

干杯!!!

Gan bei!!!

This log has taken a couple of weeks to amass enough content to make it worth publishing. It's been a labor of culinary delight of the beverage variety, and when it wasn't a labor of love, it still provided for lots of laughs and smiles. The timeline of this collection of stories is in no particular order, just some thematic organizing. Some stories stem from random life's events and observations, and others are a reflection of myself.

### **Reflections of culture**

**干杯 Gan bei!** - 干杯 is like our "cheers". It is what the Chinese say when they raise a toast over a good meal. My second Sunday here, my seat for sacrament meeting was on the back row, the row behind the Korean family with seven children. While the Sacrament was being passed, it came to one of their sons, an energetic toddler, and he took a cup of water. In the sacred silence of the meeting, he raises his cup to his mom and says "干杯" in the adorable and innocent way that only a child could. It was hilarious, mom was quiet embarrassed, and her son was proud of his toast.

**Tea for cleaning** – I am not sure if I have noted this before, but in the 广东Guangdong province at the beginning of a meal, everyone prepares their dishes by washing them in tea. Although the dish packets come prepackaged in shrink-wrap, it is still part of the culture to give them a washing before eating. The method is to first fill the teacup, then pour the tea into the bowl. Next, place the cup into the bowl, and spin it around to clean the whole cup. One can next wash the ends of their chopsticks in the bowl. A large bowl is placed in the center of the table to pour out the used tea along with the wrappers the dishes and chopsticks come in. I am still having spillage issues transferring all of the tea from the cup to the bowl. Too slow and it runs down the side of the cup. Too fast and it splashes all over. It's an art. Getting all the tea out of my cup and bowl before eating takes some practice too.

### **Reflections on new products I am finding**

**Peppermint Sprite** A couple weeks ago, I was shopping at the local grocery store, and a new Sprite product in a blue bottle was the promotion de jour. I picked one up to give it a try, not knowing what flavor it was. It ended up sitting in the fridge for over a week. I just was never in the mood to try in new Sprite. Jeremie kept asking about it every time he opened the fridge and kept seeing it just sitting there. Finally, we were going to a class project meeting at the restaurant in the business building and I figured I would bring it along. Still not knowing what it was, I finally gave it a try. The immediate flavor was awful. It was a spearmint flavored drink that was like drinking a mix toothpaste and mouthwash. Jeremie and Brad tried it as well and there was a consensus of dislike. The nearly full bottle was just placed in a far corner of the table and never touched again.

**Tropicana v Minute Maid** – Two international companies market a fruit punch in 广州, Tropicana and Minute Maid. I have tried both, and Minute Maid is the clear winner. I love getting liter bottles here for around 50 cents!

**Orangeade** – I have begun to develop a bit of a routine on the way to class each morning. The alley we go through has a local's convenience store just before the gate. Not a 7-11 type store, but a real locals "convenience shack". I have found a Minute Maid orange drink which I have had all this week and quite enjoy, especially when it's been chilled in a refrigerator. The flavor is more orangeade than orange juice. Real American style orange juice is around, but not widely available with the sodas like these Minute Maid products. According to the nutritional information, it is high in energy and vitamin C. The funny part about the energy score is the range it gives, from about 4 to about 48 units.

**Slurpees** – Like 7-11's throughout most of the world, Slurpees are a strongly promoted product in China too. Only problem is, that nine in ten 7-11s that advertise them, don't actually have the machines and sell them. We did, however, finally find a store about a 5-minute walk from here that has the machine. Only issue is the Coke flavor is the only one that works.

**Mango shake** – Last night, a Friday evening, we explored the city, including a riverboat ride with a buffet dinner and some mall wandering. As we were heading home, the urge for an orange smoothie consumed my roommate. After finding a stand that made them, we learned that orange was not an offered flavor. They did have mango though, which was good enough for the moment. I got one too. The flavor was very good, especially if you like fresh mango. It even kept the aftertaste. The texture was amazing. The ice had been ground down very small particles, and the mashed-up mango within combined for a very smooth smoothie; perfect to combat the heat and humidity hanging around at 11 pm.

### **Reflections on me...**

**Chocolate Milk** – I am a huge fan of chocolate milk. I always have been and am happy to say that one of the plethora of reasons to be grateful for life is everyday is another opportunity to down some more of this fantastic product. So when the case discussion in marketing turned to chocolate milk, I was obviously intrigued, maybe a little more passionately than normal. The lecture was on the topic of positioning, and it was noted that traditionally chocolate milk is a kid's drink, especially noting the standard small cardboard boxes it had been sold in. Remember those from elementary school? On the product-positioning map of milk products, chocolate milk has found itself with an average price, but further to the children's side of the child – adult metric than any other product (strawberry milk not included in the study). The case dealt with some efforts by a few companies to market chocolate milk as a premium priced product aimed at the adult market. Why am I even talking about this??? Since when was chocolate milk, even in the cardboard box, just a kid's drink? Did I miss an important memo, or has the rest of the world missed the awesome boat? I vote that it's a sad sign of the times that chocolate milk is not viewed as "adult".

**Frosties** – Another discussion from marketing class included a case on Wendy's and branding. Along with many of us from the US, this conversation just left us craving Frosties. Any chance there is a Wendy's in Asia somewhere? I wonder if I talk about it often enough in my blog and it gets the attention of Wendy's corporate, if they will somehow sponsor me on a trip to get a chocolate Frostie. Just sayin'!