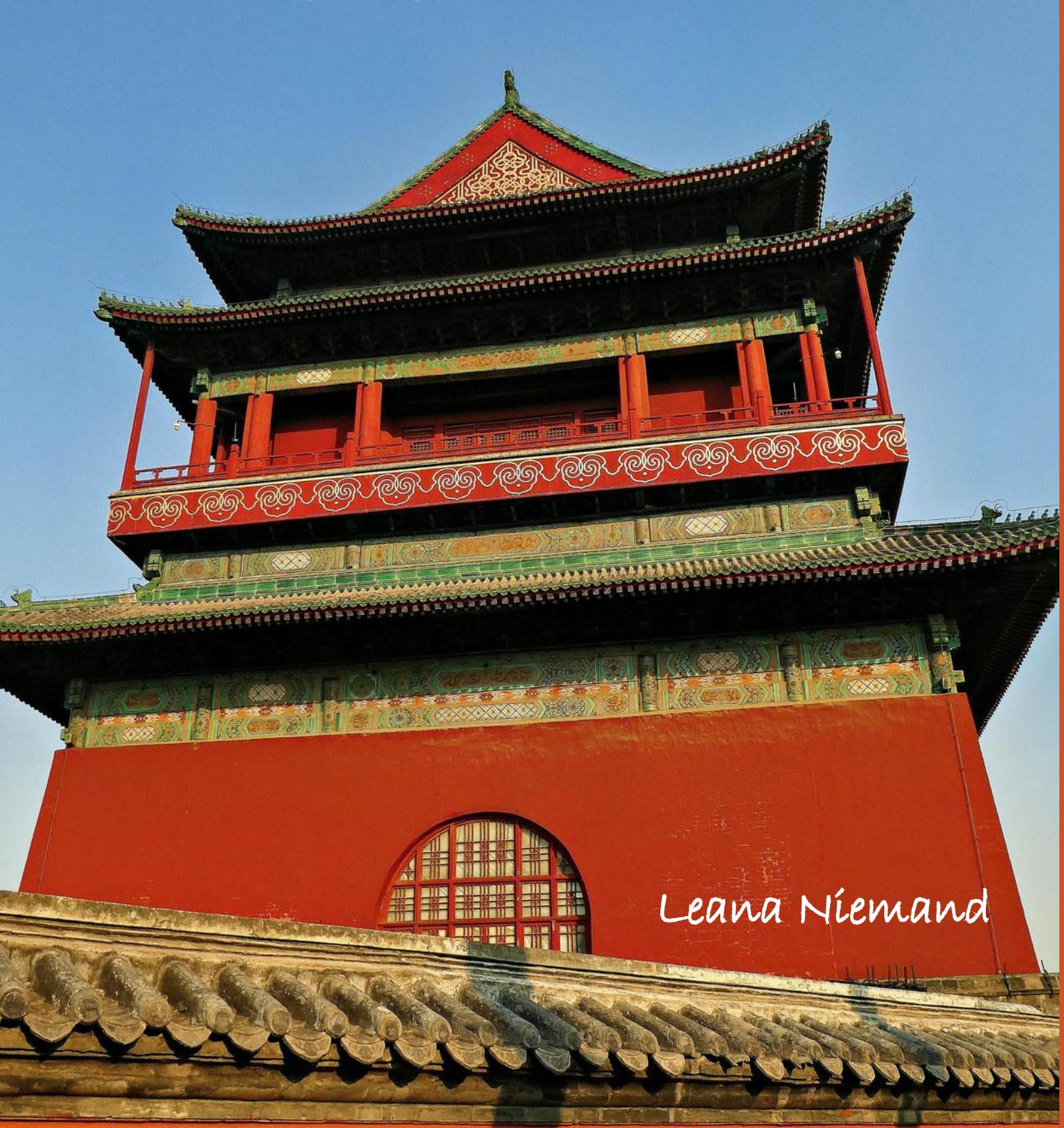


# Cycle Touring China (3) Pedalling the Grand Canal - Beijing to the Bund



<https://capetocape2.blogspot.com/>

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<https://issuhub.com/user/book/57398?sort=title>



# Cycle Touring China (3)

## Pedalling the Grand Canal

### - Beijing to the Bund







# **Cycle Touring China (3) Pedalling the Grand Canal - Beijing to the Bund**

## **Acknowledgements**

My journey through China was shaped as much by the road beneath my wheels as by the kindness that met me along the way. To the strangers who offered generosity without hesitation — a cup of water, a place to rest, a moment of shared humanity — your quiet acts of grace humbled me and carried me farther than any map could show.

To my sister, Amanda, whose steady hands and meticulous care kept my scattered journal entries and photographs in order. You turned chaos into a record, and for that I am deeply grateful.

To my dear friend Val Abrahamse, who held the threads of my life back home while I wandered the world: your diligence and trust gave me the freedom to chase this dream without looking over my shoulder. I owe you more than these pages can say.

# 老县衙古玩城

老县衙  
奇石字画古玩城

古筝  
串串吧  
旋转小火锅

空调开放

老县衙  
古玩城

## **Cycle Touring China (3)**

### **Pedalling the Grand Canal - Beijing to the Bund**

#### ***Threshold of the Unknown***

***I crossed into China as though stepping through a veil – from the warm chaos of Vietnam into fascinating historical China. The signs were unreadable, the stares unblinking, the air thick with a history I could feel but not name.***

***With my bicycle beneath me and a river of unfamiliar rhythms ahead, I pedalled into a country that asked nothing of me except to surrender to its vastness. Every road felt like an unanswered question. Every day, a new way of being small in a place impossibly large.***



## **Crossing the Border and Entering the Unknown**

Crossing out of Vietnam felt like being swept along by a human tide — a river of bodies, bags, chatter, and curious eyes. I walked my bicycle through the passenger terminal, flanked by what felt like half of Vietnam and China, all eager to help, all pointing, gesturing, ushering. Then the Chinese immigration building rose ahead, austere and unreadable, its signs a forest of characters I could not decipher.

Inside, the officer studied my passport as though it were a rare artefact. He held it to the light, flipped it, squinted, frowned. Perhaps they'd never seen anyone from "Nanfei". Perhaps they expected all Africans to look a certain way. Whatever the reason, the scrutiny felt endless. When he finally waved me through, I stepped into China as though into another dimension — a place of sensory overload, of unfamiliar rhythms and unspoken rules.

Dongxing greeted me with the blunt force of a border town. I found an ATM, withdrew 4,000 yuan, and went in search of a SIM card. The staff stared in silence, phones half-raised, as if I'd descended from Mars. A woman escorted me to the main office, and by 11h00 I finally rolled out of town with money in my pocket and a working phone — two small anchors of security in a vast unknown.

Once free of sprawling Dongxing, I slipped onto a minor road and exhaled. Rice fields stretched out in soft greens and golds, and villagers paused mid-stride to watch me pass, their expressions a mix of surprise and curiosity. The countryside was slow, gentle, forgiving — a balm after the border's chaos.



But China's cities soon rose like steel mirages. They appeared intimidating from afar, yet once inside, their wide boulevards and orderly grids made navigation surprisingly easy. Winter's early dusk caught me just as I reached Qinzhou after biking about 100km. Exhausted, I surrendered to the first hotel I found — a posh, gleaming place, twice my usual budget but worth every yuan. I ate, washed mud from my clothes in a tiny basin, and hung everything beneath the air-conditioner's warm breath. A small domestic victory.





## **Mud, Roadworks, and Seven Million Strangers - The Long Ride to Nanning**

Breakfast was a fiery initiation: stir-fried vegetables, chilli, boiled eggs, soy milk. I left with a full belly and the heartburn of a dragon, pedalling toward Nanning under a sky thick with road dust and the promise of more construction.

Roadworks slowed everything to a crawl. Mud splashed up my legs; potholes lurked like traps. Eventually the chaos thinned, giving way to abandoned villages — places emptied when residents were relocated to cities in the name of poverty alleviation. Their silence felt heavy, like a story half-told.

Cycling into Nanning was a battle of scale. Seven million people, highways stacked like ribbons, flyovers looping into the haze. Cars slowed to photograph me; passengers leaned out of windows, phones raised. Covered in mud, I must have looked like a creature emerging from the earth itself.

My GPS died halfway into the city, and I navigated by instinct and frustration until I found the hostel — on the third floor, naturally. After hauling my panniers upstairs, I collapsed into a small, warm room and let the city hum around me.







## **A Pause in the Southern Capital - Ancient Villages and Train Tickets North**

I had grand plans for Nanning, but the days dissolved into errands and small wanderings. From Nanning, it made sense to take a train to Beijing and then cycle south to Xiamen, where I'd left off last time. I bought a train ticket to Beijing — only top bunks left, the ones everyone warns against — and took a bus to Yangmei, an ancient village tucked into the hills.

The road was steep and slow, the bus groaning around each bend. Yangmei, with its Ming and Qing architecture, felt like a pocket of time preserved. Founded during the Song Dynasty, it was originally called Baihua — “all sorts of flowers” — for the abundance that once grew there. I wandered its narrow lanes for an hour or so, soaking in the quiet beauty of old stone alleys, wooden beams, and quiet courtyards. I wandered until the last bus called me back to the present.











## **Northbound Through a Sleepless Night - The Long Train to Beijing**

At the station, I checked in my bicycle and panniers, warned they might arrive days later. The fee for the bike nearly matched my own ticket — a reminder that even luggage has a life of its own.

The train bunks were stacked three high. My top bunk had no window and barely enough headroom to breathe. With everyone lying down, the only place to sit was a tiny fold-out chair in the corridor — a stage on which I became the accidental star. People queued for selfies. Others came from neighbouring coaches just to look at the foreigner. Eventually, I retreated to my bunk, hiding like a hermit crab in its shell.

The train rolled north through landscapes I longed to linger in. Mountains, fields, villages — all passing too quickly. By the time we reached Beijing West, darkness had fallen. My bicycle was nowhere to be found, and the cheap hotels refused foreigners. I walked for ages before surrendering to a taxi. Beijing, I realised, was as expensive as any Western capital — and far colder.

Beijing was shockingly cold. October was already too late in the season for this part of the world, and my skimpy clothes were no match for the climate.



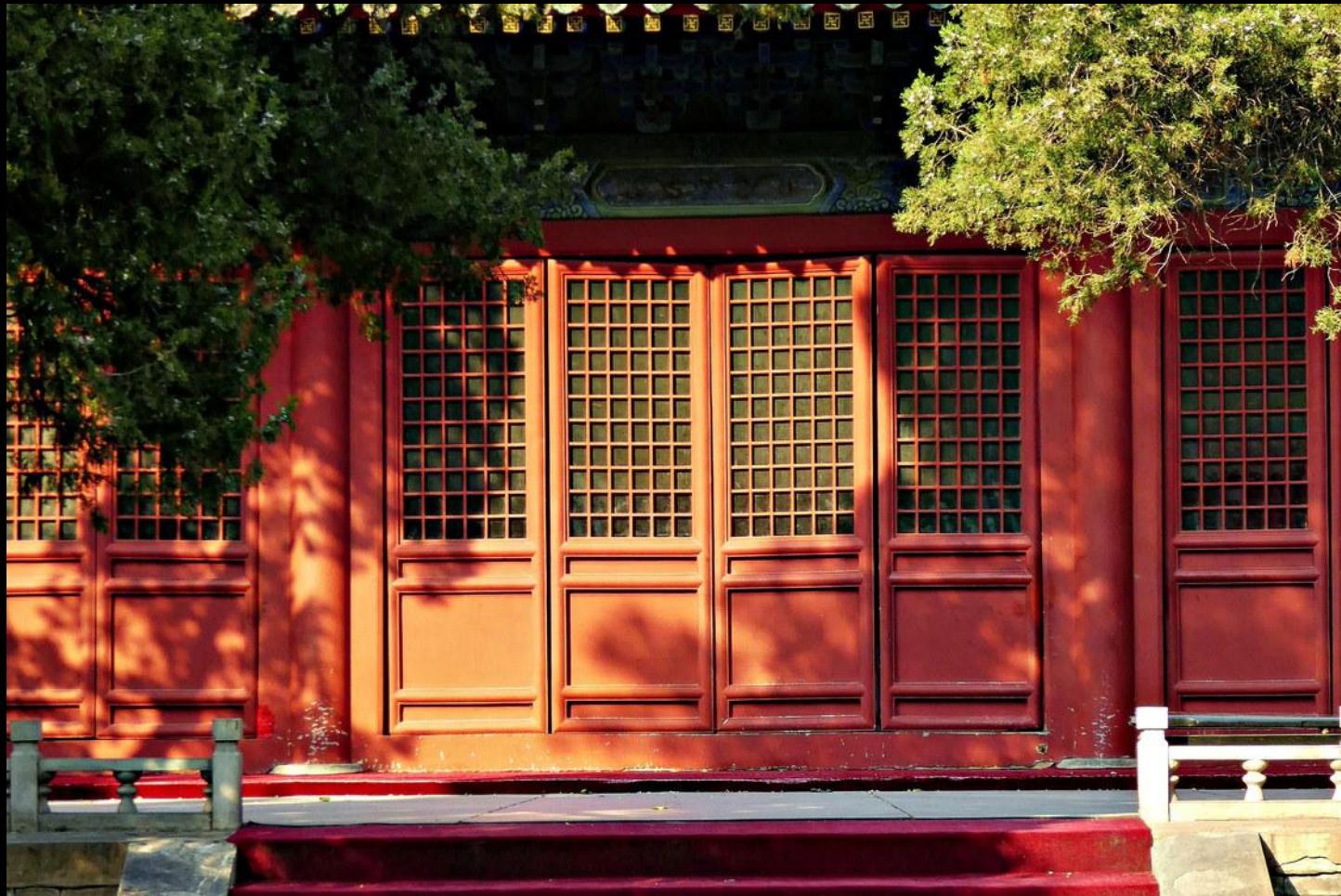
## **Winter Finds Me in Beijing - Banks, Bicycles, and the Weight of a Goose-Down Jacket**

My first mission: warmth. I found The North Face and asked for the warmest jacket in the shop. My cards were declined — a shock that sent me racing back to the hostel to call the bank. My pin had been blocked. Only my debit card still worked.

Once I'd sorted the banking chaos, I retrieved my bicycle from the station and pedalled through Beijing's vastness, past Tiananmen Square, past the Forbidden City, past millions of people wrapped in thick coats. I felt tiny, exhilarated, and grateful for being in this amazing city.

With cash in my pocket and a goose-down jacket on my back, I finally relaxed. I wandered the city, camera in hand, letting Beijing's winter light settle into my bones.











家电回收  
彩电 洗衣机 旧家具  
空调 电饭煲 旧家电  
冰箱 电水壶 旧家电  
热水器 旧家电  
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手机 电器都  
上白服务 电话：1326908173

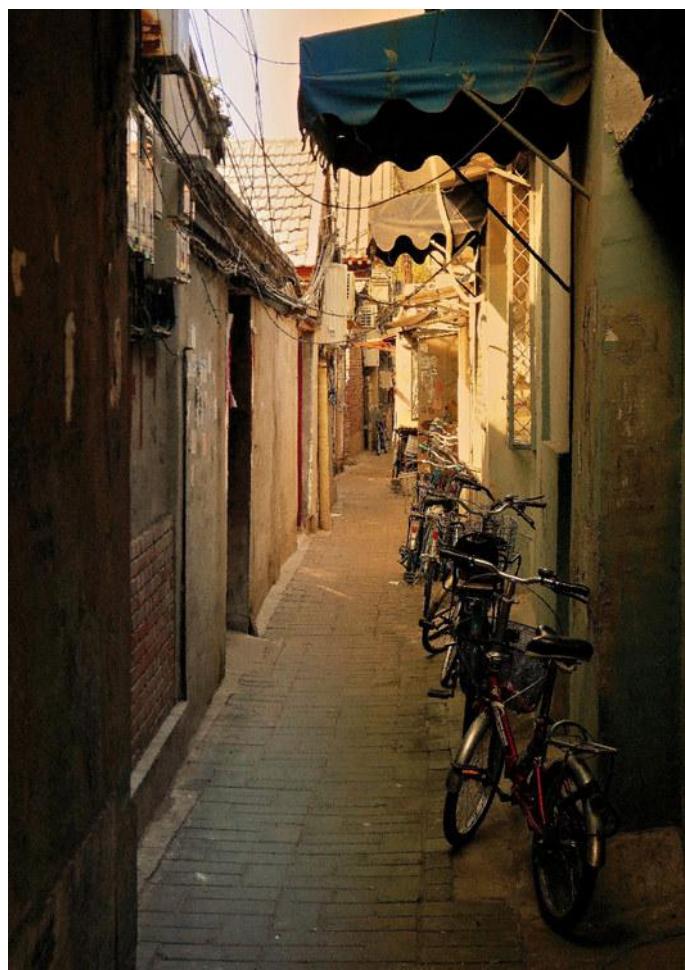
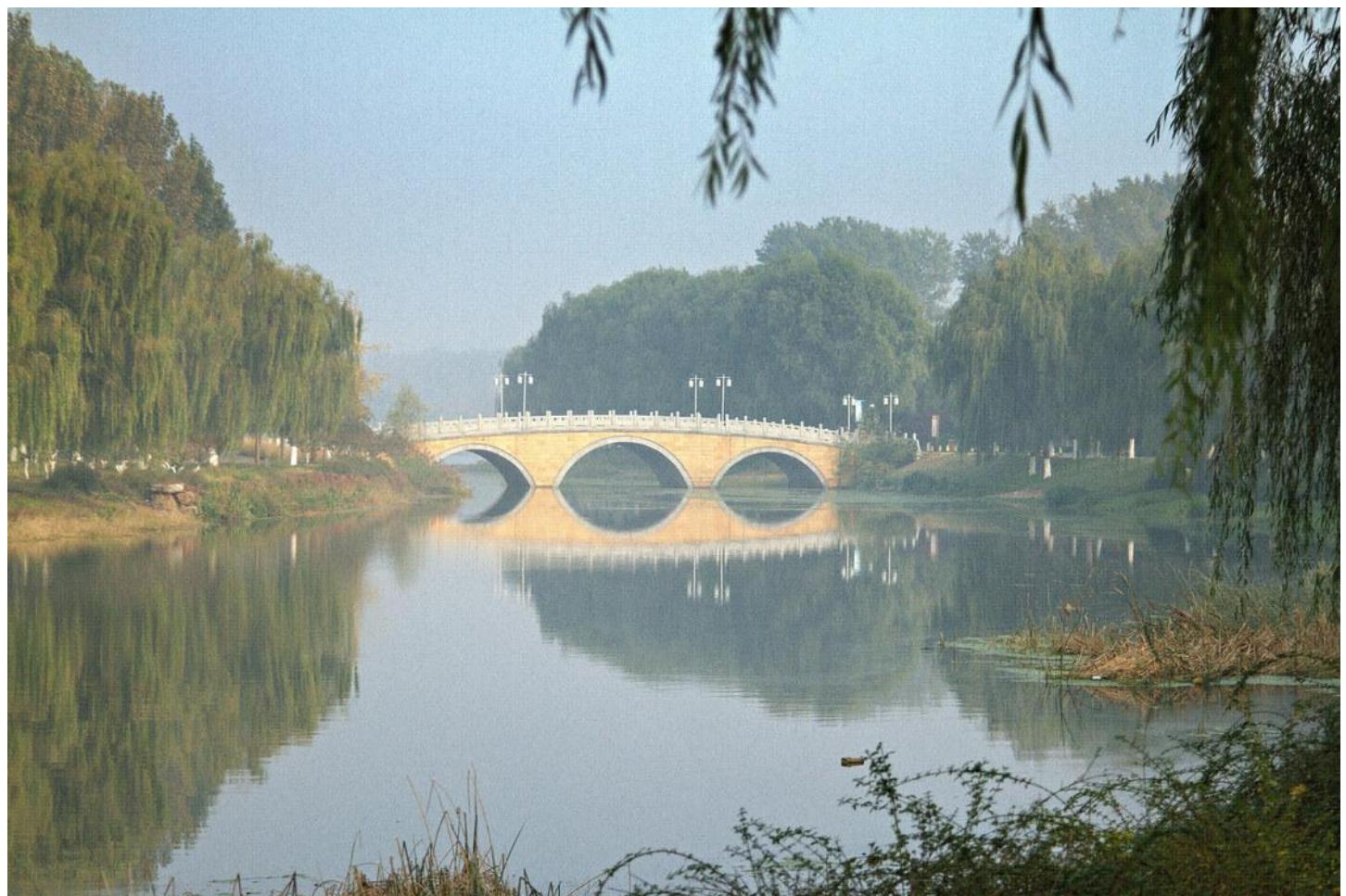
## **Following the First Thread of the Grand Canal Beijing to Anpingzhen**

I left Beijing wrapped in every layer I owned — beanie, gloves, thermal underwear, and my new goose-down armour. The city's wide cycle lanes carried me eastward, away from the monumental heart of the capital and toward the ancient thread I hoped to follow: the Grand Canal.

Thirty kilometres later, I reached Tongzhou Canal Park, the official "start" of the Grand Canal, a monumental waterway system stretching 1,300 kilometres between Beijing and Hangzhou. First constructed in the fifth century BC, it became the world's largest engineering project before the Industrial Revolution. By the 13th century, it spanned more than 2,000 kilometres — far surpassing the Suez and Panama Canals. UNESCO added it to the World Heritage List in 2014. I doubted I could cycle right alongside it, but I hoped to follow its general course and uncover a few historical titbits along the way.

A smooth cycle path traced its edge for a few kilometres before dissolving into the haze. The air was thick with smog — a grey, metallic taste that clung to the back of my throat. My nose blocked despite the nasal spray; breathing felt like inhaling through cloth. I eyed the face masks worn by nearly everyone and knew it was only a matter of time before I joined them.

With daylight slipping away, I stopped after 80 kilometres. Winter's early darkness was not something to challenge lightly. I found a modest room and thawed my fingers, grateful for four walls and a door.

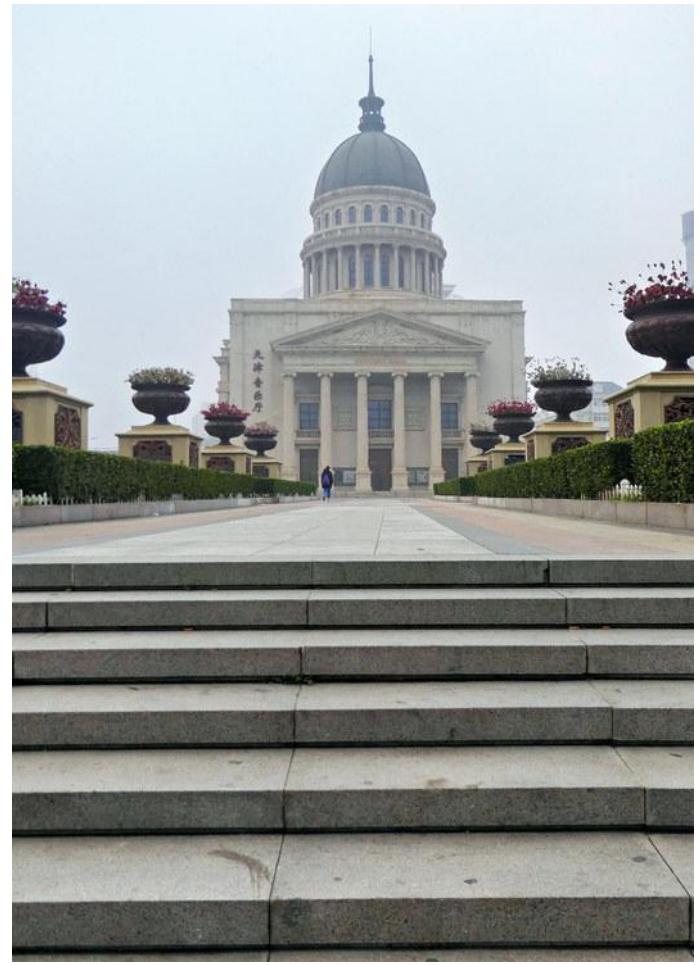


## **Fog, Freezing Hands, and Foreign Concessions - Cycling into Tianjin**

The morning arrived colder still, wrapped in a fog so dense it felt like cycling through wet wool. Visibility shrank to a few metres. I doubted the traffic could see me at all. I tied plastic bags around my feet and hands — a makeshift barrier against the cold — and pushed on.

The fog never lifted. Pile-ups materialised like ghosts: twisted metal, stalled engines, lines of cars stretching into the white void. I wove through the stillness on my bicycle, a small mercy of two wheels.

Tianjin emerged from the mist like a European dream misplaced in northern China. The old concession districts — British, French, Japanese, German, Italian, Belgian — stood with their stately facades and quiet streets. I found the Three Brothers Hostel and wandered the Wudadao, where elegant houses whispered stories of another era. By nightfall, the cold drove me indoors. I had an entire eight-bed dorm to myself — a rare, delicious solitude.

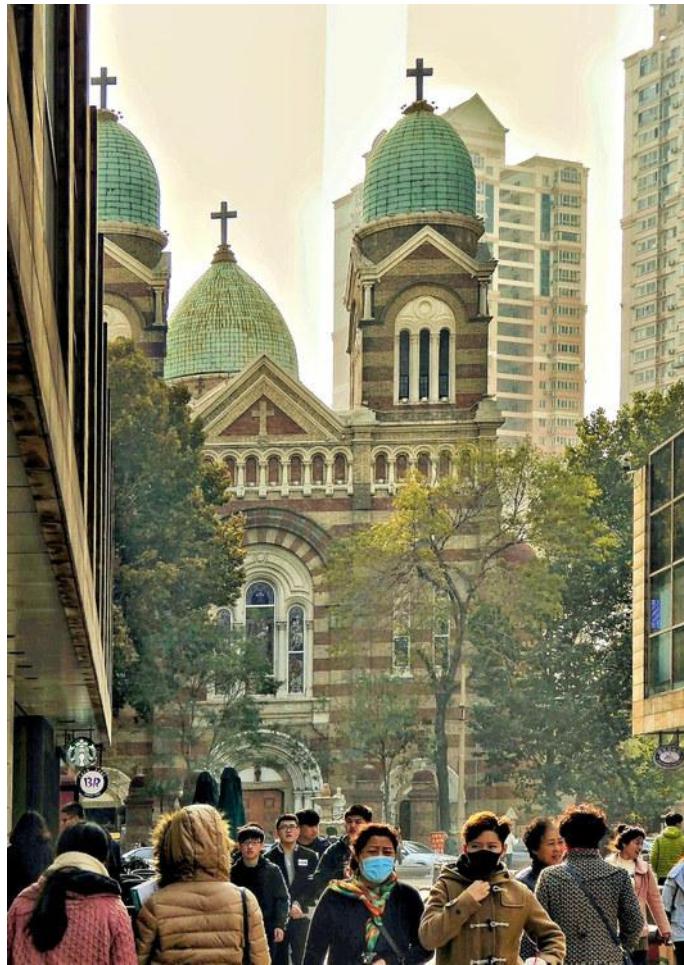


## **Searching for Old China - A Day in Tianjin**

I lingered. Tianjin demanded a slower pace, even if it wasn't the China I'd imagined. Old China had vanished beneath layers of modernity: KFC, Starbucks, Carrefour, McDonald's. Wedding boutiques in white satin. Hip cafés with young people sipping lattes. The riverfront — once part of the ancient Grand Canal — now a polished business district of glass and steel.

I searched for signs of old China, and found a few small alleys tucked behind the global brands, places where dumplings steamed in bamboo baskets and the air smelled of vinegar and garlic.

Still, the side streets offered comfort. Inexpensive eats, dark little eateries with low ceilings, and bowls of steaming dumplings that tasted like home, even though they weren't. I made sure to fill up before returning to the hostel and the tourist-priced cafés of the old town. In China, nothing beats a bowl of dumplings from a hole-in-the-wall joint.







## **The Industrial Corridor - Tianjin to Cangzhou**

The ride south was bleak. The weather softened slightly, enough to shed the down jacket by midday, but the landscape offered little joy. The ancient canal remained elusive, and I cut a straight line toward Cangzhou through industrial sprawl and tired farmland.

For nearly 30 kilometres, the road was lined with truck-repair workshops — a mechanical city of grease and grit. Cangzhou itself greeted me after 110km land with graffiti-scarred walls, half-built high-rises, and abandoned residential blocks. It felt like cycling into a forgotten future.

The first three hotels refused foreigners. The fourth —a gleaming international hotel — accepted me, though at a price. I withdrew cash from the second bank I tried, showered in a bathroom the size of a ballroom, and crossed the street for a cheap, delicious meal. China's contradictions never ceased.





## A Long, Cold Push South - Cangzhou to Dezhou

I overslept, reluctant to leave the warmth. By the time I pedalled out, the city was already in full swing. The cold kept me moving; I stopped less than usual, pushing through the flat, uninspiring landscape for app 120 km.

Dezhou appeared just before dusk. Again, the first hotels refused foreigners. The third — mercifully — welcomed me. The receptionist spoke a little English, a small gift at the end of a long day. I dropped my bags and made straight for the dumpling stand, ordering enough food for two. They always assumed I was feeding someone else.









## **Steam, Smiles, and Steel Wires - Dezhou to Ji'nan**

Morning markets are the soul of China. Steam rose from rice-bun stalls in thick white plumes, twisting into the cold air. People huddled in oversized coats, rubbing their hands together, laughing through clouds of breath. I joined them, mimicking their gestures, earning amused smiles. With a bag of hot buns swinging from my handlebars, I set off toward Ji'nan 127 km down the drag.

A flat tyre slowed me — the culprit, as always, the steel wires from exploded truck tyres. Two had burrowed into my Schwalbes. Wrestling the tyre off was a battle, but eventually the new tube was in place.

The rest of the ride passed through vegetable fields and brand-new towns not yet on any map. I thought about China's trees — the endless rows lining the roads, the vast parks in every city, and the Great Green Wall stretching thousands of miles across the north. A country reshaping its landscape tree by tree.

Ji'nan swallowed me whole. It took ages to reach the centre. Unable to find the hostel, I surrendered to a Home Inn, then ate for two hours straight, thawing from the inside out.





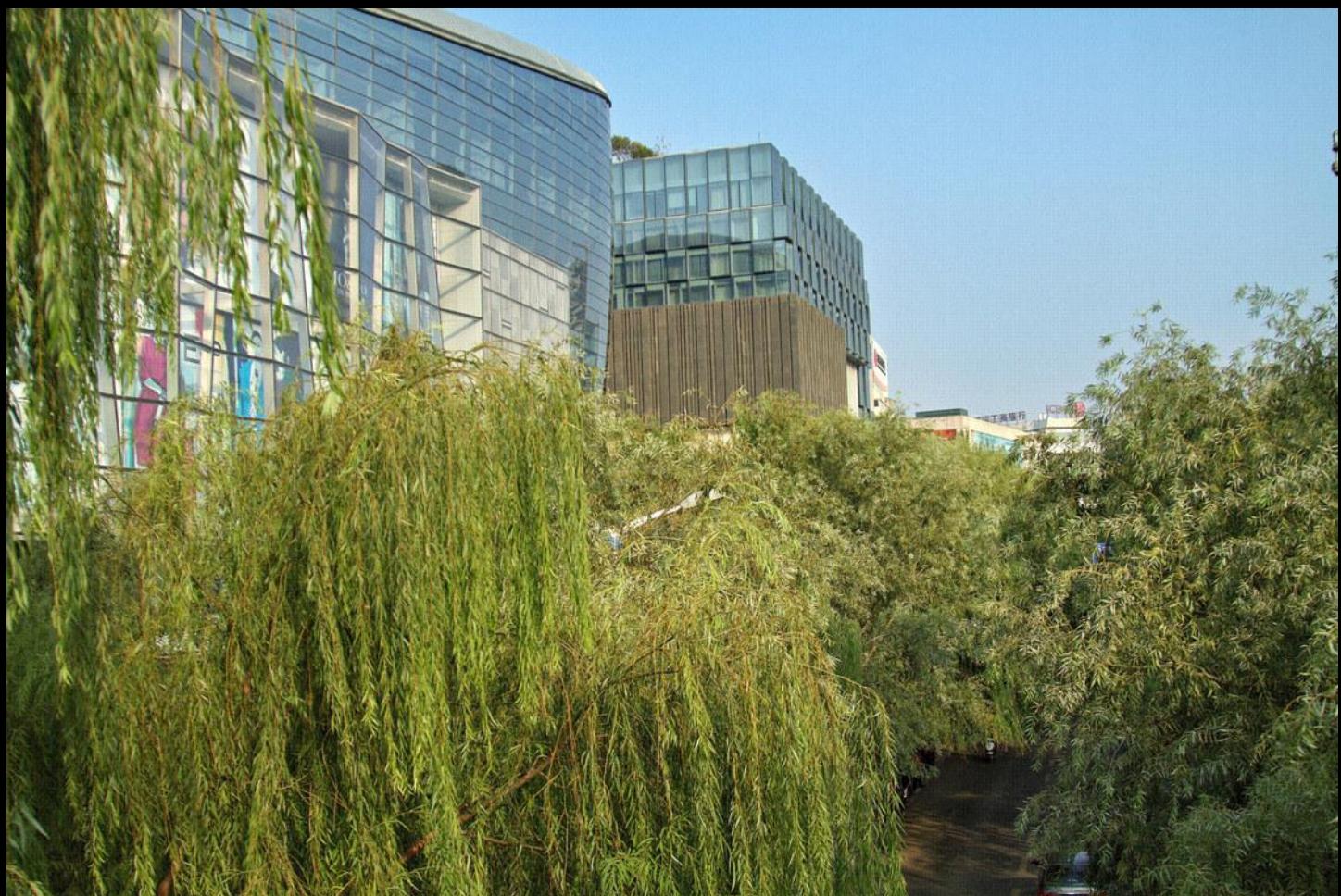


## **Snacks, News, and a City of Shiny Things**

Laundry, errands, wandering. Ji'nan was shiny, modern, full of brand names and bright lights. But the news from afar cast a shadow: the outcome of the US election. I wasn't invested in American politics, yet the result felt like a bruise on the world.

The wind howled at 35 miles an hour. I abandoned any thought of cycling and stayed put, exploring the pedestrian lanes and sampling snacks until I could eat no more. The weather forecast looked grim.





# Cartier





## Toward the Sacred Mountain - Ji'nan to Taishan

The wind eased, and I escaped. The ride to Taishan wasn't remarkable, but arriving in a traditional Chinese town lifted my spirits. The hostel sat in the heart of the old city, surrounded by narrow alleys and steaming food carts.

Taishan, one of China's sacred mountains, worshipped since the 11th century BC, is a major pilgrimage site. I wasn't sure I was in the mood to hike up the mountain in the miserable weather, so instead I visited the town's temples — the traditional starting point for pilgrims before they begin the ascent.

The alleys were lined with mobile food carts, each one spewing steam and heavenly aromas. It was the perfect place to grab a bite to eat, and I wandered from stall to stall, sampling whatever caught my eye. The warmth of the food and the bustle of the streets made up for the grey skies overhead.









## In the Footsteps of Confucius - Taishan to Qufu

A gentle tailwind carried me toward Qufu, birthplace of Confucius. The old walled city was beautifully restored, its stone lanes glowing in the soft autumn light. The hostel, an old building with creaking floors, felt like a refuge.

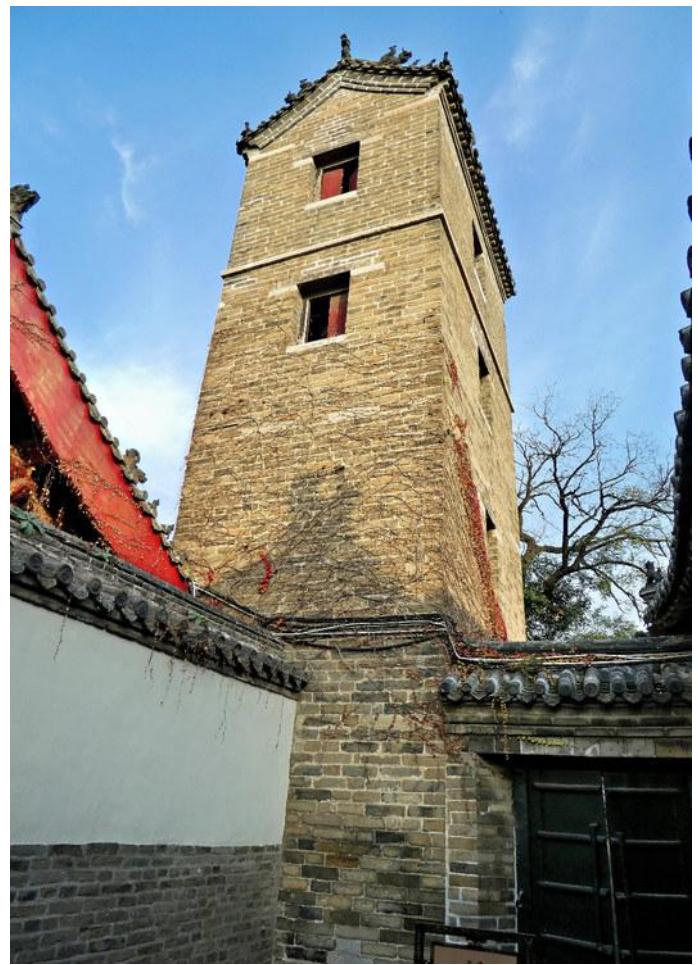
I wandered through the Kong Mansion, learning that Confucius's family name was Kong Qiu, and that "Confucius" was a Latinised invention of Jesuit missionaries. I visited the Temple of Yan, admired its quiet dignity, then hunted down dumplings — my daily ritual.

I stayed an extra day. Qufu was too lovely to rush. I took nearly 200 photos, bought more nasal spray, topped up my phone data, and marvelled at how difficult simple tasks became without a shared language.











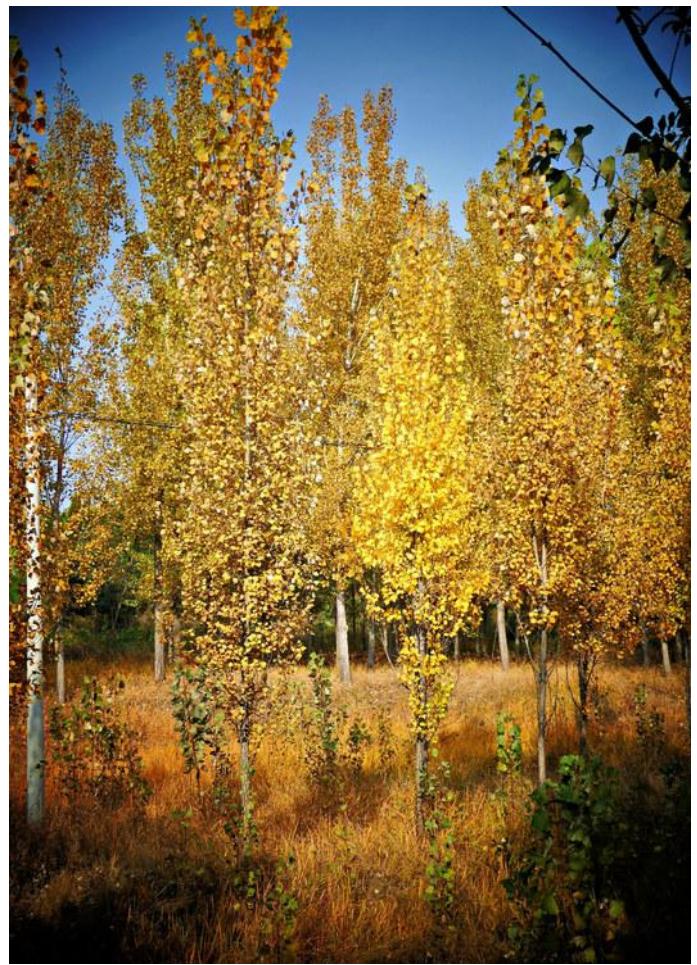


## A Slow Day Through Painted Trees - Qufu to Tengzhou

I woke with no appetite for movement, as though the fog that clung to Qufu had seeped into my bones. Packing took ages, each item resisting its place, and by the time I finally pedalled out, the morning was already slipping away.

Yet the day was warm, almost tender, and the distance to Tengzhou on 66 km. The road unfurled beneath a canopy of trees so dense it felt like cycling through a private forest. Light filtered through in soft, shifting colours. Still, my legs dragged, my mood heavier than my panniers. By Tengzhou, I surrendered to the truth: there's no point forcing a ride when the spirit refuses. I called it a day.





## A Left Turn into History - Tengzhou to Tai'erzhuang

Forty kilometres in, a sign pointed toward Tai'erzhuang, an "ancient town." I turned left on impulse, following quiet country roads.

Tai'erzhuang, founded more than 2,000 years ago, once thrived along the Grand Canal. Destroyed in 1938 during the Battle of Tai'erzhuang — China's first major victory over Japan — it has since been rebuilt as a tourist town.

My hotel was run by a man who had been fast asleep behind the counter. He woke with a start at the sight of a foreigner. He handed my passport back immediately — I doubt he could read a word of it — and then came the chorus of "OK, OK, OK," accompanied by frantic bowing. We must have looked ridiculous, the two of us performing this impromptu pantomime.

The carpet was stained, the bathroom floor sprinkled with hair, but the bedding was clean and the price right. Outside, a woman sold crispy pancakes stuffed with stir-fried vegetables. Heaven in a paper wrapper.





## **The Rebuilt City - Tai'erzhuang to Pizhou**

I explored the reconstructed old town in the morning — canals, bridges, stone alleys, all rebuilt but still atmospheric. The history of the battle hung in the air, a reminder of how fiercely this land had been defended.

While exploring this ancient town, I realised I'd left my phone in the handlebar holder. I rushed back. Miraculously, it was still there. China astonished me in moments like this.

I changed my route and followed quiet lanes to Pizhou, passing villagers who stared openly, unaccustomed to foreigners. Along this stretch, the Grand Canal was still alive — barges moving slowly through its ancient waters. A thrill ran through me. The canal still breathed.









## **Decisions on the Road South - Pizhou to Xuzhou**

My visa was nearing its end, and my mother's 90th birthday approached. Flights were rising in price by the day. December is high season in South Africa. It made sense to leave China now and return in spring, when the cold would no longer gnaw at my bones.

I booked a flight and set off toward Xuzhou with a light tailwind. The city was enormous and not particularly charming, but it had hotels near the train station, and that was all I needed. I checked into a 7 Days Inn and bought my train ticket to Shanghai.









### **A Train Missed, A Sleeper Gained - Xuzhou to Shanghai**

Morning brought a small comedy of errors. I wheeled my bicycle and panniers to the baggage department, where everything was weighed, tagged, and swallowed into the system. With hours to spare before what I believed was an evening departure, I paid for a late checkout and lingered in my room, grateful for warmth.

At the station, reality struck: my train had been at 9h30 that morning, not 21h30. I stared at the ticket in disbelief, wondering how I'd managed to misread something so simple. Fortunately, the staff changed it to a later train — but only a seat, not a sleeper.

The train was packed to suffocation. People stood in the aisles, bags wedged between knees, elbows, shoulders. I squeezed into my seat, bracing for a long, uncomfortable night. Around midnight, a flurry of radio chatter erupted, followed by a dozen curious faces turning toward me — the foreigner causing a stir again. Moments later, I was ushered to a sleeper coach, where I stretched out gratefully until dawn.

### **The Bund, the Box, and the Goodbye - Shanghai to Cape Town**

We arrived in Shanghai at the ghostly hour of 5h00. The city was still asleep, its skyscrapers silhouettes against a pale sky. I caught a taxi to the hostel, only to find it closed. A security guard waved me into the restaurant area to wait for the staff. When they finally arrived, the verdict was disappointing: fully booked.



I found another place around the corner and dropped my bags before stepping out into Shanghai's morning light. I had never felt drawn to this city, but it surprised me with its elegance. The Bund, with its art deco facades and colonial grandeur, felt like a stage set from another century. Once the "Wall Street of Asia," it had seen rice, silk, and opium change hands in fortunes. Now it was a polished promenade of history and ambition.

East Nanjing Road pulsed with life — neon signs, fashion houses, the iconic Apple store. It was hard to imagine this had once been China's first department-store district in the 1920s. The city reinvented itself with every generation.

I retrieved my bicycle from the train station four kilometres away and began the familiar ritual of searching for a bike box. Later, I met Ingrid De Graeve, a Facebook friend living in Shanghai. We shared stories, laughter, and the strange comfort of meeting someone familiar in a place so vast.

Then came the final task: packing up. The bicycle disappeared into cardboard; the panniers were strapped and sealed. At the airport, I felt the familiar tug — the bittersweet ache of leaving a place before I'd fully understood it.

China had been bewildering, exhausting, surprising, and endlessly fascinating. It had challenged me, frustrated me, delighted me. And now it was time to fly home to Cape Town, to celebrate my mother's 90th birthday, and to return another season — when the cold no longer bit at my bones and the road south would open once more.











### ***Leaving the Unfinished***

*By the time Shanghai's skyline rose around me, China had become a mosaic of half-understood moments — fog and dumpling steam, rebuilt towns, ancient echoes, cold mornings that bit through every layer.*

*I left with the sense of closing a book mid-sentence, the story still breathing behind me. Some places refuse to be finished; they ask you to return in another season, with warmer hands and a heart ready for more.*



# About this Blog

## Welcome to My Cycle ride in China

Join me on my ride through the captivating landscapes of China! This blog is your peek into my cycle ride, sharing the roads, experiences, and stories I've gathered along the way. While this route might not be the ultimate path for every cyclist, it certainly offers a glimpse into what China has to offer!

Here's What to Keep in Mind:

### **Distances:**

These daily odometer readings may not always follow the shortest route; after all, sometimes it's the detours that lead to the most incredible discoveries. You'll find plenty of twists and turns in my daily distances, but rest assured, every kilometre is accurately logged.

### **Time of Year:**

This bike ride took place in October and November 2016. Just a heads-up: the scenery might look different now. Roads could have been improved, charming stops might have changed, and places I once loved could be upgraded or gone.

### **Insurance:**

Don't hit the road without a travel insurance policy! It's your safety net against loss, theft, and medical emergencies. Just make sure to scrutinise the fine print—some policies may not cover activities like scuba diving, motorcycling, or trekking.

### **Clothing:**

Summer in Beijing is pleasantly hot but wet, and winters can be downright freezing, so packing smart is essential! Comfortable, high-quality padded cycling shorts will be your best friends on long rides. I recommend lightweight hiking shoes or breathable sandals. And don't forget those personal essentials—bring insect repellent and anti-chafe cream to ensure a smooth ride. Most importantly, strap on a cycling helmet for safety—your future self will thank you!

### **The Bicycle & Gear:**

Choosing the right bike is crucial for comfort during your adventures. I ride a mountain bike equipped with a sturdy Merida frame, reliable Shimano Deore components, strong Alex wheel rims, and tough Schwalbe tyres. My secret for smooth travels? Tubus racks and Ortlieb panniers—they may cost a bit more, but they're built to last. And before you hit the trails, brush up on how to fix a puncture. A phone holder on your handlebars will keep your map handy (I personally rely on Organic Maps or Google Maps). Plus, don't forget a handlebar bag for your camera and any must-have items throughout the day!

### **Recommended Further Reading:**

If you're looking to dive deeper, check out the Lonely Planet e-book. It's budget-friendly and packed with handy tips!



# ABOUT CHINA

## Capital City

The capital city of China is Beijing. Provincial-level administrative divisions, or provinces, are the highest-level Chinese administrative divisions, with 34 such divisions in China. However, this book only deals with four: Fujian, Guangdong, Hainan and Guangxi. The capital of Fujian is Fuzhou, Guangzhou is the capital of Guangdong, Haikou is the capital of Hainan, and Nanning is the capital of Guangxi.

## Currency

The currency in China is the Chinese yuan (CNY), also known as Renminbi (RMB). The currency code for Renminbi is RMB, and the currency symbol is ¥.

## Language

The official dialect of China is Mandarin, but there are more than 297 languages, of which Cantonese, Hokkien, Min, Gan, Wu, and Hakka are the major dialects.

## Religion

There are many religions in China, including Buddhism, Chinese folklore, Taoism and Confucianism.

## Location and size

China is one of the countries considered part of the Far East, located along the South and East China Seas. It's also the world's third-largest country, after Russia and Canada, with an area of 9.6 million square kilometres and a coastline of 18,000 kilometres.

China is bordered by 14 countries: Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Burma, India, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and Russia. Marine-side neighbours include eight countries: North Korea, South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam.

## Population

China, with over 1,408,500 billion people, is, without a doubt, the most populous country in the world. According to the census at the end of 2010, the sex ratio was about 51.27% male and 48.73% female. Some 49.68% of the population resides in urban areas, while the rest lives in rural areas.

## Internet coverage

Internet services are widely available, particularly in town areas. Most travellers planning to stay in China for extended periods usually buy a local SIM card. These can be purchased at service booths, supplier shops, and phone stores on just about every street corner.

Even though the internet is available throughout China, not all of the internet is open to tourists. For example, many internet cafes only accept customers with Chinese IDs.

The easiest way to access Western websites, such as Facebook, Google, and Twitter, is to install a Virtual Private Network (VPN). A VPN can access restricted websites in China by shielding your browser activity. Unfortunately, VPNs are hard to find in the country, so make sure you buy and install one before you arrive in China. Also, it would help if you opted for a paid service rather than a free one, as the Great Firewall can easily block free ones.



## About the Author

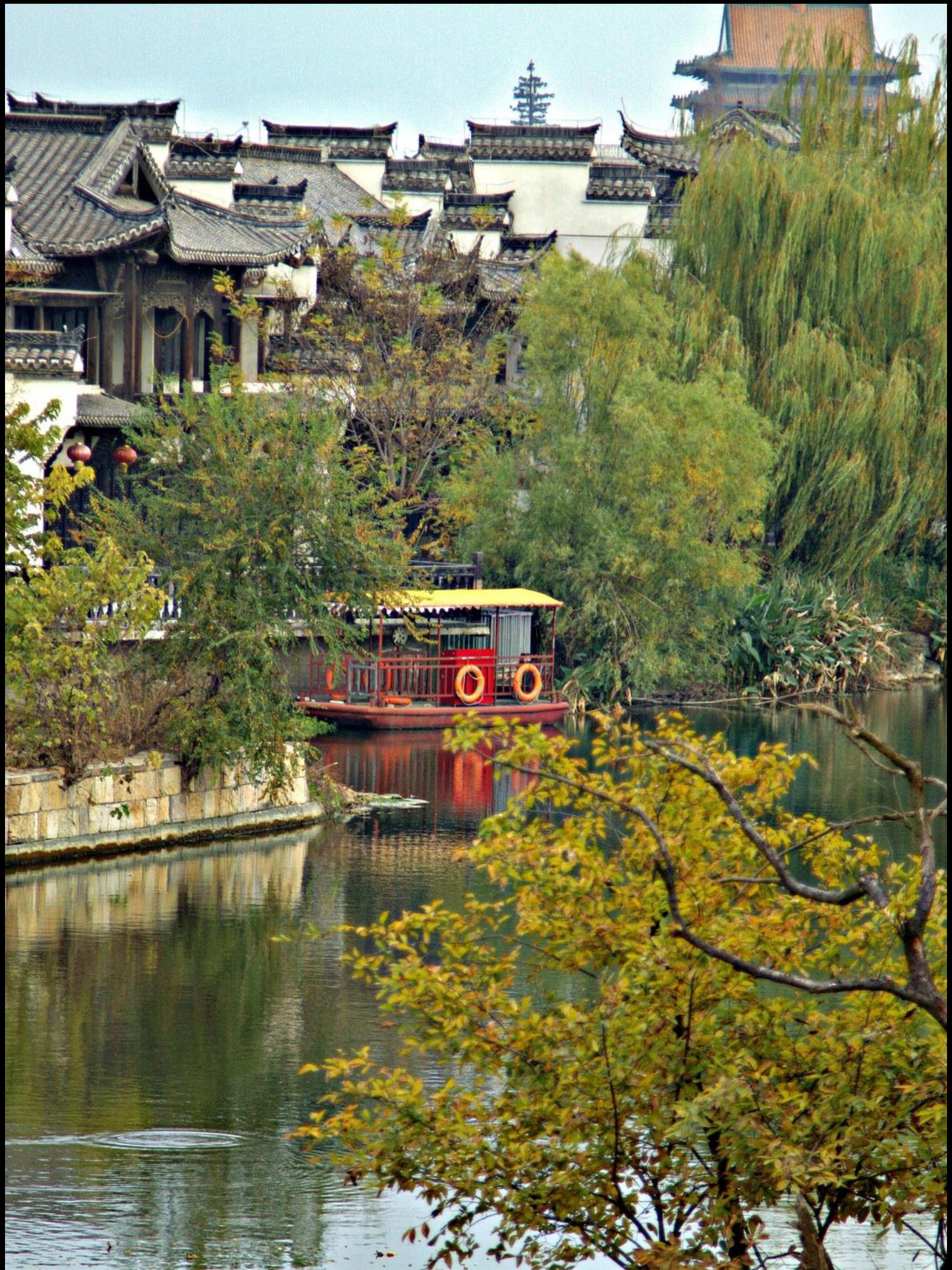
Hailing from the vibrant city of Cape Town, South Africa, Leana's journey into the world of cycling began not with years of training but with a single bold decision. In 2005, driven by curiosity and a spirit of adventure, she entered the Tour D'Afrique—a legendary mountain bike race stretching from Cairo to Cape Town. With little cycling experience, Leana purchased a bicycle, flew to Cairo, and set out on a path that would take her all the way from Cairo to Cape Town.

Returning home, Leana found that the rhythms of ordinary life could not compare to the freedom of the open road. The call of adventure proved irresistible, and in March 2007, she and her companion, Ernest Markwood, embarked on a journey that would evolve into a round-the-world cycling odyssey. Though they began together, the road eventually led them to discover their own unique directions—both in travel and in life.

Leana's travels have taken her across Africa twice, through the Middle East, Europe, the United Kingdom, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the Indian subcontinent, China, Southeast Asia, and Australia. Her wanderlust then carried her to Ushuaia, Argentina, from where she cycled the length of South, Central, and North America over several years. Along the way, she explored many of the world's larger islands, including Cuba, Jamaica, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Today, Leana continues her adventures in Southeast Asia, ever inspired by the promise of new horizons and the enduring joy of life on two wheels.









**There's nothing more exciting than being on my way to a place I've never  
been before.**



