

## Shanghai Day 2: 1-17-15

Ni Hao (hello)! Today we had many firsts. We rode the metro for the first time and figured out how to buy a refillable card (cheaper than single or daily tickets) as well as navigate the metro system. Very efficient and easy with names of stops in English (thank goodness) as well as Mandarin.

First we went to E. Nanjing Rd. area where there is a pedestrian walkway and big shopping area – all the brands you see everywhere in the world – Sephora, Apple Store, New Balance, Starbucks etc. as well as Chinese stores; pleasant to walk there because no traffic. There is a small tram as well as the kind of on-off buses we have in Manhattan.

A young woman stopped us and asked if we would take a photo of her with her camera. We did and she started talking to us saying she was visiting Shanghai from Chengdu and wanted to practice speaking English. Then she asked us if we wanted to go for tea somewhere. We agreed and she led us to a nearby teahouse where we enjoyed a tea ceremony with several teas – and ended up paying a pretty penny. We later learned it was a scam, but she was very nice and ended up walking with us for a couple of hours and took some nice photos. She explained many things – some of the wonderful smelling street foods, some basic Chinese phrases, where to find bath rooms. With her help we were able to try vegetarian dumplings from a local shop. We each had two and that kept us going for the rest of the day – very filling and yummy!

The most interesting thing we learned from Mary was at People's Park where we saw all these people sitting on boxes, umbrellas open on ground in front of them with posters attached to the front. It seems this is where people advertise for marriage partners and they are there every weekend. Some are parents but most are agents who are paid by families to advertise. Mary read some of the ads to us – height, age, education, what kind of mate they are looking for, etc. At the other end of the park is the Contemporary Museum of Art - to return at a later date.



We parted with Mary and took the metro to the French Concession, an area with wide boulevards, lots of trees and small, very expensive boutiques (like SoHo in NY or the Marais in Paris). At one end of the Concession is another very upscale area

with the larger designer stores and where we found a grocery store someone had told Ravi about that sells Italian food (pasta, tomato sauce, olives, capers, olive oil, bread, etc.). So we stocked up and then rode the metro back home. After walking many miles today we are happy to stay in and cook tonight.

Weekends are much nicer than during the week – much less traffic and pollution. We actually saw blue sky all day today. The weather was cool, about 40 degrees, but fine for walking. That's all for now.

Zaijian (Goodbye!)

© Lee Anne Bell