

华府青年中国行(二)

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Even before the plane touched down, we could see small glimpses of the beautiful landscape. However, looking through the window was nothing compared to being on the ground riding a bus through the stunning scenery.



Our first stop was at the No. 1 Malipo Elementary School, where the warmth and friendliness of the students and teachers made us feel at home right away. For the past 2 years, CYOC members have participated in weekly calls with these students discussing a variety of things ranging from daily life to schools to culture, developing a unique friendship along the way. As we were welcomed, we could spot some familiar faces among the crowd. Together, we planted a friendship tree, a symbol showing how our relationship would deepen with time, as the tree grew taller as well. They also performed a variety of cultural dances to welcome us to Yunnan and taught us how to make traditional demon masks, allowing us to experience their rich heritage and deepen our connection to Chinese culture.



Finally, at night, we enjoyed staying at a local student's home. The parents greeted us with exceptional warmth and hospitality, making us feel at home, and provided us with delicious fruit and some very expensive tea. They also provided us with luxurious toiletries as well as slippers and mugs, making our stay very comfortable.

We said our goodbyes the next day and headed to a local high school to learn about Chinese calligraphy and experience a PE class, which allowed us to get a glimpse into Chinese students the same age as us. The calligraphy masters taught us the traditional technique and we had the opportunity to practice on a piece of Xuan paper. We immersed ourselves in the intricate art, which demanded a slow and precise approach, and paired with the calming music in the background, making the experience unique and highly enjoyable.

In the afternoon, we went to a local Nanyou village to learn the



technique of making rainbow rice and embroidery. For the rainbow rice, the experts allowed us to soak the rice in the dye ourselves, and even get to taste the end-product.



After a delicious dinner, the local Nanyou students hosted an energetic performance featuring different styles and genres of dance and music, reflecting the rich tapestry of Nanyou. The evening continued with a massive bonfire party, and we participated in a variety of traditional dances around it.



飞机落地前,我们已能瞥见美丽的风景。然而,透过窗户看风景与在地面上乘坐巴士欣赏绝美风景相比,简直是小巫见大巫。

我们的第一站是麻栗坡第一小学,那里的学生和老师的热情友好让我们立刻有宾至如归的感觉。在过去的两年里,CYOC成员每周都会与这些学生通话,讨论从日常生活到文化到文化的各种事情,一路上建立了独特的友谊。当我们受到欢迎时,我们可以在人群中看到一些熟悉的面孔。我们一起种了一棵友谊树,象征着我们的关系会随着时间的推移而加深,因为树也长得越来越高。他们还表演了各种文化舞蹈来欢迎我们来到云南,并教我们如何制作传统的恶魔面具,让我们体验他们丰富的文化遗产,加深我们与中国文化的联系。

最后,晚上,我们享受了在当地学生家中住宿的乐趣。家长热情好客地迎接了我们,让我们有宾至如归的感觉,还为我们提供了美味的水果和一些非常昂贵的茶。他们还为我们提供了豪华的洗漱用品以及拖鞋和杯子,让我们住得非常舒适。

Yunnan Reflection

Bill Qian

第二天我们道别后前往当地一所高中学习中国书法,并体验了一节体育课,这让我们有机会一睹与我们同龄的中国学生的风采。书法大师教我们传统技巧,我们有机会在宣纸上练习。我们沉浸在复杂的艺术中,这需要缓慢而精确的方法,再加上背景中舒缓的音乐,让这次体验独一无二,令人非常愉快。

下午,我们去了当地的南油村学习制作彩虹米和刺绣的技术。对于彩虹米,专家们让我们亲自将大米浸泡在染料中,甚至品尝成品。

在享用美味的晚餐后,当地的南油学生举办了一场充满活力的表演,以不同风格和流派的舞蹈和音乐为特色,反映了南油丰富的风情。晚上继续举行了盛大的篝火晚会,我们参加了各种传统舞蹈。

We drove 3 hours to Mengzi City, to first take a tour of the Crossing-the-Bridge Rice Noodles Exhibition Center, where we learned about the history of this authentic and renowned Yunnan delicacy. The dish is said to have taken its name from a love story about a husband crossing a bridge to an island to find a quiet and peaceful place to study, and the wife would bring him a hot and nourishing meal, knowing that he would be too engrossed in his work to eat.



When it was time to taste the famous soup noodles, we were greeted with a tray of raw ingredients alongside a steaming bowl of soup. As the ingredients were sliced thinly, they would cook quickly in the hot broth, and following the specific order and technique made the experience both interesting and delicious.

Overall, the food we tried throughout our trip to Yunnan was exceptional. We ate in traditional Chinese restaurants, sampled convenience store snacks and drinks, and enjoyed the delicious rice noodles with various soups and toppings.

Later, we explored the former site of the Southwest Associated University with a tour guide, learning a little history about how it formed and its causes. Back in 1937, when China was at war with Japan, 3 of the best universities in China needed a safe place for students to learn, so they fled to China's remote and mountainous southwest to Yunnan. After that, we took a trip to the Bizezhai Yunnan-Vietnam Railway Historical and Cultural Park to take a couple of scenic photos on the railroad and next to one of the earliest trains in China. We then ate dinner and went to sleep.

Early the next morning, we headed to visit the Confucian temple and also the Zhujia Garden. At the garden, the tour guide brought us to see a vibrant display of flowers, complemented by the beautiful, authentic architecture that we also took a tour of.

After lunch, we visited the Lin'an Railway Station to take a train, specifically a French puddle jumper. Our first stop was at the Jianshui Shuanglong Bridge, one of China's largest bridges, which was built in the Qing Dynasty on top of the Lijiang River and Tachonghe River. In Chinese culture, dragons are associated with water, so this bridge



was nicknamed the Double Dragon Bridge. Even though it was raining outside, we decided to go out and take pictures, capturing breathtaking views, and making the soggy shoes and drenched clothes worth it.

We then went on a guided tour of Tuanshan's Characteristic dwellings, where we walked around the old architecture and also went to a tea shop. The shop featured shelves full of intricately crafted and expensive pottery as well as fruit tea which we sampled. It was delicious and refreshing, especially in the hot and humid climate.

However, I would consider the highlight of the day to be later at night, when we visited Purple Pottery Street, which was a night market. The place was illuminated by colorful lights and lanterns hung up on strings. There were stalls selling delicious-looking foods and other stalls selling handcrafted souvenirs to off-brand clothes. We walked through the crowded roads, trying not to get separated, and visited a multitude of vendors and shops, such as a pottery store, a watch vendor, and much more. Overall, this experience was something unique that you could never find over here in the States, and it was one of my favorite events on the trip.



We started off the next day with a delicious noodle breakfast and experienced the art of purple pottery. Each of us was given a spinning platform to mold a slab of clay into something we wanted to make, reminding me of the art classes in elementary school. Some of us managed to create beautiful pots and other items with the help of the pottery sculpting expert. In the end, the dirty hands and clothes were well worth the experience.

We drove the entire morning to arrive at the famous capital of Yunnan, Kunming City. After lunch, we went to visit the Yunnan Provincial Museum, which was home to a multitude of things from the scientific side of things such as evolution and dinosaurs as well as the cultural side of things such as pottery and artifacts from tomb excavations. Overall, it was a great experience to see the differences between American and Chinese



museums as well as to learn more about Yunnan and Chinese culture.

In the afternoon, we visited the Southwest Forestry University, where we first learned a little history about the college, as well as the different types of trees, including a 25-meter-tall tree. However, I would argue that the highlight of this visit was in the tea culture research.

We were given small pastries made of tea leaves, which tasted phenomenal, and paired with the tea that was freshly brewed and served in an authentic way, it was truly a unique experience. During the tea art performance, where professional tea experts were performing how to brew tea, all of us were invited to partake in a traditional dance, which was a fun time. Later, we had the opportunity to brew tea ourselves, after learning from the tea art performance. Overall, this was a fascinating activity, where we delved into Yunnan's rich heritage, learning about the art of making tea, and fostering a deeper connection to China.



The next day's morning was packed with activities, touring the Yunnan Nationalities Village, a large cultural tourism complex that showcased the diverse ethnic groups of Yunnan, such as the Bai, Yi, Hani, Miao, and more. There, we had the opportunity to watch many of the cultural performances such as singing and dancing, which we learned how to do. The park also featured authentic Yunnan architecture, with each ethnic group showcasing its own unique touches.

The next stop was the Yunnan coffee factory, where we got a tour of the entire coffee-making process, from the grinding to the packaging, and also the educational exhibits explaining Yunnan's role in coffee. Due to Yunnan being in the perfect latitude for growing coffee, with the perfect climate and conditions, it produces over 98% of China's total coffee production. We even got the opportunity to taste the freshly brewed coffee, and even though I don't drink coffee often, I could appreciate the deep and rich flavor.

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