

Day 5: Monday, May 20, 2013

Hello!

We started our day early this morning to catch a flight to Xi'an, China, in the Shanxxi Province. We had a short flight with a flight time under 2 hours. Upon landing, we ate lunch at a dinner theatre here in Xian - we didn't watch a show, but we still enjoyed the meal just the same. We were interested to see the difference in flavors of food here in China between what we had in Beijing and the food in Xian. The food is prepared much the same way, but tastes completely different. Very fascinating.

After lunch, we travelled to the City Wall of Xi'an to rent bicycles and spent an hour riding our bikes on the centuries-old wall. In total, we rode 13.7 kilometers (8.5 miles) in length. While riding our bikes, we had a beautiful view of the city. For each gate on the wall, there were three gate towers. The architecture is simply incredible, and it's unbelievable that it has lasted through so many centuries and yet remained so timeless. This has been noticeable throughout our journey in China thus far. It's a subtle reminder to us that though China looks very modern in what we see the most, it is such an ancient and well developed culture, and it is so humbling that we have the honor of being in this magnificent country with the chance to learn hands-on about their world.

After our bike ride we visited the Xi'an Bell Tower. The Bell Tower was used to signal the morning back in ancient China when they had no clocks. The Drum Tower sits across the square from the Bell Tower and signals nighttime. It was interesting to visit Xi'an because this city's history goes back 3,000 years where as Beijing's is maybe only 1,000. We can't help but think what the United States could accomplish in 1,000 years let alone 3,000. Once we came down from the tower we had free time to shop around the streets and alleys under the tower. It is still hard to get used to the concept that you can bargain for almost everything here. The best part is that even if we don't get a good deal it is still reasonably priced anyways. In the evening we had a very traditional Xi'an dish at dinner. It was a type of meat broth based soup with torn up bread and noodles. It was delicious.

Sincerely,

Ashley Giedd and Katie McConnell