

## Chongqing

This is a very preliminary writeup 11/07; to be edited and expanded.

From Xian we flew to Chongqing which is a huge city (33 million people in the metropolitan area and several million in the city itself). It is a huge, beautiful modern city on many hills. At night with the many architecturally magnificent buildings tastefully outlined with lights and moving lighted designs, it was spectacular. This is the city where we boarded a boat which took us through the three magnificent gorges to the huge dam and through the locks on the Yangtze River for three nights. This was the part in particular which interested Don the most – and why he wanted to take the trip. (*Not really... she exaggerates.* )

(*Don here:*) In Chongqing (we used to call it Chunking, British tin ear responsible) I learned why I heard the word so often as a child. A good friend of my parents while my Dad taught at Harvard was Earl Swisher, then a Professor of Chinese History I think. Much later he was well known as a commentator on China on US television at the time of Nixon's visit. When I mentioned his name to our local Chongqing guide he immediately recognized his name! Apparently he was on Gen. Stillwell's staff during the war, and thus a National hero to the Chinese! Indeed a small world. I hope I'll get an email from the Stillwell museum where I left a note.

Chongqing has some resemblance to San Francisco. It is very hilly, with a lot of fog. To my eyes (but not Margaret's) it had some of New York City's flavor also. It gave me the impression of a “city on the make” but still rapidly developing, not yet at the stage of NYC when I saw it in 1952, which in retrospect was a “golden age”. I was impressed by the city central plaza with the contrasting beautifully refurbished somewhat traditional Great Hall and the opposite very modernistic Three Gorges Museum. It will be soon recognized as one of the world's major cities with the development associated with the damming of the Yangtze and a metropolitan area of over thirty million people. There is still an old section, now very much a tourist area, as seen in many of the pictures. By contrast there is a modern monorail which I took to get to the Stilwell museum commemorating our cooperation with the Chinese in WW2, when Chongqing was the temporary capital of China. As to the “tasteful” (gaudy?) lights, see the two movie clips... quite a sight. No one has heard of “light pollution”, I suppose the residents have not seen stars at night for some years now. A bit like Las Vegas?