Greetings from Tianjin! This has been one week that will not be forgotten for a very long time. The flight into China was smooth and swift enough and the acclimatisation into a Chinese way of life has been nothing short of fun and interesting. We have all had our fair share of mistakes and embarrassments from mistaking Chinese labeled soap as moisturising cream, to ordering the wrong dishes when eating out and even learning how to use a squat toilet!

On the second day upon arrival, Tianjin had a full afternoon and night of snow, whereby for some members of the group, it was their first time ever coming into contact with a Winter Wonderland. Other than that, the whole group has settled well enough into the weather, as well have had enough confidence to not only weave ourselves in and out of traffic, but also embark on many shopping expeditions for groceries and other essential items.

We have met many local students whom have been most friendly and helpful in adapting into China, as well as taking us around the Tianjin metropolis. We have been taken to places like the museum, the town planning exhibition, a ‘mini-Italian’ town and the Tianjin Eye (Ferris Wheel).

On the weekend before the start of the study semester, we made a trip to Beijing where we got to see what the nation’s capital has to offer. The bullet train from Tianjin to Beijing was an awesome experience; the journey only lasting 30 minutes as opposed to almost three hours by bus. In Beijing, we went to the markets to try out our bartering skills (or lack of). Most of us were proud of our purchases; which were mainly clothing and shoes. The group also ventured to Tiananmen Square/Forbidden City as well as the Olympic Venue. It was an absolute wonder to see it all, as well as grasp the precious history behind each building and landscape. Unfortunately, there was not enough time to fully go through everything.

As one week has passed, we all look forward to the next 11 ahead of us. We hope to capitalise further in our conversational skills with expressions other than 你好，多少钱， and 鸡肉。A new milestone of our lives will be achieved when classes will begin next week; we all have mixed emotions but all in all, a sense of optimism and determination to do our best.

That is Week One in a nutshell. Till next time, it’s再见 for now!

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