

**A Photographic Diary of our 2017 May-June Special China Expedition:  
A Journey by Train to “Top of the World”  
by Yau-Sun Tong**

*I'm nearly overwhelmed but very much rejuvenated.*

*Sitting in a country villa high in the hills of the Katmandu valley  
I'm afforded the time to reflect on our journey. Beijing, Xian, Xining,  
Lhasa, Xigaze, Gyangze, Mt. Everest, Kathmandu, and countless  
other towns, villages, monasteries, temples and fortresses.*

*My goals for this trip were to have unique cultural experiences,  
reignite my passion for taiji, and lose weight. Last night, while  
laying in a hammock under a full moon as midnight slipped  
past I came to realize I feel I've fully achieved it all... ..*

*Thanks,*

*Kirk G. - Calgary, Alberta*



**Beijing, Shaanxi Mt. HuaShan, Qinghai, Tibet Autonomous Region with Mt. Everest basecamp, Nepal**

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# Preface

All following images within this “**Photo-diary**” were taken mostly with a *cellphone*, the rest few taken with a little *pocket-sized Leica D-Lux 5 camera*.

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.

A cellphone & 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 that...

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  
《*May26 - June11, 2017 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 17-day  
journey – another successful one of our ongoing specially arranged  
**Western China Cultural/Photographic Series Expeditions.**

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

**Featuring:** Beijing entry; by train all the way... to Shaanxi province, the famed Mt. Huashan; Qinghai Province with local culture & festival etc.; an extraordinary visit to “Top-of-the-world” – **Tibet Autonomous Region**, and up onto the Mt. Everest basecamp with visits to many worthy local culture and nature...; cross into Nepal...; finally a flight to Hong Kong for exit...  
An experience of a lifetime!

June 2017 – A Special Cultural/Photographic Expedition  
A journey by Train to “Top of the World” - Tibet... Featuring:

Beijing entry, then completely travel by train, but stopping by some unique places along our way, e.g. in Northwestern China’s ShaanXi & Qinghai provinces for impressive historical, culture and nature visits; Riding on the World’s best-view railroad from Xining to Tibet for an extraordinary visit of the mystical land; with our private coach exploring the unique southwest Tibet’s Gyirong region with beautiful nature & culture... and the Mt. Everest area. Then cross into Nepal to Kathmandu for our flight to Hong Kong exit. Another uncommon journey of a lifetime designed and led by Yau-Sun Tong!

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《2017中国西北地区、西藏地区及尼泊尔民俗风光文化摄影行》

## 2017 by Train to "To of the World" - Tibet...

# Table of Contents

The following point-and-shoot snapshots are chronologically classified into the following categories:

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- *itinerary map* (5)
- *Beijing arrival* (7 - 12)
- *Shaanxi province* (13 - 22)
- *Qinghai province* (23 - 39)
- *Tibet Autonomous Region* (40 - 98)
- *cross into Nepal* (99 - 112 )
- *Hong Kong exit* (113)
- *epilog* (114)

Enjoy...

## Beijing Arrival

### 入境北京

Late May,  
parks in  
Beijing have  
been in full  
grown green ...

A view at the  
Purple Bamboo  
Garden Park ...





Still in Purple Bamboo Garden  
久违了，紫竹院公园...





After my wonderful big breakfast in our comfortable and conveniently located 5-star hotel... It is time for me out to the parks to observe the masses participations... & for Taiji... 😊





Parks in China different from those in the west is that there are full of people happily exercise openly daily mornings... “Participation” is the name of the game seen everywhere...

地壇公园, 这个熟悉的地方, 以前常来此跟随馮志强老师學習心意混元陳式太極拳...

Our delicious Peking Duck dinner...

Fresh, healthy good foods with multiple local flavours & styles are always part of the daily “tortures” of our expeditions...

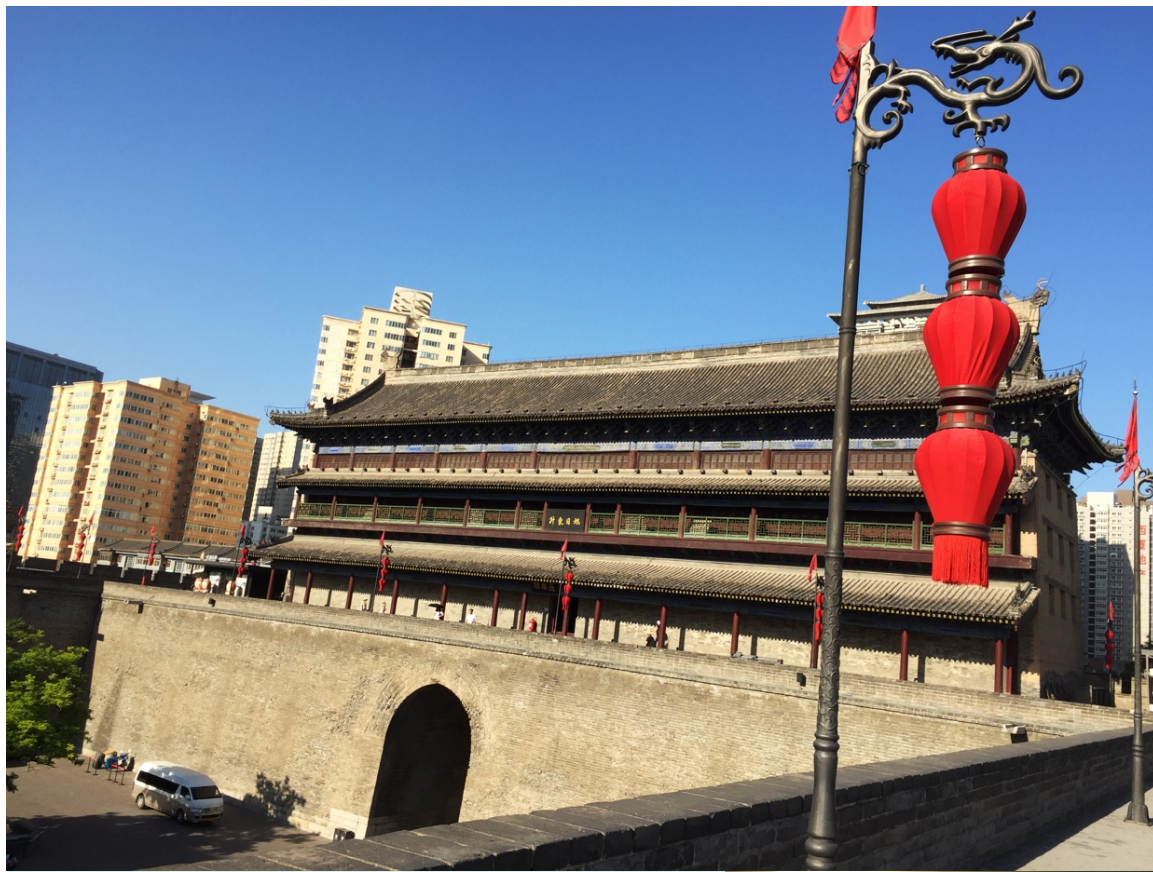




It will be many many good meals daily with our journey... three-times daily 😊

However many of participants lost weight during our expedition... due to the healthy good foods & daily activities 👍





Arrive Xi'an...

## *High speed train to Shaanxi*

高铁到陕西...

Nowadays, the new modern high-speed train system is a great way of traveling in many parts of China...

From the photo inside our cabin, you can see the post speed at that moment was just over 300 km/h. Still below it's designed speed of 350km/h or higher... very stable, quiet & comfortable too...





Streets are full of local spectacles...









Fascinatingly up on Mt. Huashan – one of the “Five Spiritual Mountains of China”... 西嶽華山，雖未論劍亦可賞風光...





Some of our members are happy to be back in 2,000 yrs ago... 😄





However the local cuisine is as tasty back then as now...  
The spectacle of the “hand-pulled noodles” making  
is as interesting as the taste of the dish itself... 😊  
真正地道可口的手拉麵呀...

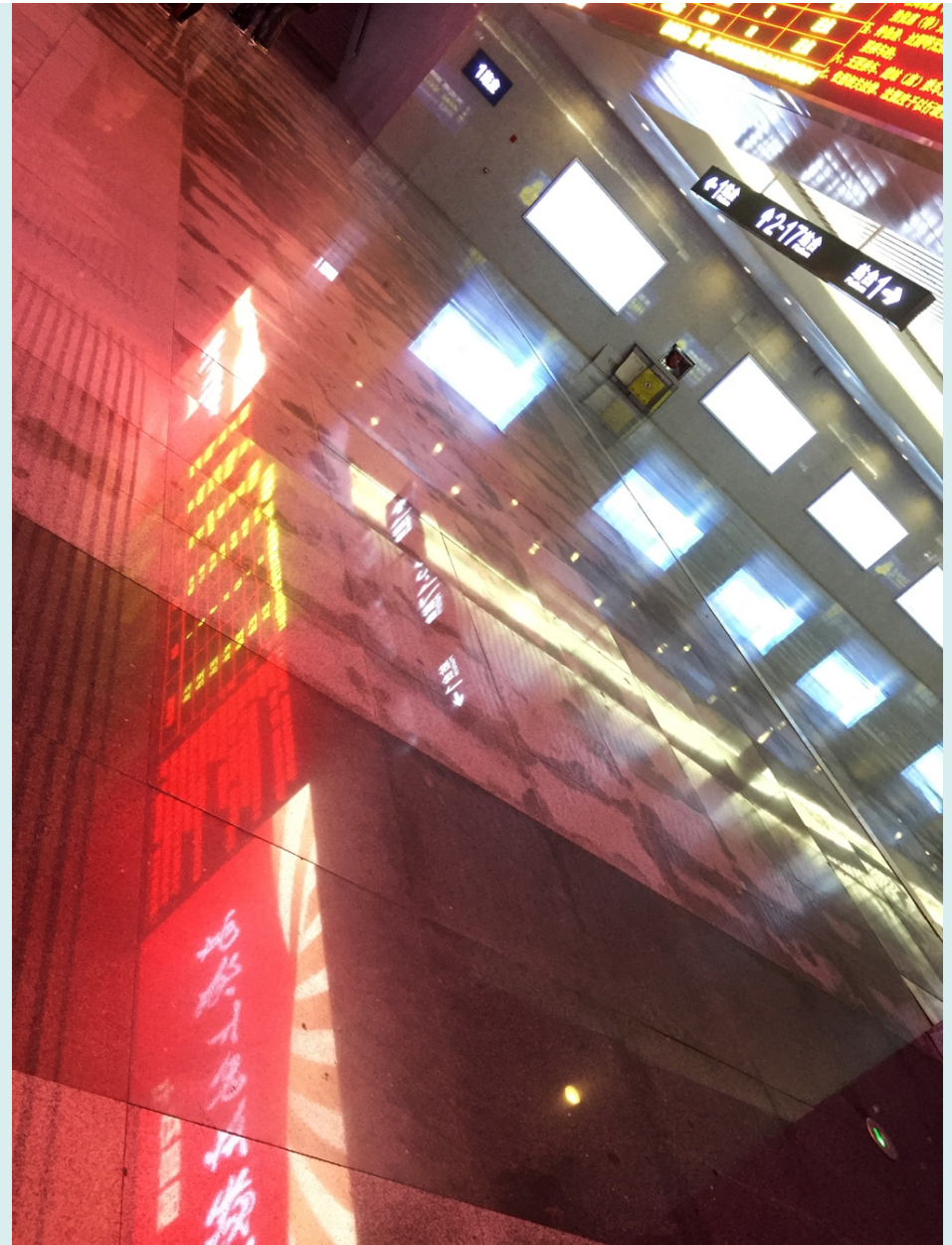




Archeology discoveries are fascinating in this province...

Yes, we are ready to train to the next stop...





*Qinghai province* 抵达青海

Our train just arrived Qinghai province...



## Qinghai province 抵达西寧

Upon our early morning arrival, the first thing is a good & quick local tasty breakfast noodle ... Kirk is eagerly awaiting for the main course of a big bowl of noodle to be brought onto the table... 佐菜來了，趕快上主食麵條！ 😊







Few local visits...

Our purpose of being in Qinghai is to gradually adapting to the rising altitude (at this point 2,600m)... in order to get ready for our destination – the highland of Tibet region... 🙌 which will be 3,600m to 5,600m during our journey upcoming... 🤔



Scott mingles well with the locals, they warmly welcome our western visitors...



Local cuisines are tasty...





The torture continues to be fresh, healthy, tasty... 👍



At dusk, we were welcomed into this historical mosque, experiencing together with the local Muslims for the Ramadan beginning celebration...

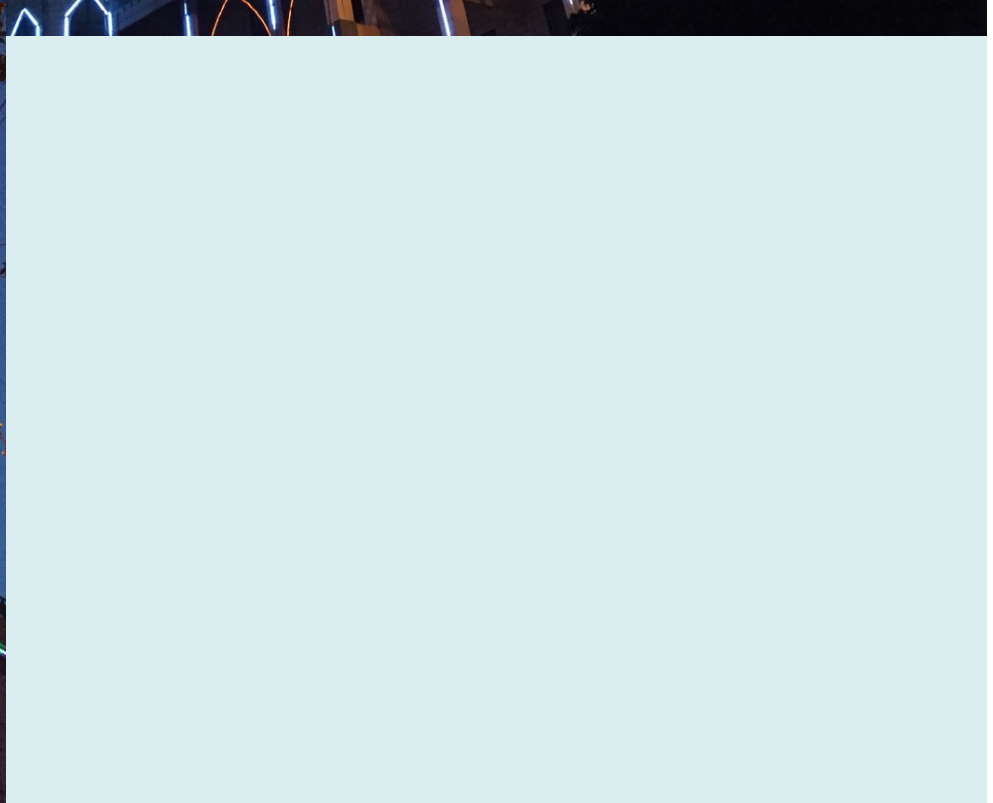
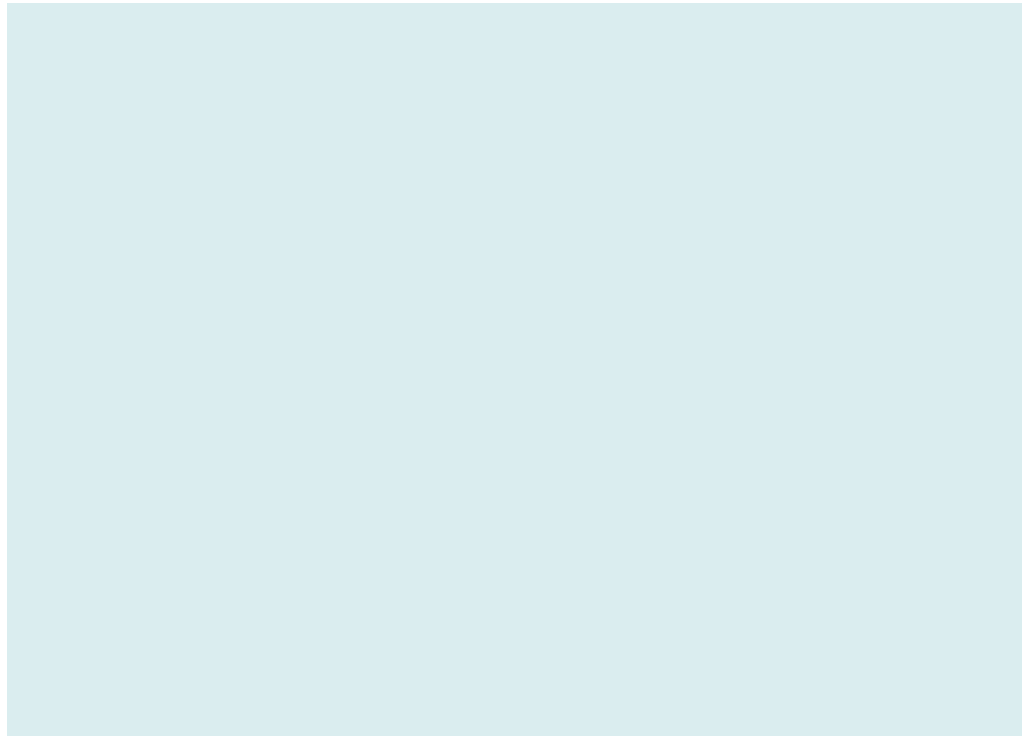






Curious & friendly interaction...







Time to the highlight of our expedition... we aboard the Qinghai-Tibet high-altitude train from Xining to Lhasa... The 23-hrs ride going through some of the most spectacular landscapes, and well over 5,000 meters in elevation...

The train is sealed for oxygen... as well has on board oxygen-generation system...

Our tour's national guide and the luggage helper are helping our members to arrange luggage into the cabin rooms...

The national guide and the luggage helper had done great works during our entire itinerary, always actively helping our members in many things...



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Along the way...



Meals on board the train is not too shabby either...



Some passengers got off the train to get a quick shot during the short stop over Ge'ermu station – the beginning of the #2 phase of Qinghai-Tibet railroad...

And along our way with countless window-views... (see next couple snapshots)









*Into Tibet*  
*arrived in Lhasa*

抵達西藏拉薩



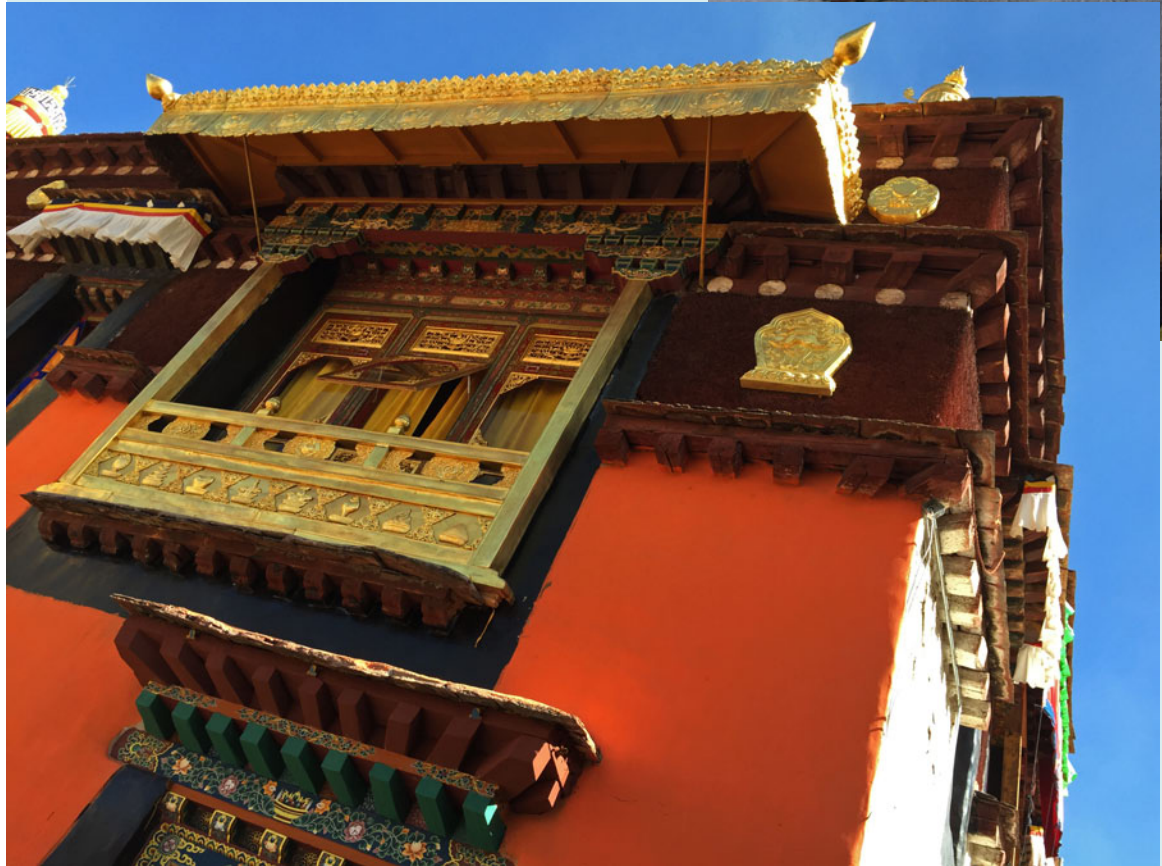
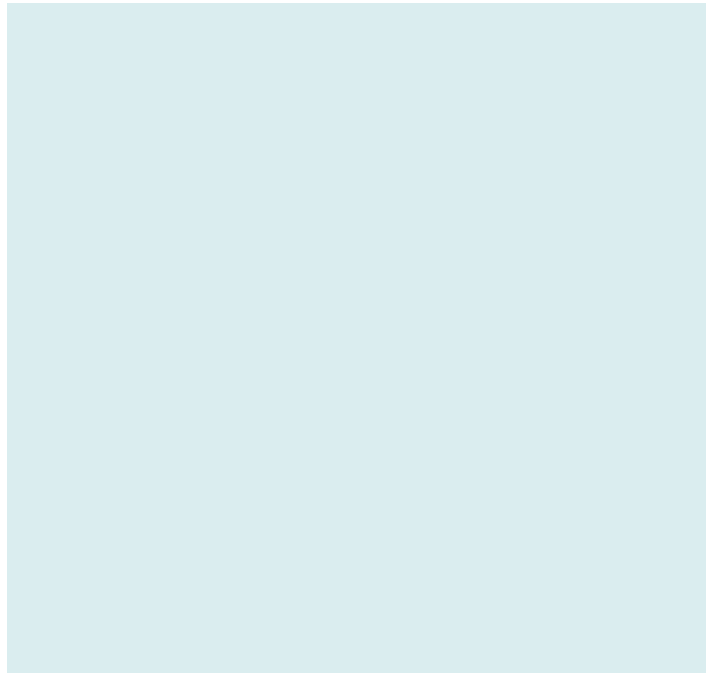
Just out of Lhasa train station,  
awaiting for going to our private  
coach to our nice hotel...





Pilgrims outside of Jokhang Monastery...











A refreshing  
Nepali meal...









Good eating is always enjoyable...



By train from Lhasa we arrived the second important city in Tibet – Shigatse...









Meals are still great... 🍷

But our morning Taiji is an even better nutrition... 🙏

(see photo on next page – morning Taiji by our hotel garden...)

下页：我们团员们晨曦练太极)





Stopping as often as we can to visit real local lives,  
interacting with real cultures is a norm of our expedition... 👍







On route to Mt. Everest basecamp, we passed by this junction point - 5,000 km away from Shanghai... of course it is not the first time for me being at this point already... every time with new feelings 😊







We are entering into the Mt. Qomolangma National Park area – the world’s highest elevation national park...

The elevation is certainly being felt... as our driver is needing a puff of oxygen supplement reaching this very high altitude area... 😊





However the other  
“torture” is still  
healthily tasty...





We reached the little town – Tingri, prepare for our next day’s journey to the basecamp...

And settled in this still comfortable hotel, at 4,300 meter altitude...



Up at 5am on route... we are charging towards Mt. Everest... nature often rewards the early risers... 🙏  
here we are seeing the 8848m peak of Mt. Everest right at far left... so often it is covered by clouds  
for days or even weeks, visitors longing but couldn't see it's face which is a norm... but we are so lucky! 😊



Yes, at the foothill of the Everest, there are peaceful villages...



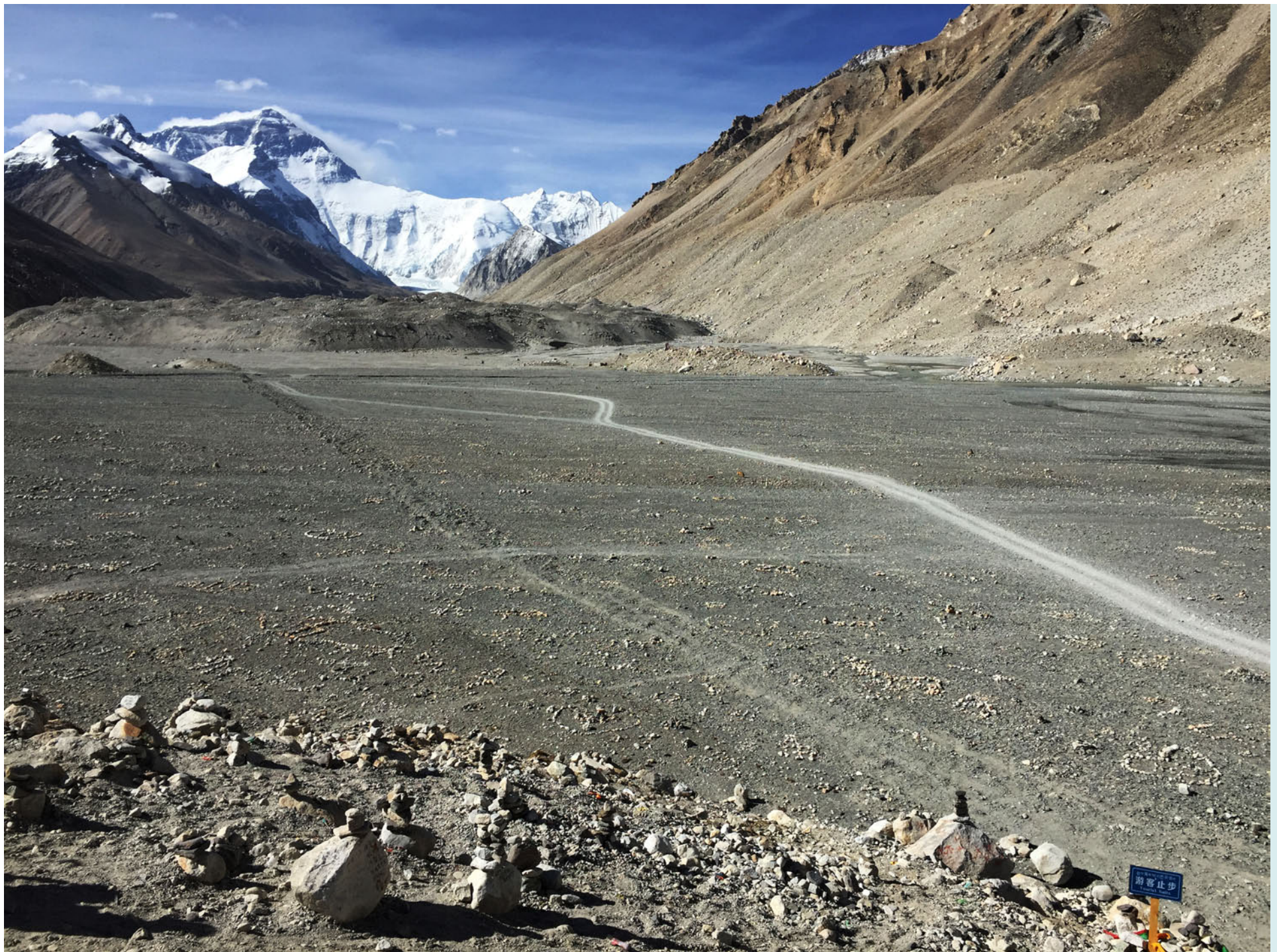


Very “close” to it now 终于驻足在珠峰大本营...

(see next page snapshot for the face of Mt. Everest from this location...)





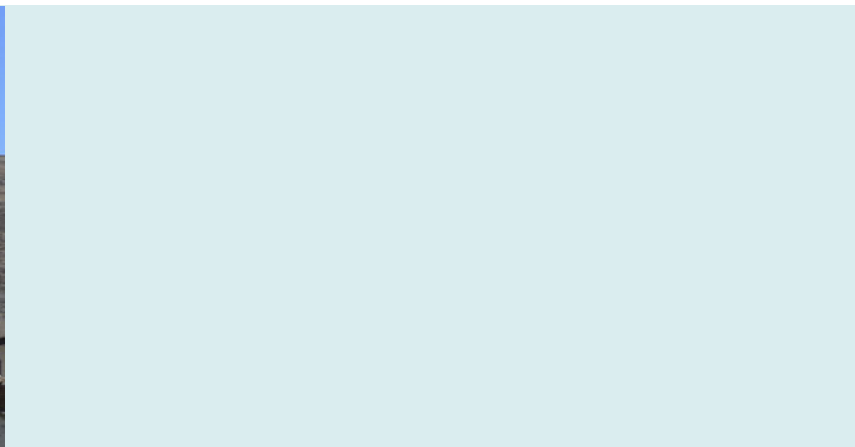


Yes, from here we can walk up to climb Everest... but we are not allowed... 😞



After back down from as high as 5,600m, on route we are towards Gyantse...





去江孜路上...









Maintain a healthy, fresh, tasty nutritious diet is a Important task for our expedition... 😊







加工青稞的水磨房...



A roadside primitive yet effective, most environmentally friendly hydraulic stone mill is grinding the highland-barley flour... which is a staple in Tibet region...



Gyantse, an important town with long history & strategy location... we are here now...









A walk up onto the famous Gyantse fortress...



江孜宗山城堡...



Before sun rising, Kirk and Nikki have been following me Taiji under the Gyantse Fortress... 🍷





Leaving Gyantse, we continue the journey via another road towards the way back to Lhasa...











A glacier at 5,560m elevation...



at 4,440m elevation, 74km long... Lake Yamdrok is one of the three famous secret-lakes in Tibet...  
a big Tibetan mastiff and a tiny 10-day old lamb are being displayed by their owner for tourist's shots...  
while Heather, Gudrun and Danny are relaxing their views over the lake to the distanced mountains...









Lunch at a little village restaurant is very enjoyable, quiet, fresh veggies, with a genuine folk singer...





The shirt prints  
“Adidas”, but the  
singing was pure  
Tibetan’s... 😊





Don't run Nikki... we'll wait for you...

A less than 2-hrs flight from Lhasa took us from the “Shangri-La” to the busy, hectic, dusty, chaotic and congested Kathmandu...



*Into Nepal  
arrived in Kathmandu*  
抵达尼泊尔的加德满都

Our local Nepali guide with the coach has been awaiting for our arrival... and started the last leg of the journey in our itinerary...



Scenes in Kathmandu old town...



The Nagarkot village area 30 some kilometers away from Kathmandu is a wonderful refuge for relaxation, and to enjoy a northern view towards the southern slope of the Himalayas in a clear day...





The morning of Nagarkot is nice with a camera for the village lives ...

(with me is a cellphone ... 🤖 which is more challenge trying to get good images... )









Buses to Kathmandu...  
去加德满都的大巴士站...





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Prepare for the fast & furious... 🙄

Soldiers' morning run...



Don't forget doggy wanting some breakfast too...



STD. IS  
LOCAL PHONE

SIN

Sar

MAKE AN  
IMPRESSION



Drink Responsably



After breakfast back in the resort, we are back to the city of Kathmandu for some more visits...







## *Fly to Hong Kong for exit ...*

A little more than 5-hrs flight took us from Kathmandu to Kong Kong for the international exit of our fascinating journey...



Hong Kong exit for home returns...  
a grand completion of our  
expedition... 😊 🙌

从加德满都飞抵香港离境，旅程圆满结束...

# 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 "2017 by Train to Top of the World Expedition" ...

for Yau-Sun Tong's special "Western China Cultural/Photographic Series" non-commercial expeditions for 2017 & 2018

e.g. the 2017 November **"Train through the WonderLands" Expedition** :  
<http://photoart.chebucto.org/2017-november.html>

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please visit news page:

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

Good-bye for now...