



# Terry's Travels

TT25-1 Return journey via Shanghai April 24th 2008

Despite some wet weather we found it hard to leave NZ. Our first stop was with friends near Sydney OZ and we had fun riding in Greg & Sheila's new VW Jetta. The rain activated wipers and auto headlights proved their worth and the Mio GPS announced street names and re-calculated our route when we missed a turning—good technology.

Our tour guide was waiting my arrival at Shanghai airport and we sped along the motorway by minibus-passing the track of the 432kph! Maglev train into this super modern city. Ken was already at the hotel across the Yangtse. The hotel was not very far from the Bund (bend) which is the centre of Shanghai.

Next day we were quickly exploring in drizzly murky weather. The planning offices were amazing and we even got interviewed on a popular TV programme. Having seen the model of the Bund we cruised the banks of it by river. The architecture is very spectacular and I wouldn't have been cleaning the windows for a fortune but some were, to earn some Yuan.

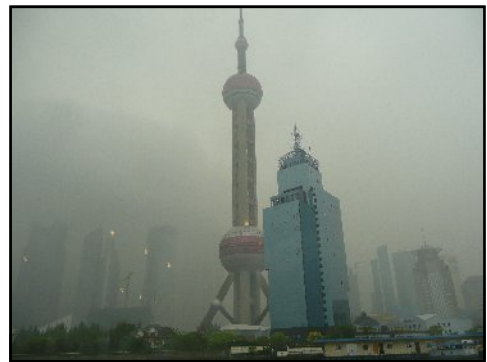
Confucious was China's first teacher and has a legacy of a museum, school with free students fees for some, plus lots of his wisdom etched on marble tablets. The Bund is the old area and is a great magnet for tourists. Our tour guide is called Snow, she explained it was because she came from a snowy area near the Mongolian border. She contacts our mini bus driver by phone and he appears just like a genie of a lamp from the heavy Shanghai traffic. It means we can squeeze more visits into this fascinating place.

It all is so far removed from what I saw when I visited Canton some 28 years ago. Snow explained that as people are re housed they get 200,000 per person but apartments cost around 700,000 to a million. There is massive building happening everywhere. Most people live in high rise blocks. A 400 year old garden was especially worth visiting even though very popular with tourists it was a remarkable mix of rocks, ponds, bonsai trees and bright flowers. Entrances are creatively made in a variety of shapes.

The hotel has cable internet and an Email from my pal in Bangkok told me that Di had arrived safely and was catching up with her sleep. Rumour has it she has a pole dancing contract.....



The Bund in the distance



The tower in the murk



Confucious outside his museum



Ken & Snow at 1580 garden

next travel plans: April 17th to OZ then Shanghai for MotoGP & touring with Ken.  
May: UK briefly then Europe May 20th in Mercie, Spain/France/Italy/Croatia/Poland  
Mid July: back in UK. Oct : NZ via Malaysia.



## Terry's Travels

TT25-2 Shanghai Museum and Acrobats April 26th 2008

I'm not over enthusiastic about dusty museums usually but the Shanghai one is something else. It's located in Peoples Square in a superb modern building with a round roof over a square building. I was told this is how Chinese people see the world. A round sky over a square earth. Unfortunately the jade gallery was closed for an update to the display but there are three floors with galleries for furniture, pottery, clothing, calligraphy, art and best of all for me some 400 bronzes. An audio guide gives the story in English. There was a display of bronze bells too that had a high quality recording of them beautifully tinkling away. A visit to Shanghai is worth it for this museum alone and we plan another visit.

Tea drinking is very much part of the Chinese way of life. Both Ken and I have hated the tea at our hotel since it strongly carries a chemical taste which, no doubt, is necessary to stop tummy bugs. It was a delight to get to a tea house that had great tasting tea of many varieties. Teapots are therefore a great part of the culture and come in an amazing range. With Ken being a potter they are of especial interest.

Photography was not allowed at an acrobatic show we visited. When I first went to China some 28 years ago I was very impressed by one. This flowing performance of juggling, balance, strength and dynamics built to a crescendo of a final crazy stunt. First one motorcycle sped around inside a large mesh round cage. It finished with FIVE speeding around, one blew his horn and then they were looping and criss crossing, I was at the edge of my seat, what an evening. The dodge of having a card in Chinese got us a taxi back to the hotel for a quiet beer accompanied by a breathy female vocalist, not a bad life.

The following morning Ken left the room just before me and was accosted getting into the lift. The lady said she could change his Kiwi currency? - he escaped and we discussed it over breakfast. I concluded that it was a counterfeit currency scam—surely it wouldn't be a hooker so early in the morning.

The weather was much better as the sun tried to penetrate the murk, our driver and guide were prompt and we were soon on our way to Zhouzhuang a water village that is part of the Venice of the East. It took an hour to clear Shanghai and reach more open roads.



C. 1,000 BC Bronze wine vessel



Made from Banyan tree roots



Teapot—a happiness symbol



Most signs now dual script

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# Terry's Travels

TT25-3 Zhouzuang April 27th 2008

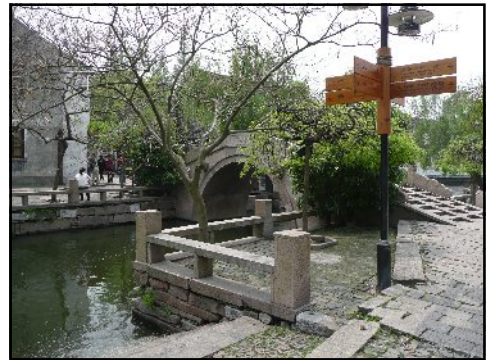
We were soon passing a giant lake as we approached the water villages which are a tourist attraction. Great effort has been put into the scenic beauty, in fact we saw one man with hand shears cutting the hedges of the road with ladies with besom brushes sweeping up. For the first time traffic was light enough to have us wishing we were on our motorcycles. You can see why the whole area is called the Venice of the East.

It's a touristy holiday place but we seemed to be the only Westerners. We both liked the laid back easy going feeling of this place with a 1,000 year old history. Our boat lady was a cheery soul and she sang very well as she propelled and guided the boat. Our guide told us she only got 600 Yuan per month (\$US90) which softened us for a good tip. It was fun to just people watch as they enjoyed their holidays. School children are usually dressed in bright clothing. The Chinese often are on tour buses and with the volume of people they are given coloured caps so the group leader can distinguish them.

One of the local delicacies is the local barbequed pork. Apparently the Chinese word for both Emperor and pork are similar so they have a description of this pork that needs three Chinese symbols to ensure that people don't ask for barbequed Emperor!

We stopped at a local tea house overlooking the canal where the old owner brought us a menu of differing teas of differing quality. The choices were amazing. After much discussion we selected a high quality jasmine. It was especially good, there is a knack to drinking from the porcelain cup, using the lid as a sieve to avoid all the twiggy stuff from going into your mouth. A pottery kettle was also left on the table for seconds and thirds. I was so carried away I forgot my knapsack and the owner came chasing after us with it.

The evening was chilly but it was nice to see the illuminated boats and lanterns. We tried dinner by the canal but fell for a scrawny fish at a tourist price with a wandering minstrel who was more enthusiastic than tuneful. Shop after shop was displaying the barbequed pork, no one was buying it and the shopkeepers were spooning more coloured crud over it to stop it becoming dusty.



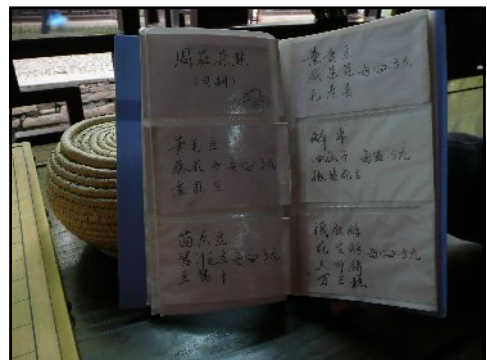
Fifty bridges in Zhouzuang



Her voice was good



Having a good time?



The menu—just for tea

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