China Study Abroad – Summer 2012
Travel Log No.1

Ten Penn State Architectural Engineering students are participating in a study abroad experience this summer. The program is made up of three parts; Shanghai, Beijing, and Hong Kong. This edition of Travel Log covers the period in Shanghai.

23 June – Arrival in Shanghai
The students trickled into Pudong Airport on Saturday, 23 June. I was glad to know I have arrived.

On one of the trips to the airport, Moses tried the Mag-Lev train. Very smooth. Very fast. As another tourist said, one barely has time to warm the seat before it arrives. Too bad it did not reach all the way to the downtown area. I suppose the army of taxi cabdrivers may not be happy if it did.

We booked our stay at The Manhattan Business Hotel. It is an older hotel right in the middle of the tourist district. Very conveniently located.
Most of the little rooms have no window. To compensate, there is plenty of glass on the bathroom wall and door, prompting Moses to ask: “What is a door for?”

24 June - Sunday
The group visited the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Center (background)

The Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Center probably cured many budding architects of the desire to build physical models. With the rate of growth and change, this model of the city is likely updated on a continuous basis.
The Exhibition Center has a collection of streetscapes over the past two centuries. This is extremely interesting to Moses as he gained an understanding for the living environment of his mother and grandfather’s time. Shanghai appeared to be a mirror image of New York City during the same time period. (Photo from Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Center)

Across People's Square is the Shanghai Museum where a wealth of Chinese artifacts is on display.

Connecting the two museum and below People’s Square is an underground shopping mall. Behind the façade of old store fronts, small merchants offer variety of trinkets beyond imagination.
First meal in China. Students chose a Portuguese style eatery. One student did try pigeon. Others were more conservative. All were brilliantly efficient with chopsticks.

People’s Square, including the Shanghai Museum, the Urban Planning Exhibition Center, and wide stretch of green space are located on the former horse racing track. (Photo from Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Center)

Nanjing Road pedestrian mall is an unbelievably busy shopping street. It has pleased ladies with money to spend for a century. Now a day, the mall is peppered with peddlers with clipped-on wheels for the tired feet, Rolex watches, relaxation for tired muscles, or company for the lonely souls. Moses walking alone through the mall was a neon target for such purveyors.
Shopping for both Chinese and foreign goods were available on Nanjing Road a century ago. One might have chosen to ride the public transportation (electric trolley), or a more private rickshaw or pedi-cab. (Photo from Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Center)