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Zhong Wu Hao (good afternoon),

The past two weeks here have been fairly uneventful. I started working with Ravi's Mandarin tutor, Sherry. We meet twice a week for two hours and then I have a couple hours of homework after each session. So challenging – hao xinku!! I hope I'll be able to order in a restaurant (fandian) before I leave. We'll see. (Also, please note these words aren't correct without the tone marks that my computer can't make. Apologies (duibuqi) to Chinese friends).

Last weekend we went out to dinner with Rodrigo and Melissa from Rio. He teaches in international business and they will be in Shanghai for 12 years! We went to a Yunnan restaurant called Lost Heaven that was recommended by Amitav Ghosh's wife when we met them last week in the lobby as they were heading there for dinner. It is in the Bund area and very classy looking. Here is a description from the website, "The concept and design behind the restaurant Lost Heaven is drawn from artistic and cultural elements of minority tribes in Yunnan. The original patterns, handiwork, and embroideries of Tibetan, Yi, Na Xi, Dai, Miao, and Yao tribes are visible in every corner of the restaurant." From what I've read, the people from these groups are treated in a stereotypic and paternalistic way by the majority Han Chinese - more about this later.



I must say the food was really delicious! We had appetizers of egg rolls and pancakes with herbs and a zingy sauce to go with that were very tasty. Rodrigo and I shared fish cooked in banana leaf with a pesto like paste but very different flavor. Exquisite! Ravi had an eggplant dish that was also really exceptional and a very spicy green bean dish that no one else could handle. Melissa's chicken dish that took 45 minutes to prepare turned out, she said, not to be that special.



Lost Heaven has a rooftop bar with a great view of the buildings in Lujiazui across the river. We went up to have a look but did not stay. Sorry the photos are dark. Behind Ravi is the Shanghai Tower, the second tallest building in the world. The observation deck just opened up and we plan to go up there on one of these clear days.



Walking along the Bund was lovely since it was a warm, clear night with a full moon. Fall is definitely the better semester to be here. The weather is really nice and the air quality is much, much better than spring. We had been used to walking on the Bund when it was cold and cloudy so this was a welcome change.



I've been reading *The Emperor Far Away* by David Eimer about his travels among the minority groups in China who he says regard Beijing as an imperial power occupying their traditional homelands, none more so than the Uighurs and Tibetans who outwardly resist Chinese domination. These groups are viewed as problems that need to be controlled and there is a strong security presence in both areas. The peoples of Yunnan are treated as "model minorities" and not seen as the threat that Uighurs and Tibetans are. Their resistance seems to be more passive in the sense that they go along to get along, but their self-identification is more ethnic than national. Eimer writes, "The fact that they are Chinese citizens is almost an irrelevance." It's an interesting book and I feel just scratches the surface of very complicated, thousands year old relationships. We are looking forward to our trip to Tibet, leaving a week from today.

Yesterday I went to the Aurora Museum with Ana from Argentina. She and her husband Leo (from Minas area of Brazil) have two daughters, Brena 3 and Tais 5 who are multilingual (Spanish, Portugese, English) and picking up Chinese rapidly. I'm envious of the ease with which they go back and forth from one language to another. I watched a little French girl, Alma who is also 3, playing with Brena. I asked Ana what language they play in since French is not (yet) one of Brena's languages - and Ana said they seem to make up language as they go! Anyway, I had a lovely time with Ana at the museum and she loved it as much as I do. I think my favorite part is the first floor with clay figures from the Tang Dynasty 618-907 CE). I love the expressiveness of the faces.



I can't end without saying something about what is going on back home right now. At lunch with some of Ravi's European colleagues the other day, they were talking about the recent explosions in New York and the links to terror. I said, we have another kind of terrorism in the U.S. and I'm more worried about that. I'm anguished and outraged at yet more killing of unarmed black men by police. What will it take to stop this insanity? I have to believe this is a moment of danger and opportunity. We have the opportunity to finally address the racism at the core of our nation since the injustice is so evident for all to see – might it be a moment of awakening and finally action to make real the rhetoric of a democracy that claims to affirm the rights of all? If not, the danger is all too evident in the divisiveness, jingoism and racism of the Republican candidate. We all need to be talking about this with every person we meet, especially people outside of our regulars. Every single one of us has an important role to play in promoting thoughtful conversation with others about this matter.



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