



ReeBee's Travel Journal

"China Trip"

China Journal

I am writing this from Tian An Men Square in Beijing, China. It is quite interesting here with a great deal of history and culture that goes back over 6,000 recorded years and far longer back in un-recorded records. The first known human, The Peking Man, was discovered here and lived here about 500,000 years ago! Yesterday I went to the Great Wall and walked on about three miles of it. It was originally 10,000 Kilometers long which is about 6,000 miles, but today only 3,500 miles of it are still completely standing. If the stone in it were used to build a road that was one meter thick and five meters wide (about 3 feet by 18 feet) it would circle the earth five times! It took about 2000 years to complete and has lasted for that long as well. I also went to the Ming Tomb as well yesterday. Today, I went to the Temple of the Heavens, the Forbidden City, and Summer Palace of the Emperor and finally late today have arrived at the famous Tian An Men Square where I finally found access to a computer!

China is very amazing and very populated. It has an area that is roughly the size of the United States, but nearly 10 times the population! Beijing, which is the capital of China and the cultural center, has a population of 16,000,000 people and about 15,000,000 of those residents travel everywhere by bicycle. It is unbelievable that many are not run over daily as all forms of traffic, busses, taxis and cars as well as the bicycles all share all traffic lanes on the same roads at random. The bicycles seem to have the right of way and the people drive like there are no rules. For instance a bus will stop anywhere to let people off in the middle of a six lane road and people just start walking towards the edge of the road. Miraculously, hardly anyone ever gets hit?? The weather here is almost identical to Chicago in the four seasons. Despite sub-freezing temperatures that get to -20F in the winter, only about five days are too severe to stop people from bicycling to work and everywhere else they need to go.

I also went to see them carve Jade at a Jade mining operation and it was incredible to see the works of art that they are able to create. In addition, I went to a fresh water Oyster farm and got to open one myself that was alive. It had over 40 pearls in it! Unlike the salt-water versions that have a grain of sand that causes the pearl, these have small pieces of meat inserted that cause the pearls to form. People here are live very simple lives with a strong work ethic. Everyone seems to be employed and fairly content. I have only seen one pet since I was here and that was a Pekinese dog today. I think there are two reasons for so few pets and one is that the food supply is too precious to be also trying to feed pets and the other reason is that the Chinese people will eat both dogs and cats! The food here is very good and healthy tasting. There are few fats in their diets and they have very few overweight people. There are many other differences in things here such as milk is drunk hot, not cold, and they eat with chopsticks of course. I have been following the custom and have not used a fork or spoon since I have been here and I think I will be losing weight if I don't improve in my skills soon!

There is much else that I will share when I return and I hope all is well there is the homeland. Incidentally, the time is fourteen hours difference here and it is one day ahead of you as it is Friday as I write this. On the way here, we flew over Alaska, the Bering Strait, Siberia and Mongolia before arriving over Chinese airspace. The flight was about 14 hours and just under 7,000 miles. This is all for now and I will look forward to being back by Thanksgiving!

Jeff Wolfe - AKA ReeBee