

## Connecting Hearts, Broadening Horizons: Beijing-Hong Kong Exchange — Jointly Organized by Ying Wa Girls' School and Ying Wa College

My life is finally getting back to normal after a dream trip to Beijing.

The Beijing exchange programme took us to the ancient capital of China, where we experienced a thrilling theme park, diverse cultural activities, and, of course, rigorous academic study. We were absolutely thrilled about nearly everything, especially since it was our first time exploring the beautiful and enchanting city of Beijing.



Minions, Harry Potter, and awe-inspiring dinosaurs! Universal Studios Beijing offers everything you could possibly want and more, and our programme included a visit on Day 3. Although the queues for the rides were sometimes long, we spent the time chatting with our local buddies, which meant there was never a dull moment. The theme park is an absolutely perfect place for taking photos and having fun with peers. We took plenty of pictures with our groupmates from YWC and quickly grew close to our buddies. By the end of the day, we were talking as if we had known each other for years.

Afterwards, we were given a free day to explore the mysteries of the city! Our local buddies took us to all manner of tourist spots and hidden gems: the Temple of Heaven, the Summer Palace, artisanal milk tea shops... you name it, Beijing has it. I was lucky enough to finally visit the Forbidden City. The palace was magnificent and impressive, but my buddy's knowledge impressed me even more. She knew so much about the history of the palace and shared the fascinating stories behind the exhibits. It was such an honour to spend the day exploring this ancient wonder with her.



Just when we thought the trip couldn't get any better, the day concluded with a magnificent palace banquet—the dream of every teenage girl! We were dressed in traditional Chinese attire, had our makeup beautifully done, and enjoyed captivating performances while savouring delicious food. The dancing was mesmerizing and the feast luxurious, but the most amazing part was that the performances, the food, and our dress code were all



deeply rooted in Chinese traditions. We learned so much more about Chinese culture and history after the banquet and enjoyed every second of it. I would certainly love to have more Chinese history lessons with such grand meals included!

Of course, in addition to the fun-filled activities, we also attended various lessons during the exchange trip. Alongside our buddies, we experienced classes in Chinese, English, Mathematics, Physics, and PE. The lessons were highly engaging, and our classmates were incredibly friendly. They listened attentively to the teachers and answered questions actively, which immersed us in a fantastic learning environment.



The trip was filled with memorable experiences, and I had a brilliant time in this city blossoming with flowers and rich culture. A gentle word of advice for anyone planning to visit Beijing: be cautious about trying the fermented mung bean drink (*Douzhi*)—it is certainly an acquired taste! However, the other local Beijing dishes and snacks are delicious and worth trying. Personally, I loved the freshly made candied hawthorn skewers (*Tanghulu*).

As I sit down to write this, scenes of arriving at Universal Studios, touring the Forbidden City, and watching the traditional performances still flash through my mind. It feels like it was all a beautifully cultured dream. Now that I am back in Hong Kong, I look forward to sharing all the details of these stories and more with my friends. I highly recommend that everyone seize the opportunity to join this programme and create unforgettable memories of their own.

