Congratulations

Congratulations on your assignment as a China teacher. On behalf of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at Brigham Young University, we wish you a rewarding and enlightening experience. At this historic time of rapid and momentous change in the world, your participation in this program underscores the university’s and the Church’s commitment to be involved in China.

This handbook offers general information to assist you in preparing for your teaching assignment and settling in after your arrival in China. It is meant to supplement your readings on China and the August workshop conducted at the Kennedy Center. Recently returned China teachers, particularly those who taught at your university or lived in your city, are the best source of specific information on what to expect, what to bring, and how to make the most of your experience.

China is a vast, rapidly changing country, with a complex and evolving educational system and tremendous variation from place to place, person to person, and year to year. Reports from former China teachers reveal the very different reactions two individuals may have to a similar situation. The best tools you can bring to your assignment are adaptability to unexpected situations, an open mind, a readiness to learn from the challenges you meet, and enjoyment of friendship along the way.

You have a wonderful opportunity to make positive contributions to the great Chinese people. We will do all that we can to facilitate your good work and to make your experience in China both memorable and rewarding. This year will be a highlight in your life and in the lives of your students. We hope that you happily enjoy all of the fruits of this significant labor of service.

Jeffrey Ringer, China Teachers Program director
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The People’s Republic of China

The People’s Republic of China (PRC) is roughly the same geographic size as the United States. It has a diverse landscape ranging from the Himalayas to the Gobi Desert and to fertile coastal plains that extend from the Russian border to the South China Sea. China shares borders with fourteen nations: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma (Myanmar), India, Kazakhstan, North Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Vietnam. Its climatic range is as broad as the differences between Maine and Arizona or between Wisconsin and Hawaii. It ranges from sub-arctic in the north to sub-tropical in the south.

China is home to 1.38 billion people—92 percent of whom are Han Chinese, with the remaining 8 percent scattered among fifty-five ethnic minorities, including a large Muslim population in the northwest. The national language is Mandarin Chinese. The dominant religions in China are Buddhism, Daoism, and Islam. Because much of China is covered by mountains or desert, the majority of the people live in the east. There are twenty-three provinces, five autonomous regions, and four municipalities.

China is one of the world’s oldest civilizations, spanning some five thousand years. Emperors of the Tang, Han, Ming, Qing, and lesser dynasties ruled China for almost two thousand years. Isolated for centuries, China was gradually opened, and exploited, by foreigners in the 1800s. Sun Yat-sen inspired the overthrow of the emperor in 1911. After long years of internal struggle and defeat of the Japanese in World War II, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was established 1 October 1949. The Communist Party has governed the country since that time. During the Cold War, China was largely closed to foreigners, as the Chinese people endured the famines of the Great Leap Forward and the destructions of the Cultural Revolution.

Finally, in 1977, the bamboo curtain was drawn back by Premier Deng Xiaoping. Since that time, growth and increasing prosperity have dramatically changed China. It has become a developing nation powerhouse. The huge population, uneven growth, and changing political realities still offer challenges, but the Chinese people are proud of what they have
accomplished and are optimistic about the future. Visitors and guests will find them to be warm, friendly, happy, patriotic, and rapidly becoming more prosperous.

China Teachers Program—An Overview

Program Description

The China Teachers Program (CTP) is a nonprofit program supported by Brigham Young University and administered by the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at BYU. The program is certified by the People’s Republic of China (PRC) State Administration of Foreign Expert Affairs (SAFEA).

Since the program’s inception in 1989, approximately 1,500 teachers have been placed in over one hundred Chinese Universities. They have taught tens of thousands of Chinese students. For many of them, our teachers have been the only native-speaking teachers they have met and spoken with. It has been a life-changing experience for both students and teachers.

Program Goals

• Provide services to our affiliated Chinese universities in English instruction and selected content areas for the enrichment of Chinese university students.

• Provide academic and cultural ties between BYU, the Kennedy Center, and Chinese universities, in order to promote understanding, trust, and academic exchange opportunities.

• Provide an opportunity for the CTP teachers to absorb the ancient and modern culture of China firsthand and to enable them to develop friendship and respect for Chinese students, faculty, and the People’s Republic of China.

• Provide Chinese students an intimate and extended exposure to American teachers and their Western teaching styles in order to increase their English-language skills and their awareness of American culture.
Program Development

1977—Deng Xiaoping opened the People’s Republic of China to foreign visitors and business.

1979—BYU Young Ambassadors toured China.


1988—China Teachers Program proposed to Elder Dallin H. Oaks, by BYU under the direction of President Jeffrey R. Holland.

1989—Board accepted CTP proposal. Agreement reached with Foreign Experts Bureau. First official group of nineteen teachers were placed in China.

1989–2009—Each year increasing numbers of teachers were placed with Chinese universities.

2008–2009—The twentieth CTP class consisted of seventy-four teachers (plus approximately twelve “friends”) who taught at nineteen excellent universities in eight Chinese cities.

2010–16—Number of teachers averaged between seventy-three and seventy-eight teachers in seventeen universities.

Because of the inherent uncertainties and the limited financial benefits of the program, a high percentage of our teachers have been retired couples. In addition to retirees, we have also placed single men and women, and mid-career couples on sabbaticals. Our placement profile continues to change as we negotiate better terms for our teachers and as the Chinese become more interested in people with technical backgrounds. The CTP and our hosts place high value on the maturity, professionalism, and high moral character of our teachers.

The strength of the program has been the mature couples and the very fact that they could cope with the challenges . . . not everyone is suited for teaching in China. Our successful teachers are a special breed. One has to be mature, courageous, adaptive, culturally sensitive, and a “happy camper.” Retired couples with these qualities have been the backbone of an extraordinarily successful program.

—Ray Hillam, a former Kennedy Center director

Program Administrators

Jeff Ringer, director of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies, also serves as the China Teachers Program director. He is aided by Alan and Kim Malan, China Teachers Program deputy directors.
Recruiting and Placement Process

1. December: Opportunities for new China Teachers are announced in the Church News and in the Church Service Opportunities web site.

2. 31 January: To receive priority acceptance, applications should be received by this date for the following academic year. However, slots are sometimes available after this date, so we encourage all who are interested to contact us about openings.

3. About 1 March: The China Teachers Program sends teacher recommendations, applications, and copies of passports and diplomas for each applicant to Chinese universities.

4. Before 1 April: Most Chinese universities consider the applications and decide whether to accept them, based on their needs and the applicant’s qualifications. After acceptance decisions have been made, the universities send letters of acceptance/contracts directly to the teachers.

5. Teachers sign their contracts and send them back to the Chinese university. The "Physical Examination Record for Foreigners" must be completely filled out by the doctor. The form is then sent to the CTP office to be checked and stamped before continuing on to the university. Teachers are responsible to collect all original laboratory blood test results, x-rays, and EKG. These must be hand-carried to China.

6. The Chinese university will then obtain a Letter of Invitation and a Work Permit from the Bureau of Foreign Expert Affairs for each teacher and send them to the China Teachers Program office.

7. June: Teachers send completed visa applications, passports, and visa fees to the China Teachers Program. Teachers will begin arranging personal affairs for their departure.

8. The China Teachers Program will send Letters of Invitation, visa applications, and passports to the Chinese Embassy in San Francisco, to obtain Z visas for the teachers.

9. August: All new China Teachers attend a mandatory, information-packed China Teachers Training Seminar at the Kennedy Center.

10. End of August: Teachers leave for their teaching positions, assisted in their travel arrangements by Kennedy Center staff.

11. When teachers arrive in China, the Chinese Office of Foreign Experts will help transfer their Z visas into Resident Work Permits.
Teacher Support

Teachers have their round-trip airfare paid, free housing, and a modest salary paid by the host institution. Conditions vary widely, depending on qualifications and institution, but CTP attempts to insure that teachers have acceptable living arrangements and a salary sufficient to cover necessities. BYU and CTP are happy to be participating with partner universities and teachers who are capable of adjusting to variations in living, teaching, and cultural environments.

The China Teachers Program and Kennedy Center staff help with placement, insurance, travel, visas, etc. A two-week, one-hundred-hour, August workshop will provide valuable training and orientation for teachers. During a fall site visit, program deputy directors will meet with teachers and observe them in the classroom; deputy directors will also meet with Foreign Affairs officers and academic departments on each campus. A mid-year conference will be held in Hong Kong, where teachers will receive further training and exchange teaching experiences.

E-mail has greatly improved CTP teacher support in the field. E-mail is the usual method of communication and will be used frequently. Program facilitators make every effort to be of assistance, but teachers are expected to work independently.

Directory. To help teachers become better acquainted with one another, a directory will be prepared with pictures, addresses, and some brief biographical data. Collegiality among teachers is encouraged and the directory will help teachers get to know one another better. Teachers receive this directory at the end of the August workshop.

Alumni Association. The China Teachers Alumni Association is registered with the State of Utah. The association meets annually at October Conference time to renew friendships and to promote good relations with China. For further information, please contact the association:

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Teaching in China

Teaching Duties and Environment

Most of you will be assigned to teach English, including conversation, writing, and other topics. Occasionally, a teacher will be asked to consult or teach their professional specialty. There are two “ranks” given to foreign teachers at Chinese universities, which determine pay scales. A person with an advanced degree will probably be given the status of Foreign Expert. Holders of other degrees will be identified as Foreign Teachers.

The university where you are assigned will determine your position and duties, based on your academic qualifications and teaching experience and their needs. Your assignment, which is negotiated individually with the university, will include teaching classes approximately fourteen–sixteen hours per week. It may also involve judging debates and speech contests, giving presentations on American culture, advising the English Club, holding “English Corners,” and conducting conversation practice sessions.

The variety of teaching experiences and conditions makes it difficult to generalize. Some of you will enter a situation with a set curriculum and a fair set of teaching materials. Others of you will arrive on the scene and find no offered curriculum. However, because we have had so many teachers, a de facto set of lessons may be available. The best practice is to ask lots of questions before you leave for China. Previous teachers will be of great help to you, as will the August workshop.

You will also find that some classrooms are colder, and/or hotter, and less well equipped than what you are used to at home. On the other hand, some classrooms are equal to the best in America. Be prepared to develop curriculum and teach with the support of technology, although a few classrooms may be without technology. Your predecessors will tell you what to expect.

The best tools you can bring to your assignment are adaptability to unexpected situations, an open mind, a readiness to learn from the challenges you meet, and enjoyment of friendship along the way.

—Jeff Ringer
Preparing for Your Assignment

There is no set curriculum to prepare you for your assignment in China; preparation varies from individual to individual. The most important preparation is attitude. You must be prepared to be teachable as you teach. The August workshop will be an important part of your preparation, as will your own reading and communicating with other China Teachers from previous years.

Once selected, you are encouraged to contact current teachers at the university where you will be assigned. They will share information about technology, teaching assignments, and schedules, as well as teaching aids, lesson plans, etc. You will find them to be a great asset, not only with teaching preparation but also with information about living conditions, the university, the city, shopping, etc. Past teachers will also come to the August workshop to present teaching ideas as well as answer specific questions.

For most of you, your assignment will consist of teaching English, usually oral or sometimes written—even if you have had no previous experience. The workshop will focus intensively on teaching English, but you may get started now by going to the library or bookstore and finding books on how to teach English as a second language. Also, try to obtain as much information as possible from your school regarding the courses you will teach. This will help you focus your preparation.

Preparatory Reading. The more you learn about China prior to leaving the better. Your Chinese colleagues will be pleasantly surprised if you have a basic understanding of China’s history and culture. There are literally thousands of books to choose from. Internet searches for Chinese history, demographics, city specific information, etc., will also be very rewarding.

Learning Chinese. Unless you have previously studied the Chinese language, it is probably not worth a major commitment of time on your part in the next few months. While it would certainly be an advantage to you to speak Chinese, most of our teachers survive very well with a knowledge of numbers and a few phrases that will be taught during the workshop. For those committed to making a more sustained effort, there are a variety of approaches to learning Chinese, such as software language learning language programs, books, Internet, etc.

August Workshop

As part of the Chinese government certification of the China Teachers Program, the Kennedy Center has agreed to provide one hundred hours of instruction to you, prior to leaving for China. This is accomplished by some pre-conference assignments and a mandatory workshop held in early August.
on BYU's campus. During this two-week training, participants meet Monday through Friday, 8:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M. and some evening sessions. You are responsible for housing arrangements and transportation.

The workshop focuses on teaching English as a second language, the culture and history of China, survival Chinese language, and adaptation skills. It is also designed to foster relationships between teachers. Workshop teachers are experienced BYU faculty, program administrators, and former participants. Instructional materials include lesson plans, teaching tools, web sites, demonstrations, involvement activities, and other aids.

August Workshop content and pre-conference assignments will consist of approximately:

- 40 hours of instruction and practice in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), including teaching written and oral English, with practice lesson plans, PowerPoint, etc.
- 15 hours of Chinese culture, history, geography, and political systems.
- 15 hours of computer programs and technology training, health issues, insurance, and travel.
- 20 hours of practical, hands-on ideas and roundtables with former teachers.
- 10 hours of survival Chinese.

Miscellaneous English-Teaching Materials

There are many items you might take to China to enrich your English teaching and to use as gifts. Teachers should be selective in deciding which items will be useful for them. Many useful aids are available on the Internet or have been left by previous teachers. This list was prepared by Lynn Henrichsen, China Teachers workshop TEFL instructor:

- Miscellaneous pictures clipped from ads, illustrations, magazines, and catalogs to illustrate people, clothing, actions, objects, interesting situations, etc.
- Simple, easy-to-transport items representative of American culture: restaurant menus, cartoons, newspaper ads, etc.
- Postcards of scenes from your home town and state.
- Tourist brochures, maps, flyers, and travel posters.
- Pictures of your home and family, kitchen, favorite places, things, friends, school, shops, etc.
- Small gifts/souvenirs characteristic of your home area (pins, key chains, pens, etc.).
• Cultural materials (pictures, decorations, etc.) connected with various American holidays: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Fourth of July (Christmas and Valentine’s Day are well known in China).
• Basketball-related items, trading cards, magazines (Sorry, American football and baseball are not popular in China.).
• Labels from food cans and packaged goods for reading practice and role-play/skit props.
• Samples of American coins, currency, and postage stamps.
• World almanac, fact books, Guinness Book of World Records for reference and conversation.
• Copies of the Reader’s Digest and similar magazines with short, readable stories of interest.
• Basic American history and/or geography books, travel atlas, and maps.
• Copies of good children’s literature books.
• Music and words for songs you know how to play/sing. Perhaps a small musical instrument.
• CDs with English songs (popular, folk, children’s etc.).
• Audio/video recordings of American daily life: a family meal, phone call, radio show, etc.
• Audio/video of special events with cultural themes: rodeo, parade, community celebration, etc.
• English-language publications are available in China. Both the China Daily and the Beijing Review are government controlled. Foreign newspapers and magazines may also be found.

Again, talk to the teachers you are replacing. Many of these suggested items are already in the apartment.

**Being Professional in Your Teaching**

Your primary responsibility is to *deliver a professional service* to the Chinese institution that employs you. The success that CTP has enjoyed is a direct result of the excellent work of our past teachers. Many foreigners go to China to teach, hiding ulterior motives: proselyting, partying, finding a spouse, or simply getting away from home. We have been told many times by Chinese officials that our people are different. It is this difference that has put our teachers in such great demand.

Our agreement with the Chinese government reads as follows:

All teachers will observe the laws of China and the regulations of the host institution. While they may practice their own religion, they
shall respect both the religious policy and moral norms and customs of China and shall not conduct any activities incompatible with their status as a teacher. Specifically, they will not discuss religion generally or answer questions about their own religion either in class, in public places, or the privacy of their own housing. They will neither distribute religious materials and information nor suggest places where such information may be procured.

You will likely be asked about your religious beliefs by your students, co-workers, and others with whom you come in contact. When this happens, you should explain our agreement with their government and drop the subject. You must not teach religion and must not proselyte. This also means that you are not to distribute copies of the Book of Mormon or other Church materials in any way. The Church has worked diligently to follow Chinese laws, and teachers must not do anything that would jeopardize the Church’s standing.

**Professional Guidelines.** You are guests of the Chinese. We want you to project a positive, professional image for BYU and for its sponsor. You should dress and act professionally in all circumstances.

In the classroom:

- Be on time and be prepared.
- Explain evaluation criteria at the beginning. Grade all papers thoroughly.
- Hand assignments back on time with helpful comments.
- Have all activities appropriate for college-age students.
- Be sensitive when calling on students. Do not cause them to lose face.
- Be warm and supportive with students, so that they will gain confidence.
- Take pictures of students and memorize their names.
- Do not change class hours or days. Do not change exam hours.

In your apartment:

- Don’t have students over too often. (Once a month is a good rule).
- Give all students an equal opportunity to visit. No visit should be longer than 1/2 hour.
- Never have a single student in the apartment. Never be alone with a student.
- Never let them shower or nap in your apartment.
- Be wise. Be vigilant.
In all interactions:

• Do not over-fraternize with students. Do not become too familiar with them nor let them become too familiar with you (for example, call you “mom” or “dad”), either in or outside the classroom.
• Do not counsel students on personal problems.
• Do not do for one student what you cannot do for all your students, or what other teachers in the future may not be able to do in terms of gifts, etc.
• Never give money to a student, or tell them you can get them into America.

In your personal life:

• Dress professionally. Ties are appropriate for male teachers or at least a shirt with a collar; dress pants are suitable for women.
• Act professionally. No slouching, chewing gum, etc.
• Accept the teaching times and classes assigned to you.
• Never, never try to counsel them or their system. You will fit into their system and do what you have committed to do, i.e., teach oral and written English.
• Be sensitive toward your Foreign Affairs office representative (“waiban” in Chinese). Do not complain.
• Do not ask for special privileges (special days off for tours, etc.). If there is an emergency, work with your waiban.
• Always check with your waiban before leaving the city. It is a courtesy, but to Chinese universities it is much more.
• Never talk about the Church. Do not give information about the Church or where information may be obtained. Do not try to see how close you can get to the line!
• Be happy and enjoy the challenges and surprises.
Chinese Teaching Style and Students

Chinese teachers are authority figures, knowledge givers, and disciplinarians. “Intensive Reading” is the basis of the grammar-translation method of teaching English used in China. The focus is on language content and not on teaching methods. It is teacher and book centered and involves rote memorization—something that you will find your Chinese students do very well. They are very disciplined and excellent at absorbing information. Chinese students learn to read English and memorize the rules of grammar. But the memorization teaching style presents little opportunity for students to learn to think and communicate effectively in oral and written English.

Large class sizes and limited teacher experience with native English speakers reinforce the focus on reading understanding rather than on English communication. Since they have not been trained to develop ideas in English, students, when faced with a writing assignment, often resort to simply extracting content from available written sources—a form of plagiarism facilitated by the Internet.

Several cultural values influence Chinese teaching and learning style. Studying means finding and imitating a good teacher and transferring knowledge from books into the student’s head. It is considered selfish to cause someone to lose face by challenging them. Being modest and self-effacing is praiseworthy, while wasting other students’ time or challenging the teacher or another student is disrespectful and selfish. Silence is a virtue.

By contrast, U.S. English teachers tend to focus on class interaction, communication, and diverse teaching methods. U.S. students expect to be involved. In order to generate involvement, U.S. teachers use a variety of teaching tools and techniques. While these devices are effective in developing English communication skills, they may be viewed by Chinese students as “play”—not real teaching/learning. U.S. students, on the other hand, generally feel they learn better if happily involved and participating.
Governmental Education Oversight

Governmental education oversight is present on every level: from a national level to each university, to each college and department, and to every classroom.

The State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs (SAFEA) is organized to actively promote international exchanges and cooperation programs as a part of the national effort “to accelerate the country’s economic and social progress.” As a functional department of the Chinese central government, SAFEA is responsible for the administration of foreign experts affairs.

The Foreign Affairs Office (or Foreign Experts Office, or Office of International Cooperation and Exchange). This on-campus office is in charge of foreign experts. In addition to your department chair for academic matters, the Foreign Affairs office representative (waiban), will handle all questions concerning your housing, telecommunications, travel arrangements, residence permits, and visa. They can be your best friend! Your relationship with the Foreign Affairs office will have an impact on your experience. Most Foreign Affairs offices are efficient, well staffed, and very helpful. Others are overburdened and unable to commit time or resources to solving your problems. Besides providing support and services for foreigners, the Foreign Affairs office can assist in mediating between you and the Chinese in your department who are less acquainted with foreigners. This mediation may be flexible or strict, enhancing relationships or encouraging distance.

Class Monitors. Sometimes there might be one or more student monitors in each of your classes. They have several functions. The monitor is responsible for leading the students. They organize class outings and socials. They act as a liaison between the teacher and the class members. The monitor is also responsible for reporting any inappropriate teaching. Most teachers find the monitor to be very helpful in administering the class, taking roll, and giving feedback. For more information, ask the teachers you are replacing about monitors in your university.

Four Types of Chinese Universities

Chinese Universities are classified into four types: Keypoint Universities, Comprehensive Universities, Normal Universities, and Foreign Language Universities. They may also be classified by specialty (technical, agricultural, traditional medicine, etc.) as well as by sponsor (national, provincial, or municipal government).
Keypoint University. A keypoint university, of which there are nearly one hundred on the national level, is an institution designated to receive an additional share of the country’s resources. A keypoint university receives the best faculty and facilities available, enrolls the most qualified students (that is, sets higher entrance requirements), and receives special support services and financing from the central government. Some are jointly administered by the State Education Commission (SEC) and other ministry-level organizations, while some are administered solely by the SEC.

Comprehensive University. Only forty-seven of China’s 1,909 universities and colleges are considered “comprehensive,” rather than “specialized.” This generally means that they offer degree programs both in the sciences (theoretical and applied) and the arts (social sciences and humanities). The term is applied to both key national universities as well as some provincial and municipal schools.

Normal (or Teachers’) University. Universities and colleges whose basic institutional charter is aimed at training primary- and secondary-school teachers, as well as training educational specialists to support the work of these teachers, are designated as “normal” or “teachers” universities. There are six normal universities under the direction of the SEC. These include several of China’s best universities. Over two hundred other normal colleges are supervised by provincial and municipal governments.

Foreign Language (or Foreign Studies) University. There are eight university-level institutions throughout the country that are designated as foreign studies universities (FSU), foreign language universities (FLU), or foreign language institutes (FLI). Their primary responsibility is training personnel in foreign languages and area studies.

Comparative Rankings of Chinese Universities may be found on Google.com: “Chinese Universities Rankings.”

Important English Examinations in China

Examinations play a key role in determining future opportunities for Chinese students. Important English examinations include:

• National Entrance Examination for Universities. Taken at the end of high school, this test covers many subjects, including English. It determines the student’s higher educational opportunities and the university the student will attend. It is commonly referred to as Gaokao.

• English Placement Examination. This test determines which English classes entering freshman at some universities will take. It includes
listening comprehension (30%), reading comprehension (40%), vocabulary and structure (20%), and close (10%).

• **National Band 4 College English Test (CET).** This test taken at the end of the second year in college includes listening comprehension (20 minutes), reading comprehension (35 minutes), vocabulary and structure (20 minutes), and close (15 minutes).

• **English Entrance Examination for Graduate Students.** This test influences who goes on to graduate study.

• **National Band 6 Graduate English Test.** This test is taken at the end of the first year of graduate study. It is required for a PhD.

• **Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).** This test is taken by students worldwide and is used by most U.S. universities to determine admissibility of international students. Created and administered by Educational Testing Service (Princeton, New Jersey). It includes four sections: 1. Reading (60–80 minutes), 2. Listening (60–90 minutes), 3. Speaking (20 minutes), and 4. Writing (50 minutes).

• **Graduate Record Exam (GRE).** Many students desire to go to the United States to attend graduate school. They must take the GRE to apply. It consists of verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and analytical writing.
Adapting to Chinese Culture

Reducing Culture Shock

When you first arrive in China, many things will be exciting. Over time however, the differences may begin to get to you, and you will experience some longings for home—culture shock. Here are some suggestions to help you adapt:

• **Get to Know China with Objective and Up-to-Date Information.** Your image of China will influence what you see. If consciously or unconsciously you see China as an undeveloped country, then what you see may seem inferior to what you have at home. Treasure your experience; if you expect treasures, you will find them. If you expect adventure, it will be very exciting; if you expect a challenge, you will find fulfillment; if you expect a tough experience, it will be tough.

• **Notice Similarities.** The process of adapting to a new culture is aided by paying attention to the things that people have in common. Chinese students are concerned about their future work, relationships with family and friends, changing styles, etc., just as American students are. Of course, there are differences, but noticing similarities helps you feel more comfortable.

• **Respect Chinese Culture.** People of different nationalities are assimilated differently, so inevitably they use different criteria when they evaluate things around them. Learn to understand and respect Chinese cultural criteria in order to adapt to life there. For instance, in choosing their future work, Chinese students usually seriously consider their parents’ wishes and try to reduce their family’s financial burden, while Europeans and Americans tend to put greater emphasis on personal choice. People tend to highly value their own cultural norms and may overlook the diversity of cultural standards. Some even have feelings of cultural superiority. If you interpret the new culture in a negative way, it will be very difficult
for you to appreciate the new culture and life. Try to perceive what you see from a Chinese perspective.

• **Keep an Open Mind and Be Tolerant.** When you enter a new culture, there are many things that you do not understand. Being uncertain about the meaning of people’s behavior can make you anxious or even defensive. Don’t jump to conclusions. Learn to live with uncertainty. Do not retreat to your own circle. Maintain a positive attitude and learn to know China to reduce culture shock and have a positive experience.

• **Keep Expectations Realistic.** In China, as elsewhere, there is often a gap between expectations and reality. Don’t expect to tour the country, master the language, or be a perfect teacher immediately.

• **Remember There Is Not Always a Solution for Every Problem.** Chinese people believe that some problems can never be solved. When something goes wrong and doesn’t seem to get fixed, relax and live with it.

### Social Interactions

**When to Speak and when to Keep Silent.** In English, if someone asks you a question, it is good manners to answer. In Chinese culture, it is permissible to avoid answering in order to avoid embarrassing yourself or the speaker. American culture emphasizes speaking skills, while Chinese culture emphasizes listening skills. English speakers ask questions to show interest, while Chinese might think it rude to interrupt. Pause longer to accommodate your Chinese partner who will take more time.

Some topics are universally acceptable, such as the weather, jobs, hobbies, and local and national events. However, you should be careful asking age, marital status, or income questions, making jokes about political leaders, or discussing sexual matters.

**Direct and Indirect Talk.** Chinese speakers often use indirect statements or even polite lies to avoid a confrontation or refusal. “That will be difficult” may be a polite refusal of a request. A Chinese speaker may use a third person to convey particularly sensitive information or requests.

If you do not mention a situation for a long time, people may think you accept the situation as it is. Silence, in this and other cases, is meaningful. Most important is avoidance of confrontations and showing anger.

In other ways, Chinese may seem very direct or abrupt. The etiquette of host-guest relations is that the host directs and the guest follows, something Westerners view as somewhat “bossy.”
Senior members of a department can direct the activities of other members. You may be directed to do some work or attend an event, when you think you should have been asked instead of ordered to do so. If possible, do what is required. If you cannot do it, give a good reason.

**Nonverbal Behavior.** Chinese tend to rely more on non-verbal behavior. For instance, at a banquet, not much of substance may be said, but the banquet itself, the formal greetings and well wishing, the participants, food, toasts, and setting are all rich in meaning. Pay attention to the specifics of the situation, as well as facial expressions and silences to figure out what is going on and how to respond.

**Calling Cards and Introductions.** The Chinese tend to be formal with new acquaintances, and calling cards are a must. CTP will provide your first set free, after that, you will need to purchase them. They may be printed in China at a reasonable cost. We recommend English on one side and Chinese on the other.

In China, surnames are given first. Mr. Pu Limin is addressed as Mr. Pu. Chinese women retain their maiden names after marriage. Men and women who attend social functions with foreign guests do so because of their functional positions and often do not bring spouses.

**Punctuality.** Strict punctuality is observed for social occasions and appointments. It is proper to arrive a few minutes before the specified time. Chinese guests may arrive fifteen minutes early. Making others wait for your late arrival is considered rude.

**Tipping.** This is officially frowned upon and central authorities have considered legislation to make it formally illegal. It is common and even expected, however, by international-standard hotel workers, as long as no other member of the hotel staff is present.

**Gifts.** The Chinese are very generous in their gift giving. Chinese enjoy practical gifts like books, calendars, pens, school mementos, and CDs of American music. You will not be expected to give gifts, but a small expression of appreciation will always be warmly welcomed. When traveling to other universities, you may wish to offer souvenirs from your home institution in return for university souvenirs you will likely receive.

**Photographs.** Historic buildings and monuments may be photographed, but refrain from taking pictures of bridges, obvious military facilities, airports, equipment, and soldiers. Ask permission before taking photos in which individuals are the primary subject. Taking such pictures without permission is considered discourteous, and offended parties may seize your camera. Take photos of your hometown, family, university, and colleagues to China to share with students.
Laws and Regulations

As a foreigner in China you are subject to Chinese laws and regulations. Few people in China are aware of all the regulations on the books, but you should know about some that affect foreigners. Chinese laws prohibit certain religious activities by foreigners, including proselyting, assembling groups for religious services without authorization, and distributing religious materials. Freedom of speech and press is not written into Chinese law, and penalties for possession of pornography, banned books, or other objectionable materials may be serious.

Within your living and teaching environment, you will still see the effects of a bureaucratic tradition over two thousand years old and of a political system trying to maintain stability and legitimacy. At the same time, you will see a China that is experiencing great and rapid change.

Two additional suggestions:

• Avoid political subjects (Taiwan, Tibet, Tiananmen, etc.).
• Do not be an ugly American. China’s success as a nation only enhances ours. Enjoy it with them. Do not brag about the U.S.
Living in China

Housing

Host universities provide housing for visiting teachers and experts. The lodging provided to visiting teachers, though modest, is generally superior to that of most Chinese faculty members. Generally, your residence will be near the university; often the apartment is on the main campus. They do not always have the means or the management systems in place to provide the routine maintenance and cleaning service you would expect of apartment buildings in the U.S.

Housing at different universities varies widely in terms of size, age, maintenance standards, cleanliness, and level of service provided. All apartments will be much smaller than standard American quarters. Each will include a bedroom, sitting/dining area, private Western-style bathroom, with tub or shower, and kitchen area, with an apartment-sized refrigerator, one- or two-burner stove, microwave, sink, and small storage space. Apartments also have washing machines, Internet hook-ups, television sets, and telephones. Ovens and clothes dryers are rare. Most universities provide some sheets and towels. A few provide cooking and eating utensils. Previous CTP teachers often leave additional items such as printers, DVD players, routers, etc.

Many universities have needed to expand; therefore, satellite campuses have been built. You may need to commute in order to teach on these satellite campuses. The university provides transportation to and from these campuses.

Many universities restrict access to apartment buildings housing visiting teachers for security reasons. In order to ensure the safety of foreigners on their campus, they may lock the main entrance at 10:00 p.m. and require visitors to register. It is not appropriate to accommodate overnight guests in most apartments. If special arrangements are made, there may be fees for relatives or visitors who stay overnight. Ask neighbors, your building concierge, or your department hosts for a briefing on general practices. If fire...
exits are locked at night, discuss the matter with building supervisors and request an emergency key.

**Food and Beverages**

**Water.** Tap water in most of China is *not* safe to drink. Water that is potable at its source is often contaminated in old pipes en route to your tap. It is advisable to use bottled water or to boil drinking water. Chinese-standard hotels and your students often provide hot, boiled water (*kāi shuǐ*) in thermos bottles; you may cool this in a carafe or canteen for room temperature drinking water (*liàng kāi shuǐ*). Bottled water is widely available. Canned or bottled carbonated beverages, including soft drinks, are also safe.

**Fruits and Vegetables.** Purchased on the street or from local stores, these items should be washed or cleaned before eating. If they will be either peeled or cooked, fruits or vegetables need only be washed with water and dried. If eaten raw, they should be washed with detergent, rinsed with clean water to remove detergent, and/or soaked in a solution containing chlorine. Use one tablespoon of chlorine bleach to one gallon of water to soak, and then rinse with clean water. Pesticide use is not regulated as closely in China as it is in the United States. For this reason, you may wish to remove the edible peels of apples, pears, cucumbers, etc.

**Eating Out.** Chinese restaurants serve a wide variety of tempting dishes. Those cooked at high temperatures and served right away are safer than those that sit without refrigeration for several hours. The “American” Chinese food so familiar in the U.S. is not what you are likely to find in China.

Universities provide dining rooms where foreign professors, scholars, and students may eat. Often you may use a pre-paid meal ticket that your waiban will help you purchase. The selection of fresh, frozen, and processed foods in many cities in China has expanded rapidly in recent years, as farmers independently market their produce. Fresh fruits and vegetables are available year-round, and many Western brands of foods are available in supermarkets. Other expatriates in your campus neighborhood are probably the best guides to local shopping.

Special needs, such as salt substitutes or spices, may be difficult to find, and we recommend bringing a supply with you. Import stores in most cities offer a variety of common Western foods but at generally high prices. It is nice to bring a supply of good, dried Western soups to tide you over until you become familiar with local shopping.

**Clothing**

Teachers are encouraged to dress professionally for the workshop and while teaching in China. Moderately dressy clothes are appropriate for Chinese banquets. Previous teachers are the best source of information on
attire at your host university. Comfortable, casual clothes, including dress slacks for women, are common on campuses.

There are wide variations of climate in China. Beijing and New York are at the same latitude, with similar weather except that Beijing is much dryer. Guangzhou and Miami share similar latitudes and subtropical climates. Temperatures in Shanghai stay above freezing through the winter, but because buildings are not centrally heated, warm clothing is needed in winter to combat chilly rooms.

In summer, China is hot and humid just about everywhere. In the winter, only Guangzhou manages to be comfortable, but layering is still the rule. Generally, there is central heating in apartment buildings north of the Yangtze River between 15 November and 15 March. Public buildings, classrooms, and offices are usually unheated and very, very cold. Comfortable walking shoes are important everywhere, and rubber boots are useful in snowy or rainy cities. Come prepared. Your size may not be available in China.

China produces a wide variety of clothing including cashmere sweaters and scarves, attractive and very warm down-filled jackets and coats, silk long johns, blouses, sweat suits, and sports and dress shoes. Prices and availability vary from season to season and place to place, and size selection may be limited. Shoes over size eight for women and nine for men are not always available, nor are clothing sizes for tall or moderately heavy figures. Many stores around the country offer sewing and tailoring services and a wide variety of fabrics for custom-made clothes.

**Laundry and Dry Cleaning.** Many apartments are equipped with a washing machine but not with dryers. Balcony clotheslines are the usual drying (and sometimes clothes storage) facility. Dry cleaning is available in the big cities at prices similar to those in large U.S. cities. The quality of service varies. Hotels and some university apartment buildings also offer laundry service. Normal wear and tear, hard water, and strong detergents may be hard on clothes. It is wise to bring a serviceable wardrobe for everyday needs. Dress clothes that can withstand normal washing, needing little professional cleaning attention, will fare best.

**Money and Banking**

Your host university will provide a modest monthly salary designed to cover basic food and living expenses. In most situations, these costs will be considerably lower than in the United States. Generally, our teachers “break even” with income and expenses. Although there are many benefits associated with the program, teaching in China is not a money-making proposition for you.
**Currency.** In China, the official currency is called *Renminbi* (RMB) or *yuan* or *kuai*. The exchange rate is approximately 6.3 RMB = $1 US. You should expect to do all of your transactions in Chinese currency. Foreign currencies must be converted to Chinese currency before making purchases. Dollars may be converted to yuan at airports, banks, and hotels. Some hotels, however, limit exchange privileges to hotel residents. You may also exchange cash at a designated Bank of China branch. Nearly all exchange counters charge service fees.

**ATMs.** The spread of ATMs has made accessing your home bank accounts much easier. They also provide the best exchange rate. With the easy availability of ATMs, people do not use checks. Marvin Wu, however, will accept U.S. checks for tours. Other banking services in some Chinese cities are less convenient than in the U.S. Ask your waiban and previous teachers for more details.

Most teachers maintain their home accounts in the U.S. and arrange for Bill Pay or other electronic banking services that can be managed and monitored via the Internet.

Credit cards are accepted for purchases at major hotels, hotel restaurants, government-run antique and handicraft shops, and factory sales rooms that produce carpets, jade, or other tourist export items. They are also accepted at most major Air China offices, but the Chinese Railway system does not accept any Western credit cards, nor do most small shops, restaurants, or hotels frequented primarily by Chinese citizens. If your university pays you through a bank and gets you a debit card, you may use those in major grocery stores. Check first.

**Shopping**

Shopping opportunities are tremendously varied. They range from modern mega-markets and shopping centers to outdoor markets. Small shops and street vendors are everywhere. While there is an increasing number of “fixed price” stores, especially in the large shopping centers, many merchants expect you to “bargain” for the price you will pay.

It is customary in Chinese culture to bargain and haggle over the price of just about everything, except food. Just keep in mind that the people want you to bargain and sometimes even argue with them. If you don’t, the seller will feel that you either gave up too soon and cheated yourself, will feel bad that they cheated you, or will sometimes feel cheated out of a chance to practice their English. Just remember to never pay full price for anything and don’t worry that you may offer a price they don’t like—they expect it. A rough rule of thumb in most outdoor markets is to offer anywhere between 25 and 60 percent of what is asked, or ask a Chinese friend or student what is an appropriate price. Bargaining can be a fun experience, but it usually requires
a sense of humor and patience. Another rule of thumb, if both you and the merchant are smiling at the end, the price is OK. Under Chinese law, if you make an offer and they accept it, you have bought it. (You have also “bought it” if you break it—and the merchant sets the price!)

Toiletries and Miscellaneous. The availability of toiletries, including Western brands, has improved markedly in recent years. If you prefer specific brands, you might bring a supply to last for your stay (shampoo, deodorant, moisturizer, shaving cream, feminine products, toothpaste, dental floss, extra toothbrushes); otherwise, the local economy will meet your needs. Western make-up is expensive. You may wish to bring a year’s supply. Most make-up made in China has a lightening agent in it.

Household Goods. Universities generally provide towels and sheets. Face cloths and dishcloths may be purchased locally at relatively low prices. Plates, bowls, cups, and chopsticks are also available and inexpensive. While Chinese cooking utensils are not expensive, imported specialty utensils (potato peeler, cheese grater, sieve, Western-style spatula, etc.) are expensive, if you can find them. Former teachers will tell you what supplies are in the apartment.

Electrical Appliances and Equipment. The local current throughout China is 240V AC, 50 cycles (except for some areas of Shanghai where it is 120V). To use 120V appliances you need a step-down transformer. Transformers are available in department and electronics stores. Your laptop computer should work on either 120V or 240V. Chinese wall sockets accommodate most foreign plugs.

Often it is more convenient and less expensive to buy small 240V appliances in China than to find and carry transformers from the U.S. for American appliances. Hair dryers are inexpensive in China. If purchased in the U.S. with dual voltage capability, they may be used both in China and in the U.S.

Because of the limited power capacity in most university housing, teachers should check with building electricians before using self-supplied appliances that draw heavily on the power supply, such as hotplates or space heaters. You usually cannot use a hot plate, rice cooker, and computer at the same time.

Batteries (Eveready, Duracell, etc.) are widely available. However, some teachers have brought rechargeable batteries, with a charger that can use 240V current.

Local Transportation

In China, you will probably walk more than you are used to in the U.S. Think of it as necessary exercise—it’s good for you. Owning a car is costly and dangerous. Our teachers do not have cars.
There are good public transportation systems in every city. Most cities have excellent public bus systems. Many have modern subways. Some universities offer shuttle buses to shopping areas and may rent out university vehicles with drivers for student field trips or for special requests. Taxis are available everywhere. Check with university personnel to find out how to use taxi services from your campus. Not all taxis are safe. Be sure to use only taxis with licensed drivers, agree on the price in advance, and see the meter is turned on. It is wise to carry the address of your apartment, the university, and your destination with you—written out in Chinese.

Bicycling is a popular mode of transport in many areas, particularly where the climate is dry, and the terrain is flat. Standard, no-frills bicycles are inexpensive to buy, new or secondhand. When purchasing a bicycle, keep in mind that bikes are often stolen, and bikes that work well but look plain are cheap, convenient, and less likely to be stolen. Ride carefully. Bicycling can be dangerous. Motor and pedestrian traffic is heavy, and motorists do not yield to bicycles.

Safety—Be Careful

Some simple suggestions for staying safe, healthy, and happy include:

- Practice cleanliness. Wash often, as do the Chinese. Warm towels and boiling water to clean utensils are offered in good restaurants. Prevention is the best medicine.
- Be diligent in careful food preparation. (See food section.)
- Watch out for traffic. Pedestrians do NOT have the right of way.
- Avoid isolated areas, especially when alone.
- Observe those around you, check out your surroundings.
- Beware of thieves. Avoid keeping money, credit cards, or passports in pockets or purses where they might be stolen. Pickpockets are skilled professionals. Keep valuables in a safe place. Keep apartments locked.

Your Own Worship

There are existing organized branches or groups of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in all cities where China teachers are placed. A Melchizedek Priesthood holder from among the teachers may be called and set apart as the group leader in cities where there are not organized branches. You may bring your own scriptures and religious materials to China. However, you must NOT share them with Chinese passport holders.
**Computers**

You should have your own laptop computer for use at the August workshop and in China. It will not only be very useful in your instructional preparation and for finding enriching teaching materials, but it will also provide a welcome link to home. Your university will probably provide Internet access for you. If not, they will help you arrange for Internet through a provider. Teachers should carry laptop computers when they fly to avoid damage from rough handling and possible theft.

Talk to teachers from previous years. They often leave printers and other computer accessories in the apartment when they return to the U.S. We recommend you buy your computer accessories (printers, scanners, etc.) in China. There are relatively inexpensive computer supplies of all kinds available, as well as computer repair services. Your laptop computer and printer should work on either 120V or 240V.

**Virtual Private Network (VPN).** The Chinese government blocks some news and social media sites. A VPN allows access to these blocked sites.

**Data Sticks.** Data sticks are very useful for transferring PowerPoint presentations and other data to instructional equipment where available. It is suggested you get a data stick with a “physical write protect” switch to help protect against viruses.

**Communication and Electronics**

**E-mail.** E-mail is the easiest, fastest, and least-expensive method of written communication. It is readily available in all of the cities where BYU China teachers are located. E-mail has revolutionized communication with our teachers. It is the best method of communication you will have with family, friends, the Kennedy Center, and others in the U.S.
Digital Cameras, Cell Phones, Etc. In recent years, digital cameras, cell phones, and other electronic equipment have become widely available, as have CDs and a wide variety of American movie DVDs.

Television. Many apartments are equipped with television. In most areas of the country there are some English-language broadcasts. If you are used to U.S. cable TV, you will find the selection of programs quite limited, but you will appreciate having access to what is available.

Telephones. You usually have a landline phone in your apartment, although the quality of the connection will vary. Cell phones are everywhere. It is recommended that each person has a mobile phone. You may bring your unlocked Smartphone and buy a plan there, or you may buy a Smartphone in China with a plan. Another option is to buy a Chinese cell phone. No contract period is required. Minute cards can be bought that are easily renewed. Check with previous teachers to find out if a cell phone is already in the apartment that you could use. Some BYU China Teachers have used Vonage, MagicJack, or other services that allow you to have a U.S. phone number and can call U.S. numbers without long distance charges. Another option to call home numbers is Skype or FaceTime, but sometimes the Internet will be too slow to keep up with the video. Voice usually works well.

When calling China from other countries, it is necessary to use the long distance code (011), country code (86 for China), city code (Beijing 10, Guangzhou 20, Shanghai 21, Tianjin 22, Nanjing 25, Chengdu 28, Xi’an 29, Jinan 531, Qingdao 532), and local number (usually eight digits).

In timing your telephone calls, consider the time difference between China and the United States. China, despite its continental size, has only one time zone. During Daylight Savings Time there is a twelve-hour difference between China and the east coast of the U.S., and a fifteen-hour difference from the U.S. west coast. Midnight in Washington, D.C., will be noon the next day in Beijing. The rest of the year there is a thirteen-hour difference from the east coast. Midnight in Washington, D.C., will be 1:00 P.M. the next day in Beijing.

Letters and Packages. International letter airmail between China and the U.S. takes from four to fifteen days. Magazines may take longer. Letters from the U.S. addressed to the People’s Republic of China are more likely to arrive promptly than those marked only “China.” International air parcel post takes about ten days either direction, barring delays. You or your university’s Foreign Affairs office will need to personally appear to receive a package at the post office. Contents are subject to customs regulations. Packaged mail
shipped by surface is more economical than air, but transit time is uncertain. If you want to ship supplies to China, check with your local post office for cost.

**Paper.** There is a wide variety of stationery supplies available. Standard paper size in China is A4 (8” x 11.5”). Copy services are now widely available and inexpensive.

**FAX/SCAN.** Fax facilities are available at major hotels in China’s principal cities and on most campuses, but you may be charged for sending/receiving faxes. Clarify your university’s policy with your Foreign Affairs Officer. The most preferred method to send documents is scanning and e-mailing. Many printers now have scanning capabilities.
Passports

You will need your passport with the appropriate visa before you may enter China. You will also need your passport whenever you check in for a domestic flight or at a hotel in China, purchase a train ticket, or exchange money. It is highly advised that you make a copy of your passport and visa to carry with you. If you lose your identification, this will make replacement much easier and quicker.

Visas

Everyone needs a valid visa prior to departure for China. The China Teachers Program will help you obtain your Chinese visa from the PRC Embassy in San Francisco. Your university will arrange for a Resident Permit (equivalent of a “Green Card”) after you arrive in China.

There have been recent changes in the Chinese Embassy’s policy regarding visa applications. As soon as the CTP office receives your official Letter of Invitation, work permit, and your visa application, the process will begin to obtain your visa. The visa and application fee will be approximately $225 for a multiple-entry visa.

After you arrive in China, your waibian will assist you in exchanging your Z visa for a Resident Permit that will allow you multiple entries into China. As soon as you arrive in China, register your passport and visa with the U.S. Embassy. This will save you hours of work and headaches should your passport get lost or stolen.

Your Chinese visa will indicate the validity period—generally ninety days from the date of issue. Travelers must enter China within this period. The visa will also indicate a duration of stay period. Once you receive your Resident Permit, no further registration should be necessary. It is important to remember that Chinese regulations are sometimes inconsistently applied and subject to change without notice. If you need to make any changes to your status while in China, your foreign affairs personnel will help you. Every
married couple must have an official marriage certificate in their possession. Marriage certificates have been required in some cases and may need to be authenticated through a Chinese Embassy or Consulate.

**Photos.** A dozen extra prints of your passport picture will be useful in China for identification cards required for ten-month residents. Photo shops in China also offer passport photos.

**Travel to and from China**

You will fly into the city where you will live, and a representative of the university will meet you at the international airport and escort you to the campus. You should notify your Foreign Affairs Officer of the flight number, exact arrival location, date, and time of your flight. It is wise to carry with you the phone number of your waiban and information about your university in case your flight is delayed or connections are missed.

Round-trip travel expenses are guaranteed by the China Teachers Program. In some cases, the Chinese university will pay for a one-way ticket. In such cases, we send you with a one-way ticket, and the Chinese university buys the return ticket in China.

You should make your own travel arrangements by working directly with the BYU Travel Agent Nancy Bean. She may be reached by telephone on campus at (801) 422-1291 or by e-mail at nancy_bean@byu.edu. She is under instruction from BYU to follow standard Church travel policy, *i.e.*, booking you on the most direct flight at the lowest fare. You may choose other flight options; however, you will be required to pay the price difference. Side trips are allowed, but the additional expense will be your responsibility. You will usually be traveling with the other CTP couple assigned to your university.

**Baggage.** There are specific and changing baggage limits for international air travel and for domestic air and train travel. Extra pounds are expensive. Plan your luggage carefully. The airlines now only allow one checked bag. Each bag should not exceed 62 in. total dimensions, nor exceed 50 lbs. in weight. You will also be allowed one carry-on bag that must fit in the overhead bin or under the seat in front of you. Passengers are also allowed one personal item: purse, laptop, briefcase, etc.

If you elect to travel within China on flights that are not part of an international flight, you will be restricted to one checked bag not to exceed 44 lbs. (20 kilo) plus a carry-on.

It is highly advised to bring with you on board the plane any medications you will require prior to your arrival in China. Please also consider taking travel-sized toiletries and a change of clothing in case you arrive before your luggage does.
Clearing Customs. Personal belongings and supplies other than books are easiest to bring into China in person when first entering the country. Your predecessors will have left many things behind; talk with them before sending teaching materials.

When planning your return, you may find it necessary to check and see if your domestic airline charges for extra baggage. They usually do not. However, if they do, you will need to pay the extra cost. Also, some universities will pay for you to ship one cubic meter container home by sea. You might also want to investigate the shipping services of China Post or private freight forwarders.

Flexibility. Please understand when traveling anywhere, the thing to take with you is a good attitude. If flights are cancelled due to weather or mechanical difficulties, be patient with the airline and not demanding.

In-Country Travel and Tours

You are not in China as a tourist, but you will have opportunities to see much of this great country. There are frequent flights to most major Chinese cities as well as other cities in Asia. If you miss a flight, you will have to buy another ticket. A good China travel guidebook will be very useful.

For short distances, trains can be very nice and relatively inexpensive. High-speed trains are becoming more common. They connect major cities in China and are comfortable, quiet, and fast. Please note: Trains are on time. They may even leave a few minutes early. When the passengers are on board, they leave! There are several classes of train accommodations:

“Soft Chairs” are comfortable and well padded, with good leg space.

“Hard Chairs” are more like bench seating and often over-sold with people sitting in the aisle. Overnight trains have “Soft Sleepers” that have four beds in a compartment with a door. They are comparable to second-class sleepers in Europe.

“Hard Sleepers” have six beds (stacked three high) in a compartment with no door. They are open to the aisle.

Buses run between cities as well as within cities. Travel light. You will often have to haul your own luggage. It is tough to travel on holidays when flights, trains, and buses are very crowded.

Tours. A variety of tours are available to you and your fellow China Teachers coinciding with national holidays. Local guides lead the group at each location. Participation in the tours is encouraged for the camaraderie they build, as well as for the wonderful insights they offer about this ancient
country. Tour costs must be paid by each participant. Past tours offered to our teachers have included:

**Silk Road Tour.** During the October Autumn Festival, this tour goes from the Moslem northwest corner of China to Xi’an—home of the Terra Cotta Warriors. Along the way you will visit bazaars, ancient tombs, irrigation systems, and a Uyghar home; transportation includes camels and donkey carts, as well as planes, overnight trains, and tour buses; and there is great food!

**Thanksgiving Tour.** In Beijing, sites include Mao’s tomb, the Forbidden City, the Imperial Palace, the Summer Palace, the Silk Market, the Great Wall, and a Peking Duck feast.

**Mid-Winter Tours.** After the Hong Kong Conference, the southwest China tour visits Guilin, the Li River, and the home areas of twenty-five ethnic groups in Kunming, Lijiang, and Dali. During this class break, groups also have gone to the Winter Ice Festival in Harbin, and the tropical beaches of Hainan Island, or visited other countries in Southeast Asia.

**May Day Holiday.** Cruise on the Yangtze River, past the huge Three Gorges Dam and on to Chongqing.

Some teachers go to Tibet after school ends in June/July. Some have also taken the Beijing to Moscow Trans-Siberian Railroad.

**Major Chinese National Holidays**

**National Day, 1 October.** Commemorates the establishment of the People’s Republic of China. This is a three-day holiday, but classes are usually dismissed for a week, and the two days extra days are scheduled to be made up later. This is also near the Mid-Autumn Festival, when Moon Cakes are given as gifts.

**Spring Festival—Chinese New Year—Semester break.** The date varies each year based on the lunar calendar. New Year in China begins on the last day of the twelfth lunar month. It is usually in late January or early February. This is the most traditional holiday in China, lasting about a month.

**Labor Day, 1 May.** This is another three-day national holiday.
Health Precautions

Physical Examination

Each teacher is required to have a complete physical examination prior to going to China, with results reported on the “Physical Examination Record for Foreigner.” This record is required for obtaining Chinese working documents. It must be filled out completely by the examining doctor, with appropriate signatures, notations, stamps/seals, and attached lab work, including tests for HIV and some STDs. The completed examination record should be sent to the CTP office, and then originals will be returned to teachers at the August workshop. These forms and all original lab reports should be kept and hand-delivered by the teachers to the university in China. A second physical examination and lab work may be necessary when you arrive in China (especially if the examination record is incomplete). Physical exams must have been done within six months of moving to China.

Medical Records

Bring a health record with you. Having a general health history makes it easier for you to answer your foreign physician’s questions should a medical problem arise.

Prescriptions

If you take prescription medicines, bring a supply to last for your stay. Be sure to bring a package insert or documentation that provides generic name, indications, and contraindications for the drug, since your physician in China may not be familiar with American commercial pharmaceutical names. Prescriptions must be in original packaging. The CTP office can issue you a letter stating that you will be in China for ten months and requesting a year supply of medicine. Take a copy of your eye prescription and an extra pair of glasses with you. Excellent prescription glasses are inexpensive in China.
BYU Health Center Foreign Travel Suggestions

The following medications are suggested to take with you:

- Sudafed, 60 mg. for colds. Take 1 every 12 hours.
- Zithromax tabs for travelers’ diarrhea. Take as directed.
- Benadryl 25 mg. for allergic reactions. Take 1 or 2 every 4 to 6 hours for pain.
- Antibiotic ointment (optional) for scrapes and cuts. Apply liberally after washing well with soap and water. Cover the wound and keep it clean.

Guidelines for preventing illnesses:

- Be very careful about your hygiene. Hand washing should strictly follow use of restrooms and before touching any food or drink. Use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- Do not drink or brush your teeth with local water, unless it has been properly treated or boiled. Ice may contain bacteria and should not be used unless you are sure of its source.
- Peel all fruits and vegetables before eating. Wash them with treated water.
- Make sure your food is properly prepared and well cooked before eating.
- Do not eat vendor food from the streets, no matter how good it may look.
- Never eat or drink from another person’s utensils or glass. Bacteria are passed through mucus.
- Remember that most bacteria will enter your body through the mouth.
- Keep hands away from face—eyes, nose, mouth.

Pre-Departure Immunizations

The Chinese government does not require travelers entering China from the U.S. to have any inoculations. There are no required immunizations. As a routine measure, all travelers and their families should update their inoculations prior to travel, especially to developing countries. Discuss what shots you should receive with your personal doctor or county health agency. Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B, Tetanus, and Typhoid immunizations are strongly suggested. The International Health Certificate, a yellow booklet available from city or county public health agencies, is widely recognized by overseas public health authorities and provides space for conveniently recording immunizations.
Hepatitis-A and Hepatitis-B

Hepatitis is very common in China. Ten to 15 percent of Chinese are Hepatitis-B carriers and are contagious. Hepatitis-B is spread through body fluids (blood, intercourse), but in endemic areas like China, there are other modes of transmission. Everyone should be immunized. Hepatitis-A is transmitted by contaminated food, water, and infected individuals. Hepatitis-A vaccine is recommended for those eighteen years of age and older. The Hepatitis-B series takes six months, so you may need to receive the final injection after arrival. Private clinics and the Australian Embassy in Beijing offer most vaccines but at a higher cost than in the U.S.

Health Insurance

Individual health insurance coverage is mandatory. All China Teachers must be covered by medical insurance. Coverage will be verified by our insurance carrier. The preferred option is to have each teacher arrange for coverage with their current provider. Some policies will not provide coverage outside of the U.S. In those instances, we have made arrangements though the Church and DMBA to provide coverage for your time overseas.

Senior Service Medical Plan (SSMP) insurance may be obtained from DMBA (Deseret Mutual Benefit Association). This is the same insurance coverage that is provided to other senior-service volunteers in the Church. It is similar to most other medical insurance plans, covering a wide range of medical needs and providing reimbursement for specified medical and medication costs.

DMBA also evaluates the existing insurance coverage of all prospective teachers. They are prepared to insure teachers through the SSMP program after receiving copies of the insurance and health sections of the applications. Teachers may apply for SSMP. The 2015–16 premium was $187 per person per month.

A final note: This will be a great adventure. You will work hard, but you will enjoy it. You will influence your students in ways you never imagined and build a lifetime of memories. The China Teachers Program will do everything we can to assist you in this wonderful service.