

Report no. 1.

Beijing

Monster between cities, Beijing offers to the eyes a giant show of urbanism and colors. One thing that visitors- who want to know something about Beijing- should see is the view from the plane; when you travel by plane you can really see how big this city is. And this can offer you an image about where you are really going. From a plane you can see how the urbanization is shaped in Beijing: areas covered just by flats which have mostly the same shape but different colors. You can also see areas covered only by houses which are- how I could later discover- mostly in poor condition and pressed together in such a manner that those neighbors know everything about each other. But you can also find combination of huge flats with poor small houses, mixture which has not so many features common with some urbanization. Another modern symbol is the new center which is created by skyscrapers and other buildings signed by the modern architecture. Skyscrapers are not so big like in Shanghai and Hong Kong but the city is growing up very fast and with it also is the number of new buildings.

Air pollution in the city during our stay in Beijing wasn't that big as expected but still from plane was possible to see cloud which I can connect with fog but the difference is (as I know from Czech Republic or Norway that fog is white) but in Beijing it was always yellow.

Let's move inside the city. After our arrival at the airport we took the bus to the city. When the bus arrived people were pushing each other as they wanted to get inside of the bus. During the way to the center of the city I had to sit on the floor of the bus.

When we arrived to a bus station near central railway station in front of the bus there were waiting few persons who offered travelers accommodation as close as possible. In first night we took some cheap hostel but next few days we had accommodation with one Chinese guy in his flat (guy that I met on Couch Surfing). When we arrived to his house I was a little bit surprised that he lives alone and his home is so big when many bigger families have to live in small flats; but we were happy for this because it meant more space for us. If you want to have a picture about how big is Beijing, imagine that if we wanted to get from our accommodation only to Central Railway Station which is near to the center of the city it took around 40 min. by metro; and if we wanted to get on the other side of the city it could have taken more than 2h by metro. When I'm talking about metro you have to know that this is the right place where you can feel the overpopulation in the city. When the metro arrives in the station it is hard to get inside metro but also out of the metro. Inside the metro you can feel like tuna in the can.



pic. 1. I can say that this is still nothing. Many times there is no space.

Living style in Beijing for me seemed quiet strange: flats everywhere; from plane how I said We could see many flats, but when you get in the city you think that there must be maybe 30 times more flats than you could see from the plane. Some people even if they live in the huge flats they have in front of them small cages with chickens or some other home-bred animals. As well, drying clothes on the streets is a normal thing which We have never seen in Europe. Just imagine that you are driving a car on a big road with many lines and next to the road there are trees which are connected with ropes and on this ropes people dry clothes. So now you know that Chinese use every space in the city. I can say that actually Beijing is not such a modern city comparing to others. For me Beijing is a city created from Chinese villages where houses are pressed on each other with the only difference that they have access to hot water and sanitation but this doesn't change the fact that inside their homes you can find a total mess. Yes, Chinese people don't have such a big sense of clean household as western countries. Our sense of organization of our own things doesn't say anything to them. You can find it maybe in educated families which are numerous in China but if we will think about how many people live in China the proportion is not in favor of this number.



pic. 2. In these two pictures you can see poor accommodation. Streets don't look so nice.

Security in Chinese big cities is high and I can say that many times also annoying and this is the security that checks places like metro, train stations or some other areas where can be a lot of people together. Only when we wanted to get near the Forbidden City we had to pass through a small area we had four security checks which were as usually busy so we have spent also a long time waiting. When we talked to some people they told us that they don't understand why the security checks are such a big deal and what exactly the security guards are doing. Because many times when we went to the metro we just put our luggage inside the roentgen and person who was responsible to check the screen didn't care about it. So it seems like that government is wasting money for some security which is not effective. But on the other side, the Government manages in this way many working places for people. A city of 20 million inhabitants cannot provide jobs for all of them using just the help from investors, it needs to create also its own work places. Also you can see in the city many workers who have to clean the streets sometimes you can even see that they are working in Chinese highways, work that has to be really dangerous. Nice thing is that you cannot find so many homeless because most of the people have job even those jobs which from outside seem a waste of money. But I don't want to say that there are no homeless. Comparing with Prague there are not so many or at least is hard to find them.

Shanghai



(Shanghai as center of Chinese Economy)

Not an historical city but a rich city. Master piece which constitutes a symbol showing the growth from fishing village to a giant monster between cities. I cannot say that there is a difference between lives in Beijing and Shanghai. The advantage that Shanghai has comparing to other cities is the port and the sea which bring more goods from other countries. Nevertheless, the rest is similar to Beijing. Many constructions, poor parts separated jus by walls. Many poor parts in Shanghai are separated by walls from beautiful parts. When I was walking around one wall in a poor part at the end of the wall I arrived to a new street with beautiful shops.



pic. 3. Nice French part in Shanghai, houses have some style.



pic. 4. Chinese typical style. In picture on the right side you can see wall, behind this wall is street with nice architecture.



pic. 5. Only few meters behind the wall.

Way in the train to Yunnan province

36 hours in the full Chinese train that was real experience. Because we wanted to save some money we chose hard seats in the train. People were everywhere. Some of the people had ticket for standing as we discovered and that was the reason why the train was so full and carriages for sleeping were locked so all this people had to stay in the same carriages where hard seats were. I don't know if I should say we were lucky or we had bad luck but around us was a Chinese family. A grandmother and two married couples with four kids and between them there were always sitting some other two persons. And for these 11 persons plus Liga and I, there were 10 not so big and- I can say- hard seats. In front of me was sitting the grandmother which was always carrying one child and many times it was really annoying to have these two persons in front of me because the kid was always putting his legs in my space and the grandmother also. I felt like fish pressed very well in the can. Also if you travel a long way with the train you can see some advertisement in the train for selling some goods like special towels, energy banks for phones or some electronic devices or what looked special and have big

success was presenting a book for math. The promoter started to give passengers math exams and many people started to buy this book.



pic. 6. Picture with my legs, legs of kid and adult person which hold the kid.



pic. 7. Two pictures from countrysides.

One week in the village

After the long way by train we arrived to Kunming capital city of Yunnan province. We also visited HQ of HPP in China and with their help could get more experience between people; we spent two days in one city where we could see school for small kids who can learn English and we were also invited there for Chinese lunch. We could also try there to teach these small kids. It was nice because the kids were willing to learn English and

I can also say that it gave me some ideas which I hope I can use in my project.



Another experience from Yunnan province is that Euclid and I spent one week in a village which is 40 minutes from Dali, being hosted by a local family. We could see how it looks in normal Chinese village how the life is going on there and we also tried to work in one of the many brick factories which were around the village and also, one day we went with the family to the mountains where they have tea fields and nut trees.

The paradox in the Chinese village is that buildings are very simple but sometimes you can find expensive car inside. But on the end of village there are the poorest people. Chinese houses in the village are very simple many times the rooms in the house are missing front wall so that some rooms are open and you can see inside if there is no wall around the house. We had a beautiful room but with a bad odor. People in the village were mostly friendly and neighbors were visiting each other as they wanted. Small kids had fun seeing people like us in the village because most of them have never seen people from other parts of the world.

I remember when we arrived in the village in the first hour I smoked around five cigarettes because everybody we met gave us cigarettes. It looked like it is a Chinese hobby to smoke like mad. I didn't see any woman smoking cigarettes, it seems like they are not allowed. It looked also like that man was the head of the family and had the only authority. We couldn't see this exactly, but the woman in the family was doing almost

everything: cooking, working, washing, taking care about home-bred animals. As well, when we were in the brick factory and worked with them, women were working really hard. And some of them were older so I can say that Chinese women are really strong. We also went to see how the work in the mountains was. The field of the family who hosted us was around 1h far from the village at the beginning of the mountains. During the walk there we could see other people from the village how they have to work. I was surprised how heavy were the boxes they have to carry up to the hills and that they have to bring up to the hills water in leather bags on the horses.



pic. 8. Not so high quality of roads in villages.



pic. 9. In the streets you can see mostly people walking to the fields or people playing games.



pic. 10. Food was served simply on some garden table.



pic. 11. One morning some cow was just running in the street. Nobody care.





pic. 12. Producing bricks.



pic. 13. Chinese women are really strong



pic. 14. Special oven for bricks.



pic. 15. Lunch in brick factory.



pic. 16. Typical style, how Chinese mothers carrying kids.



pic. 17. Water wells were dirty.



pic. 18. Typical toilet in the village, hygiene was quiet bad.



pic. 19. From this kitchen we got always amazing food.



pic. 20. Place of god.



pic. 21. Grave yard



pic. 22. Way to the field in the mountains.



pic. 23. Way to the field in the mountain 2.



pic. 24. In these bags is water. People have to bring water up to the mountains.



pic. 25. In the tea field.



pic. 26. The breake.



pic. 27. Strong woman.



pic. 28. Modern architecture in the village.



pic. 29. Last dinner, chicken head.



pic. 30. Neighbors in the village.



pic. 31. Drying tobacco.



pic. 32. Tai-chi in Dali



pic. 33. I meet this guy in Dali, we were communicating by translator in his phone, and he showed me Dali. This guy is bigger farmer.

Is it Communism?

This is a good question: which system is working in China?! Is it Communism? I believe that people who have experience with communism, I mean people from countries which were under Soviet Union will say that there is no connection with communism. But censorship is one of the biggest signs of communism as I know and I'm not talking only about blocked Facebook or YouTube but they are also checking the personal things which you can send from your PC.

When we were in village (we were there for one week) it looked that they don't even care about the fact that they would be under communism. The people that I could see there, looked as they had everything they needed. They wake up, go to work, work which maybe doesn't even have some strict schedule after work at home, chat in the streets and that's all. I didn't even see during this stay that somebody got angry.

People in the big cities for them have higher living conditions than the people in the villages and it makes them satisfied. It seemed that if they had enough electric devices they wouldn't need anything else. When you get in the metro you can see that 80% of the people are using smartphones and are playing games, listening music or watching videos. This is the way they make time pass faster. But 90% of them? That is way too much people! I couldn't see this anywhere in Europe. I could see in Europe funny pictures about what Chinese people do in the metro and there were five persons, two of them were playing with smart phone, one was reading a book, one was reading news and the last one was an old lady. But I have never seen anybody read a book in the metro and even old ladies were playing games on smartphones.

Hong Kong and Macau

Hong Kong and Macau are very interesting cities which are still somehow part of China but just because of their own government the living style is completely different. We could as well feel that the atmosphere in the streets is different, I don't know why but we felt freer and also people were a bit different. Hong Kong in comparison with Shanghai looked for us more modern, even if Shanghai has a higher development index. Hong Kong looks newer and you can feel the influence of colonization from the British part. A city built especially for businessmen and the biggest and strongest economic companies in the world, Hong Kong is for China what the Western countries are for Europe. Main land China is like cities which are still in developing process but Hong Kong is fully developed and the poor parts are hidden very well that you cannot feel them. It is a city made for rich Chinese people who own flats here, go for shopping and enjoy typical western rich live. Huge buildings with the most famous and expensive brands for clothes or other fashionable brands as HUGO BOSS, CHANEL, LOUIS VUITON, ROLEX and many others and rich Chinese are ready to stay in huge queues just to shop in this shops. When I was walking with the guy who hosted me during my first stay in Hong Kong he told me that these people are 90% Chinese and it is something when you have in front of the shop PRADA 60 persons waiting to get in this shop.

Macau is another interesting city which is not build that much for shopping and typical business but especially built again for rich Chinese which are coming here for another kind of fun. This kind of fun is now hazard and gambling in the casinos. Yes Macau is a city built mostly from the income brought by casinos. And life seems also different than life in China or Hong Kong. In Hong Kong you can see people with very nice fashion medium class cars, but Macau is fashion somewhere in the middle. I think I can say that

I never saw so many expensive cars as in Macau, Ferrari, Lamborghini and many cars with very expensive tuning. Hong Kong and Macau- these two cities are good examples how you can build city with help of rich people- on one side, strong economies of the big international companies and money from Chinese people which are spent for shopping and on the second side is spending money for fun in casinos.

In these two cities there are also differences in what people do on the streets. I mean spitting on the ground, smoking or riding bicycle. These things are in many places forbidden. Also it is hard to find parts where people dry clothes in the streets. And population in these cities is multicultural. You can find many people from other countries.

Conclusion

It probably seems that this report is full of criticism but really I cannot imagine my life in China. There are so many things which don't look good for me probably just thanks to the very fast development. I'm used to live in cities which don't have a population counting more than 100 000 people and this is probably what makes China different. Being in the village for one week, living and experiencing with the locals was the best time spent in China.

