

Day 1 – April 13, 2009 Monday

Travel day: Leave 2:50 a.m. in the bus to New York.

Arrive in New York at 11:30 a.m.

Plane leaves for Beijing at 4:30 p.m. (Flight 982) on Monday

Day 2 – April 14, 2009 Tuesday

We arrive in Beijing after a thirteen hour flight at 6:04 p.m. on Tuesday evening April 14, 2009.

Yes, there is a “lost day” in there. After our arrival we go to the Quan Ju De restaurant for Peking Roast Duck dinner.

Peking is Cantonese which is the former name for Beijing.

Day 3 – April 15, 2009 Wednesday

Our first full day in China. We meet Emily (Wei Wei) our Beijing tour guide and Wong our bus driver. (We hope they don't take us the wong wei. ☺ Sorry I couldn't resist!) Bei means north and jing means capital in Chinese, thus Beijing.

Our first stop, The Temple of Heaven, made only of wood. This is where we saw people doing Ti Chi, playing cards, singing Chinese opera, ball room dancing, etc.

From there we went to the Emperor's Tomb (Changling Tomb for Emperor Yongle)

Lunch

Climbed the Great Wall (23 heroes)

We then went to Hanci Health Preservation Hall (Han Ci Tang) to have a fabulous foot massage.

Dinner

Acrobatic Show

Day 4 – April 16, 2009 Thursday

7:30 a.m. Tong Ren Tang Pharmacy Emily told us that all Chinese have benefitted from this 380 year old pharmacy using TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine). (We're hoping some Americans do too.) ☺ They use the left hand to “feel” the pulse to check the heart, liver & left kidney and the right hand to check the lungs, spleen and right kidney. The Chinese also use acupuncture.

After leaving lots of U.S. dollars behind at the pharmacy we went to Tian An Men Square. We observed thousands of Chinese walking patiently in line to view the wax figure of Chairman Mao.

From there we went to the Imperial City which is before the Forbidden City. There are three gates into the Forbidden City, home of 24 emperors with a total of 9,999 rooms. One of the gates is the Gate of Heavenly Peace. Quiz: How many concubines could an emperor have? Answer: 81. Quiz: Why don't Chinese men wear green hats? Answer: It means their wives had an affair.

The political area was a man's world. It included the Hall of Supreme Harmony, The Golden Throne Hall (the most important building in the old days.) The symbol of power in China was space, so that is why there is only one piece of furniture in this room, the throne. There was also the Hall of Central Harmony (a preparation hall) and the Hall of Preserving Harmony (the national banquet hall.) The main menu was Mongolian Hot Pot.

The residential area was a woman's world. No men allowed except their husband. (Servants were eunuchs - ouch!) This area included the Hall of Mental Cultivation in the living quarters. The Imperial Garden included the Dragon Claw Locust, the date tree and Taihu Rock (which came from a lake near Shanghai.) The rock was in the lake for 100 years to get the holes. The walking paths were made of mosaic tiles.

On the way to the Hutong neighborhood we drove past the CBD (Central Business District) the most expensive area of Beijing on the third ring road. There are six ring roads in all. Remember the short pants tower and China Central T.V. Station?

In the Hutong neighborhood we had lunch with a family. We then saw Cricket Liu expound about his life in cricket fighting. (It is amazing what we humans find entertaining.) Next was the rickshaw ride through the Hutong neighborhood.

Afterward we drove past the Bird Nest, the Water Cube and the Pangu Plaza (Dragon Head Building which has a 5 star hotel and the Morgan Stanley office.)

Next we went to the Summer Palace which is on Longevity Mountain and next to Qunming Lake. This is a 250 year old man-made lake which is 6 ft. deep. The water used to come from a jade spring but now comes from a reservoir. The Summer Palace boasts the longest corridor in the world and the Pagoda of Incense (a Buddhist Temple.) Don't forget the 17 Arch Bridges and the Hall of Longevity. Quiz: What made up animal represents health and wealth? Answer: If you guessed Quilin you would be correct! It has the head of a dragon, deer antlers, fish body, lion tail and ox hooves. (I wonder what it tastes like.)

The Pearl Factory was next and then came Dinner.

Day 5 – April 17, 2009 Friday

We leave Beijing on the bus at 10:50 a.m. to go to the airport for Shanghai. Our flight took off at 1:30 p.m. Once in Shanghai we meet our next tour guide named: Emily 2 (Hu, Ya Ping). We then take about a two-three hour bus trip to Suzhou (pronounced sū chōw.) Suzhou (the paradise down below, population “only” 5 million.) has four distinct seasons. It snows in winter and summers can reach 100°. We go on the canal boat ride and walk through the very aromatic market place. We learn that the canal is about 10 ft. deep and construction was started about 2500 years ago. The canals in China link the five main rivers. Dinner follows with traditional Chinese music including Pipa (musical instrument) playing.

Emily 2 is a wealth of information. Before 1990 there were no highways in China. There are 23 Provinces and 5 autonomous regions – Mongolia, Tibet, Shinta, Hua and Huang Shi. China has had a one child policy since 1970. It costs about \$30,000 to adopt a Chinese baby. There are over 2000 people per one square kilometer in the east coast region of China. From 1966 to 1976 China experienced a 10 year cultural revolution. Most of the temples were destroyed. In 1978 farmers signed a policy with the government to get incentives to produce more and get paid more. (What a novel idea!) Speaking of money a Chinese dollar is called a yuan (pronounced U. on.) There are about 7 yuan per one U.S. dollar.

Day 6 – April 18, 2009 Saturday

We go to see the Lingering Garden from the Ming Dynasty. It was built by one of the emperor’s officials after taking bribes under the table. (That must have been quite a table.) There are four elements to a Chinese garden: rocks, pond, plants and pavilion. There are three different types of Chinese gardens: 1. Royal, 2. Classical (private), 3. Landscaping.

Suzhou Silk Factory next on the agenda. A Chinese bride must have a silk comforter, a jade bracelet and white pearls. Silk was discovered over 2000 years ago in the Han Dynasty by boiling silk worm cocoons. Silk worms eat mulberry leaves. It takes 800 cocoons to make one tie. No wonder only Roman Emperors could afford to wear silk. Silk is made up of protein and amino acids so it smells like human hair when burned and allows the body to breathe, like a second skin. Unfortunately the workers only make about \$300/a month plus welfare.

Next on the agenda was lunch and the oh, so delicious snake wine. Only three brave souls dared to drink it. How are you feeling BJ, Dan and Gary? You were able to walk more than five steps so they must have removed the poison glands before making the wine!

Next came Tiger Hill (the 2500 year old landmark of Suzhou where the king was buried by his son) and the leaning Pagoda was built in 951 A.D.

We board the bus for Hangzhou.

Day 7 – April 19, 2009 Sunday

The first day of rain. Hangzhou (pronounced hong chōw) is Emily 2’s home town. She was naturally proud. She told us that Hangzhou offers a good education (the country people have compulsory education for 9 years, the city people for 12 years) and suffers from no natural disasters. It was a very beautiful, green place. (I told Emily that it reminded me of our home town.) The only idiosyncrasy is the 8 meter high tidal wave which always comes on the 18th day of Lunar August. It comes from the ocean and lasts about a half hour. Hangzhou is host to the most famous IT company in China, Alibaba.com.

Next we visited the Tea Farm and our education about the wonders of green tea began. Even though we (Bruce & I) didn’t buy any we were sold on its wonders. The Tea Bible was written 1200 years ago. Longjing tea (green tea) is roasted 8 hours (Dragon Well Tea). It is roasted at 220°, then 180° and mixed with canola oil. It is picked only by women. It is dried in the air several times. It takes 40,000 lbs. of fresh tea to make 1 lb. of tea. (That doesn’t seem possible, but that’s what my notes say.) The Chinese say they “eat a cup of tea” because it has such medicinal power. It contains vitamins A, C, E and D. They have a saying, “A cup of green tea keeps the doctor away.” I changed it to, “a cup of green tea keeps the dollar away.” ☺ It is supposed to be “eaten” one half hour after a meal. It is called slim tea because it absorbs fat and reduces cholesterol. It is also suppose to be good for high blood pressure and diabetes. As for caffeine, black tea has an 8 to 1 ratio, while coffee has a 15 to 1 ratio compared to green tea. According to the tealogists you can reuse the same tea leaves up to 5 times in one day.

Some helpful recipes: Health or Weight Loss Formula
1 cup 180° water or (room temperature)
5 grams – 2 pinches of green tea
5 grams – 2 pinches of orange peel
5-8 pieces of Hawthorn berry (8 pieces for weight loss)

You can put wet tea leaves on fish to remove the fishy smell.

You can put to pinches of tea in cotton in the cavity of a chicken to absorb the fat.

FACE MASK

Used green tea leaves

1 egg white

2 tsp. honey (Mix together and leave on face for 15 min.)

The lighter and smaller the tea leaves the better it is for you. Leaves picked in April (Grade A) are the best (Emperors tea) which they do not export out of China. (But they also said that white tea is the best green tea and I have seen that on the shelf at the grocery store.) The later the tea is picked in the season the darker it becomes and eventually the leaves are broken. Picked in May (Grade B), picked in June (Grade C). Enough of the tea infomercial.

Next we visited the Lingyin Temple (Buddhist Temple). Buddhist monks are vegetarian and they do not get married. Buddhism began in the 2nd Century before Christ in the Han Dynasty. Buddhism originally came from India. This temple is the number one tourist attraction in the city. It was built by Indian monks in the Chin Dynasty 1700 years ago. There are four halls and the tallest sitting Buddha made of camphor wood coated with gold. There are 480 Buddha carvings in the rock cliffs. Do you remember the 500 bronze ARHAT (perfected disciples)?

China has three main religions, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. What our guide Emily 2 could not possibly know is that Christianity is making a huge in road in the “underground church” in China. (No added charge for that information.) ☺

We next had lunch and the boat ride on West Lake. Where we saw the very exclusive Dragon boat.

We then left on the bus for Shanghai where we had dinner that evening and saw the city lights by the Bund (101 stories, the highest building in the world) near the water front.

Day 8 – April, 2009 (Monday)

Our last full day in China began with a tour of the silk rug factory of Shanghai. There were some very beautiful rugs in this factory that employs 2500 workers, about 800 of which work from home. The people who work in the factory are provided food, dorms and incentives for production.

Next came lunch and after lunch we took the 7 minute train ride to the Shanghai airport on the fastest train in the world. It went up to 431 km/h (250 mph). The airport was 45 kilometers away. We passed the train coming the other way at either 350 or 310 km/h depending on which way you were going. To say it went by fast would be an understatement.

The city of Shanghai will host the 2010 World Expo. They are obviously putting a lot of effort into tearing down old buildings to rebuild new ones in their place. The city of Shanghai is 2500 years old. It has been an international destination for centuries. There is a heavy European influence on the architecture in the old section of down town. The symbol for Shanghai is hu – fishing tackle because it was originally a fishing village. Now people come to Shanghai for the shopping. It is the most densely populated city in China. It is said that there are oceans of: 1. People, 2. Lights 3. Skyscrapers (4000) 4. Shopping and 5. Traffic in Shanghai. We can attest to all of that!

We spent the afternoon shopping in China town. Where there were bargains on knock-off items from purses to pens and everything in between.

From China town we went to dinner.

After dinner we attended the ERA Show Multimedia Theatrical Spectacular. (Say that fast 10 times.) It really was spectacular and hard to look at sometimes. (Especially when they were on top of that whirling wheel!)

Day 9 – April 21, 2009 (Tuesday)

It is time to take our leave of China. We board a 7:45 a.m. flight to Beijing (although we left late.) Emily 2 had tears in her eyes as she said goodbye to us. Parting is always bitter sweet. Our afternoon flight (CA981) also departs late so we do not make it back to the U.S. until about 4:00 p.m. in the afternoon on Monday the same day we left. We then get on the bus and get back home to the Chamber about 1:30 a.m. Wednesday morning.

China is a fascinating country which is propelling itself into the 21st century. They place a high value on education. But it has been awhile since the four famous Chinese inventions of: 1. Gun powder 2. Compass 3. Paper and 4. Printing Press. Emily 1 said that the Chinese were good at copying, but not as much so with imaginative thinking. Perhaps as they seek to emulate the West their thinking will become freer and their government will as well.

You now know everything I know about this trip. I hope I haven't been too long winded. It was a pleasure getting to know all of you better, especially those on Bus #1. May you all live to the age of tea (108) or if you prefer the age of rice (88).

Until the next trip...zàijiàn, Bonnie Jentner ☺ Jentner Financial Group www.jentner.com