

Dec 4, 2013

China Spree Journal Entry
Looking back with Gratitude

Mother was a world traveler.

When I asked her what her favorite destination was, she answered immediately, China.

In the year 2013 I decided to visit China myself in Mother's honor.

I took Mother's China Travel Journal with me. It included entries for both her 1988 and 1990 trips. At night I would read her journal.

One night I read her entry for Aug. 5, 1990, "Truly the most exciting day of my life...They welcomed us at church in Taicheng... Many fans made the church so nice and cool...I was asked to stand up because I was the oldest in our group. They clapped and clapped and clapped. As the choir walked past us many smiled at me. Then at the end of church they waited for us to leave and oh, the wonderful smiles and love we received as we shook hands with hundreds of the members." Mother was 81 years old and had worked in the rice fields with the Chinese.

I can imagine her standing there radiantly, basking in the reverent appreciation the Chinese people hold for old age.

During my week with China Spree in Beijing I made some additional journal entries in blank spaces in Mother's journal. I wrote about really walking on the Great Wall of China for 2 full hours, learning of the acres and acres of buildings and grounds and garden in the Forbidden Palace all for only one man, the emperor, about the surprise of finding a Tibetan Buddhist temple and compounds within Beijing.

The biggest surprise of our trip was the freedom of movement throughout Beijing.

We stayed in Beijing's Traders Hotel right across the street from Beijing's tallest building. Below our hotel was a subway station. Several of us ventured forth to different destinations in

Beijing. Also below our hotel was a wonderful mall with upscale stores and an ice rink, all below street level.

Contrary to stories from other US tourists to China, I discovered a surprising amount of freedom of movement. Mornings I walked Beijing's city streets.

On a free day a new friend and I walked the 5 blocks to a "Knockdown Mall" where we bargained for just the right gift to bring home for friends and family

I loved how the city trees were so well cared for. Trees more than anything else connect me with life. The trees in Beijing greeted me like the church parishioners had greeted Mother. Somehow I felt Mother's love right there, so I also found in China what Mother found- a little more of that which makes Life personally meaningful.

You never know.

And I left behind in China- as my Mother did- love to be discovered by the next person in my family who takes a trip to visit China.

You never know who it will be or what they'll discover. But I am grateful to China Spree for a great tour so reasonably priced.

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