

## *China Tour 2012 09*

Looking back on our Smartour, less than one week has passed; it is difficult to remember what we saw where and when?? Thinking that if one week has had such an impact, I better set down some things I remember to assist in recalling the great experience, the adventure enjoyed by the Tour Group led by "Chen".



Here is our entire group; 26 Americans and 4 Canadians, plus our Chinese Tour Leader, Chen Bai Ping, on the left. This particular shot is taken at the base of the Great Wall.



We arrived in Shanghai on 2012 08 30 and after checking in at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, pic on left, we paid a visit to the Bund, pic to the right.

Shanghai is the financial centre of Mainland China and the Bund is where the action is centered.



The sheer number of people surprised me as much as anything; they were everywhere in large numbers! With a population of just over a billion, I suppose that I should have expected the high density in the cities we visited. The vast number of high rise apartments "blew me away"!! And further, no matter where you

looked, there were new apartments under construction as more people relocate from rural to urban living. Shanghai and Beijing, the nation's capital, both have populations of circa 24 million.



Our tour's very first exposure to driving conditions and drivers was in Beijing. I want you to understand that my remarks to follow are not in any way intended to be unkind. Having said that, the most accurate single word I can use to describe conditions and drivers is "insane"!! Drivers appeared to exhibit absolutely no concern for their personal safety or for that matter, for the safety of others on the road. Perhaps the best or worse example of this was when our tour exited the Bus on our 1<sup>st</sup> outing to the Bund. Our local guide had us all stop at the signal light and wait until the light turned Green! We all began to cross the street, believing the oncoming barrage of motor scooters would stop for us, *especially as they were facing a Red Light!!* NOT SO! They came at us blowing their horns with total disregard for our safety or as I stated earlier, for their own. ***We had just been exposed to a part of the culture of mainland China!!*** Lois and I rode in the front



seat of the bus and we witnessed countless similar situations. I am now going to insert a pic I took from the bus. The girl riding the motor scooter, steering with one hand, and holding her umbrella in the other was not



alone??? See the rider in front of her with the blue umbrella!! Note: Helmets did not appear until we arrived in Hong Kong!!)

While in Shanghai we also visited the museum, dropped in to a silk outlet and attended an "acrobatic show". Our historical visit was a walk through the very attractive Yu Yuan Garden. The Gardens provided a pleasant and interesting alternative to the down town. See description on page 3 below. On page 3, I have posted pix of the Garden and one taken in the museum.

Do hope you enjoy this first summary article of our trip to China in Aug/Sep of 2012. More to follow!!

Stan McCormack 2012 09 17.

# YUYUAN GARDEN

Yuyuan Garden is an excellent model of classical Chinese gardening architecture under state preservation. It was built during the reign of Ming Emperor Jiajing (1559) as the private garden of Pan Yunduan, an administration commissioner of Sichuan Province. With an area over two hectares, the Garden is famous for a number of architectural marvels, including the Big Rockery, the "Naturally-Hollowed-Jade" Boulder, the Hall of an Emerald Touch of Spring, the Ancient Opera Stage and the Inner Garden. Also well-protected in the garden are precious cultural relics showing the best of China's tradition of art.

