



CHINA OR BUST

To: ...a Rookie's Guide to Living and
Surviving in China as an ESL Teacher

老外之中国游记

By: 柯兰 著 Lana Kerr

邱益鸿 译



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TESTIMONIALS

So many Australians head overseas to experience life in a "foreign country", or as we can say "get paid to travel" as an English teacher. Living and working in China is an extraordinary experience. Lana's account of her experiences in China reminds me of my tour of duty in the Middle Kingdom. Let's hope that "China or Bust", along with the very helpful information contained therein, encourages others to move out of their own comfort zone and experience China.

Lana has written her stories on her introduction to China telling it how it is, or how it was for her. China is an ever changing place—and full of adventures for us Westerners who visit—so much to see, so much to do, and so much to laugh about—mainly at ourselves!

... Di Hill. M.A. Author. Biographer. Former ESL teacher

Lana, your book is an absolute delight!!!! I could not put it down. It's witty, clever and full of insight. Thanks for letting me read it.

... Perry Sein, M.A., Education, Azusa Pacific University, California USA English Teacher: Suzhou University, Suzhou, China

Hold onto your hat! We are off on an adventure of China at it's very best. Lana and her husband, staid and bored, decide to take the plunge and head off to China to work as ESL teachers.

This book will guide you through the process of going to China to live. She covers subjects such as how to get a job, decide where to go, find accommodation, use the buses and trains, and the whole gastronomic process from the plate to the low Asian loos.

Written in a fast-paced hilarious style this book is a laugh a minute as we follow the author's experiences and challenges; both with day-to-day life and in the classroom. This book will help get you off your couch, out of your rut, and into an exciting life as an ESL teacher in China.

... Ricky Hunter. Author. Educator. Workshop Facilitator. www.rickyhunter.org

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INTRODUCTION

China, a land of contrasts, where the old Hutongs sit cheek by jowl with magnificent skyscrapers: China, whose name means “The Middle Kingdom”, the third largest country in the world in area, housing one fifth of the world’s population: China, a nation proud of its long history, but forging ahead in modernity, where the world depends on its burgeoning economy. China, a land of mystery, mountains, and perceptions of old men with goatee beards fishing with bamboo poles.

Have you ever been to China, or had a hankering to visit? Many of us might dismiss the thought as a result of erroneous notions or viewpoints based on a lack of knowledge. Has a biased Western upbringing influenced your thinking?

Many people have a distorted view of China, perhaps due to the fact that it was a closed society for so many years. But its move into the 20th and 21st Century is nothing less than astounding, progressing from the feudal systems of old to today’s communist based society, but one with an eye to becoming accepted as a contemporary nation, dependant on trade from the West. With its strong economic base it is ready and able to play its part in international affairs.

It is also a nation struggling to retain its old heritage, while at the same time being influenced by its close neighbours such as Russia, Japan and Korea. More importantly, it is trying to balance the former cultural lifestyle with the very powerful influences permeating from the West.

引言

中国是个融合古今、特色鲜明的国度，在这里，古老沧桑的胡同和宏伟高大的摩天大楼比肩而立。中国，顾名思义，乃“中央王国”之意，她坐拥世界第三大面积的国土，养育世界五分之一的人口。中国，虽历史悠久，却能在现代化进程中锐意进取，她蓬勃发展的经济助推着整个世界经济前进的脚步。中国是个神秘的国度。这里，青山连绵，群山起伏；这里，古时的长须老者曾手执竹竿、溪边垂钓，他们的见识隽永智慧，历久弥新。

您可曾到过中国，又可曾想去中国看看？也许，很多人因为对她了解不够，心存误解，打了退堂鼓。是不是生长在西方，让您对这个国度有了偏见？

或许是因为她一度闭关锁国，不少人看不到她的真面目。但是，20世纪和21世纪的中国，她的发展速度着实令世界震撼：她从过去的封建制度进步为现在的社会主义社会，并立足将自己打造为一个被世界认可的现代国家，与西方贸易往来密切频繁。中国，凭借自己强大的经济实力，将来一定能在国际事务中大展拳脚。

如今的中国一方面正竭力保留自己历史悠久的文化遗产，另一方面却又深受近邻俄罗斯、日本和韩国的影响。值得一提的是，她正尽力在传统的文化和生活方式，与西方国家强劲文化渗透之间，找到平衡。

毋庸置疑，中国是一个令人赞叹的国家。这里，世界一流的建筑水平，令百层玻



In reality, this is a most amazing country, where state-of-the-art architecture produces one hundred story glass towers. A land where The Great Wall perilously rides the backs of remote mountain ranges, reminding us that even ancient China had men of great vision. A country of such diversity, that every day life is exciting. A place I consider my second home.

My name is Lana Kerr and my husband Peter and I, an unworldly-wise couple in our late fifties, decided to rejuvenate our boring life and do something completely different. We went to China to teach English. It became one of Dr Phil's "life changing experiences".

I write this book with two goals in mind. Firstly, to entertain you, to recount stories of our first year in China, about the people and places, our experiences, hilarious and otherwise, our travels and teaching work. To also dispel some of the old myths that everyone lives in shanty towns or that it is a place that hasn't caught up with the times yet.

Secondly, if you decide to go there to work for a time as a teacher or in some other occupation, this book gives you much of the information you need to get a job, settle in, use the extensive transport systems, access health care and all the day to day matters you will face in a country where you can't read or speak the language and most of the people you'll meet can't speak English. It's a challenge like no other, but you'll have the time of your life.

So what led us to even consider such a move? To leave our comfort zone, our family and friends and head off into the unknown?

It was an information evening we had just attended about TESOL (Teaching English as a Second Language). The speaker, Lesley, was from one of the accredited organizations that would train us. Once we gained our TESOL qualifications, we could apply for vacancies.

Lesley was a very interesting woman, about 60 years old with a petite figure, red curly hair, dressed in a snazzy denim pants suit covered in an eye catching rhinestone pattern. She was a psychologist who'd worked in Asia and got into teaching English because of the poor English levels of her local staff. She progressed into the teaching area and was now in charge of training in Australia and New Zealand. She sat on the corner

玻璃幕墙摩天大楼矗立云间；这里，万里长城盘踞于绵延群山之间，提醒我们，古时候的中国人民便已这般具有远见。中国，是如此丰富多彩，这里的每一天都令人振奋；这里，便是我心中的第二故乡。

我叫柯兰，澳大利亚人，和丈夫彼得两个老顽童，在年近六十的时候，不甘寂寞，决定再年轻一回，走出枯燥的生活，换一种全新的活法。我们来到中国教授英语。此行成了美国名嘴菲尔博士所说的“改变人生的经历”。

我写此书有两个目的：一是为愉悦读者。本书既记录了我们夫妻俩来华第一年的遭遇，又有我们在华生活期间发生的趣闻轶事，还有我们的旅游见闻和教学故事；同时也为消除人们对中国的偏见，因为直至今日，仍有人误以为中国百姓大都生活在穷乡僻壤，把她看成一个跟不上时代潮流的落后国家。

二是为有意去中国工作的老外提供生活指南，告诉他们如何在语言不通且人生地不熟的中国求职安家、出行旅游以及求医问诊。

中国之行绝对是一大挑战，但你的人生也将因此而别样精彩。

那么是什么原因让我俩想到离开温暖的家园，告别亲朋好友，漂洋过海到陌生的中国？

那就要追溯到我俩参加的一场 TESOL（对外英语教学）介绍会了。那天的主讲人叫莱丝丽，是一家有资格认证的正规机构的主管，她将负责培训我们。只要我们取得 TESOL 资格证，就可以申请国外教职。

莱丝丽是个很有趣的女士，大约六十来岁，长得小巧玲珑，一头红色卷发，身穿一套时尚的粗棉套装，服装上的水晶石图案格外引人注目。她是个心理学家，曾在亚洲工作过，因当地员工的英语水平太差而走上英语教学之路。她在教学圈内渐渐有了名气，如今负责澳大利亚和新西兰两国的培训工作。莱丝丽坐在桌角一侧，双腿不停晃动，声音低沉沙哑，兴致勃勃地给我俩讲述在国外教书的趣事。

“小事一桩，”她说，“只要你会讲英语，就教得来。就是现在不会，等学完我们的课程也就学会了。工作机会多得要命。你们呢，既可以赚点钱，又可以大开眼界。”



of the table, legs swinging, her gravelly voice enthusiastically giving us fascinating information about teaching English overseas.

"It's a piece of cake," she said. "If you can speak English you can teach it, or you'll be able to once you've done our course. There are thousands of jobs available. You can make some money and have the experience of a lifetime."

Peter came with me to make sure that this information evening wasn't a scam. "Let's face it, there are plenty of people out there willing to take any ready cash you've got, or any cash you haven't got for that matter," he said to me. "Let's just check it out. It sounds a bit suspicious to me."

I didn't mind. After all, if it turned out to be worthwhile, we could both do this, so I wanted him to come along and see for himself.

It seemed legitimate and so exciting. For me, it meant an escape from a life in a ten-foot-rut. I would take the bull by the horns and bloody well go, come hell or high water.

If you are in your "middle age years" you may be like me. My childhood and teen years were typical of a child in the fifties and sixties. The second twenty years were spent getting married, having five fabulous children, doing everything for them, and working part time. The third twenty years were spent in and out of boredom and mild depression. By the time I was in my fifties the family was old enough for us to leave New Zealand and head to Australia without them, to do something different. The thing is, that they followed us. That wasn't such a bad thing, because we were still all together, and then at short notice we inherited my elderly mother to care for, but we hadn't done anything "exciting and different".

Before I left New Zealand I worked full time in a large Government office and loved my work as Personal Assistant to a wonderful man. I had full control of the office, and it ran like clockwork. In Australia, again I worked in a Government Department. But this was different. This was a well-oiled machine, and I was the bottom cog. This position was exceedingly stressful, dealing with queues of customers all day. Everything was regimented. There was ten minutes for your break, not more and not less. The girls in the office were lovely, but I felt smothered. There was no room for putting your own stamp on the job; and I was used to being a bit of a leader and not a follower at the very rear.

彼得跟着我过来，就是想弄清楚介绍会是不是骗人的。他对我说：“那些人不是就想骗你的口袋里的钱吗，可别钱没挣到，反而赔了本。咱们去摸摸底，我总觉得这事儿有点玄乎。”

我没把他的话放在心上。要是介绍会真管用，我俩不是都可以试试嘛，所以我拉上彼得，让他自己瞧瞧究竟。

似乎是正规组织，听介绍很让人兴奋。我呢，可以借此机会逃离一成不变的生活。管它前面是刀山还是火海，我都决定义无反顾了。

要是你和我年纪相仿，已经过了中年，可能经历与我大抵相同。童年和青少年时期的我跟20世纪五六十年代的小孩差不多。第二个二十年，又忙着结婚，拉扯五个孩子，为他们忙前忙后，还要做兼职挣钱。第三个二十年乏善可陈，日子过得无聊而沉闷。等我到了五十多岁的时候，孩子们已经长大了，我们老两口总算可以不管他们，离开新西兰去澳大利亚过不一样的生活。没想到，孩子们一个接着一个地尾随而来。这倒也不算什么坏事，因为一家人又团聚了。紧接着，又轮到我那年迈的母亲需要我照顾，所以一直无缘过上那种令人激动的“不一样的生活”。

我在新西兰时，在一个政府大机关工作，是一个很有作为的官员的私人助理，我很喜欢这份工作，管理整个办公室得心应手，事事顺利。后来在澳大利亚，我也是在一个政府部门工作，但情况却大不一样。比方说吧，我工作的部门是一台上好油的机器，我就是机器上最末尾的齿轮。这个职位压力真的超大，每天要和一长排一长排的客户打交道。所有事情都有严格的时间规定。休息十分钟就十分钟。我们部门的姑娘们倒是很不错，可我总觉得心里不舒服。在那里我压根儿没有说话的份儿，而我以前大小是个官儿，没当过最底层受人指挥的小角色。

所以，我换了份工作，不过是才出虎口又进了狼窝。新老板的脾气倒还凑合，不算太坏，麻烦的是他老婆也在里面工作。这个愚蠢的金发女郎，大部分时间不是在忙家务，就是上美容院去了，剩下的时间才会坐在办公桌前记记账，就这么点小事每天都要出状况，偶尔也会跑跑市场。