



**Southwest China Karstlands**  
**October 13-29, 2004**

**Tour Leaders: Dwight Deal, PhD and Mary Fletcher Deal, MA**

Dwight is a geohydrologist, karst researcher, and caver who has studied and explored major karst areas in China. In 1993, as part of the CRF China Caves Expedition, he spent a month in the area that we will visit. Mary is an experienced travel planner who speaks some Mandarin and has led numerous tours to China since 1982. For 10 years she was actively working with Denver-Kunming Sister Cities and has accompanied high-level delegations in both countries.

**Trip Overview**

This will NOT be a caving trip, although we will get into caves. It WILL be like an extended convention geological and cultural field trip. We will visit commercialized caves and the entrances to wild caves. We will spend time surrounded by some of the most spectacular and arguably oldest karst landscapes in the world that have been studied by learned scientists for more than 2,000 years. Participants will learn about the karst of China from Dwight and Chinese karst scientists. We will visit remote local villages where indigenous minority peoples live much as they did 400 years ago and see the production of handicrafts. The minority people still work their fields in colorful dress. And you will learn about the urban and rural culture of interior China. Moderate hiking will be part of the trip, but alternative activities will be available for those that do not wish to hike.

We have refined our plans and have an exceptional trip planned. We will endeavor to make every day even more special and to take into account the specific desires of those who commit to travel with us. There are some things in China that change unexpectedly, including certain government regulations and transportation schedules. We are working closely with some good local Chinese travel specialists and expect that changes will only enhance the trip.

We have set the duration of the trip at 16 days away because several travelers have indicated that it will be difficult to take much more than two weeks. The suggested dates are tentative and can be adjusted. Let us know your preferences for travel dates, and particularly state which dates are NOT possible for you to travel.

The estimated cost is \$3500 per person including air from the West Coast, double occupancy with minimum of 10 travelers plus two leaders. The maximum group size will be 16 travelers plus leaders. Review the itinerary and return the trip form soon so that we can continue our planning and get back to you with a final itinerary and cost. Once the group members are identified and interests are refined, final arrangements will be made and a tour price set.

**Kim's World Travel** in Denver is our travel agency that will handle air travel and final land arrangements. Kim has a track record of searching out the best air fares, finding a reasonable hotel in Hong Kong, working with Chinese agents, and assisting travelers with their special concerns traveling in China. She has provided her expertise for many Fletcher trips.

Please complete the Trip Reservation and Planning Form and return it to me soon – even if you plan NOT to take the trip, so we will have a good idea of how to plan. We ask for a deposit of \$100 per person to hold your place. Feel free to ask any questions you may have, and thank you for your interest in this special tour.

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**Itinerary Revised Feb. 24, 2004**

**OCT**

- 13 Wed Depart west coast in the evening Overnight in cities  
14 Cross Dateline and lose a day listed at the right.
- 15 Fri Arrive Hong Kong in the morning and feel the rhythms of the Orient. A chance to rest and adjust your internal clock. Options to explore Hong Kong -- Star Ferry to Hong Kong Island, tram up Victoria Peak for a view, optional short hike around the summit. Welcome dinner included. Hong Kong
- 16 Sat A morning and early afternoon in Hong Kong to do some things you did not do yesterday. Fly to Guilin in late afternoon or early evening. Airline schedules will probably require that we buy our own evening meal as we go. Guilin
- 17 Sun Day in Guilin. Orientation talk on China and Chinese karst and the opportunity to explore Guilin and vicinity. Highlights can include Seven-Star Cave and Puto Hill, the classic type-example of a Chinese foot cave complex at Chuanshan Cave, Elephant Trunk Park, Folded Brocade Hill, and the shops, cafés, and restaurants in Guilin. A "welcome to the karst" dinner in the evening. Guilin
- 18 Mon Up early for breakfast and put our luggage on a truck to go to Yangshuo to wait for us while we board a boat for a trip through the most spectacular portion of the Li River karst. We will eat lunch on the cruise boat and have an English-speaking guide, reaching the dock at Yangshuo about 2 PM. *NOW*, in this small village on the banks of the Li River, you are surrounded by stunning Chinese tower karst! We check into our hotel and are reunited with our luggage. Outdoor cafés and local handicraft shops in Yangshuo offer rest and people watching. More ambitious activities (which can be postponed to tomorrow) include a visit to the local countryside with options to walk, bicycle, or sightsee from a minibus. Local attractions include karst, caves, Moon Hill, a giant and famous banyon tree, and more. Yangshuo
- 19 Tue In the morning our bus takes us to the rural fishing village of Xingping and Lotus Cave, or you may prefer to spend a leisurely day in Yangshuo or continue with some of the local options suggested yesterday. The unusual Lotus Basin formations in Lotus Cave are complex rimstone formations developed behind rimstone dams under variable pool conditions. More sight-seeing through the karst, with the option to bicycle back to town. Cormorant fishing with locals is an evening option. Yangshuo
- 20 Wed We will send our luggage ahead to Guilin and visit portions of the 12-km-long Guan Yan (Crown Cave) system. The stream flowing through the cave heads in non-soluble rocks to the east, drains 80km<sup>2</sup> and has formed a 4.5km<sup>2</sup> polje before it flows into two resurgence cave entrances. The discharge into the Li River at the commercial entrance to Crown Cave has a normal flow of over 4m<sup>3</sup>/sec. We will travel by private bus through Xingping and then over rural roads, winding between karst towers. If time permits, some of us will walk to the Nanxu arch, which towers over the polje, and visit the resurgences. The bus will take us around to the resurgence at the commercial cave entrance where we will take the cave tour or lounge on the banks of the Li. Lunch at the hotel at the cave. Our bus will then take us north to Guilin, where we will have an opportunity to sightsee, visit caves, and relax. Guilin

- 21 Thur A highlight will be a visit to the world-renown Karst Museum at the Institute of Karst Geology in Guilin, followed by lunch with special guests from the Museum. The afternoon affords time to visit more attractions around Guilin. Guilin
- 22 Fri Fly west to Guiyang in the morning. There we will be met by Prof. Xiong Kangning from Guizhou University. Prof. Xiong is a Chinese caver who speaks English, has attended NSS conventions in the USA, and is now chairman of the Univ. Geography Dept. The afternoon in Guiyang will help us learn about minority people of Guizhou Province. Visits may include the Provincial Museum, the University, and batik shops. The university has both a minority-studies program and a batik manufacturing facility. Prof. Xiong and other university staff will be our special guides. Guiyang
- 23 Sat Guided by Prof. Xiong, a bus will take us westward into the heart of the Longgong karst area. On the way we will go through Anshun and visit the Anshun batik workshop and village of Buyi nationality people. Entry to the Longgong Dong (Dragon Palace Cave) is by boat. This is the resurgence of a long and complex set of karst drainages through caves, poljes, and brief stretches of surface streams that we will have studied on the way. Local electric power is generated by a 36m fall below the resurgence lake. At the far end of the boat tour, it is possible to walk farther into decorated passages and to exit a dry entrance. You will have the option to walk back outside the cave through a small "stone forest" past the small rural hydroelectric plant, or ride back in the boat. Our hotel will be by Huangguoshu (Yellow Fruit Tree) Waterfall this evening. Huangguoshu
- 24 Sun Huangguoshu and Longgong karst area, continued. We will explore around this magnificent waterfall (the biggest in Asia by volume and 67-meters tall) and continue to be guided by Prof. Xiong through the SW Guizhou karst. Minority villages dominate the countryside. Huangguoshu
- 25 Mon We will continue in our private bus to Xingyi through more of SW Guizhou karstlands and minority villages. Visit Tianxing stone forest on the way. There will be several opportunities to meet the local people and get to learn their cultural ways through their textiles, personal stories and presentations. Xingyi
- 26 Tue We will spend a day in the Xingyi area, visiting the beautiful Maling River Gorge, surrounding karstlands and associated minority villages, and the Wanfeng Stone Forest before driving into Yunnan Province. Xingyi
- 27 Wed Bus to Lunan Stone Forest (Granddaddy of them all) east of Kunming. Here you will have an opportunity to lose yourself in the giant *karrenfelder* of the Stone Forest. Tonight a performance by the Sanyi people. Stone Forest
- 28 Thur Drive to Kunming. Visit Western Hills and an excellent provincial museum with displays of all 24 nationalities of this province. Tonight will be our Farewell Dinner in a traditional Yunnan restaurant. Kunming
- 29 Fri Fly home via Hong Kong or Shanghai

Recover your "lost" day by arriving across the dateline in the USA the same day you depart China.

Also options to visit the Yangtze Gorges or other major cities in China: Shanghai, Xian or Beijing and the Great Wall.

#### **TOUR INCLUDES:**

- Round-trip air fare from the west coast
- Hotel accommodations for 14 nights
- Welcome Banquet, Special Luncheon, and Farewell Dinner

- All but a few meals that we'll try on our own
- Admissions and costs for activities listed in the itinerary
- Chinese guides and local special guides at times
- Chartered buses and other transport for our group
- Special arrangements for cave visits and karst studies
- Karst Museum at the Institute of Karst Geology in Guilin
- Accompaniment of Prof. Xiong Kangning from Guizhou University
- Visits to market places and villages of minorities
- Performances by minority groups