

Nigel Sew Hoy

## New Zealand Chinese Association Winter Camp Report 2008

This report is written in order of the cities that we visited and outlines the various attractions and personal memories that I can remember from visiting each city. It doesn't include all my memories because that would take far too long to put onto paper. For me, the China Trip was the best and most inspirational trip that I have ever been on. It certainly stirred up emotions when visiting the homes of my ancestors and it helped me to understand and appreciate the good life that I live in New Zealand.

**Foshan City:** I really enjoyed learning the kung fu routine at the Wong Fei Hong temple. The amount of time spent at the temple was perfect, and the routine learnt sufficiently difficult and complex, yet simple enough for us to learn in three days to perform to the public! The two kung fu masters were helpful, friendly and also very approachable. I enjoyed socialising with them at karaoke on the final night at Energy bar. Watching the other members of the kung fu school perform at their daily performances was also very inspirational.

**Zhong Shan City:** The visit to the Dr Sun Yat Sen memorial statue and the Dr Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park was a very educational and amazing experience. Prior to the trip, I didn't know the history or significance of this important figure in Chinese history. The statue was huge and the memorial park was equally impressive.

**Taishan City:** The highlight of my visit to Taishan city was our visit to the Magnificent China Folklore Park. I didn't realise how large and detailed the park and its exhibits were until I had visited the actual places at a later stage in the trip. It gave me a good rounded view of the geography and culture of China and its people. I was previously unaware of the vast number of different people who make up the people of China. The buildings, structure and scenery never ceased to amaze me. A particular highlight was the flying fox within the park, also the two magnificent shows that we attended during the evening.

**Guangzhou City:** Guangzhou city was one of the most interesting cities that I visited in China. Its proximity to many of the China Trip participants' ancestral villages, and its sheer size, make this city a definite favourite of mine. The visit to the Guangzhou Memorial Fort and the giant goat statue was hampered by rain, but still was enjoyable. The experience of buying umbrellas, and subsequently getting ripped off by 10 Yuan is still a vivid memory of mine. The cannons outside the Memorial Fort, the huge burial building and the amount of interesting history of Guangzhou and the Guangdong province made the visit a very enjoyable and educational experience.

**Visit to Ancestral Villages:** I was lucky enough to get to visit 3 of my ancestral villages. At each place, people were there to meet me, or if no one lived there anymore, the ancestral home was located with the help of Janet and local residents. These visits are an important part of growing up as a New Zealander with Chinese heritage. It gave me much satisfaction to have seen the birthplaces of my ancestors and their way of life.

**Shanghai:** My first impression of Shanghai was that it was so much more advanced than any other part of China that I had visited so far. Shanghai seemed to be full of flash malls. Our visit to the lookout to see the amazing buildings that made up the Shanghai skyline was a definite highlight. The most impressive building was the Oriental Pearl Tower and the Financial Centre Tower. The Oriental Pearl Tower was an amazing sight and the museum underneath was equally impressive with much Shanghai history and wax figurines inside it. Nanjing road was another highlight in Shanghai for those looking to shop. The ancient road on which Nanjing Road is built upon reminds everyone of the history that China has. On my free day in Shanghai I visited the Shanghai technology museum. This was easily the most amazing museum that I have ever visited. It was huge! It covered every area of science and even some that I didn't know existed. It took

me a whole day to walk around the museum and even then I didn't have enough time to see and do everything that I wanted to.

Beijing: The Joy City Hotel that we stayed at in Beijing was amazing. It was built for the Beijing Olympics and attached to a large mall full of retail shopping and many food outlets. We didn't need to go anywhere else to go shopping as we had it all right there beside us. One of the highlights of our trip to Beijing was seeing Tiananmen Square, The Forbidden City, The Whispering Wall and the Temple of Heaven. All these sites were within walking distance from each other. We also went to see The Legend of Kung fu show this was an amazing show with mind boggling kung fu performances and fight scenes. The Summer Palace was also an amazing place to visit. It was winter when we went to visit and the large manmade lake was frozen solid, which was an amazing sight to see. Shopping in Beijing wouldn't have been complete without a visit to the Silk Markets. Some people went back multiple times to bargain and buy almost anything you could think of. We also had a delicious Peking duck dinner. By far my favourite day of the whole trip to China was the day that we visited the Great Wall of China, the Ming tombs and the Beijing Olympic stadiums. The Great Wall is the most amazing place that I have ever visited, and the Birdsnest and Watercube were some of the most amazing buildings that I will ever see.

Hong Kong: In Hong Kong we were allowed to explore the city by ourselves. Most of us split up into smaller groups and explored the seemingly endless number of shopping malls and arcades. Some of us went to HK Disneyland, others went to Macau to gamble and some also went to Ocean Park for some theme park excitement. My favourite places during the Hong Kong visit included visiting Ocean Park, Shopping at the largest shopping mall in Hong Kong, Ocean City and catching the ferry to Macau to look at the Venetian Casino.

Accommodation and Travel: The accommodation in the hotels was good with most hotels being centrally located to shopping malls and eating areas. The highlights were the hotels in Shanghai and Beijing. It took a while to get used to the hard beds in China, but apart from that the accommodation was very comfortable and suited to our tour groups needs. The free internet at most hotels was a definite plus to our accommodation and I would encourage future tour participants to bring a laptop with them so they can keep in contact with the western world! The travel on the touring busses has been comfortable, and the bus drivers were always happy and helpful.

Janet/Jessie/Cindy/Sunny: These four people were exceptional on this winter camp. The amount paid for the trip is very much worth it for the amount of knowledge, guidance and wisdom they have shared. You just cannot put a price on having people like this to show you around a foreign country. China wouldn't have been the same experience without having these four as our guides. All were approachable and very helpful in every aspect of the trip.

Conclusion: This winter camp has been a trip of a lifetime. It was both worthwhile and very eventful. I have made many new friends and learnt many history lessons. It helps me to appreciate where my family has originated from, and it is a trip that I would recommend all Chinese New Zealanders' to take part in. 10/10.