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It has been raining non-stop and cold for the past three days so we have pretty much hunkered down at the apartment or in Ravi's office. We did have a Chinese class on Thursday evening – the first one since the New Year break. Our instructor is lovely and patient, but starting to really crank up the pace! I'm sorry I only have two more classes. I have so much to learn!



On Friday it was so dreary we stayed in the apartment to work. At midday we walked over to the place where I had my foot massage and opted for full body massages - side by side in the same room. They gave us these silk pajamas to put on with tops and short pants. Both the masseuses were men. They spent quite a long time on the skull and forehead and it was sometimes painful. This was definitely not a new age massage with scented oils and soft music. None of that! But, I felt amazingly well at the end of it and I think Ravi did too. Both of us, for an 80-minute massage, paid less than 300 yuan – less than \$50!

On Saturday we braved the rain to go out for lunch. We stopped to get bread and olive oil at a shopping center on Nanjing Road. We have discovered that the place to find supermarkets is in the basement of shopping malls. This one is very upscale (as are most of the stores on Nanjing Rd). When we entered the lobby we encountered a huge display dedicated to Monopoly – the Uber capitalist game! There were game boards set up all around the lobby with an emcee and microphone, and costumed young women in top hats to lead the games. It was really jarring to see groups of mostly young girls playing monopoly surrounded by intent adult watchers. Diane told me about an article in the NYT magazine about the radical origins of Monopoly, before it was sold to Parker Brothers. Apparently, the game was created by a young woman who was a free thinker and anti-capitalist. Definitely not the version we witnessed today. Chairman Mao must be turning in his grave.



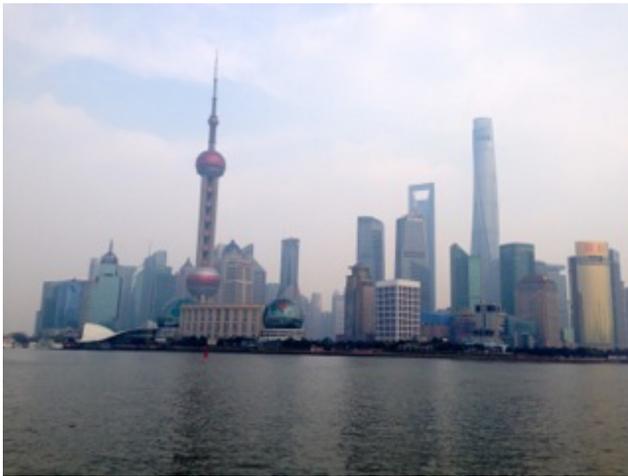
Yesterday we went shopping for gifts at Yuyuan Gardens. It was full of people out for a Sunday stroll and enjoying the first sunny day in awhile. Below is a shop with women making dumplings in the window. The “Millions of Gourmet” sign is typical of the hyperbole on signs (everything is the biggest, best, most). I find the adaptations of English endearing.



The whole area is full of buildings in the old style - very attractive. We had lunch at the purportedly “oldest vegetarian restaurant in Shanghai.” We had read that we should go

upstairs where the English menu is available so we did that. We selected noodle soups and dumplings from the menu but the waiter told us we could only get them downstairs. I pointed to the table across from us where they were eating noodle soup and dumplings but he insisted we could not order them. Perhaps we had to go downstairs and then bring them upstairs but I didn't see others doing so. Very confusing. The place was very crowded so we went ahead and ordered from our allowed menu but it turned out not to be very good. We should have gone downstairs to order I guess, or maybe we wouldn't have liked the noodles and dumplings either.

We went back to walk along the Bund during the daytime, and though hazy, had lovely views of the river. Shanghai really is a beautiful city and I will miss it.



Now back to work – getting ready for another editors' meeting on the book tomorrow morning. In the evening I'm screening my film at NYU-Shanghai. Looking forward to that. Can't believe I'm leaving a week from today. Seems like I just got here. Time has really flown by. I look forward to seeing my friends back in NY though, and I'm praying that the temperature goes up a little before I return!

Sai Jian, Lee

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