

000207 Departure

Hello! I am writing this email before I take off for China to let you know what I have learned so far and to make sure that I have all of the email addresses written correctly.

In less than 24 hours I will be somewhere over the US or Canada as the plane makes its way from JFK to Seoul. There are six people who are in the program at Yantai. The members of the group are from all over the US, so we will be flying separately. I will be meeting one other person in New York and we will be catching up to everyone else in Seoul. From Seoul we fly down to Shanghai where the group will spend a few days to shake off some of our jet lag and to enjoy the remnants of the new year's celebration.

From Shanghai we fly up to Yantai where we will have orientation for the first few weeks. From what I understand, the orientation includes language study and instructions regarding how to teach English in a Chinese classroom. I am not sure where we will be staying at this point since not all of the group will stay in Yantai. Some of the group will be staying as far away as three hours outside of the city at various schools.

I will be teaching at a middle school located in Yantai, itself. The middle school is for 12 to 16 year olds who can either live at the school or at home. The boarding school part is supposed to be pretty new and nice. The non-boarding school is more run down and the students are in larger classes. I will be teaching both the boarding and non-boarding school students. The classes can range in size from 40 to 60 students. I am finding these numbers to be a little intimidating! The boarding students start their day at 5:30 AM and end at 9PM. From what I have hear from the former volunteers at the school, a great deal of this time is spent in classes. They students are driven out of fear of examinations that they will face and so there is great pressure to succeed.

I am afraid that I may have to keep these hours as well for I will be living at the school. There is a special section of the school where the volunteer teachers live. It is a 5th floor apartment that has two bedrooms, a common room, a kitchen and a bathroom that was designed for twelve people. The large bathroom has been billed as ideal for doing laundry. The other person in the apartment will be another WorldTeach volunteer, although I am not sure who it is yet. In all I am happy with the sound of the arrangements. However, since the school gates are closed and locked at 9PM, that means no nightlife for me!

Yantai itself is described in the Lonely Planet as being someplace that you go only to catch a ferry to elsewhere. It is a busy seaport with two beaches. To show their ingenuity with names, the officials of the town named the beaches: beach number one and beach number two. The various guidebooks can not agree which is better, so I will let you know. There is an international seamen's bar which is not for the fainthearted. However, in the past two months, four other bars have opened as well as a new market, so maybe I will be missing something. We shall see.

Well, I will let you know what Yantai is really like in one of my upcoming emails. It will probably take me a while to figure out where the cyber café is so that I can access my

account, so please be patient. I may use one of my other accounts to email you, but please respond to this address since I will use it as my primary address. I would love to hear from you, but please remember not to send jokes and the like because I will be paying to use the computer and possibly per email and I am not sure of download times. And if you would like to be removed from this mailing list, please let me know.

My flights are:

Boston to JFK: Delta 80 departs at 5:10 PM on the 7th and arrives in JFK at 6:20
JFK to Seoul: Asiana 221 departs at 10:40 PM on the 7th and arrives at 6:30 am on the 9th
Seoul to Shanghai: Asiana 3335 departs at 9:20 AM and arrives at 10:10 AM

I am not sure of my Shanghai to Yantai flight. From what I have heard about the Chinese airlines, I am not looking forward to being one of their customers. Please keep me in your prayers tomorrow and on whatever day we take the Chinese airline.

I do have my snail-mail address and I do not use that phrase lightly! I am including it in a PDF file which has both the romanized and pinyin versions. The PDF file is called chinese_address.pdf. Characters are a much better way of addressing the mail. You can cut out the address and paste it to letters or big care packages :) . Mail can take from 2 to 6 weeks to arrive depending on who you talk with. Please also mark any boxes with the words "gift" or "personal effects" or I may have to pay a tax to get them at the other end. I will try to get the characters for these words emailed out on Monday, but I may run out of time.

Well, that is about it for now. Take care and I will email again soon!

Jeff

Next  | [Return to Main Page](#)
