

Xi'an

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

Next we flew to Xian basically to see the Terra Cotta Warriors and to listen to an excellent lecture (there have been excellent lectures in every city). In the last seventeen years, they have unearthed a tremendous number of new warriors – and continue to do so, but the crowds of tourists have increased so that they have had to put them in large buildings with viewing walks up so high that it is difficult to see features on the warriors. I'm glad that I went when there were few tourists and fewer warriors. I walked on the dividing walls between groups of warriors – just above their heads. I even was able to pick up some of the dirt. I'm so glad that I really saw their features etc.

(Don here:) The city of Xi'an was very appealing, with a beautiful setting and a requirement that new buildings be constructed in the style of the Tang dynasty (possibly the "golden age" of China.) I wish that we had more time in the city itself. We did see a performance of a play/musical composed by a Tang emperor, who was an accomplished choreographer/dancer/musical composer. (Just imagine that in a U.S. president!)

Back to Margaret

We first went to a lecture given by a professor at the Xian International Studies University. This was very interesting, titled "China's Cultural History". It was a discussion of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism and its effect on the Chinese people. These are the three main religions, but there are others. At this time, I think that there are more Buddhists than anything else, but I know that Confucianism had a tremendous effect on the culture of China for many, many years. After the lecture, we walked among the students and spoke with them. Their campus was also very American as was the campus in Guilin. Most of the students spoke English well and were eager to communicate with us. (Of course this was the University's specialty.)

We later went to the Museum of History which was a large museum describing the history of the many Chinese emperors and showing their dress and art. Supper this evening was very interesting. We had a dumpling dinner – nineteen varieties of dumplings. The dumplings were in the shape of the contents. A chicken shaped dumpling had chicken inside, etc. I took a photo of my plate with four or five different dumplings, thinking that was the meal – but it continued until we had eaten nineteen ! \\\

In the evening we went to a performance of Tang Dynasty music and dance. As Don wrote above, it was written by the Tang Emperor. This was a song and dance production like no other. This was colorful, dazzling, and beautiful. Don took many photos of this production.

This was the only city where the temperature was similar to the U.S. It wasn't too humid and not too

warm, but it did rain a bit – but not enough to bother us. The next day we went to see the very famous Qin Emperor's Terra Cotta warriors tomb. As I mentioned above, many more warriors have been unearthed and there are more buildings containing them – and so many more tourists. The size of this terra cotta army is truly impressive. This emperor was certainly prepared to rule in the afterworld as an emperor,

Our last stop in Xian was to visit the Moslem Hui section. There we visited a Chinese style Moslem mosque and shopped in the Moslem stall market. Once again much tourist stuff and not much quality. Later our city guide took some of those interested in jade to a store which had a fine collection of jade jewelery etc. of good quality. We bought small jade pendants for each of the females in the family.

(Don... I also enjoyed the city center Drum Tower, an ancient monument with absolutely huge drums which served as “Big Ben” to the city. It had great views, and an interesting museum inside. A bit of quiet relief after the extremely crowded bazaar after we left the mosque.)

Xian was a large and interesting city with good temperature. We'd like to see more of this city.