

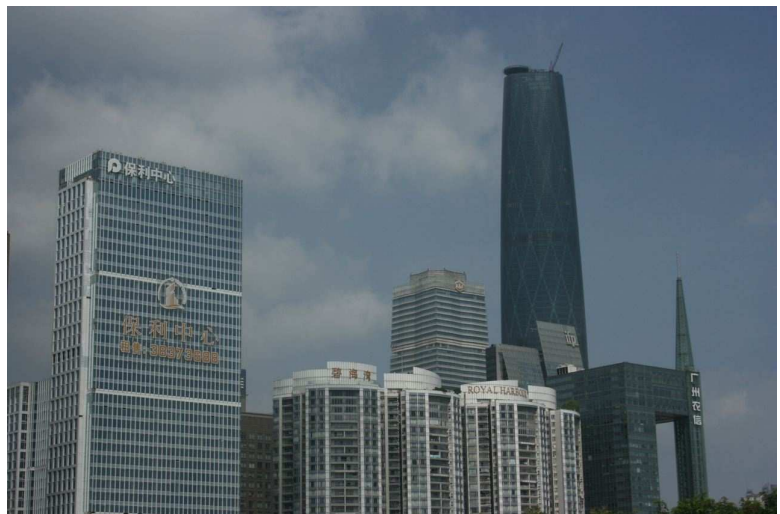
Three weeks into a new semester most certainly calls for a weeklong vacation to Hong Kong to celebrate China's National Holiday ☺

The Celebrations for China's 60th Anniversary have officially begun! For most of Mainland China, this means a full week off work, and it the best opportunity for many people to return to their families home town. A group of us in the CIMBA program decided to tour Hong Kong for the week. This series of logs is my journal of place is visited and sights I saw for the week.

To begin the holiday, we threw a party on Wednesday evening to thank our Chinese buddies for all they have done to help us get organized in China. We truly could not be having as much fun here without them and are very grateful. I was playing Monopoly and am holding my cash.

We left for Hong Kong on Thursday, Oct 1, at about 12:45 pm to catch the 2:10 train to Shenzhen, where we could cross the border into Hong Kong and the New Territories.

The photos in this series continue to show the sights around Guangzhou and the Canton Province I call home. All of these pictures were taken in transit, either in taxi to the train station, at the train station, or on the train headed to the border. On this day of travel, the skies were beautiful providing for an opportunity to show off the high rises of my city.

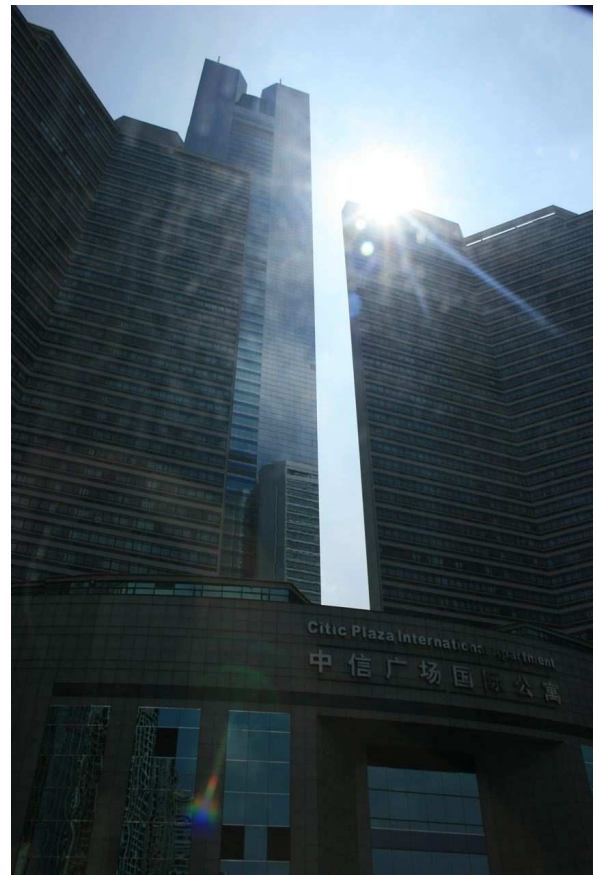


In the first picture is the new Guangzhou TV and Radio tower, scheduled to be completed by the end of the year and on full display for next year's Asian Games. The structure will be Guangzhou's tallest by a sizeable measure. In terms of engineering and design, think of a twisted circle of toothpicks standing on end.



The next two photos display the tallest office building in Guangzhou. The first is taken from the Guangzhou bridge, and the second, with the bus and Victorian themed apartment building was shot very close to church.

As we neared the train station I snapped this photo of the sun's rays sneaking between the tops of a couple more of the high rises in Guangzhou. Most cities do not support close to 12 million people at any given time without a lot of high-rise structures. These tall buildings have surrounded me almost all day long since I arrived here at the beginning of September. My school's campus is one of the few places I am able to go in Guangzhou and not be surrounded by these marvels of modern civilization.



Arriving at the train station, it was madness. Because it was the first day of the national holiday, most people were traveling somewhere and trains are a very popular means in China because of their low cost for distances of a few hundred miles. We ate KFC. My chicken sandwich was very good. The recipe here calls for a lot more spice than in the States and I am usually sweating by the time I am done with the sandwich.

Thanks to our classmate Ann, who is from Hong Kong, and routinely takes the train home on the weekends, we were quickly led through the train station's procedures. Tickets to Shenzhen cost only RMB 75, less than we had anticipated. The lines moved through security much quicker than in the US as well. And unlike US security posts that confiscate water, we are also given a free bottle of water for our travel.

This photograph is of Chris, Monica, Jeremie, and myself as we wait for the train to arrive.

The train is a great ride. It feels like a nice airline but with a lot more space available for the passenger who demands a little more leg and elbowroom. Also, one doesn't realize just how fast the train is moving because of the smoothness of the ride. A speedometer, however, at the front of each car indicates that at times the train touches 200 kph, which is well over 100 miles per hour.

As the train made its way south, I experience a little bit of the more rural areas of China as well as some of the mountains. The 广东 Guangdong (Canton) Province is one of the most populated, so even when the train was cruising through farm lands, factories and tall buildings were always nearby on the horizon; however, nothing as intense as 广州。

We arrived in Shenzhen after about 90 minutes on the train. The train station is at the border, so to get to Hong Kong all we needed to do was follow the signs. The windows from the covered bridge displayed the border; a river and chain link fence with barbwire. I think this is the international standard.

Once in Hong Kong we got our passports stamped and continued on to the metro station, which took us to the part of this grand province Ann calls home. My first impression of Hong Kong, at least from the metro, is that I am suddenly in a first world location. Things are cleaner and society is more orderly. But Hong Kong, is also a very energetic city, and the speed everything happens caught me by surprise.

