

## Visit to Wuhan 武漢:

An insult or a blessing in disguise?

Wuhan has become the center of attention in the News for the past few months. It reminded me of our visit to Wuhan.

In the year 2002, my husband Fred and I joined our friends, two other couples to take the Yangtze River Cruise in China. It was said that since the construction of Big Dam 長江大壩 on the river was completed, the famous Three Gorges of Yangtze River 長江三峽 will be filled with water in 2003 and the scenic gorges will be buried under the water forever. So, we decided to go in September 2002.

We flew from the States, and the tour started from Shanghai on September 19. After touring the city of Shanghai, we were taken by bus to Nanjing(南京) the next day, 9/ 20, and checked into the cruise ship. The next day, 9/21, we had a day tour of Nanjing, visiting famous Chon San Lou, etc. The ship started sailing on the evening of 9/21.

The complete itinerary of the tour will be listed at the end of the article. I am writing only about some high lights of the tour:

### YELLOW MOUNTAIN 黃山

One of the high lights of the trip was the visit to the famous Yellow Mountain 黃山 on the third day.

9/22. The ship docked at Jiujiang 九江 and we were taken up to the mountain by bus. When we arrived at the most scenic part of the mountain, to our great disappointment, the mountain was covered entirely by foggy cloud, not even a glimpse of the mountain was visible. We worried because we could stay there for only a couple of hours before we returned to our ship. If the fog didn't clear up, we would miss the whole purpose of our visit. How regretful that would be if we could not see the famous beautiful Huang San when we were right there!

While we were feeling let down and dismayed, the mountain suddenly appeared in front of us like a magic, the fog suddenly and quickly shifted away. That moment of excitement was beyond words! The scenery was just as fantastic as all the photos we saw in the magazines and publications. Everyone started to take pictures. So did I. But, after taking only a couple of pictures, the screen says "the memory full", I couldn't take any more. I got panicked and quickly deleted some pictures taken previously. It was a pity I had to delete some pictures that I didn't mean to. In 2002, there was no iPhone to substitute the camera.

The beautiful scenery stayed only for about 20 minutes, the cloud swiftly drifted back to occupy the surface of the mountain again. But those few minutes were enough for us to see the most spectacular section of Huang San. It was quite a treat and meant so much to us. We felt grateful to mother Nature. The whole process was so dramatic, amazing and unbelievable. I can never forget.

### WU HAN 武漢

About two days later, 9/24, we arrived at the port of WuHan. We, the three couples from the States, were informed the day before, that we had to leave the ship in WuHan, because there were problems with their bookings. We argued and protested to no avail. It was a great insult to us. We felt awkward and ashamed to tell the people, who were assigned to be on the same table with us for meals and we got to know them well, that we were compelled to leave the ship. We were very upset.

After a short visit of the vicinity of the port, in late afternoon, we were taken back to the ship to get our belongings and give our cabins to a group of people, who, we heard were Germans. The ship sailed away that evening.

We were taken to a hotel, Shangarila in the city and then had dinner at a restaurant. To our surprise, the label on the dining table says: "Guests from Taiwan" How did they know we were Taiwanese? We booked through US agency and used US passports without any Chinese characters. So, we wondered "Is it because we were Taiwanese, it was easier for them to bully us and take advantage of us?" Nevertheless, waitresses were nice and the dinner was sumptuous.

On the next day, they showed us around the city of Wuhan. It was a beautiful city with many historical monuments we learned from High school. Among those, Yellow Crane Tower 黃鶴樓 was most famous because a great poet Lee Pai 李白 in Tan 唐 dynasty wrote a beautiful poem about the monument. We were very excited to visit several other monuments we learned and admired in High school. While we climbed up to the top of the tower to look over the whole city. It was spectacular.

In late afternoon, they took us to board the cruise ship Victoria 5. To our surprise, we were upgraded to the luxurious first class suits, with sitting area, big window, more than twice the size of our cabins in the original ship.

The next day, we arrived at another town nearby, Zhenjiang, 鎮江 where we visited YueYang Tower 岳陽樓, another famous monument we learned in High school. A famous article was written by a well known philosopher Fan Chon Yen 范仲淹 to commemorate the monument in Son dynasty. The architecture was very unique and magnificent.

Our original itinerary did not include sight seeing of WuHan, only short visit near the port of WuHan, then, the boat would sail to River gorges and then to visit Ghost Town. So, we missed Ghost Town but got to visit WuHan. I heard that there was nothing fantastic in Ghost Town, we didn't miss anything.

After WuHan, we arrived at Yichang, 宜昌, to visit the Great Dam of Three Gorges 三峽大壩 which was almost completed. Then, for two days, we sailed through picturesque Three Gorges of Yangtze River, rode on a small boat to see Three Little Gorges 小三峽. On 4/28, we arrived at our final destination: Chong Qing, 重慶 for a day's visit. The next day we flew to Beijing for another day trip there before we flew to Taiwan.

Though we felt insulted and upset at the time, our detour in WuHan actually was a blessing in disguise, 塞翁失馬, 焉知非福, we got to see famous and beautiful historical city Wu Han, I wouldn't trade that for anything else. Besides, we got to ride in a luxurious first class cabin for the rest of the tour. We were not really mistreated after all. Yet, back in our mind, there was still a dark spot, the feeling of being insulted because we were forced to leave the cruise ship against our will and contract. It is a mixed feeling.

Now, WuHan becomes a well known city, we appreciate the opportunity to have seen the bright side and beautiful side of WuHan.

Hueyli Liu

written May 29,2020

Itinerary of the tour:

9/17 Arrived at Shanghai 上海

9/19 check in hotel for the tour group in Shanghai

20 on bus to Nanjing 南京 transfer to cruise ship

21. tour Nanjing, Chong San low 中山樓

22 dock at Jiujiang 九江, go to Yellow Mountain 黃山

23 Visit famous Mt.Lu 廬山

24 Arrive at WuHan 武漢, tour near port of Wuhan and left ship, checked in Shangarila Hotel 香格 里拉

25 Tour city of Wuhan, Yellow Crane Tower, 黃鶴樓 etc. Pm. Get on Boat Victoria No. 5

26 To Zhenjiang 鎮江 Yue Yang Tower 岳陽樓, 洞庭湖.

PM. To YiChang. 宜昌

27 Great Dam of Yangtze River 長江大水壩 : tour through Three Gorges of Yangtze River 宜昌長江三峽

28. On small boat to Three Little Gorges.小三峽 PM; arrive at Chongqing 重慶

29. Tour the city of Chongqing. PM flew to Beijing 北京

30. Tour Beijing. Pm: flew to Taiwan.

Three photos :

First: Six of us taken in Shanghai

2nd: Yellow Mountain

3rd: 黃鶴樓 Yellow Crane Tower



