

Our luggage was handled to perfection throughout the tour, with Chris always checking and rechecking to make sure everything was in the right place.

There is so much to see and do in China; we know we only had a sampling. We were most impressed with the Chinese people and the progress they are making. They were very friendly — we found they like Americans and are most grateful for the help we gave them during WWII.

The large cities are very modern with skyscrapers, McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Hut all over. The traffic jams and bicycles weaving in and out were unbelievable.

We cannot rave enough about this tour company and its wonderful operator. It is probably the best tour we have ever taken. The cost was \$3,648, which included airfare from Vancouver on Canadian Airlines; add-on fare from Cleveland was \$300. All meals were included except lunch and dinners in Hong Kong.

— MURIEL SALOVON, Cleveland, OH

CHINA In June '99 we took a 17-day trip to China with Mr. Chris Lee of **China Plus (Dallas, TX)**. The trip included a 5-day Yangtze River cruise with Victoria Cruises.

Our focus was to visit the Three Gorges Dam site and the villages along the way that will be flooded when the dam is complete. I was really looking forward to visiting Fengdu; however, fog delayed our cruise slightly and we missed the city.

The captain surprised us instead with a visit to Shibaozhai. This made up for most of the disappointment, as it is a lovely ancient village with a magnificent stone pavilion dating back to the Ming dynasty; we

climbed all 13 stories to the very top. Some of the other cities included were Beijing, Xi'an, Guilin, Hong Kong and Suzhou.

This was our second trip to China and it had been 10 years since our last. Suzhou was a first and we really enjoyed this city. Unlike our first visit, this time we stayed in 4- and

5-star hotels and had excellent transportation and local guides. Where possible, Mr. Lee tried to accommodate special requests for additional sightseeing. He was able to succeed in many cases as our tour group consisted of seven people.

I am vegetarian, but I did not request special meals so as not to disrupt meals for the others on the tour. However, Mr. Lee still sent special messages to the restaurants and chefs and I always had SEVERAL vegetarian dishes each meal.

For the total cost of the tour, I rate this as one of the best-valued and -enjoyed tours we have taken in many years. We highly recommend China Plus Tours.

— DEBORAH NICHOLS, Carrollton, TX

CHINA I took a trip to China with **China Plus (Dallas, TX)**, July 6-29, '99. The tour was 24 days. What makes this tour unusual is it visits the Silk Road, Yunnan Province and Tibet, and it is given only once a year. For second- or third-timers to China, this is ideal.

The tour was outstanding. The group was small and the hotels were good. Everything was included — no extras. The tour was led by Chris Lee, owner of China Plus and originally from the Silk Road area. Chris is an outstanding young man, very knowledgeable about China. He has a background of tourism in China and we profited by his experience.

Most of our travel was by air, as we traveled many miles in China. Our gateway city was Beijing, followed the next day by Urumqi, capital city of Xinjiang Autonomous Region. This area is very different from any other parts of China — exotic, with spectacular mountains, deserts and lakes, and people wearing different costumes and speaking different languages.

From there we went to Kashgar, where the highlight is the colorful Sunday bazaar. Kashgar is China's westernmost city.

Then it was on to Turpan, China's lowest point, surrounded by desert yet growing grapes and melons. We visited the ruins of ancient cities plus Thousand Buddha caves, Flaming Mountains and Grape Valley — all marvelous!

Heading on to Dunhuang, we visited the largest sand dunes I've ever seen, Singing Sound Hill; you can ride a camel to the top. We also visited the famous Mogao Grottos, a UNESCO World Heritage Site — extremely interesting.

We left the Silk Road and flew to Kunming in the Yunnan Province. It's the "city of eternal spring." The

climate is mild and there are many flowers and abundant growth. Coming from the dry desert, this was a welcomed pleasure.

In this area we visited the Stone Forest and Sani minority village. The Stone Forest is China's most remarkable natural phenomenon. It consists of innumerable bizarre-shaped limestone peaks, the result of wind and water erosion over millions of years. It is fascinating!

From there we moved on to Dali, a historic and cultural city. We took a boat trip on Erhai Lake, enjoyed beautiful scenery and visited a village of the Bai people. In the evening we enjoyed the "three course tea dance ceremony."

We continued on to Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province and home to Panda Research Development. A good jumping-off point for Tibet, we were there only one night, leaving the next day for Lhasa, that country's capital.

We were in Lhasa four nights and visited the Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple and Drepung Monastery. In the open market everyone bargained to their hearts' content. We drove through the countryside and visited villages, ate Tibetan food and attended a Tibetan opera. We left the "Roof of the World" with fond memories.

The entire trip was outstanding — for anyone who wants to see more of China than the usual sights, this tour is a must. You need to be in pretty good shape as there's lots of walking and many, many steps. It's all worthwhile as there is so much of interest that you'll never find anywhere else. I can't cover all the extras and points of interest we experienced.

The food was excellent and Chris saw that we had the local dishes, with the "hots" tamed to our taste.

The cost of the tour was \$4,898. It was one of the best tours of many I've taken.

— JOAN ZIGGINS, Sonoma, CA