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INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL NEWS

July 2000 TOURS IN REVIEW

Candid appraisals of group tours

The following are candid appraisals of some of the tours ITN readers have taken in the last year or so. Where possible, for comparison's sake, different readers' appraisals of a particular tour company are presented in tandem.

When writing to ITN about a tour, please include the ADDRESS and/or phone number of the tour company plus the PRICE, length and MONTH/YEAR of your tour. (Write-ups may not be used without the price included, and remember, ITN does not cover destinations in North America.)

Write to Tours
in Review, c/o
ITN, 2120 28th
St., Sacramento,
CA 95818.



CHINA On March 23, '99, we left on a fabulous 19-day "Best of China & Yangtze River Cruise plus Hong Kong" tour with **China Plus, Inc.** (6360 LBJ Freeway, Ste. 100, Dallas, TX 75240; phone 888/

386-0166 or e-mail Chinaplus@netzero.net).

China Plus is owned and operated by Chris Lee, who is a native Chinese and worked in the tour industry there before coming to the United States and starting his own com-

pany. He is a U.S. citizen with a Master's Degree in Business Administration. His tours are small and operate as VIP groups, with Chris or his wife, Ping, acting as escorts on a 24-hour basis.

The tour was inclusive and hotels were deluxe — as nice as any we have stayed in. In each city our local guides had been personally requested by Chris and were some of the best in China. They spoke excellent English.



Children performing in a Guangzhou kindergarten. Photos: Salovon

We are experienced travelers and our tour of 12 persons was a great adventure — exciting, educational and most enjoyable. At that time of the year, China was not overly crowded with tourists and the weather was beautiful.

We saw the highlights of Beijing, Xi'an, Shanghai, Suzhou, Wuhan, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Guilin and Hong Kong and took a 5-night cruise on the Yangtze River aboard the *Victoria II* with excellent staff and accommodations. All Yangtze River side trips were arranged by Victoria Cruises, an American-operated cruise company.

Some of the most memorable events of the trip were climbing to the top of the Great Wall, viewing the Terra Cotta Warriors, cruising the Lesser Three Gorges, seeing the

Three Gorges Dam site, climbing 700 steps (there is a chair lift) to see hell in the ghost city of Fengdu, smelling the orange blossom perfume while cruising the Li River in Guilin, seeing pandas in the Chongqing zoo, seeing children perform in a kinder-

garten in Guangzhou and taking a sampan to view the boat people of Aberdeen in Hong Kong.

Chris was always with us, answering any questions we might have, adding information about places visited and telling of his personal life when he lived in China. He sat with us at dinner. We had tea together. He was always there to give advice and solve any problems that might arise.

We told him we were interested in furniture, so he took us to a furniture factory in Xi'an. When I told him a Chinese friend asked me to bring him back a copy of a particular Chinese classic in Chinese, he called one of our future guides to purchase it for me.

We had four flights within China on China airlines. The planes usually were crowded and the seats were narrow, but most flights were only about 1½ hours. On one flight, no earphones were passed out and everyone had to watch "The Bodyguard" in Chinese with Whitney Houston singing in Chinese.

We took the ferry from Guangzhou to Hong Kong.