

Shanghai Journal 9-9-16

Zaoshang Hao from Shanghai:

We've been back in Shanghai for over three weeks. We've been so busy time has flown by. We arrived August 24 late at night and the next morning our guest, Anna Landim, arrived from Australia. Anna is the daughter of friends of ours in Rio and she is spending a year abroad at an Australian university. We've known her since she was a baby and now she is a grown up 23 year old! Going around Shanghai and environs with Anna was actually good for me – it got me out and moving every day in the sunshine and I think helped me get over jetlag more quickly. Fortunately, it was also a week of good weather – sunny, not too humid, and good air quality.

I've been posting photos on Face Book, but for those of you who don't indulge, here they are. Our first day out we went to some of the iconic places along the waterfront on the Pudong side of the river.



On the weekend, we went to People's Park where we saw the people advertising on umbrellas for marriage partners, then past the opera and on to the Shanghai Museum where the lines were impossibly long.



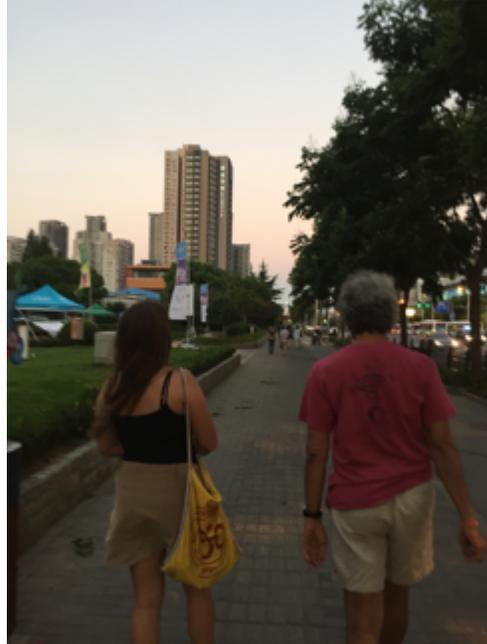
So Ravi went back home to get ready for classes and Anna and I, (and a young woman from NYC we picked up along the way) went to the Municipal Museum – one of my favorite places in Shanghai. I love the room-size diorama that shows so well the enormity of this city that just keeps growing – population now about 25 million. The display shows the river that bisects the two parts of Shanghai – Pudong and Puxi. Lit up on either side of the river are all the tall buildings and what is left of old Shanghai. The expanding city stretches out as far as the eye can see. To imagine the pace of growth – Pudong, which is inside the curve of the river at the top of the photo, was open countryside only 30 years ago!



After the museum, we went to Yang's for delicious dumplings! They have a crab/crawfish dumpling that is to die for. Anna ate at Yang's several times while she was here (there are several branches around the city) and I joined her whenever I could since Ravi can't eat there – only fish and pork available.



Of course, we have also gone back to our favorite restaurants – Vegetarian Lifestyle and You (pronounced Yew-oo – there should be a mark over the o). You is famous for its oat noodles and homemade yogurt eaten with honey, which Kathy and Liz will remember fondly. The young women below are rolling the noodles while a little girl watches in fascination. You is down the street from our residence so very convenient. You can see Grand Pujian in the distance as we walk back after dinner (we are on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor and have good views of the little park behind us and of the tall buildings downtown in the distance.)



Early the next week we took the train to Suzhou for the day. The gardens look very different than they did when we were there in the spring. Giant lilies and lily pads are in profusion, where in the spring were clear reflecting ponds. I think the spring was more beautiful. (Ravi disagrees). We saw three gardens – the Humble Administrator’s Garden, the Lion’s Garden and the Couple’s Retreat (the latter was under construction so couldn’t see all of it.)



It was very hot and walking in the sun was really draining, so we took an earlier train back to Shanghai, but had to sit on the floor because the seats were sold out.



On Anna's last day, we went up in Pearl Tower since it was a clear day for a great view. I finally got up the nerve to go out on the see-through floor – a popular spot for photos. It is scary though, to look down from that height.



Actually, the reason we had that day together was that Anna missed her flight the night before, because she thought it left at 1:30 in the afternoon rather than 1:30 the night before! She was able to get the same flight that evening so it all worked out.

Since then, Ravi has been busy teaching and meeting with his research colleagues and I've been busy working on a presentation on implicit bias that I did for the NYU-Shanghai faculty this past Monday. I've been asked to do a follow up workshop with the Humanities and Social Science faculty. It's really interesting to think about how implicit bias operates in different cultural contexts, and then what happens when there are so many cultures interacting in one environment. Of course, American media, with all of its sexist/racist images, is ubiquitous around the globe and has its own impact. I look forward to learning more.

We enjoyed two talks by visiting writers this week: by Amitav Ghosh on his book, *In an Antique Land*, about living in Cairo in the 1970s, and then a panel with him and Gish Gen on writing. I really enjoyed his talk about Cairo and want to read it. We just ran into to him and his wife who are staying here for a few days and had a nice conversation about restaurants to try in Shanghai. They've been here several weeks traveling to Beijing, Chengdu and other cities.

We started Chinese classes with a tutor Ravi worked with last year. We each see her for two hours twice a week. She is very good and I am somewhat hopeful I will learn more this year. Ravi certainly learned a lot working with her last year.

The familiarity of having been here twice before is lovely. In fact, we are in our exact same apartment as last year. Seeing familiar faces of staff and other faculty is also nice. Last weekend we went to a birthday party for Leo, one of Ravi's colleagues in math, and that was a lot of fun, with people we knew before and some new faces as well. Conversations in French, English, Portuguese – lucky for us though mostly English. The staff in our building is so friendly and helpful. The Mid-Autumn Festival is coming up next week and they gave boxes of moon cakes (traditional for this holiday) to every apartment. Isn't that sweet?

The people at the massage place were very friendly and welcomed us back. We went for a massage with Anna before she left and she was in heaven. I was actually in pain for a lot of it (Judy can appreciate this). I guess I was really tight after the 16-hour flight and a week of walking all over Shanghai and Suzhou. This afternoon we went for a second massage. This time it was much more relaxing and only a little bit painful. I feel great now. It's so funny trying to communicate – they are trying to learn English and we are trying to learn Chinese - and neither of us knows enough to get through a conversation. But we have fun trying!

That's all for now. Hope you are all doing well and enjoying the beginning of fall weather back home. While we get a little bit about the election here, and read the Times every day, it is gratefully easy to tune it out. Please write when you can. We love hearing from you!

Zaijian, Lee

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