



During my vacation last May, I had a hard time choosing a tour. Flights to Japan, Hong Kong and Australia are just too common. What I wanted was somewhere exciting and exotic, a place where I could be spared from the holiday tour crowds. I was so happy when John called up, suggesting a trip to Cherokee, a county in the state of Oklahoma. I agreed and went off with the preparation immediately.

We took a flight to Cherokee and visited a town called Qualla Boundary surrounded by magnificent mountain scenery, the town painted a paradise before us. With its Oconaluftee Indian Village reproducing tribal crafts and lifestyles of the 18th century and the outdoor historical pageant Unto These Hills playing six times weekly in the summer nights, Qualla Boundary tries to present a brief image of the Cherokee past to the tourists. Despite the language barrier, we managed to find our way to the souvenir shops with the help of the natives. The shops were filled with rubber tomahawks and colorful traditional war bonnets, made of dyed turkey feathers. Tepees, cone shaped tents made from animal skin, were also pitched near the shops. "Welcome! Want to get anything?" We looked up and saw a middle-aged man smiling at us. We were very surprised by his fluent English. He introduced himself as George and we ended up chatting till lunch time when he invited us for lunch at a nearby coffee shop. "Sometimes, I've to work from morning to sunset during the tour season. Anyway, this is still better off than being a woodcutter ..." Remembrance weighed heavy on George's mind and he went on to tell us that he used to cut firewood for a living but could hardly make ends meet. We learnt from him that the Cherokees do not depend solely on trade for survival. During the tour off-peak period, the tribe would have to try out other means for income. One of the successful ways is the "Bingo Weekend". On the Friday afternoons of the Bingo weekends, a large bingo hall was opened, attracting huge crowds of people to the various kinds of games like the Super Jackpot and the Warrior Game Special. According to George, these forms of entertainment fetch them great returns. Our final stop in Qualla Boundary was at the museum where arts, ranging from the simple hand-woven oak baskets to wood and stone carvings of wolves, ravens and other symbols of Cherokee cosmology are displayed. Back at home, I really missed the place and I would of course look forward to the next trip to another exotic place.

CHEROKEE: ABOVE EVERY VACATION VISIT

John and I decided to go on a trip to Cherokee during our vacation. There, we visited the Oconaluftee Indian village, located in the heavenly place "Oval's Boundary". That place brought us back to the 18th Century as it recreated the tribal crafts and lifestyles of that time. Along with this, there were different shops abounding with items made of dyed turkey feathers. and nearby were tapes, cone-shaped benches. A man named George, invited us at lunch and shared the living and also standards of the Cherokee people, giving his example of cutting firewood for a living and also having to work day and night during the tourist season. They do not rely solely on trade, they have to do extra work to make ends meet. On Bingo weekend different types of entertainment activities are played, this brings profit to them. We ended our journey by visiting a historical museum filled with aesthetically pleasing art and Cherokee cosmology.