

Highlights of Trip to China -- Oct. 21st - Nov. 5th, 2010

by

Henry S Harrison & Ruth Lambert

Part 2 - Day by Day Travelogue

Pre Tour Day 1: Beijing



Beijing, China's capitol, has a rich history that dates back more than 3,000 years. We spent this first day walking about 5 miles around the financial area where our hotel, the Ritz Carlton Beijing, was located without any specific destination in mind. We wanted to 'get oriented' (pun intended). This was our first exposure to modern China. The city had a major face lift two years ago, in time for the 2008 Olympics. The main avenues are now wide, full of cars, motor bikes, bicycles, scooters, motorcycles and a few trucks. By some miracle, they all seem to move along without killing each other. (The skill of a Chinese driver is about the same as that of a typical Boston driver - e.g., terrifying.)

To our surprise, in spite of the heavy foot traffic, nobody pushed or shoved us, nor did we see anyone spitting on the sidewalks as previous travelers had warned us to expect. We heard that there had been a very strong government program to crack down on these behaviors to make foreign visitors more comfortable in China. It appears to have worked!

We had arranged to have dinner at the gourmet Chinese restaurant "JADE" in the Ritz with relatives of our American friends who live Beijing. Our guests were our friend's sister and her husband and their niece, Helen.

Helen had been living in Australia for 5 years, working in banking, but had returned 2 years earlier to marry. "What could I do?" she asked us rhetorically. "The man I loved lived here. So I came back home."



She and her husband have a little daughter who is 18 months old. Helen's English was very good, and she translated back and forth for us. We gave the family a

booklet Ruth prepared of photographs of our son H Alex and best friend Xin and the rest of our family going back 25 years. It was a memorable and delightful evening, and we learned a lot about the lives of educated middle-class Chinese people.



Day 2: Beijing — We Visit The Temple of Heaven

This historic site features a 667 acre park (about the size of Central Park) planted with thousands of cypress trees, and containing two temples built in the early 1400s, during the famous Ming Dynasty. These temples were where the emperors went to pray publicly for good harvests. They included several additional buildings for preparation, such as a Temple of Abstinence. We took cabs both ways from the Ritz. Taxis are everywhere in Beijing, and cheap: a typical 20-30 minute ride was about \$3.





Parks like this one are clearly very dear to the hearts of Beijing residents, as Central Park is to New Yorkers. It functions like a green oasis in contrast to the somewhat grim grayness of the city, and the Moscow-era scale (enormous) and style (lumbering) of most municipal buildings. Despite the cool and overcast weather, the park was full of large family groups walking the pathways and visiting the temple shrines.

It also had a government rated “Happy House” with a 3 star bronze plaque on the front entry, signifying at least one Western style water closet, instead of the scary hole in the floor with slippery grated footholds. (phew!).



Outside the rear gate, where we exited, vendors were selling roasted sweet potatoes and various roasted meats as well as long sticks of tiny glazed crab apples.

Day 3: Beijing — Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City

This morning we joined our tour group, and were assigned to Shan Shan Wei as our guide. (Or Wei Shan-Shan, with her family name first in Chinese.) She was 31 year old, college educated, and single. Her grandfather was a general under Mao, and both her parents were career military. They all lived together in a 1200 s.f. luxury three bedroom apartment about 40 minutes drive from the city center, with her father’s elderly mother. She told us she was not a member of the Communist Party, and in fact, only about 8% of Chinese are party members now.



Each bus group had about 33-35 people, and there were 8 groups in all. First, we visited the enormous and overpowering Tiananmen Square, which can accommodate 1,000,000 people. This was the setting for the notorious student uprising in April 1989, which was brutally crushed 3 months later by government forces. Today, it is used for a wide variety of civic events, including performances, military parades, and national holidays, and features a very large video screen with on-going displays. Ironically, in Chinese its name, Yi-heyuan, means “garden of restful peace”.

The weather was cold, windy and extremely wet. After about 40 minutes in drenching rain and wind, we got back into the bus to tour Beijing’s Forbidden City, made up of nearly 800 buildings dating from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1440). It is the world’s largest surviving palace complex. Walking its grounds brings you to a series of opulent palaces, pavilions, courtyards and imperial gardens within the 26-foot-high walls.



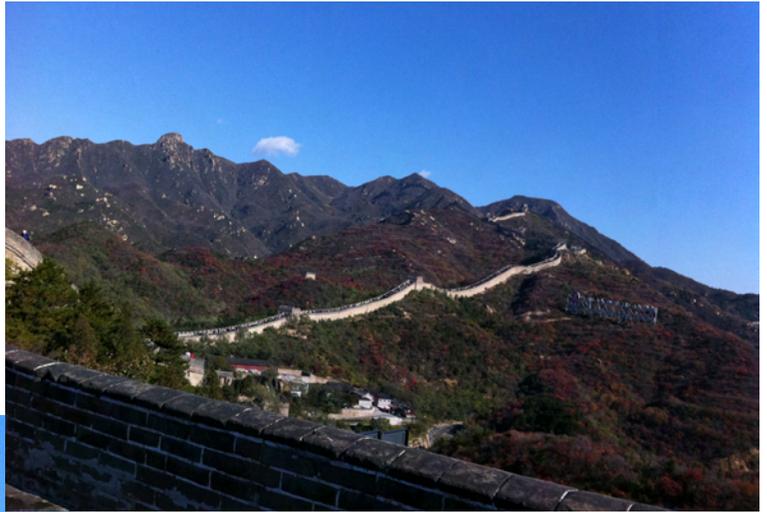
Unfortunately, the sharp wind and fierce rain continued throughout the morning, making this adventure relatively uncomfortable. Nonetheless, there was a



significant number of tourists throughout the compound. It was a Saturday, and Chinese workers have 2 day weekends, like most Westerners. We had lunch with our group in a local restaurant, served on a traditional large glass Lazy Susan in the middle of the table, which swirled the variety of family style dishes around to allow self-service. Then, after surveying our soaked feet and freezing hands, we left the tour rather than continue on to the Summer Palace — an outdoor garden — in the downpour. Instead, we took a cab back to the Hotel to warm up in a extra deep hot bathtub, followed by wrapping ourselves in fluffy robes, and hunkering down to see more of China on our TV, which ran a continuous loop China film.

Day 4: Beijing — To The Great Wall and Beyond

After a breakfast buffet at the Ritz Carlton so lavish it defies description, we traveled overland about one hour by bus through throngs of vehicular traffic to the Badaling Hills. Here there is an impressive and well-preserved section of the Great Wall of China — a 4,000-mile-long series of sandstone and earthenwork fortifications built and maintained between the 5th century B.C. and the 16th century A.D. We walked up towards a guard tower at the top of the first steep rampart. (Ruth made it about a third of the way and stopped, as her hip was sore with bursitis, diagnosed just before we left.)



Henry headed off to the uppermost tower. It was so cold that black ice had formed on the steepest stairways, and he slipped on the way down but, unlike others on our tour who fell, he grabbed the railing and was not hurt.



There were hundreds of tourists, mostly Chinese, despite the cold, brisk day. There were also babies touring the Great Wall with their stalwart parents!



Dogs” are actually always LIONS, we visited the Sacred Way, a tree-lined avenue guarded by massive sculptures of elephants, lions and camels, leading to a group of Ming Dynasty tombs. The Sacred Way was majestic and very beautiful, planted with elegant willow and cherry trees all along its one-mile length. Down on the flats, it was also much warmer than on the Wall, and the walk was very pleasant.



Day 5: Beijing and Xian

Today our tour took us to Old Beijing's *hutongs* or narrow alleys, now a mostly residential historic district, and only accessible on foot or via rickshaw propelled by bicycles. These were the only rickshaws we ever saw in China and were strictly for us tourists (much like the horses and carriages in Central Park in New York City). We saw many old houses (mostly restorations) that purported to show what living in Beijing used to be like.

We were told that because these small homes are very close to the Forbidden City, they are now extremely expensive, as costly as living in the chic parts of Greenwich Village or Soho.

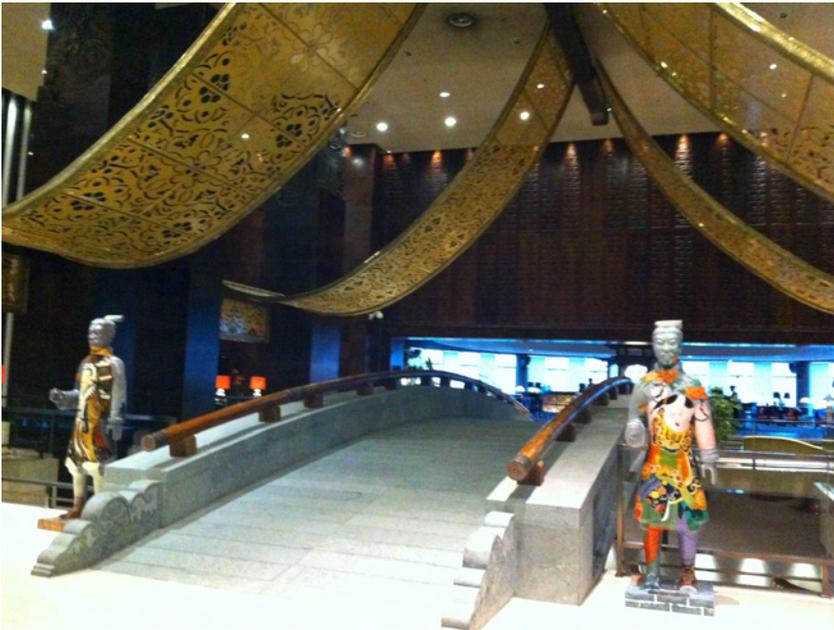
We next visited a silk carpet workshop for a demonstration of silk rug making techniques by two truculent and bored young women who spend their work hours performing at large looms for tourists. The workshop was adjacent to a large "buying opportunity" showroom of silk rugs. Most were gorgeous, and very expensive. They ranged in price from about \$700 for a small prayer rug to over \$50,000 for a room-sized silk rug.

We watched a short film about silk production, which starts with the boiling of the silkworm cocoons, and the unraveling of their amazingly long thin threads. A human hair is 7 times as thick as a single strand of silk! We also saw a colorful array of dyed silk yarn on display.



Day 5: (afternoon) Xian

After lunch, we flew to Xian, the main city of the Tang Dynasty, and the former capitol city of northern China in ancient times. We stayed overnight in the just-opened gigantic ultra-modern German Kempenski Hotel and Convention Center, complete with a Brew Haus restaurant, ugly Teutonic furnishings, and a sterile atmosphere throughout. The hotel is part of the newly developed Ecological District, and is awaiting a rush of tourism as the Xian excavation continues. Bill Clinton and other famous personalities have visited the site, which already brings in hundreds of thousands of tourists each year. It is expected to have 2,000,000 visitors each year. There was nothing in the area that was more than two years old, and every main street we traveled leading to the airport had plantings of thousands of new trees, often several rows deep, of ginkgo, cherry, plum, willow and pine among others.



Only the majestic lobby, which featured a dramatically draped bridge across a real pond, guarded by two very large painted terracotta soldiers looked at all Chinese.

Day 6: Xian (Morning)

The tour to the mausoleum where Emperor Qin Shi Huang was laid to rest over 2,000 years ago was fantastic. We saw thousands of life-sized terracotta warriors, archers and infantrymen that were buried with the emperor. Each man and horse was made with distinctive features, and we were told that the artisans had copied each other's faces to make them all realistic and unique. Walkways provide a bird's-eye view of the entire man-made necropolis where the terracotta soldiers were discovered in the 1970s.

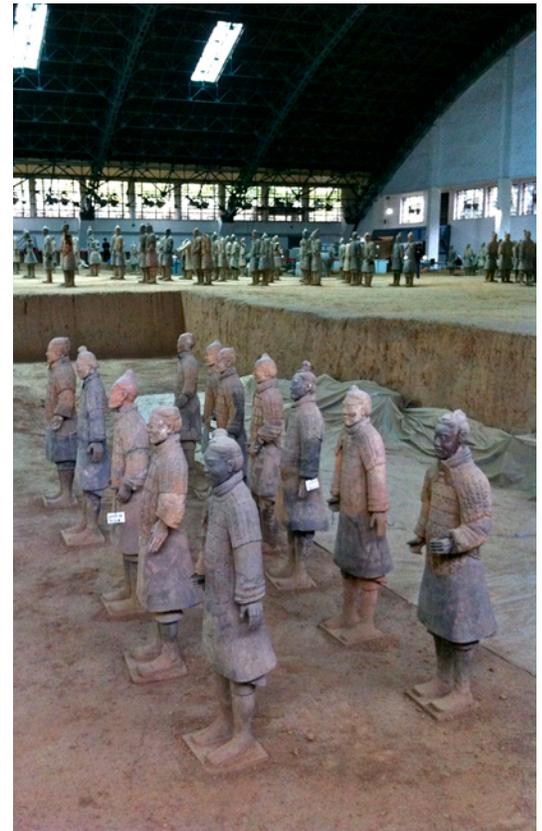
The local farmer, who was digging a well when he stumbled on the massive burial chamber, is still alive. He sat at a table during our visit, signing books about the excavation with his 'chop' dipped in ink, as he is illiterate!



The vast excavation is now a massive archeological dig and World Heritage Site, covered with two hanger-type buildings, each the size of several football fields, and kept at a nippy 50° to preserve the finds.

So far, they have uncovered and restored about 2,000 of the 8,000 Terra Cotta Soldiers buried at this site. Teams of

archeologists and student assistants were at work at the site, taking great care to preserve this national treasure. Each soldier is marked and photographed in place. They are then removed for restoration, and carefully replaced in the same spot.



We also went for a tour of the main museum at the site, with more examples of restored soldiers, their implements and tools, and various animals such as donkeys and horses.

Day 6: ChongQing (afternoon)

After our tour of the terracotta army, we headed to the airport with a box lunch in tow, and flew on to ChongQing, a mountain city about 1-1/2 hours further west, and inland. This modern provincial capital is already home to **30,000,000** people, and is expected to double its population over the next decade! It was, during WW II, the capital of China during most of the political reign of Chang Kai-Shek and headquarters of the Flying Tigers. Here we got our first real view of the massive housing program being undertaken all over China. We learned that about 15 million people migrate from the interior farm lands to the cities each year, requiring about 3,000,000 housing units (mostly high rise apartment buildings) to be built to accommodate them. The announced goal is to increase the number of those moving to cities to 25 million annually, to get them away from subsistence farming and into the modern economy!

What we saw all over the hills of ChongQing were endless high-rise apartment buildings (typically 20 to 40 floors high) with concrete walls, and the ubiquitous bamboo scaffolding covered with green netting and capped with a construction crane. These developments look something like Co-Op City in New York in their dense proximity.



Our group estimated that 150 more buildings were currently under construction in ChongQing, and giant cranes were the most prevalent sight on the horizon. It felt imposing and oppressive to drive through the hills and valleys, surrounded on all sides by the high towers of this incredibly populated city, knowing that double the current number of housing units must be built in the years ahead. Little wonder China is experiencing a housing boom, and a housing price run-up, which may cause an inflation — the last thing China needs.

Our bus ride took us on a steeply winding (stomach churning) path to the Yangtze River to board our Viking river boat — a mini cruise ship for about two hundred eighty passengers — for the 6 day, 460 mile cruise Eastward down river towards Shanghai.

Ruth complained that the looming city above us looked like something out of a nightmare “Manga” cartoon. She was

very relieved when we finally arrived at the dock, where we boarded our luxury cruise boat for the next phase of our China adventure. Many other tourist boats were on the majestic river, including this fabulous Dragon boat!

Day 7: On Board and Shibaozhai Monastery

The next morning started with the lavish breakfast buffet that would greet us every day on board. Especially delightful was the wide assortment of fruit, much of it quite exotic for us Westerners, such as lichis and dragon fruit, which looks like white watermelon with a bright pink rim and small dark seeds and tastes like a very sweet cucumber.





Our ship docked and we took a side trip to visit the Shibaozhai Temple, a 12-story 99-step pavilion built in 1650 along the Yangtze. The local authorities have built a multi-million dollar dike around it, and the island it stands on, to prevent it from being flooded by the new level of the river, which reached its planned height of 175 meters above sea level in mid-October of 2010, just before our arrival there. The small rural town hosting the temple was relocated from lower down the mountain, which is now completely under water. Most buildings were rebuilt or built from scratch within the past 5 years. This is an increasingly popular tourist destination for both Chinese and foreign visitors, and all along the way, the approach streets

from the quay were lined with local vendors selling everything from wooden flutes and chess sets to silk robes and purses.

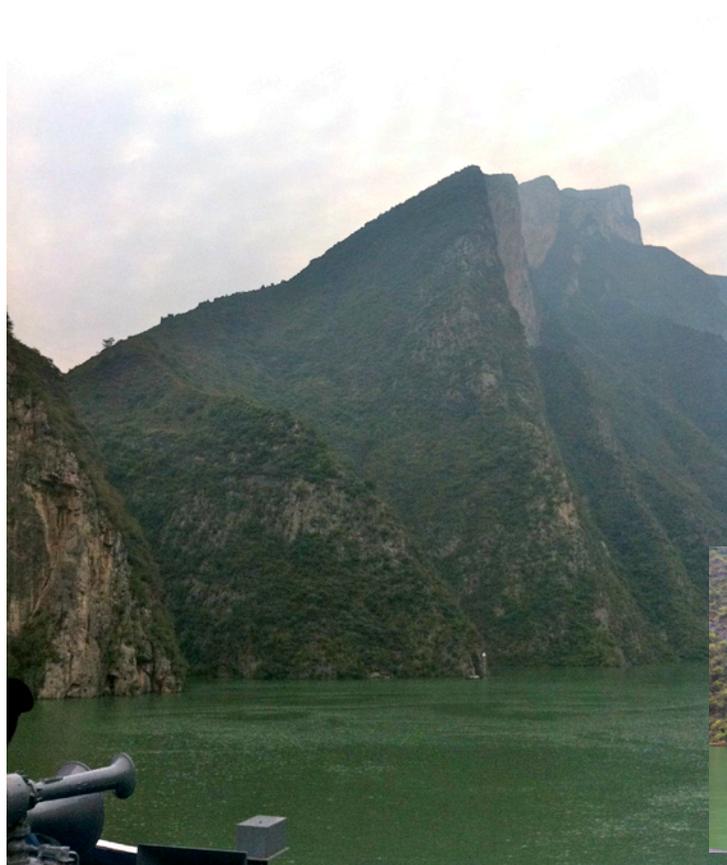
There is a planned city park and garden which was still under construction adjacent to the rope suspension bridge that is the approach to the island. The monastery is no longer a religious living quarters, but

still has a sacred presence in these hills, and it is considered good luck to visit it, and climb to the summit.

Day 8: The Three Lesser Gorges and the Three Gorges Dam

For the next 150 miles, we traveled along the most scenic stretch of the Yangtze as it forced its way through a spectacular series of limestone ridges and “drowned mountains” known as the Three Lesser Gorges. We stopped and transferred to a smaller excursion boat for the 3-hour side trip that took us through these beautiful canyons flanked by towering cliffs.

Unfortunately, trying to provide pictures of how spectacular these



Gorges are is like trying to show photographs of the Grand Canyon that reflect its true splendor. We sailed through the Yu (Jade) and Wu (Witch's) Gorges, both renowned for their magnificent scenery, and went back to our own boat for the trip down river to the massive Three Gorges Dam.

Boat traffic along this stretch of the Yangtze is very active, with the deep water created by the dam making navigation possible



all year long. The nearby towns are creating levees of trees and concrete along the frontage of the river to protect against periodic flooding.

Late in the evening, we transited through the gigantic five-stage locks of the Three Gorges Dam.

The Three Gorges Dam is a hydroelectric dam that spans the Yangtze River at the juncture of the Three Gorges, the narrowest area of the river. It formerly had an island that extended about 1/3 of the way across the span, making it possible to build the monstrous dam in sections. The dam is complete except for the special boat-lifts that will allow small boats to be lifted over the dam by cranes. It stretches a full mile across the river (it is four times longer than the



Hoover Dam) and rises 600 feet high. It took over 20,000 people working 24/7 for fifteen years to build it, at an estimated cost of \$30 billion dollars.

China is operating many thousands of coal-burning power plants, which spew smoke into the air, causing serious air pollution, especially in the northern cities. These chimneys were operating along the Yangtze. Supposedly, the main purpose of the 3 Gorges Dam project was to provide hydro-electric power (it was supposed to supply about 5% of China's total power usage when running at capacity) but their needs are rapidly expanding, and it doubtful if 3 Gorges will make a real difference.

Besides supplying power, however, the dam makes the Yangtze river much more navigable for ships of all sizes, and reduces the frequency of life-threatening floods, which were endemic to the main river valley. Construction was very controversial because 1.2 million people — mostly poor subsistence farmers — lost their homes and farms. It also had an enormous impact on the natural ecology of the region, with long-term potential negative consequences not fully understood yet. Based on our limited observation, however, the population relocation project seems to have been successful. Many people, especially the elderly, were relocated into the new cities built along the river. Some were located onto new farms. These elders are often quite bitter about the abrupt disruption to their lives; however, almost all the young people were pleased with the opportunity to relocate into the new cities, to get away from marginal farming. When we arrived, they were celebrating that the water had just reached its maximum level of 175 meters above sea level. This area had been about 100 meters above sea level before the dam; its construction added approximately 200 feet of water to these valleys!

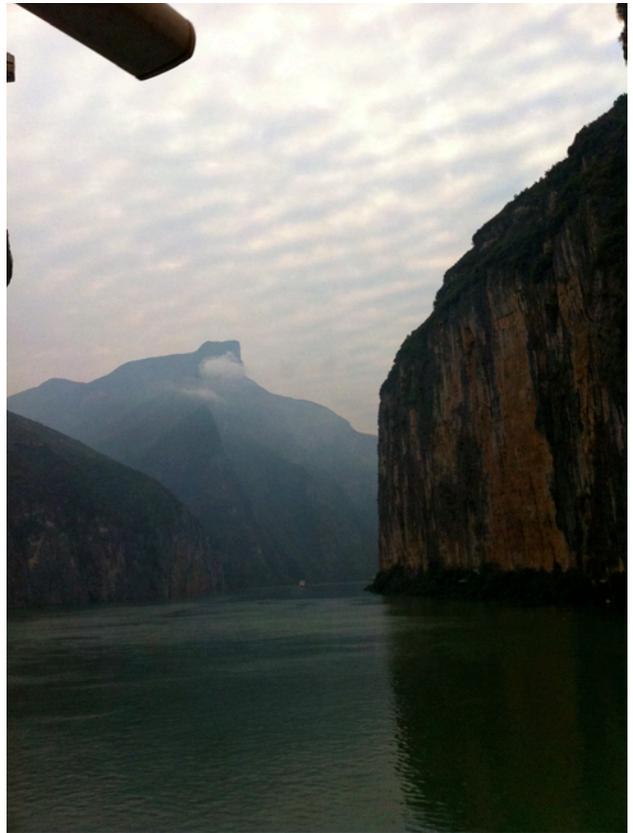
Day 9: Three Gorges Dam



We disembarked from our ship for a 3-minute bus ride back to the top, for a tour of the Three Gorges Dam, where we learned more about this immense engineering accomplishment. The Dam project has become a major tourist attraction for the Chinese as well as foreign visitors. It is also a security concern, and was the first time on our trip that we saw soldiers and police with guns.

Day 10: Three Gorges & Jingzhou

We cruised through Xiling Gorge, the longest of the Three Gorges to Jingzhou, where we took a bus ride to a rural community to visit an elementary school sponsored in part by Viking River Cruises.





There we were greeted and entertained by the children, who sang and danced for us (although it was a Sunday, which meant they had come to the school on their day off), and then went to a 4th grade classroom with them. They were dressed like American kids of their age, and seemed to enjoy the experience of entertaining us. These kids all looked fit and well. The small farming towns we drove through on our way there, however, looked very “second world”, with only two or three paved streets and small low-rise housing blocks in between long stretches of green fields of vegetables. We were told that only one child in a hundred here would be able to attend college, as their parents would never be able to save to pay their tuition and fees.

Day 11: Wuhan (morning)

We cruised overnight to Wuhan, a major city with a population of over 10 million people. We visited the Hubei Provincial Museum to enjoy a performance by musicians in native costume playing tunes on their unique collection of ancient 2,000 year old bronze bells, some as large as a grown man. They are the oldest examples of bronze bells in the world.

The largest bells were played with giant mallets which were brushed against the interior walls, to produce a deep mellow tone. Most of the music was traditional Chinese melodies, on their 5-tone Eastern 1scale, but the last piece they played was Beethoven’s Ode to Joy, much to the amusement and pleasure of the audience.



This city is a big education center, with over 50 colleges and university. Wuhan University has over 50 thousand students and many of the other colleges and universities in the city have over 10 thousand students each.

The airport in Wuhan looked entirely Western and modern, like all of the airports we flew through in China. On the runway, we saw this handsomely decorated Air China jet.



Day 11: Shanghai (afternoon)

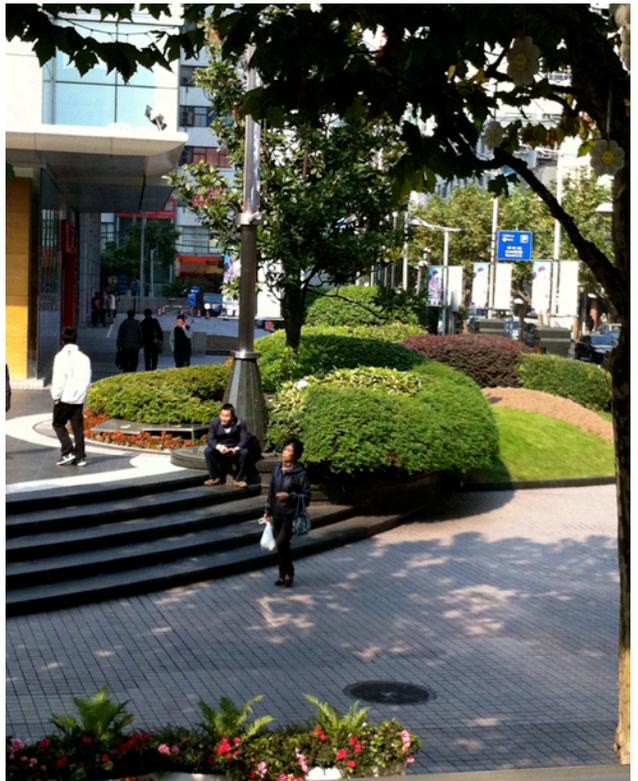
In the afternoon, we flew to Shanghai. We checked into the awesome Ritz Portman Shanghai Hotel, which — if it were in the United States — would get seven stars. Our breakfast buffet once again featured wonderful exotic fruits such as lichis and dragon fruit. Henry gave our table a lesson on how to peel and eat a lichi, removing the cactus-looking shell to reveal the sweet nutty meat inside. This was scooped out and slurped like an oyster.

After the cool interior, the weather in Shanghai was wonderful, with bright sunshine and a light breeze. The temperature reached the mid 70s by noon each day. It was obvious that we were now in the gracious, relaxed south, rather than the austere self-important north. Shanghai puts most American cities to shame. It has an ultra modern transportation system, the main streets are kept immaculate by constant cleaning (both washing and sweeping by hand), and there are flowers and trees everywhere. Most major street corners feature “pocket parks” and flowering plants. Parks abound and are lovely, easily accessible, and often feature sculptures and other decorations.

Day 12: Shanghai

This morning, we toured Old Shanghai and the historic Bund, where the countries and enterprises that entered China in the early 1800s, after the Opium Wars, made their headquarters. It now consists of about 50 historic buildings, originally built as embassies and bank headquarters, including the famous Sasson Peace Hotel built by Vidal Sasson’s family, who survived the Holocaust as refugees in Shanghai, as did Ruth’s cousins, Giselle and Imré Kossard, both doctors, who settled in Sydney, Australia after the War.

We toured the giant new Shanghai Museum, and spent some time at the exquisite Yuyuan Gardens, dating back to the Ming Dynasty. This was a private summer writing retreat of a minor official at the time, and featured an open pavilion with carved wooden walls and shutters, beautiful koi ponds, plantings of all kinds, and lovely views. The stately willow trees made cool reflections everywhere.



In the evening, we went to see the world-famous Shanghai Acrobatic Troupe that produces something similar to a Cirque de Soleil show. The finale was truly spectacular, with 8 motorcyclists zooming around inside an enormous lighted globe amid flashing lights and loud music.

Day 13: Shanghai — On Our Own



Our tour group left for the airport after a final communal breakfast, and we began exploring Shanghai on our own, having arranged for two extra nights at the Ritz. On this day, we walked for miles along the famous Nanking Road, the 5th Avenue of Shanghai.

This is a shopper's paradise. Everything you could possibly want is for sale in countless beautiful upscale stores — including the iPad and iPhone in Apple's magnificent new store, where we saw at least 200 people waiting to get in the crowded store. Patrons were limited to only 4 iPhones apiece.

There were separate stores for at least a dozen Swiss Watch companies, countless fashion stores for men and

women, department stores, etc. All were selling original goods — not the ubiquitous knock-offs, which were available in a nearby separate mall. There were also big auto dealerships for almost every make of automobile. The Bentley dealer announced on the evening news that they had already sold 500 Bentleys in China during 2010, and were projecting sales over 1,000 for 2011. (A Bentley retails for close to \$200,000.)

We checked out the McDonald's, Starbucks, and Kentucky Fried, all of which are thriving. The pundits laughed at Starbucks for trying to crack the market in a formidable tea drinking culture, but to everyone's amazement, the Chinese — especially the young and rising middle-class — are quickly converting to lattes for breakfast, while still drinking tea the rest of the day. Shan-shan told us she can't start the day without a double espresso from Starbucks!



Walking back in the afternoon, we turned off the Nanking Road, and went to Beijing Road just one long block north, and parallel to Nanking, where the masses of local Chinese shopped in stores selling real Chinese everything! We saw some shops selling odd parts of chickens, a shop featuring only cooked Peking ducks, and others selling slippers or scarves, toothpaste and cosmetics. There were also quite a few "7-11" type convenience stores selling snacks, sodas, cigarettes, and candy.



Again, after being warned to expect it, we were surprised by how few people smoked. Almost none of the young people we saw anywhere smoked.

The car and bus traffic reminded us of NYC, to which was added an equal

number of motorbikes and regular bikes (with special lanes at most major intersections) — but they all seemed to move along just fine. There were stories of massive traffic jams, but we did not see any in Shanghai. There was a great deal of pedestrian traffic, as in any large city in the U.S., and most of the people were stylishly dressed and well groomed. Only elderly women wore silk pajamas, while older men sometimes wore the Mao-era gray cotton pants and boxy tops.



The city was revitalized by the recent Expo which closed just one day before our arrival. Rumor had it that the Chinese government spent \$1 billion dollars on sprucing up Shanghai in the two years leading up to the Expo.

The gorgeous China pavilion will remain a landmark on the horizon; over 73,000,000 people attended the Shanghai Expo, whose slogan was “Better City, Better Life”. A typical Expo attracts about 10 million visitors, and many foreigners. Most of the visitors to Shanghai for the Expo were Chinese from other parts of the country. There were many lotteries and contests prior to the Expo that offered free excursion tickets, which were very popular!



The main arteries are elevated bi-level roadways that do not interfere with either foot traffic or street traffic above or below. Together, they provide three of the five levels of vehicular transport, the other two being subways (which we did not attempt), and the Mag Lev airport transport monorail — the fastest short rail in the world. Once again, the sidewalks were jammed with people, but we were never pushed or shoved.

We estimate we walked about ten miles in ten hours. That evening we were too tired to go out to eat, so Ruth went to the nearby shopping mall and market.

She returned with meat and cheese for sandwiches, and some fruit and salad, as well as a picture of this local delicacy of the week: **Hairy Crabs**. They were sold alive, similar to lobsters in New England,



bound securely with string to prevent them

from clawing their way out of the shopping bags! (We had no way to cook them, so we passed on this delicacy.)



Day 13: Shanghai

We decided to board the Big Red Bus that went all over the City in a continuous loop, with recorded descriptions of what you were seeing available in 8 languages. They ran every half hour, so you could get off and walk around and then get back on. Included was an optional evening boat ride on the Huangpu River, with great access to all the many attractions of the city.

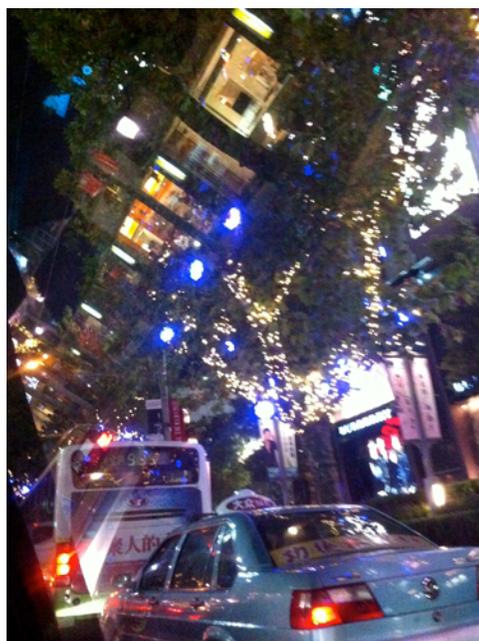
The river, with a graceful gardened walkway and park along its sprawling Western waterfront, splits Shanghai into two main sections: the Bund and west, and Pudong and east. A giant statue of Mao graced one square.



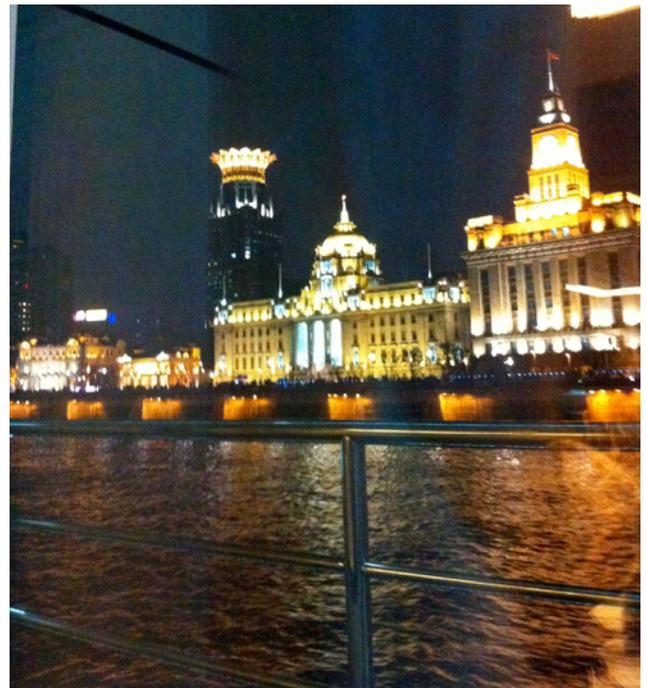
Our Big Red Bus made a separate trip to the Pudong financial area via one of several enormous suspension bridges. This is where many of the newest and most dramatic buildings in East Asia have sprung up like mushrooms. It is obviously an architect's paradise.

Just 10 years ago, Pudong was farmland, with truck farms that provided Shanghai with fresh vegetables. It was not connected to the rest of Shanghai except by ferry boat. Imagine Wall Street in Manhattan in 2050, and that's Pudong today. The two most iconic landmark buildings are the Oriental Pearl Radio Tower, and the Jin Mao Tower, with its fantastic open transom at the very top. Pudong is growing very rapidly, and is intent on becoming the new financial and commercial hub of East Asia. It is already the financial capital of China.

Later in the evening, we took the boat ride that was part of our bus package for a dazzling view of Shanghai at night. The walls and windows of all the major buildings are lit up until midnight, so that the whole town is a fantastic light show. From the boat, the Bund looked noble, majestic, and dignified in its turn-of-the-century elegance, something like Paris viewed from the Seine at night. It contrasted perfectly with the modern high-rise profile of Pudong on the opposite side.



Later, we took a cab ride back to the hotel, and watched as all the blazing lights of Shanghai surrounded us in a bright neon glow, including thousands of small smiley face twinkling lights in the hundreds of trees lining the sidewalks. It was a fitting farewell for our last night in Shanghai.





Day 14: Shanghai - Tokyo - New York (JFK)

We left at 5:30 AM for the airport for our 8:30 flight that had a stopover in Japan to change plane. We had a welcome breakfast in the Delta Executive Lounge, complete with a wild translation into English of the Japanese word for Cheerios!

Our flight back to New York from Shanghai was the same as our flights to China, except in reverse. We landed at Kennedy at about 3:30 PM and arrived back in New Haven in time for dinner. The trip home took 22 hours, portal to portal. The twelve hour difference makes readjusting to sleep cycles a challenge, but we were more or less back on track within a week of our return.

Conclusion: Our trip was fascinating, overwhelming, tiring and just what we hoped: a whirlwind tour of China that gave us memories and adventures to mull over for years to come. In our opinion, it is fortunate that China is a long way from the USA. They have plenty of land and resources, and plenty of internal problems to deal with, so they will probably leave us alone for the foreseeable future — in spite of their highly visible posturing to the contrary. Fortunately, they have a well-educated and highly motivated middle-class populace that wants economic progress coupled with stability and harmony! Hopefully, they will succeed in achieving all three.