are most lively at that time. An



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expert from the center takes us around and explains the habits of these adorable animals to us.

In the afternoon we visit **Wuhou Temple** and the **Wen Shu Monastery**, where we enjoy a vegetarian feast in the Buddhist style, followed by a stroll through the tranquil courtyards of this lovely Buddhist temple. Sichuan temples, built with dark wood and accented with deep red trim, have a subtlety and charm different from temples in other parts of China.

Today, we have vegetable dinner in Wen Shu Monastery as well or you can skip dinner for a relaxing night.

Yinhe Dynasty Hotel

Meals: B, L, **(Optional Dinner)**

Day12: Chengdu



This morning, we drive about one hour to visit **Mt. Qingcheng**, one of the four best known Taoism Mountains in China. It has many Taoism temples on the mountain.

In the afternoon, we visit Dujiangyan, The Dujiangyan Irrigation Project is long-established water conservation works. It is 56 kilometers (34.8miles) west of Chengdu at Dujiangyan city lying in the middle reach of Minjiang River, which is the longest tributary of Yangtze River. Around BC 250

during the Warring States Period, Libing, a governor of Shu in Qin state (present Sichuan Province) with his son directed the construction of Dujiangyan. The governor gave up the old ways of dam building which was simply try to catch the floodwaters. Instead he employed a new method by channeling and dividing the water to harness the Minjiang River. He accomplished this by separating the project in to two main parts: the headwork and the irrigation system. The project effectively put the flooding waters under control.

Tonight, we enjoy hotpot dinner in Chengdu.

Yinhe Dynasty Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

Day 13: Chengdu to Lhasa

In the morning, take flight 3U3856 (0830/1020) from Chengdu to **Lhasa**, meet the tour guide and transferred to Lhasa Hotel.

After lunch, enjoy free time to acclimatize high altitude.

Tibet, well-know as the Roof of the World and The Third Pole of the Globe, is located at the Southwest part of China, with a land area of 1.22 million square kilometers and a

population of 2.3 million, in which, 95% are Tibetan nationality. The average altitude of Tibet is about 4,000 meters above the sea level. Lhasa is the capital of Tibet and its height is 3,700 meters. Normally, it takes some time to acclimatize high altitude once we get to Lhasa.

We have Tibetan style dinner tonight.

Overnight Lhasa Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

Day14: Lhasa



In the morning, we visit the most well-known landmark of Tibet, **the Potala Palace**. Its red and white buildings sit nobly on a rocky hill, commanding the attention of the entire Kyichu (Lhasa River) Valley. As the political center of Tibet, and the residence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tibetans come from miles around to pray to its majestic walls. The approach to the Potala is not easy, and requires climbing many steep steps, so we take it slowly and allow ourselves to leisurely

enjoy the Palace and its surroundings. Once inside, we visit one room after another, admiring the many beautiful murals and sculptures.

After lunch, we take a short drive to the outskirts of Lhasa, where **Sera Monastery** sits at the foot of the mountains. One of the three main Gelupka monasteries in Lhasa, Sera is an important spiritual center for Buddhist monks. Depending on how we are feeling, we can take a short, easy walk from a nearby nunnery, taking in wonderful views of the entire city of Lhasa. Inside the monastery, we stroll among the vast temples and college complexes, and mingle freely with monks going about their daily duties. We then visit the printing center, where sutra texts are still printed by hand on the traditional long paper of Tibet, and have a chance to print our own. We then proceed to the debating courtyard, where we watch nearly a hundred monks hone their debating skills in an elaborate clapping ceremony.

Tonight, before dinner, we will be learning more information about Tibetan culture, history and Buddhism from **a lecture by Tibetan expert**.

Overnight Lhasa Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

Day15: Lhasa

We join the many pilgrims flocking to **Jokhang Monastery** this morning, to visit the spiritual center of Tibet. Said to be built over the heart of an evil goddess, the Jokhang is the hub of concentric circles of monasteries emanating out of Lhasa. As we make the



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inner circuit around the courtyard, spinning numerous prayer wheels as we go, we are swept up in the energy of the devout. From the rooftop, we get stunning views of the Potala, and the snow capped peaks off in the distance.

After lunch, we will visit a **Tibetan hospital** to know more about Tibetan herbal medicine. Tibetan herbal medicine has a rich heritage and is currently practiced not only in Tibet, but also in the adjacent Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan, and in the neighboring kingdoms of Bhutan, Nepal, Ladakh, and Sikkim, where communities of Tibetan people have long been established. Many non-Tibetans also seek out treatment by this traditional system because of its good reputation. Tibetan medicine also extended to India, and, from there, to many countries of the world (especially in Europe and North America) under the guidance of a small number of refugee physicians.

Then, we get over to **Dropenling** to enjoy what will undoubtedly be the highlight of the trip. As discussed above, a special day of events will be put on just for our visit that will include a photo exhibit, local artisans, and plenty of good music, food, and dance. Whereas yesterday we had the opportunity to chat with Tibetans about life in Tibet, today gives us an opportunity to meet many of the expats living and working in Lhasa and hear their adventures and trials here. Hopefully we are able to synthesize these two viewpoints to come to a better understanding of the situation in Tibet.

We expect the activities to continue into the evening when our dinner be catered by a local restaurant.

Overnight Lhasa Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

Day 16: Lhasa to Beijing via Chengdu

We have some free time this morning to complete some last minute souvenir shopping before transferring to the airport for our return flights. Of course, after such a full schedule, you may find that a leisurely breakfast is in order. Take flight back Beijing via Chengdu. Get to Beijing, transfer to the airport hotel and check in.

Have farewell dinner tonight.

Overnight Sino Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

Day 17: Depart Beijing for Home

Transfer to the airport for your flight back according to your flight schedule.



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Quotation for group (more than 4pax, guaranteed group departure)

2008

Land Prices (CAD)

Dates	11-27May	07-23Sep	12-28Oct	02-18Nov
Land cost: 4-22pax	5,170	5,270	5,270	5,170v
Single supplement	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200

Flights

Call for international air.

Call your tour expert for tailor-made your private journey

Discount

CAD100 discount for senior traveler who choose half-board meal service. (Two nights' optional meals arrangement)

Price includes:

- Domestic economy flights and airport taxes.
- Land transfers for whole trip
- All accommodations on a twin-sharing basis, at the hotels specified in the itinerary where available
- All admissions and activity expenses as noted on itinerary
- Meals, drinking water, and soft drinks during meals as program indicates
- All programs as per itinerary
- Private tour guide and local experts service along the whole trip

Price excludes:

- Discretionary gratuities for drivers, local guides, and experts
- Expenses of personal nature, e.g. mini-bar, laundry, telecommunications, alcoholic beverages etc.
- Travel insurance
- Excursions not included in the itinerary
- International flights and airport taxes
- GST