

Shanghai Journal  
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Ni Hao,

Saturday we went to the Long Museum, a relatively new museum built by a Chinese billionaire who is said to have started out driving taxis and selling bags in Shanghai (the Chinese version of rags to riches). It is on the waterfront in the West Bund in an old industrial building. The entry fee is quite expensive compared to other museums in Shanghai (200 yuan, around \$30 U.S.) – more expensive than MOMA.

The first exhibit showed 100 species of peony painted by a Qing Court painter, Jiang Tingxi. Fascinating to see so many varieties of peony. Imagine 100 of these along the walls of three large rooms.



My favorite exhibit though was on calligraphy, a truly gorgeous display of the drawings of Master Hongyi, a Chinese Buddhist monk, artist and art teacher who died in 1942. His scrolls of calligraphy of Buddhist sayings were so elegant and beautiful, yet spare and simple. We found it very moving.





One example of Hongyi's sayings: "If you can see through it, you won't have worries. If you cannot put it down, you have to shoulder it."

The final exhibit we saw was on Dutch masters and it had a few paintings by Rembrandt, several by his students and one by Vermeer – amazing light and such unique facial expressiveness in those paintings.

The most interesting thing to me was the prologue that situated the art from a Chinese perspective. Here is a section that maybe you can expand to make more readable.

It is clear that the arts and culture of China, one of the richest in the world in both spheres, and the Netherlands, as well other countries at the time, were influencing one another unconsciously through the continuous global trade. This was particularly so in the exchanges that connected the Netherlands and Spain in Europe with Mexico in South America. Examples abound of the connections: the stoneware displayed in Vermeer's work probably represents a masterpiece from remote Jingdezhen, China; and the silver in the hands of Catalina and the mansion of Qian Qianyi in *Woman Holding a Balance* may well come from the ore of South America. Some of the silver came to Delft in the Netherlands across the sea, while others first arrived to the Philippines via Acapulco across the Pacific Ocean and were later transported to the port of Quanzhou in China – from which they entered the Ming Dynasty's marketplace.

I'm glad to have seen the Long Museum and I truly loved the calligraphy exhibit, but it doesn't hold a candle to the Aurora Museum or the Shanghai Museum, both of which I've been saving for when Linda and Marcella, and then Livio and Carla get here.

Afterward, we were happy to have Didi (Chinese Uber) to get home. So far, all of the drivers have been great and we've had no trouble at all getting to where we need to go thanks to GPS!

Sunday we went to City Market to do some grocery shopping and saw young people on the metro returning from a race called "The Color Run." Evidently, throughout the race onlookers spray you with color, so there were many people on the train who looked like this.



Today is Tuesday and we leave for Japan on Thursday afternoon. This is the autumn break for the university (and grave sweeping ceremony for Chinese people. Also Oct. 1 is Chinese Independence Day). We are looking forward to spending 4 days in Kyoto and one day in Nara. That will be in my next journal.

Thanks to all who sent notes after my last journal. You don't know how much that means to me! It's really wonderful to hear from you.

Zaijian,

Lee