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# China Day Tour Report

## Part II

## SHANGHAI DAY TOUR 03: SUZHOU AND ZHOUSHUANG WATER VILLAGE

May 9, 2005

**Tour Itinerary:** Suzhou | Net Master Garden | Silk Factory | Lunch | Zhouzhuang Water Village

**Tour Guide:** Helen

**Transportation:** Pick-up at hotel via van; 15 minutes later than scheduled time. Owing to the heavy traffic and aggressive driving styles, vans should be equipped with seat belts on all passenger seats.

**Comments:** Helen was sweet, but not proactive. She was very much a generalist and didn't delve into specifics. On the tour, customers asked most of the questions and received brief answers. Although the sites were as intriguing as any place visited in Beijing, she often walked us up to a plaque – which we then had to read on our own about that site instead of getting a thorough explanation from her. Then she hurried us on the next attraction so we didn't have much time to read about it anyway. She was most effective when paired with the local guide at the Silk Factory, with the local taking the lead and Helen interjecting interesting comments.

**Comparison** Using Beijing tour guide Jason as the benchmark, Helen acted as if she had been at the tour sites many times before, instead of making the experience fresh, new, and exciting for her guests.

**Gray Line:** The only GLC logo visibility was a sticker on the back of the tour guide's clipboard.

**Observations:** The drives to tourist sites are longer than those experienced in Beijing. The tour guide should be well-equipped to spend some time discussing Shanghai and the surrounding area. In lieu of that, perhaps an audio narrative could be made available to pass the time. For larger groups, personal audio devices could be used so each person could control the pace and volume.

## SHANGHAI DAY TOUR 04: HANGZHOU, HEAVEN ON EARTH

**May 10, 2005**

**Tour Itinerary:** Hangzhou | West Lake Cruise | Pagoda of Six Harmonies | Tiger Running Dream Springs | Lunch | Temple of Soul's Retreat | Meijia Tea Village

**Tour Guide:** Helen

**Transportation:** Pick-up at hotel via van; arrived on time

**Comments:** Even longer travel time than the previous day. This tour might necessitate another site or comfort stop prior to arrival in Hangzhou. The major difference between this trip and the one to Suzhou was that we were accompanied by two other passengers. This presents advantages and disadvantages for tour guides of Helen's caliber. There is more conversation between the customers, so a guide doesn't need to interact as much; however, there are more questions to field about specific subjects that a guide might not be able to answer. On this tour, Helen seemed somewhat disengaged and unenthusiastic about the beauty and significance of the sites that her customers were seeing for the first time. This was a beautiful and interesting tour that included a peaceful cruise on scenic West Lake, two impressive pagodas, and the astounding cultural and religious sanctuary of the Temple of Soul's Retreat. All were amazing representations of the area's physical beauty and heritage.

**Comparison** Hangzhou was a beautiful and interesting destination, well worth the lengthy drive. There were many of cultural and historical opportunities for the guide to make this trip as memorable as any we visited elsewhere in China. Like the Hutong excursion in Beijing, inclusion of the Dragon Well Tea visit was culturally unique. The tea farm's representative provided in-depth information that the other visits on the tour lacked.