

Shanghai Journal  
11-3-17

Ni Hao Pengyou,

In the last journal, I was getting ready for an MRI. The orthopedist explained the film which showed liquid around my knee and said there is a small cyst behind the knee where water has accumulated. At some point that may need to be removed but he said it is not a problem right now. He stuck a long needle in my knee, drew out the fluid and put in cortisone and some antibiotic – and I feel much, much better! He also gave me a brace that I wore for a couple of days but apparently was wearing it upside down and backward! No wonder it was so uncomfortable! I got another lesson on how to put it on and now I'm to wear it for 4-6 weeks and will see doctor again a week from Monday for a check up.

The doctor also showed us (Linda was with me) photos from his phone of a recent knee replacement surgery. I can't believe I watched it given how squeamish I am, but I'm glad I did. I had imagined they replace the whole knee but it seems to be less invasive than that. Basically, they remove damaged cartilage and put two small metal pieces above and below the patella. It was kind of fascinating, though I hope I don't have to have that done anytime soon.

On the day they got back from Xian, Linda, Marcella and I went to Pearl Tower and then met Ravi for dinner at Lost Heaven.



After dinner, Marcella took off for her consulting gig and I stayed with Linda at their hotel so we could get an early start on our train trip to Hangzhou the next day. Ravi and I have been to Hangzhou twice, but for the first time the sun was shining! In fact it was a gorgeous day and it seemed everyone was out walking around the lake and hanging out in the parks - dancing, singing opera and playing cards. They all seemed to be enjoying themselves and the cloudless day.



People are really into dancing - line dancing, waltzes, Western, tango - and there are many very good dancers. Linda joined in the dancing with gusto while I took photos and video. I would have joined but still taking care of my knee. I sat with other spectators and we smiled at each other a lot!





On the return from Hangzhou, we picked up her luggage from the hotel and Linda moved to our apartment until Marcella's return. The next few days we had leisurely strolls around our neighborhood and different parts of Shanghai, and just generally hung out. One day we walked around the former French Concession and came

across a store/museum of traditional block print designs at the end of a shikumen alley I had never seen before. I bought one of these jackets last year and was happy to come across the place that makes these beautiful designs. There were long yards of dyed cloth drying in the sun in front of the place and I wish I had taken a photo.



On another gorgeous day, we took a ferry ride from Pudong over to the Bund (for the price of a metro fare!)





This month is hairy crab season in Shanghai, a delicacy to which poems have been written over the centuries. Linda treated me to a hairy crab lunch and it was quite a feast of crab cooked in multiple ways – with asparagus, with tofu, in shark fin soup and as below with a ginger dipping sauce. Fortunately, our waiter was willing to prepare it for us. We watched a video about how to do it but really, I think I would have made a mess of it!



The next day, I treated Linda to Yang's Dumplings, my favorite! She loved them too, as have all the other visitors I've taken there (I can picture you drooling Kathy, Liz, Fabio, Anna). Truthfully, the dumplings are as yummy as the crab, and for a lot less money and effort



On another day, we tried out the sauna and whirlpool in the residence and got a massage and facial in the neighborhood. Sounds so decadent, but truly so affordable out in the boonies where we live.

On Halloween, the children in the residence came to trick or treat. They were so cute, banging on the door yelling, "We want candy!" Adorable!



We went back to Happy Feet on Linda's last day with us. The next morning, she moved back to the hotel with Marcella, and I left for Beijing for a two-day marathon of screening my film and speaking to several different groups. My former students started a company (Due West) that provides college counseling to Chinese students who want to study in the U.S. and they arranged this trip. I met with middle and high school students from several schools, and parents who are concerned about sending their kids abroad for college. We visited the American International School in Beijing and a boarding school called Keystone whose campus would rival most Ivy League colleges. It was a strange and interesting experience that will take me awhile to process.

I enjoyed talking to film students about the filmmaking process and it was interesting to see what Chinese students know and don't know about racism in the U.S. and to hear the ways they connect or not with the film.



After the screening/discussion on the first night, Novi treated us to a lovely dinner with the group below – we sat at a round table and dishes kept coming and coming – all fish or vegetarian and completely delicious.



I enjoyed meeting and talking with the group at dinner. The woman in green, Ria, is from Surinam and works with an African NGO in Beijing. The woman in white, Mary, is from Domenica and works for another NGO about which I did not get the details. The woman on the other end, Rhianna, is from San Francisco and is an ESL teacher who worked in Japan for several years before coming to China. All are fairly fluent in

Mandarin. They were very impressive. The Chinese woman is a parent liaison with schools and Novi is my former student and co-founder of Due West.

The next day was a whirlwind that started early in the morning and went all day. My flight back to Shanghai was an hour late so I didn't get home until after 10, exhausted. It will take a while to process it all, but certainly lots to think about.

Today, I took it easy! In a few minutes though, I have a conference call with others with whom I will be participating on a panel next week. More about that in the next journal!

Hope all is well with you!

Zaijian, Lee