

2009 NZCA WINTERCAMP by Kim Young

The tour started in Shenzhen Sunon Hotel. I had a good sleep in and a good breakfast ready for a big day ahead. We jumped on the bus and drove to the Magnificent China and Minority Culture Park and show. When we arrived we went straight down to look at the miniature buildings.

The buildings are really well made with so much detail, they must have spent hours making them. After a bit of lunch, we had a look at the other side of the park. I liked this side the most. The flying fox and the horse show were pretty good. That night we watched the dancing Dragon and Phoenix Show and also the Great Ethnic Costume and Dance Show. The first one was great but by the last one I was getting a little tired.

The next stop we visited was the Ancestral Villages. It was very interesting to see how they go about their day to day life. Each village was set up slightly different depending on their crops and farming. The best part of visiting the villages was getting the chance to have a look at the houses where my grandparents once lived. They were so excited that I was going back to their home villages, some of them haven't been back to China since coming to New Zealand.

After that we stayed at the GD Overseas Chinese Vocational School where we did Kung fu, Chinese language classes and calligraphy and painting classes. The Kung fu was very intense and a good work out. I think I enjoyed it more after we had finished the classes, than when we were doing them. The Chinese's languages classes were good; I learnt a few extra words to help me get around China a little easier. I thought the calligraphy and painting classes were cool too.

When class was out we played a couple of games against some of the students, where our games were very close but we all ways seemed to lose haha must of been all that good food we were eating.

Then on the last night at the school we were invited to an assembly, where we performed the Haka and watched people from other nationalities show their performances. It was an awesome experience to be a part of different cultures.

On the 6th of December we attended the 30th GD Vocational School Anniversary Celebrations where we watch the Kung fu performance put on by our master and his students. They made it look so easy, I really enjoyed it especially the little guy doing the flips and things.



A couple days later we arrived in Hangzhou. The thing I enjoyed the most in Hangzhou was the bike ride round the Westlake. It was just fun to get out there and burn some energy! There was lots of great scenery with the trees grown around the lake and the misty fog coming off the water. The other things we did in Hangzhou were interesting too, like the Dragonwell Tea village where we were shown how to make a proper cup of green tea. That was good tea! Also the Westlake boat cruise that was ok. I think I preferred the Night River Boat Cruise better.

Our next stop was Shanghai! I found Shanghai and Beijing more Westernised, more like home. It was good because by that time I was missing my European food. There was more of that kind of food handy, haha. Shanghai has some amazing skyscrapers. I have seen them on TV but when I was standing at the bottom looking straight up, I thought it's just crazy how high they can build them! The Magnolift train was great too. The ride was only around 10min there and back. That was the fastest I've ever travelled on land!



Last stop in China was Beijing, my favourite city. One of the things I really liked was looking at was the Great Wall. I was amazed at how they moved rock up that hill; it was hard enough just walking it let alone building it! So many people died building it too. The Forbidden City and Tiananmen were also very interesting.



All the hotels were great, I didn't have any problems with them. The food was a lot better than I expected, everyone I spoke to said the food up north wasn't very tasty and that I will really miss my home cooked meals. Well yes I did miss home cooked meals, but I missed European food the most. However the good thing was on our free days we went and had pizza, spaghetti, Subway, Mc Donalds haha all the fast foods just like home.



When I was told that I was booked to go on the NZCA China Wintercamp for 30 or so days I wasn't too pleased aye. I think it was just the fact that it was a super long time away from home and I wasn't really interested in going there in the first place. But now that I've been, I would fully recommend this trip to anyone, even if you don't know anyone on the trip you soon make friends! You become like a little family! It was sad when the trip ended. I didn't expect to start missing everyone and it

was just a few days after I arrived home. We hung out lots after dinner, just talking about the stupid things that happen during the day. I would like to say Thank you to Virginia and Janet for organising this trip and also to everyone else for making this trip so memorable and fun!