

NZCA China Trip 2008

By Aaron Young

22nd November 2008 is a day i will never forget. This was the day I embarked on a trip of a life time to China.

I never thought the day would finally come that i would meet 28 strangers (only knowing one person prior to the trip was bad enough) and spend the next 30days with them all!

After a rushed 1st group photo, we were all on a plane flying directly to Foshan via hong kong... the trip had just begun! the 12hour flight was terrific, slowly introducing each other over a game of cards was a perfect way to break the ice.

Once we had landed in Hong Kong, we had another flight to Guangzhou and then to top it off a Two hour bus ride. This was a very exciting experience as i didnt expect so much drama from one bus ride, The horn was always tooted and then horns being tooted back, it was amazing we didnt crash. This was also our 1st experiance with china food, it wasn't like any of us had eaten before and most just passed and waited to find the Mc'donalds once we arrived in Foshan. Myself included.

After such a hectic 1st day arriving in to china the next day was even more grewsome. This was the day we started our kung fu lessons, early morning starts and introduced to local traffic etiquette towards pedestrians, vehicles will always win against us crossing the road, it was almost a game to cross the road not to get hit. After watching afew presentations we thought it was going to be simple and a esy feat. we were very much wrong. Split into two groups the challenge was on. After 3days of solid training and messing aorund my group finally got the routine down, we stepped up to the plate to show our sei-fu (master) what he had tought us. he was very impressed, well that was the impression i got... the other kung fu group almost did just as good but im sure we came out winners that day.

The village part of the tour was intreging, as we saw each others villages and how village life style is completly contrary to how we live in NZD. It was good to see how many variations each village has to one another. My village was closer to the end of the village tour, I had already been back with my parents about 10years ago and from what i could remember, it was exactly how it was when i saw it. No one had lived in the house since my grandfather left many years ago to come to nzd. I took many photos to show my parents how the house was getting on and with my distance relatives so i wouldnt forget their faces. After we had all seen our villages we went to the Guangzhou technical college, this was where we challenged some students to a friendly game of basketball and soccer. Both the basketball game and soccer game were memorable for me as i did the craziest shot to the hoop (from what i have been told) and it went straight in! and the soccer game as i was the only person that scored, well done to me. later that evening we were paired up with students learning english. It was a awkward moment at the start but it panned out really well by the end of the night. We talked about random things, listened to music, took photos and had a ball together...

Musical chairs was being played between shows so I got involved, it was the toughest musical chairs id played since primary school but I won a photo frame for my buddy, she was stoked! They had put on a show all in english to practice there english(?) so in exchange we had to do a NZD traditional war dance.... the Haka. We did our performance and we left the stage swiftly with red faces...

Next after leaving Guangzhou we headed to Huangzhou. We went to the Lingyin Temple, one of the biggest temples I had been to on the trip and for good reason. What I enjoyed the most in Huangzhou was the massive bike ride we all did around the Westlake, it was such a good change from being in buses and aeroplanes. We all broke out and let our energy out but it didnt last very long, most were tired within minutes. I also had to bring a broken bike back for a peer 3/4 way around Westlake as the bike decided to fail, this was a great experience. not really. But im always willing to help out. Arriving in Beijing, it was good to go inside the Forbidden city and see Tiananmen square. excited to go to the Great wall, i couldnt wait to conquer it, the day we went was the coldest day ever on the trip, it was the only time i used my jacket. Once making onto the wall i realised how much i had underestimated the climb and so did many others. i wasnt going to give up that easy tho. hours later i found myself and the end of the "easy" side and a gropup of us had found a travel group that were from nzd, wellington to be exact. we where that last group to board the bus.to finish the day off we made a quick stop to go around and explore the olypic village, i wasnt very interested to begin with, I was cold, hungry and wanted sleep; but it was astonishing to see the birds nest and how impressive it really was up close. I took a few photos and it was already time to leave. The shopping in Beijing was amazing aswell, I only wish that i could have brought more back to nzd with me! I was so used to the prices in China i became tight with how much

i would actually pay.

After a busy schedule running around between cities, bus rides, planes, trains and automobiles we were now coming to a close of the tour with four days in Hong Kong. The most memorable moment in Hong Kong was the shopping and the time to explore the popular tourist attractions this being Ocean Park, Tian tan Buddha and The Peak. It was wonderful Janet came with our little Group, she was our own personal tour chaperon for the day. We most certainly couldnt have made it with out her guide around H.K. The gondola ride was impressive being a 20min ride but the share size of the buddha was phenomenol. Id also like to mention the racecar driver we had for our bus ride from the buddha to the ferry terminal, it was the best ride ive ever been on! Definatly recommended.

Having to come back home after such a momentous trip, it was a bittersweet experience. I looked forward to seeing my family again, having a nice home cooked meal and sleeping in my own bed but i wanted to continue having a great time in another country with a bunch of terrific people i had only just really got to know in a month... Having to deal with 30 rambunctious individuals and organising the day wouldnt be a easy feat for any ordinary person, but somehow Janet did; so I'd like to thank Janet Joe and Virginia Chong also for organising such a immense experience in China and having the opportunity to learn about my heritage I hardly knew. The 2008 NZCA WinterCamp is a trip i will truely never forget