

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you regarding Paul Ostroverhy. Over the summer, we went through an introductory Mandarin Chinese language and civilisation course of one hour per day, with me as his private tutor. It was with curiosity, enthusiasm, and diligence that he successfully finished studying the following topics:

- Basic knowledge of Pinyin;
- Everyday greetings and phrases;
- General introduction to classical Chinese poetry, with an emphasis on Li Bai and Su Shi;
- A focused study of the poem "Quiet Night Thought", including understanding its meaning, analysing its imagery, and learning to write the characters and to recite the poem by heart;
- General introduction to traditional Chinese culture, including ancient Chinese cities, Chinese calligraphy, paintings, and music.

The course passed with lots of interactions, and it is because Paul has been an ardent student who is more than willing to explore a culture which is different from his own. For example, learning about traditional poems, he was quick to discover the rhyming in Quiet Night Thought, and immediately asked if there were patterns to follow and study. In addition, when we looked at the ancient city map of Peking, he was mesmerized by the traditional way of urban planning. Driven by such interest we continued to explore the Tang dynasty capital, Chang An. Most impressively, Paul could absorb the knowledge given to him, and even began to imitate and design his very own city - He Ping, "city of peace".

He was not only a passionate student, but also a hard-working one. Learning to write Chinese characters is, in fact, a challenging task, yet Paul was determined to learn and improve. We printed out practice papers, and even when the space given is used up, he would still write a few more times on the margins; one day, he showed me his Tintin comics and told me that he could actually recognise some characters, or better - he even knew how to write them.

It is indeed rare to see a student who enjoys knowledge about another language and culture so much, and is capable of transforming it into his own artistic and academic output. And it is with great pleasure that I recommend Paul Ostroverhy to you.

Sincerely,

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and Romance Languages at New York University

