

Shanghai Journal 10-16-16

Xiaowu Hao, Nimen, (Good afternoon, Everybody),

Since my last journal I have received several photos of what we missed when we had to turn back from Everest on our Tibet trip. Very nice of our travel mates to send us these so we can enjoy it vicariously. Milos said it was hard going with constant headache, sleeplessness and cold temperatures, so I think we did the right thing, but...still hard not to have regrets.



We are both feeling better after shaking the cold we got on the trip home from Tibet and are now back into our routines. Chinese classes are still kicking my butt. I think I've learned something but then I get into a real situation where I should be able to say something intelligible and I can't remember any of the words and phrases. So frustrating! Let's see how much I can internalize in my last two weeks.

Rodrigo got tickets for the Shanghai Men's Open this past week so we went for the day. It was really fantastic! We saw the top two seeded players: Djokovic (#1) v. Pospisil (#17); Murray (#2) v. Pouille (#16). We also saw Tsonga (#13) v. Zverev (#21), and a doubles match with Brazilian Marcelo Melo (#1 in men's doubles) - four great matches. We had terrific seats because it was not that crowded so we were able to move closer to the court. This would never happen at the US Open or Wimbledon where you have to pay a fortune to get such seats, so we felt incredibly lucky. It was also fun to see up and comers like Pospisil and Zverev play. Bodes well for tennis in the future.



Last night we went to a new Indian restaurant in Puxi called Vedas. It turned out to be quite good and everyone enjoyed it. Here is Ravi with Leo from Brazil, Pablo from Argentina, Melissa, Rodrigo and Rodrigo's friend from Rio. I'm taking the photo. Next to them is a new building I saw in Puxi the other day that looks like it is made from bamboo (or organ pipes). I couldn't see a sign that said what the building will house when it is completed, but I thought it was pretty spectacular.



Today Ravi and I walked to the river and took the ferry across to Puxi. We can use our metro cards and it only costs 2 kuai (about 30 cents!) Great views of the skyline from the ferry and we discovered an area on the other side we hadn't seen before called Cool Docks. It is still being developed but there are going to be trendy apartments and art galleries, some not so trendy places to eat (New York Pizza and Bubba's Texas BBQ), fancy riverboats, even a fake beach where people can play volleyball. Rodrigo went there one day to play but was disappointed. I guess if you grow up in Rio, a fake beach doesn't do the trick!





We walked all the way up the Bund to the tip. I never get tired of looking at the buildings and people who are always out in force enjoying the weather, and I always see something I never noticed before, like this sign about the Opium Commission. We followed the crowd and took a selfie, but at least we haven't succumbed to the ubiquitous selfie-stick (yet!).



We sat for a while, and a man came up to Ravi and asked where we were from. While I was still trying to decipher a single word he said, Ravi understood and carried on a short conversation in Mandarin. Very impressive!

We just got the news that we will not be staying in Grand Pujian next year. The hotel has been sold and is being refurbished in the spring to sell as apartments. A one-bedroom apartment here is going for a million dollars and some have already been sold! The people who have to move out of here in January are a little freaked out because NYU-Shanghai has not yet found an alternative place for them. The one residence that has been floated is nice but very far away. We'll see what works out. Since we only have one more semester here, we'll be fine with whatever they find for us – but it might mean we won't have the extra bedroom we've had for visitors thus far.

This Thursday and Friday we are going to Hangzhou to celebrate our birthdays. I'll try to get one more journal in about that before I leave for New York on October 28. I also just want to say that these journals focus on the high points. They don't convey the loneliness and frustration I sometimes feel when Ravi is gone for the day and I'm on my own, or have to go three places to get together whatever we are making for dinner. So it has been really important and wonderful to hear from you all. Whenever I get an email it makes my day, and Face Time visits with Seth and Kristyn, Rama, and Dipti, Dennis and Sumita have been a real treat. Thank you all!

Zaijian, Lee

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