

## Peggy's ISI Hong Kong-China Trip June 23-July 12, 2011

### REPORT Summary

The trip was wonderful, I really felt my path cushioned by prayer the whole time, giving me much confidence that GOD was in this trip. even in my most unnerving moments (see blog):

And the best part, answer to prayer was the almost constant, generous and warmhearted companionship of my old friends hosting me every leg of the journey and launching me safely into the next segment.

I feel perhaps 50% of the long-term value of our ministry with each of them happened during this trip.

As you will see, there is no lack of good food in China! (see websites for closeups of the dishes!) at least amongst my friends. I was told, confidentially, that they feel a proper host must serve the guest at least 10 dishes for a dinner or else be considered cheap. My hosts can definitely not be accused of that!

Well, each of these photos is a whole story, or more, but for those you'll have to read the reports.

Soooooooo many things can go wrong, especially with such a tight schedule, such as:

#### CONNECTIONS:

Constant meetings with about 30 ISI Santa Cruz alumni, all over China. But EVERY connection I scheduled was made, including 2 down-to-the-departure-minute exciting races with my 2 heavy bags through train/bus stations to catch train/bus. (NOTE TO BOB: this time it was my host's miscalculations not mine!)

#### TYPHOONS:

Missed by a day. The occasional warm rain was refreshing in the hot muggy weather, but I spent most of my free time in Hong Kong inside the ubiquitous, overly air conditioned shopping malls, anyway so my problem was staying warm enough!

#### HIGH SPEED BULLET TRAIN MALFUNCTION:

The brand new train opened July 1. I rode July 8. Later I saw news reports of a big train malfunction on July 7. Missed by a day. My 5-hour Shanghai-Beijing ride (normally 14 hour) was great!



Professor QingJu Qu hosts me for a Mongolian Fish bake dinner with family and colleagues

getting on a bus heading into communist China on my own, with a very tight schedule, hoping my Mandarin skills were enough to get me through border security and to my destination and 6 cities where I'd never been.

Also being put on a packed old "hard sleeper" train at 2 a.m. squeezing into the top bunk climbing up over 4 snoring Chinese men in the bunks below, was a bit creepy. But turns out a lot of nice people are around, all the young ones know some English, though most have never spoken it with a real English speaker before. Makes it fun.

My first big challenge was finding a garbage can on our car, The train attendant had no idea what I was asking, with a mother and her shy teenage daughter that took about half an hour of questioning and translating . But then we shared some tea and oranges and had a jolly time. Especially when they found out I am from America and have international student friends, therefore I must be a nice person, she hopes to visit me in America some day!

*And the Major Goals went RISKI because of your prayers !*

### QUALITY VISITS WITH ALUMNI!!!

**Amongst all the lovely dinners and generous hospitality** from my hosts showing me around their cities, I realized that my favorite part of the traveling is the in-between parts. The times where my host and I can just talk, often strolling arm in arm with my female hosts, even if they had not known me very well before. I think that is the Chinese way of friendship. Also, partly because I am a distant friend, so we have no common responsibilities to worry about, or resentments, but also, because that is my job, I represent and promote friendship. And here on this trip I find it again. the lovely touching of souls that happens in between doing all the other busyness and hecticness. Just sharing our everyday ups and downs of life.

And this did happen with nary every one on my list, even with only 1 or 2 days per visit. My showing up In Person, in their normal life at home, representing all their ISI Santa Cruz friends, I think, made their ISI friendships much more real to them and caused them to reflect a bit on all their Santa Cruz experiences. It proved we still care about them, cemented friendships for life. Also, although our time together was not really long enough to get deeply spiritual, an UpSide to such a whirlwind trip, is that they are each very interested to hear about all the OTHER alumni, connecting with THEIR peer group, so my trip was attractive for them to feel a part of the big ISI global fellowship.

### HONG

#### TWO REUNION DINNERS:

in Shanghai and Beijing. Took a lot of coordinating on my hosts' part. But very valuable for building a sense of community and ISI identity. They like to see the other ISI alumni! I got to make short and sweet speeches to encourage all of them to seek after God.

## **SHANGHAI, China -- Fudan University/ISI Santa Cruz alumni Reunion dinner**

Fudan is considered one of the top 5 technology universities in China.

Sophia, (1st row, 2nd from left) organized the dinner and hosted me for the afternoon. She and three others just graduated from Fudan two days before, and starting new jobs, a very impressionable time. They are holding the Scripture Verse calendars I gave them as gifts.

I didn't recognize any of the other students at first, but they told me how they had each been involved in ISI Santa Cruz, with airport pickups, conversation partners. Two said their favorite memory in Santa Cruz was Thanksgiving dinner at Anne Johnson's home.

Yukai, next to me, is a brother in Christ and Fudan alumni from another ISI program, who joined us.

## **TEACHING SOCIAL DANCE**

After lugging my ballroom shoes and music all over China, I did get to use them on my last night in Beijing. Although I offered to all of them to teach any social dance, most of my visits were too short, between their hosting me for fabulous dinners and some sightseeing.

But my final host, Zhang Lan, really wanted me to teach her and her two teenage girls, so, in her private office at the Physics Laboratory, on white marble floors, at 8 p.m. on my last muggy night in Beijing, I taught the three of them Merengue and Swing. I was careful to not turn up the music too loud, to not disturb the researchers down the hall. At first, Lan's eagerness for her girls to learn awakened her stern Tiger Mother mode, but I overruled her scolding and insisted on keeping the lesson happy and fun.

Perhaps my favorite moment was with my oldest and dearest friends, Peking University Chemistry Professors Xie and Yang, whom I dubbed my Chinese mother and father. Late at night outside their apartments, they asked me to teach them some dance, they didn't know the English name of. So they motioned a sharp turn with their head and arms. TANGO! I showed them the most basic step, leading each separately. The rhythm, the placement of their arms, the directions to step, it was all so weird for them. but they liked it. Then I put them together as partners. To see the delight on the faces of this 80-year old married Professor couple learning to dance Tango under the summer Beijing moon, laughing, and discovering a new way to connect together in each other's arms. So Heavenly!

The next morning the wife, eagerly brought me to their university area church in Beijing, learning about how to connect in a new way with our Heavenly dance partner as well.

**New ISI students/scholars** are already requesting airport pickups in September. One had emailed me from Tsinghua Univ. in Beijing, at midnight of my last night in Beijing. I responded that I was staying at Tsinghua at the moment, and offered to meet him the next morning on my way to the airport! That didn't happen, but it was fun to offer. So we shall meet when he arrives here Sept 15. Beijing / San Francisco....now I feel in my heart they are not that far away.....

# ISI Hong Kong Conference REPORT

## Part 1



### Global Intersection of East and West

Victoria Harbor is the Guinness World Record holder for the most visited tourist place in the world. A nightly spectacular free musical light show draws thousands of tourists nightly to watch, as one big happy global community, the colorful laser beams on many of the skyscrapers around the harbor, choreographed to pop music broadcast around the waterfront.

Our ISI conference at the thrifty YMCA Salisbury Hotel was only a block away from one of the best viewing spots, in the heart of the most glamorous part of town. I love the excitement of city life all around me.

As well as the majority of Chinese, there were a LOT of Mid-East people wearing Saris and Arab clothes. For the first time in my life I saw a Muslim mosque with a crowd of people in Arab clothes exiting their prayer time. Westerners are a small minority here.



ISI conference brought staff from around the world together for five days of singing, praying and teaching on “Efficacy vs. Efficiency in God’s work”

(Edmund Chan, pastor Singapore)  
“God is our Water, Rock and Fire”



(Barry Corey, President Biola University) “Globalization of International Students (Promod Haque, Venture Capitalist) and workshops such as “How to relate to Chinese Students,” and “How to do trips to visit Returnee students/scholars” which most of us staff had either just done or were, like me, about to do.



Sunday evening any Hong Kong ISI alumni , including my Santa Cruz alumni Eunice, were invited to an ISI dinner with their staff.

Plus all day long chatting and praying and hugging with our ISI colleagues from across the U.S. and even from Australia, India, HongKong, U.K. and Canada.





Cuisine served at our meals was very Hong Kong: half British baked beans, toast and strong milk tea; half Chinese dim sum & noodles & Congee porridge —for BREAKFAST!

I thought it was cool that with my I could buy “Hot Chinese Fungus Soup” at the 7-11 stores that are on nearly every street corner, anytime of day or night just by tapping my

“Octopus Card on their payment scanner machine. It is also good for any bus or subway ride.



And the famous HongKong Egg Custard Tarts with oh so flaky crust for the splendid tea times.

Life in Hong Kong is fast, and tasty. I feel right at home here. Take home message to Peggy I like being a part of what God is doing in this fast moving global fellowship!



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## REPORT Part 2

### HONG KONG<sub>with</sub> ISI Santa Cruz alumni Hiu Yan "Eunice" Poon



My Hong Kong returnee host, Hiu Yan "Eunice" was already a strong Christian when she came to UCSC in 2006 for one year as a psychology undergrad. We met weekly for personal bible study and mentoring. She joined many ISI activities while at University of California Santa Cruz and was also heavily involved with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship including community service projects.

Five years later we met in my hotel lobby. I greeted her with a compromise between our American bear-hug and her Asian no-touching-in-public bows, resulting in a light and slightly awkward hug.



She was still friendly, but changed, more high strung and subdued now, under her Hong Kong life pressure.

And she was SOOOO thin! "This is my normal weight" she informed me "when you knew me in Santa Cruz I had gained 15 pounds."

She was dressed in casual city glamour: a slinky sequined top, tight jeans, glasses, no makeup, and sequined, flat shoes for fast city walking.

She gave me a bag of snacks her mother sent me, fresh juicy Lychee fruits, Hong Kong style cookies with some kind of chewy fruit filling, and a weird looking, but delicious purple fruit that neither of us knew the English name for.

Eunice was so enthusiastic to show me around her home city that she **visited** with me 5 days in a row **during the ISI conference**, even while working full time! Very encouraging for both of us.





Eunice talked fast, walked fast. Don't waste a second because there is too much to do in too little time in Hong Kong! We zoomed around the city on metro trains, jitney buses and taxis. We constantly raced through the crowds everywhere we went, often getting lost in the labyrinth of shopping mall

First stop, joining her friend at a cultural museum to see a Pixar exhibition they had been planning to attend (ironically my first Hong Kong cultural experience is seeing a Bay Area cartoon movie

company!)

She directed me to the Hong Kong street market to join in the local sport of haggling, including much dramatic acting by both buyer and seller. I think I was successful (in Mandarin!) and got a nice pair of sunglasses and a bag for about \$10 each. I'm pretty sure I did a good job because the merchant told me in Mandarin, my offer was too low. So I cheerfully said "OK, bu yao" and walked away. Then she



called me back and agreed, handing me my change with a wounded look, moaning how she will go out of business if she sells it so cheap. Then when she learned I was from America, she brightened up and told me how good it looks on me. Fun!



Dinner at Eunice's family's home, a 12<sup>th</sup> floor apartment in the upper hills around Hong Kong gave me a sense of her fast-paced normal life. Everyone lives in very dense, very clean, high-rise apartments-- no

single family homes anywhere in the city. Constant traffic noise from nearby freeways.

Upside of such city living is at no car is needed, you can take a bus anytime, only a few minutes wait, or metro, or just walk through the huge underground metro stations for blocks, or through the ubiquitous shopping malls, pretty much everywhere, to get around the city.. No need to stock up on goods, either, when you can duck into



shopping malls anytime, day or night, to buy anything you need!

Hong Kong is heavily Christian, 30% Eunice says, and has a booming economy (could there be a correlation?) Her family is strongly Christian, and warmly welcomed me. Her father suffered a stroke a couple of years ago and is well taken care of in their home by the family. Although he can hardly talk, he smiled and looked at me during most of my visit. He squeezed my hand and nodded eagerly when I talked about Scripture being God's living Word. A bond of connection without spoken words.

Eunice is now working for the Hong Kong government as a management trainee. She told me of the pressures in Hong Kong of the high expectations that everyone must work 6 or more days a week, and many hours overtime. "Everyone does it," she insisted. "It's not like in America, you can't just refuse to do it" I prayed with her for her career and God's guidance on however He is using her life here, while she works, lives at home and pursues a Master's degree in counseling. She also prayed



ip for dessert

with me for my China trip for God to keep me safe and God's spirit to bless all the people I visit.

She pointed out her church, where she is part of a good fellowship, near her home. Big modern buildings. Lots of thriving, alive churches in Hong Kong, Eunice says. "We feel we have an important evangelism ministry sharing Christ with the many people from China who come here to Hong Kong," she said.



The last day, after our ISI final sessions, we met again to

visit the Hong Kong Art Museum across the street leisurely enjoying the sophisticated modern art. But due to our miscalculation of hours needed to get to the airport, when we arrived back at the hotel, the lobby clerk told us sternly I had to RUN to take a taxi to get the bus into Shenzhen, China to catch my flight.

We RAN.

Eunice valiantly insisted on carrying my heaviest bag until her arms sagged in exhaustion. We lugged my bags into the taxi, then at yet another huge shopping mall we RAN through the mall for 15 minutes to find the bus station. Three different people gave us wrong directions. Finally we arrived at the little bus terminal in the middle of the mall. Its back door opened onto the bus parking lot. I bought the bus ticket that would take me to customs gate for China. Then I would get off the bus, walk through customs and get onto another bus for the airport.



I hoped I understood what to do, since I would be on my own now, no more mollycoddling cradle of ISI friendships carrying me along. As a last minute they asked me if I wanted to check in for the flight.

“No time for that!” Eunice scolded. But I got it anyway. The computer printer spit out the boarding pass perfectly, one minute before bus departure time.

I boarded the bus. The driver did not speak English. The bus was filled with 100% Chinese passengers. No one smiled or looked at me. I found a seat at the very back, and hoped I was on the right bus.

If anyone challenged me or accosted me I would be completely alone to handle it now. My mind echoed with stories of people being detained or arrested by border guards when going into China...but that was years ago, right? Isn't it all changed now? I hope? But I've also heard that in China, anything could happen. It's such a huge place every good and bad story you hear is probably true. For the first time I felt a bit spooked.



**Bus to Shenzhen airport**

Sunlight faded into twilight as our bus drove on freeways towards the darkness of what I hoped was the border to China. I thought it would be ½ hour ride, but after 1-1/2 hours on the road I got nervous about catching my flight. And I wasn't at all sure how this bus transfer thing at the border would work.

I really felt the need for some assurance that I was going in the right direction. After all it was MY idea to do such a hectic schedule by myself (hopefully inspired by the Holy Spirit, right? I remembered my prayer times with Eunice, and back in Santa Cruz with Glenna, and trusted God for what would happen.

NOTE: Since our time together in Santa Cruz, Eunice and I have Facebooked mutual encouragements, then this summer, being a guest in her home city has deepened our sharing as equals. Her latest Facebook entry (translated from Mandarin) is about following in Christ's

footsteps by embracing the sufferings God gives you. I think Eunice is now spiritually mentoring me!

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TO COME:

Reports on ISI conference, Guilin, Changsha, Xi'an, Hangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing