

Shanghai Journal 9-7-17

Ni Hao, Friends and Family,

This is the first installment of my Shanghai journal for Fall 2017. If you do not wish to receive it, please let me know and I'll remove your name from the list. No hard feelings, truly! If you are interested in journals from the three previous trips, you can click on the link below my email signature (leeannebell.org) where you can find them all.

Ravi and I have been back in Shanghai for a week for our final semester here. This time we are in a different residence (Lanson Place) after three times in Grand Pujian, now turned into condos and no longer available to NYU-Shanghai. I am missing the familiarity and, more importantly, central location of the old place. It feels like we have moved from inner Brooklyn to outer Queens! While there were two other options that were somewhat closer, we chose this residence because the others would have required us to supply everything - linens, towels, kitchen supplies, etc. - and I wasn't willing to do all that for one semester. I think those residences are only useful for faculty who will be here for a longer period.

Lanson Place provides everything including housekeeping three times a week and breakfast five days a week in the dining area downstairs, including congee, miso soup, cereal, bread, cheese, hard-boiled eggs, meat, pastries, fruit, and juices. We have eaten there a few times and it is not bad. It's nice to have that option.

The first few days in the apartment were complicated however. We had opted for a two-bedroom apartment since we have company coming to visit and wanted them to be able to stay with us. Though the apartment had two bedrooms and two bathrooms, it was very small. The tiny kitchen had no space to cook and the living room had one uncomfortable couch and one chair where a max of three people could sit. We were told that a bigger two-bedroom might become available if the current tenant did not renew their lease, and were willing to pay the extra \$500 a month, but unfortunately, that didn't work out. So yesterday, I packed up and moved all our stuff to a one-bedroom plus study that is more spacious and has a much better kitchen. While there is only one bathroom, the study has a pullout couch that will be fine for our friend Linda when her wife Marcella is away consulting, but may not be comfortable enough for both of them when they are together. This will also be a problem for Livio and Carla who are visiting from Rome. We are exploring alternatives. It may be that visitors would prefer to stay closer to the center anyway, and avoid the long metro ride from here.

For myself, this apartment is much better since it has lots of light and space to work, a comfortable living room with plenty of seating, and an amazing amount of storage, far more than the other place. Below is a photo of our kitchen and shots of the living room and the cute little study.





The metro stop is at the end of our street (Line 6) and goes straight to the university, taking about 45 minutes. Also, Lanson Place provides a shuttle from here to university and back, twice in the morning and twice in the evening. We took it the other day and it beats the metro at those busy times because you are guaranteed a seat! At off-peak times the metro is fine.

There is a supermarket just beyond the metro station called Auchan, a French chain. It is kind of like K-mart in that it has both groceries and all kinds of other household items. Even better, in the other direction is a wholesale vegetable market and next door a fruit market. The veggies we have gotten there so far have been great.



Right across the street from our residence is a foot massage place! I feel allegiance to Happy Feet, our old place, but I will check this one out at some point. It is certainly convenient. There is also a small shopping mall with several little restaurants. Ravi and I tried one the other day for lunch that had a few vegetarian dishes and they were pretty good. Of course, not as good as Vegetarian Lifestyle, our favorite – but that happens to be on line 6 – so it is a straight shot from here.

Lanson Place has a small gym with two stationary bikes, one elliptical and three treadmills, as well as weights and some machines. My knees are still giving me problems so I've been riding the bike every day and stretching a lot. Once our health insurance kicks in I'll see a doctor about it. I'd like to try acupuncture and see if that helps.

The Lanson Place staff is very helpful and friendly. They are hosting a barbeque on Saturday and it will be nice to meet the other residents. We have already met a few. I went with Ravi to the university to get my Chinese phone set up and it was wonderful to see people we know from past years. We look forward to getting together with them. When we saw Rodrigo, the first thing he said is "Are we going to the Shanghai Open this year?" I said, "Of course!" That was a real treat last year. Great tennis and great seats close to the action.

I think this will be a good place to work. I set myself up today for that and will start in tomorrow. I have two projects: a second edition of my book, *Storytelling for Social Justice* and my consulting work with a health equity project in D.C. I may not be going around as much as before until our company arrives. But we are going to Kyoto the first week in October and I'll send photos of that trip.

Hope all of you are well. It is heartbreaking to read about DACA, the Houston flood and other challenges back home. So many important battles to fight, but I'm inspired by the response and persistence of so many. I have to admit it's a bit of a relief to be somewhat away from the ongoing insanity in Washington. I've been reading the Chinese papers about North Korea. It is all pretty scary. It's also been interesting to read about BRICS and to see China step in where Obama was trying to go with TPP. That will end up being a big loss for the U.S. I think.

Please write if you are inclined. It is always such a treat to get notes from home!

Zaijian, Lee