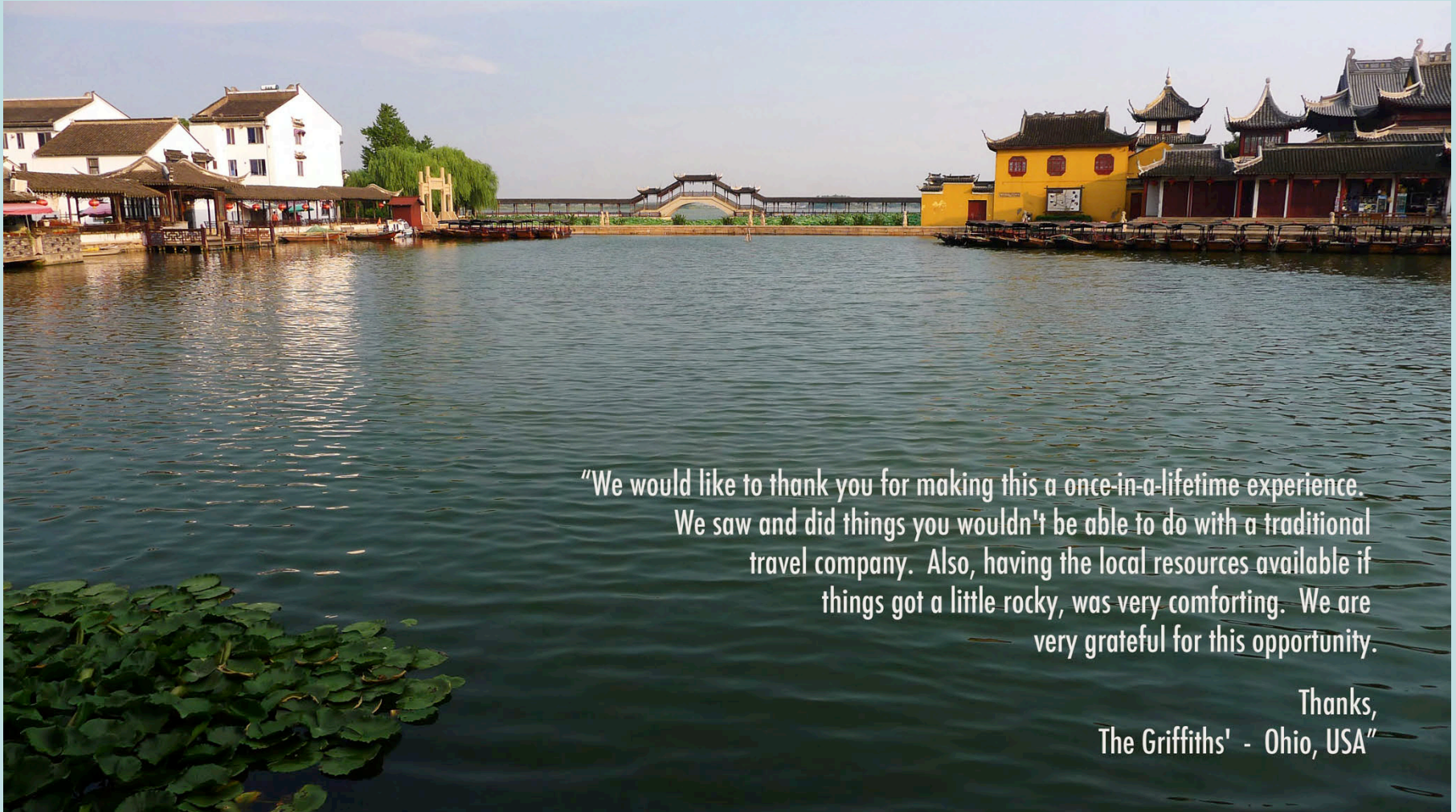


# A Photographic Diary of our “2015 August Special China Expedition”

by Yau-Sun Tong



“We would like to thank you for making this a once-in-a-lifetime experience. We saw and did things you wouldn't be able to do with a traditional travel company. Also, having the local resources available if things got a little rocky, was very comforting. We are very grateful for this opportunity.

Thanks,  
The Griffiths' - Ohio, USA”

**Jinxi Water-town, Gansu Dragon-bay village, Tibet Autonomous Region with Lhasa “Shoton Festival”**

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# Preface

The following images within this “**Photo-diary**” were taken with a little pocket-sized **Leica D-Lux 5** camera. (or from a cellphone)

These **snapshots** are only intended **to capture** and **to document** the **events, our travel routes,** the **joy and fun of our tour members** during this lifetime experience of a fantastic visit to another one of the western China regions; and for our memories.

The little “point-and-shoot” **D-Lux 5** has many limitations in picture taking, little performance in terms of optical quality compared to the famed **Leica R and M** camera systems with slide-films I am so often used to and fond of using; but at the same time it poses a challenge to myself for still trying to create meaningful images with it.

High quality slide-film images taken from this tour are **not** shown in this **photo-diary**.

Some of the goals I am trying to achieve in my photography include:

- *True to the moments in nature and culture;*
- *Natural and candid;*
- *Compositionally challenge and unique;*
- *Meaningful in subjects and topics;*
- *Story telling with good impacts;*
- *Not to disturb and intrude into local human subjects' life.*

## Brief intro

Gathered in *Shanghai*, our tour group started the great experience of our  
《*August 2015 Special China Cultural/Photographic Expedition*》  
which was especially  
designed for those who were interested in a real cultural experience  
in some of the fascinating places for unusual and  
rich topics of photography and travel.

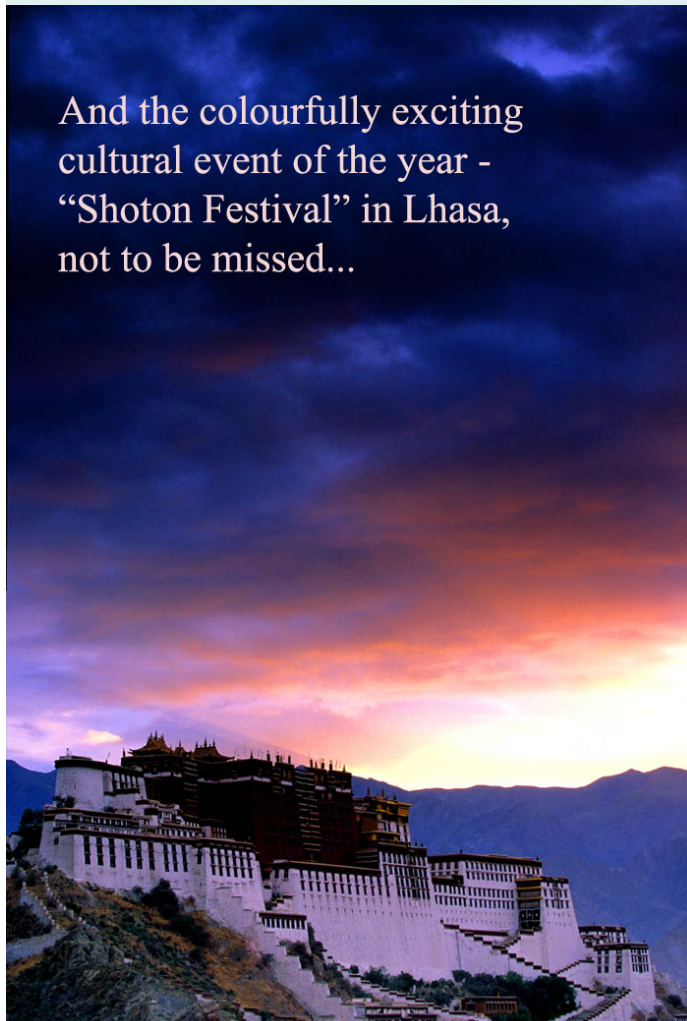
The following images in chronological order are intend to share the enjoyments  
from some of the events and highlights of our journey of this over 14-day  
tour – another successful one of our ongoing specially arranged  
**Western China Cultural/Photographic Series Tours.**

My sincere appreciation & many thanks to all participants of this very special tour!

**Featuring:** Shanghai entry; Eastern seaboard water-township; Northwestern China's Gansu Province with unique local culture & scenery; An extraordinary visit to "Top-of-the-world" – **Tibet Autonomous Region**, with visits to some historically attractive areas for Culture and nature...; Beijing exit.

An experience of a lifetime!

And the colourfully exciting cultural event of the year - "Shoton Festival" in Lhasa, not to be missed...





《江南水乡西北黄河龙湾西藏地区及拉萨雪顿节民俗风光文化摄影行》

## August 2015 JinXi Water-town, Gansu Dragon-Bay village & Tibet "Shoton Festival" Expedition

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- *GanSu Yellow-river Dragon-bay village* (22 - 40)
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*Enjoy...*

# Shanghai Arrival

## 入境上海

A view at dusk from our beautifully comfortable downtown Shanghai hotel...





The next day at dawn 7am, below our hotel, exercisers were busy already...







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Our first welcoming dinner;  
you can see nobody could wait... 😊







## *Water-town Jinxi*

江南水鄉

To ensure adapting to our travel itinerary comfortably, we took time to rest well by Starting the enjoyment from the charming Yangzi river delta area water-townships...











The commanding view with the total relaxation during our tasty dinner was a great moment...



By our hotel... A good morning is always great for our spirit and photo taking...









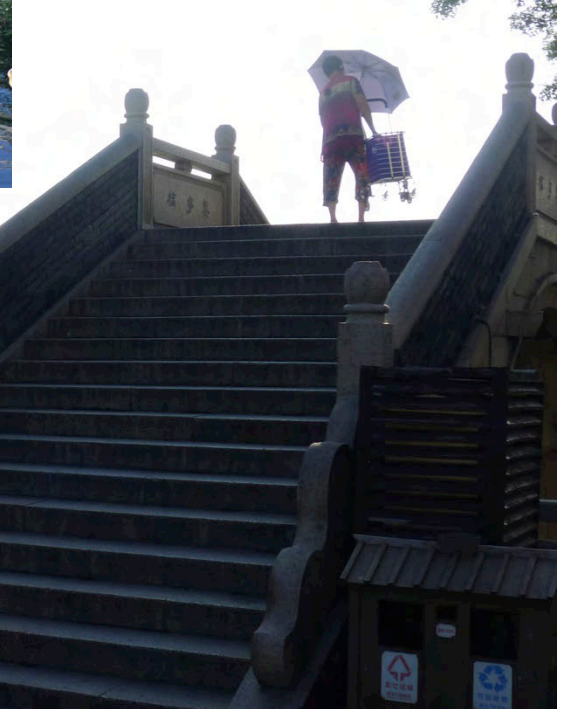
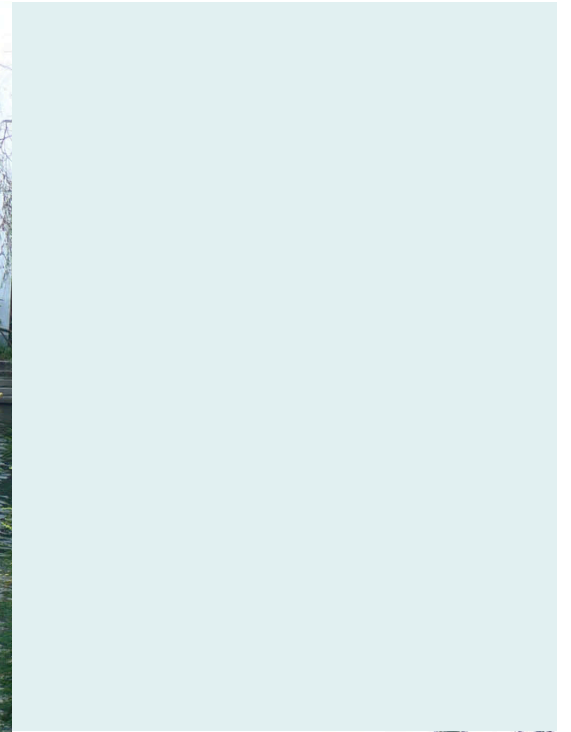
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## *GanSu province* 抵达甘肃

Flying from Shanghai, we were here mid-way in this northwestern China region to help adjusting our body to the adaptation to high altitude later when we are in Tibet region...  
We arrived late in the evening checking into this country inn that's so quiet...



A morning so beautiful, only  
birds' singing waking us up...





The farm inn is completely surrounded by fruit trees, crops, flowers... and sounds of nature...







Lookouts from our room windows...







Our courtyard...





Alan is having fun on the morning exercise machine...  
(Alan told me that after the journey, he lost 10 lbs unwanted weight...)



We are refreshed & ready for further travel in western China...





Our breakfast was so healthy, wholesome and fresh...!  
Our country inn servers just picked a whole bunch  
of juicy pears from the fruit tree by the inn for us...







## Dragon-Bay village by the Yellow River

We are in the village next to the Yellow-river...  
Staying with this family's B&B, a large house  
immersed in orchards...

Here everything we eat is fresh from the field, the  
tree, the vegetable gardens, fish from the river...  
Healthily delicious home cooking...





For thousands of years, people live around this part of the northwest China travers the river with those light weight, reliable locally made sheep skin rafts on the Yellow-river... we too had fun with it...





With the rafts ride we arrived the rock-canyon...







Some of our members prefer some good hike...





Around our B&B in the village, the house is within orchards and gardens...

For many it is a welcome change & wonderful feeling away from the noise & busy centers or cities...





The next morning we are leaving the village to the capital city Lanzhou for a train ride to Xining... Here two 7-years old met... Evan from Nova Scotia & the pink girl from Gansu who could speaks some English too...







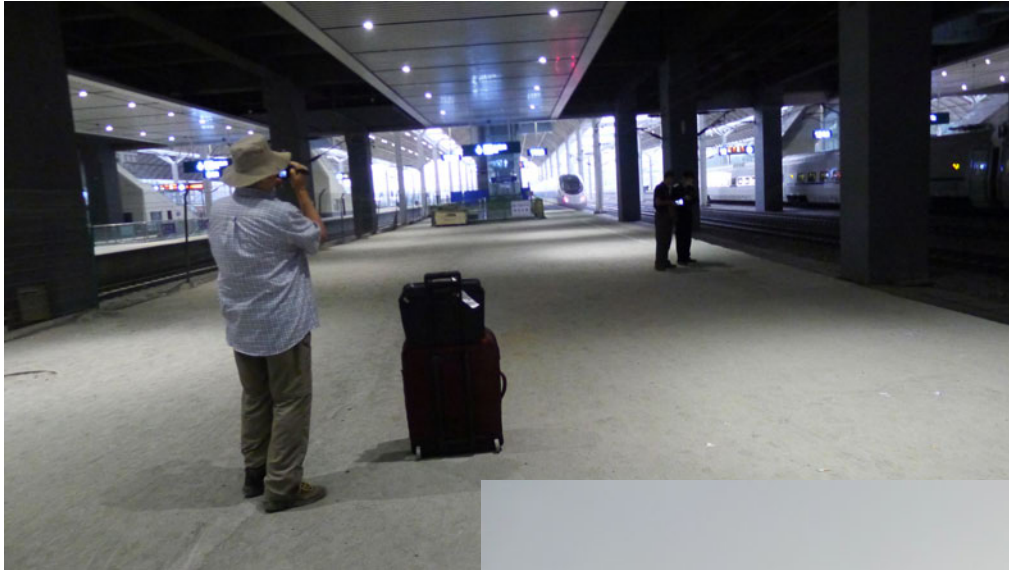
Leaving the Dragon-bay...



Before our train,  
we still had a good visit  
to the impressive Gansu  
Provincial Museum...







## 西宁火车站

Quick & comfortable, arrived Xining in no time – the capital city of Qinghai in northwest China, the next morning we'll fly from here to Tibet...

Brian is impressed with the Chinese high-speed train... which is a part of the important and efficient public transportation system in China nowadays...







Our grand dinner while in our Xining evening...





Over to “Top of the World” – on our flight to Lhasa...



# *Into Tibet*

*arrived in Lhasa*

飞抵西藏拉萨







On route to southern Tibet region...

What a familiar, happy, relaxing and almost spiritual feeling, I've been here many times...





Morning is always full of vitality...



Obviously, they got the right of way...





In Samye Monastery...  
An important and impressive  
monastery established in 8<sup>th</sup> century...





In Samye Monastery...

a local Tibetan is doing  
repair work...





## In Samye Monastery...



Local Tibetans are on “arga” works, chanting & singing in unison... making construction surfaces by repeatedly pounding with the rock tool... (see “arga” in action here in video: <https://vimeo.com/137528630>.)



In Samye Monastery...



Few monks were practicing Buddhist scripture debating in this nice courtyard...



In Samye Monastery...





A view of the 7<sup>th</sup> century Tibetan King Songtsan Ganbu's burial ground...





A view of the 7<sup>th</sup> century Tibetan King Songtsan Ganbu's first palace - "Yumbu Lakang"...





A morning view along the mighty river of Tibet – “Yarlung Tsangpo”...  
The world’s highest altitude river...





A morning view along the mighty river of Tibet – “Yarlung Tsangpo”...  
The world’s highest altitude river...







This world's highest altitude river is 2,070 km long within Tibet region, flow through the world's largest and deepest canyon – the Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Canyon before passing through India and Bangladesh into the ocean...



A Tibetan mastiff...



A Tibetan yak...



In Tashilhunpo Monastery in Shigatse, founded in 1447, is the traditional seat of successive Panchen Lamas...





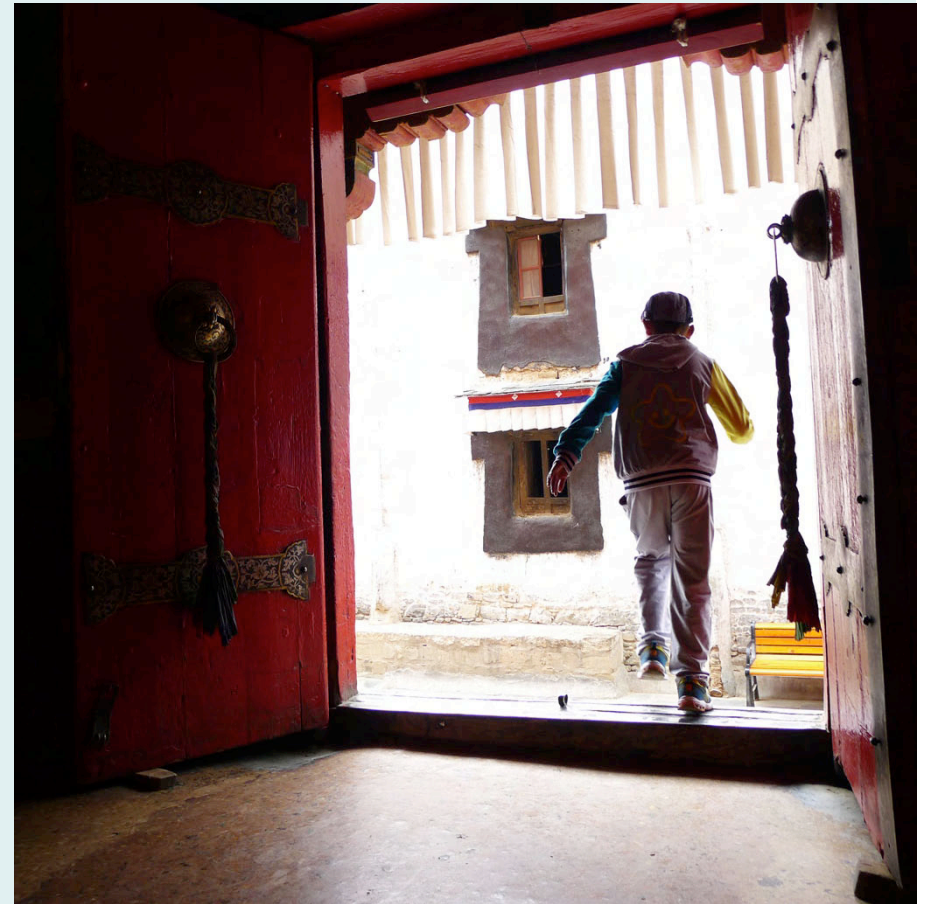
## In Tashilhunpo Monastery



A monk jumps up in delivery morning prayer flyers...



In Tashilhunpo Monastery



Pilgrims...



# In Tashilhunpo Monastery





## In Tashilhunpo Monastery



Lamas are in their Buddhist scripture debating practice...  
(see scripture debating practice in action here in video: <https://vimeo.com/137544274> )



On route from Shigatse to Gyangze we randomly stopped by a village, Drolma – a very pleasant & warm Tibetan girl (dressed in white standing with her sister) warmly invited us into her spacious family house, a wonderful cultural visit. Drolma is a university student studying in Beijing, at home for summer vacation, she told us that after her study she want to come back working for her village.





Gyantse – a historically important township in Tibet. The Gyantse Fortress is a prominent landmark, seen here in background with this group of happy locals...





In Gyantse...





In Gyantse – a view from our hotel windows to the prominent landmark of Gyantse Fortress...





On route back to Lhasa...







On route back to Lhasa...  
Right side on our country road is the newly completed Lhasa-Shigatse railroad...



On route back to Lhasa...



Alan - a farmer from Ohio is inspecting the roadside crop field...

As seen on this milestone, here is exactly 4,747km from Shanghai central square...



On route back to Lhasa...  
Season of harvesting – Tibetan farmers working on fields...





In Lhasa... the morning of Shoton Festival in Drepung Monastery's hilltop, the ritual accompanied with the grand trumpets call to display the huge figure of Sakyamuni thangka...





The Shoton Festival last several days in Lhasa, including the tradition of grand performance of Tibetan Opera in Norbulingka Park...





Norbulingka – the traditional summer residence of Dalai Lamas in Lhasa...  
A part of the UNESCO World Heritage site Ensemble along with Potala Palace & Jokhang Temple Monastery...





Norbulingka – the traditional summer residence of Dalai Lamas in Lhasa...  
is nowadays a favorite go to place for the Lhasa common Tibetans...





Norbulingka – the traditional summer residence of Dalai Lamas in Lhasa...  
is nowadays a favorite go to place for the Lhasa residents...

*“smile mother...”*





In Lhasa - a view from our comfortable Lhasa hotel windows...





In Lhasa...



One of our many delicious good meals,  
tonight is Tibetan style...





The last morning in Lhasa...  
a morning walk around the  
famous Barkhor Street...





The last morning in Lhasa...  
a morning walk around the famous Barkhor Street...

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The completion of a wonderful expedition journey...

Do we need a summary? Look at the smiles, that's the greatest summary... 😊





# *Epilog*

The snapshots in this Photo-diary are in no way able to represent the richness of culture and nature scenes we've seen, the fun and joy we've experienced during our group's "2015 August China Expedition" ...

for Yau-Sun Tong's special "Western China Cultural/Photographic Series" expeditions for 2016

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<http://photoart.chebucto.org/photonews.html>

*Good-bye for now...*



For July 2016 - An exclusive expedition journey through Genghis Khan's Hulunbuir grasslands, during the famous Mongolian *Naadam festival*, explore the wonders along China's extreme Northeastern borders with Mongolia & Russia



Then continue to the fascinating southern Sichuan's Yi people region, partaking the *one of a kind Yi festival* in July; and the beauties of nature & cultures in this part of the Southwestern China...



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