

**University Sponsorship Programme 2005-06:
Student's diary**

**Project : Baiji (Yangtze river dolphin) and Finless
Porpoise – Population Monitoring**

Date : 15 to 24 November 2005

Student: Milla Fok



Wuhan Day 1 (15 November)

We gathered at 0935 to check-in today. The flight we were taking is from South China Airline, from Hong Kong International Airport to Wuhan Tianhe Airport. Although our flight departed at 1135, we entered the arrival hall before 1100 because the gate is 66, which is almost the furthest one. Anyway, this made us have the chance to take the “auto-train”.

The flight journey was nice. Lunch is provided. We had fried chicken rice, hami melon, a very hard bun, kit-kat, coconut-cream biscuits, orange juice and Chinese-styled appetizer. The journey is about one and a half hour and we arrived Wuhan around 1315.

The arrival hall is just next to the immigration block, very special. When we exited, we could immediately see a man, Dr Hao Yu Jiang, holding an A4 paper with Ms Milla & Tracy written on it. Thank you very much. We are so happy that two men (another is Mr Yu, the driver, who was previously a Chinese army) is waiting and greeting us!

When we left the airport and got into the car, we could feel the more than ten-degree-decreased air temperature. It was only around 11 degree Celsius at that time. I remembered that when I checked the weather forecast last night, it said the temperature might be even around 5 degree Celsius at night!! Luckily, the observatory had wrong weather forecast again, and more importantly, we have a heater in our room.

We took around 50 minutes ride to the Institute of Hydrobiology (IHB). On the ride, Mr Yu bought us a Chinese-styled pizza, which tasted good! :P! We left our baggage

in the hostel first and then Dr Hao guided us to have a tour in IHB. We are really satisfied with our room: tidy, clean and with TV, air- con, good service and big en-suite, it is much better than what we expected. The IHB is very modern. It is much larger than SWIMS (The Swire Institute of Marine Science, University of Hong Kong), ahhh. It's interesting to find that the mat in lift has the weekday printed on it and is changed everyday. Dr. Hao introduced the directors of the IHB, and two conservation parks to us. After a short chat, the director of IHB gave me and Tracy 2 bananas, hahaha.....weird? But I do love banana.

Then Mr Yu drove we three to the Baiji museum which is just a few minutes apart from the IHB. Although there's no captive Baiji anymore, the porpoises inside are really cute and attractive!!! The museum is also quite modern. For the pools of porpoises, just like the Ocean Aquarium of Ocean Park Hong Kong, there's an underwater floor for us to observe the lovely cetacean!! In the pool we're observation, there were two females and one calf. One female (not the mother) was so active and always swam toward us. We took many photos and videos. After that, Dr Hao introduced some of the research students and academic staff there. As there were many rooms and in many cases only two people shared one room, we were just like having room visit during that time. Dr Hao introduced them and we introduced ourselves again and again.

We also visited the Museum inside the Baiji Museum. There were many specimen inside. All of them are real. The most impressive one is the specimen of the fetus of porpoises. There were many and of different sizes.

Before leaving the museum, we had the chance to observe the feeding programme. During the feeding session, the trainer, i.e. also the staff and students there, tried to trained the porpoises, mainly for collecting faeces samples. The fish fed is called 小鰓魚. Porpoises there were fed five times daily. For the calf, the meal at 1650 is of 0.25 kg.

We really love the porpoises. However, we had to leave the Rearing pool. As Dr Hao wanna stay there, we followed Ms Li Xiao Yian to have dinner. We tried tomato tenderloin, a big lighted-bowl of fish soup and some vegetables. Then went back to IHB to get on the internet and sent email to Cynthia. Later, as they said that Poyang Hu may be quite cold and they were worried that I dun have gloves. Ms Wu Myn led us to her room and found her gloves for me. Thanks very much again!!

Finally, we went back to our room, bathed and packed thing for tomorrow journey to Hu Kou. Suddenly, after about two hours, Dr Wei Zhuo came and visited us. As he will go with us tomorrow, he informed us about the schedule. He gave us his new books, 長江瀕危動物大拯救, Saving Endangered Yangtze Animals, which was just published yesterday. He's so nice!! Thank you!

