



My first full day in China! We woke up from a great night's rest at the Captain Hostel, but unfortunately had to find a new hostel as a large group had rented the hostel for the rest of the weekend. On our way out of the hostel we saw the group checking in and they truly were large. Had filled the entire lobby. Following the advice of our Lonely Planet guide, we found another hostel a few blocks away. It took about 20 minutes to walk to there, and we reserved a room for the rest of the weekend. Below are photos of the streets between the two hostels.



The new hostel was a youth hostel, designed for a college crowd, and the average guest was about my age. Leaving the hostel to return to the first place and retrieve our stuff, I noticed the message at the top of the page pinned to the ever-informative hostel bulletin board. If ever looking for local recommendations, discounts to local entertainment, or advice, this is a great place to look. The advice offered in this message proved to come in handy as the day progressed.

As Brad and I were walking out the door, I over heard a conversation using words such as "branch president" and "relief society", which are give-aways that they are LDS. I started a conversation with them. They are all younger college students teaching English in a small central Chinese province. They were in Shanghai for a weekend vacation. It was fun to run into some members of the Church in China as it doesn't happen often and is very refreshing.

By 11 am, Brad and I had moved our luggage to the new hostel, and were ready for a fun day of sightseeing in Shanghai. Our plan was to find the Bund tunnel to the Pudong District to see the high-rises and then in the early afternoon to return to the Bund side of the river to see Shanghai's "Times Square" at Nanjing Lu.

Finding the tunnel proved to be difficult because of the construction happening along the Bund. Shanghai is hosting next year's World Expo, and as part of the preparation are building a new water front park to compliment the historic early 20th century business buildings that comprise the Bund. Asking locals gave us several answers, but the consensus, if it was open, was a few blocks to the south at a metro station.

Finally we found it and luckily it was open for business. The ride was pure entertainment! It was like something dreamed up for the Epcot Center. The ride was in a slow moving tram, with the walls covered in LCD lights taking the passengers through several worlds and emotions. There were trips through space, the moon, and Halloween, amongst others. It was simultaneously the best and worst 40 Yuen I have ever spent! Coming out of the tunnel, several venders had touristy items for sale. At one of the stands was this communist hat that Brad caught me wearing for a photo.



Back on the street, we found a great view of the Bund from the other side of the river; the new financial capital of China, where two of the world's largest buildings compete. The photo above is Brad and I with the Bund at our backs. Directly in front of us is the Pearl Tower, the tall structure with the large sphere in the middle and at the top. To our right are the high rises of Shanghai stretching into the clouds.

We next walked into a mall I search of food. Brad had yet to eat at China's favorite American fast food institution, KFC, so that was our next stop. In the mall was a wine promotion. The promotion included waiters from several local restraints participating in relay races down a track set up in the middle of the mall. A team member, carrying an open bottle would run to the end, fill several glasses with the wine, and then run back to send his next teammate. An action photo of the event is above. Asia has very unique ways to draw crowds and promote not only a brand, but entire markets. As I learned in marketing, most American companies are a long distance behind Asia when it comes to marketing.



After lunch, we started walking towards the financial buildings, in hopes of getting a good view and maybe even going up one. On the way I spotted this Maserati Gran Turismo. Guangzhou is known for money, but not too much of it is displayed in their cars, so it was a nice sight to see. When we arrived, a wax statue of Jackie Chan greeted us.

The price to go up to the observation deck was about RMB 150, which is a lot of money in China, especially for tourist stuff. I remembered visiting the old tomb for RMB 12. Brad asked for a student discount. They said it was only for students under 23. Brad then tried to convince them, that although he looks like he is in his 40s with his bald head and beard, that we were in fact 23. For some reason, they did not believe us. It was funny to watch though.

We then walked over to the other building, to try our luck there. A tour guide, asking what we wanted to do, met us. We told her we wanted to see the city from the observation deck but we were students and wanted a student discount. She told us it would be a waste of money because the building did not offer them, plus the deck was in the clouds. Looking up the side of the building, we could not see the top because it was hidden, and we agreed that this day would not be a good choice to spend the money to stand in the clouds. We then continued to walk around the city. Below are several pictures taken on this afternoon.





As nightfall approached, surprisingly early because of the latitude, we boarded the subway to travel to Nanjing Lu, a famous street that would be similar to Times Square. Before entering the subway, we noted how quiet the streets of the downtown area had been. A number of cars cruised the streets, but very few people besides some tourists walked around. We found this very strange for China. Entering the subway, we learned where everyone was! It seemed like the entire city was within the subway system in transit. It was incredible how many people were on the trains.



Coming out of the Subway, we walk right into the spectacle of Nanjing Lu as the lights were turning on, and what a sight to behold, as the photos from this and the previous page depict. The tall lights, and old styled buildings were all well maintained and displayed in grandeur. Closing the street from cars, allowed the few thousand people to move freely and enjoy the evening. The rain from earlier has stopped.

A few street vendors were out, mostly selling towels and fake luxury goods, but no stands were set up. One of the vendor was selling wheels that attached to shoes to create make-shift roller skates. After the vendor brought her price down from 80 to 20 yuan, I agreed to try them. I could not seem to grasp the technique to make them work. Nothing like real skating. To the sellers anger I did not buy them. She really was not pleased that I tried them and did not buy.

A couple other stories from the night refer back to the sign we had seen at the beginning of the day warning us foreigners of scam artists. While walking to the other end of Nanjing Lu, a

group of three art students started speaking with us. After a few minutes of chatting, which was good Chinese practice for me, they told us they were in town from Beijing for an art show. They invited Brad and I too see their exhibition. We were hesitant and told them we had no money for tickets or to buy art, and of course, we were assured it was free and they just wanted to show their work. So we walked to their exhibit, in a rented room in a nearby building. After telling the stories behind the dozens of paintings, many quite pretty, the pressures sales pitch began, culminating in reminding us that since we are all students, we surely understand their need for cash and that buying would support their studies. While I believe the art-student part of the story, we did not want to spend the money. The pressure increase for about 10 minutes, until they realized we were going to hold to our "just came to see" stance we started with. Dejectedly they let us go. Brad and I felt bad, but really did not want or need any of the art.

On the return trip up Nanjing Lu, a couple more college students approached us. This time their story was they just wanted to be friends and hang out. Kind of a weird start. They asked where we were going and we told them we were hungry and looking for food. They invited themselves to join us, saying they would pay for their meals; they just wanted to hang out with foreigners. We went to a restaurant Brad and I had spotted, but this was too expensive with all meals, even appetizers in the triple digits. The girls then suggested a restaurant across the street. Going up to this one was when things got really weird. This place appeared as pricey as the first one. They promised it was cheaper and headed for an empty table. Brad and I stopped. Not only was the menu weird, but it was only slightly cheaper, with appetizers starting at 80 yuan. The girls also seemed to have some sort of a relationship with the employees of the restaurant. At this point, Brad and I decided to listen to our gut feelings and just leave the restaurant and the girls before something happened. So we said goodbye, hopped on the elevator and left. Back at the hostel, another sign about scammers had been posted.

