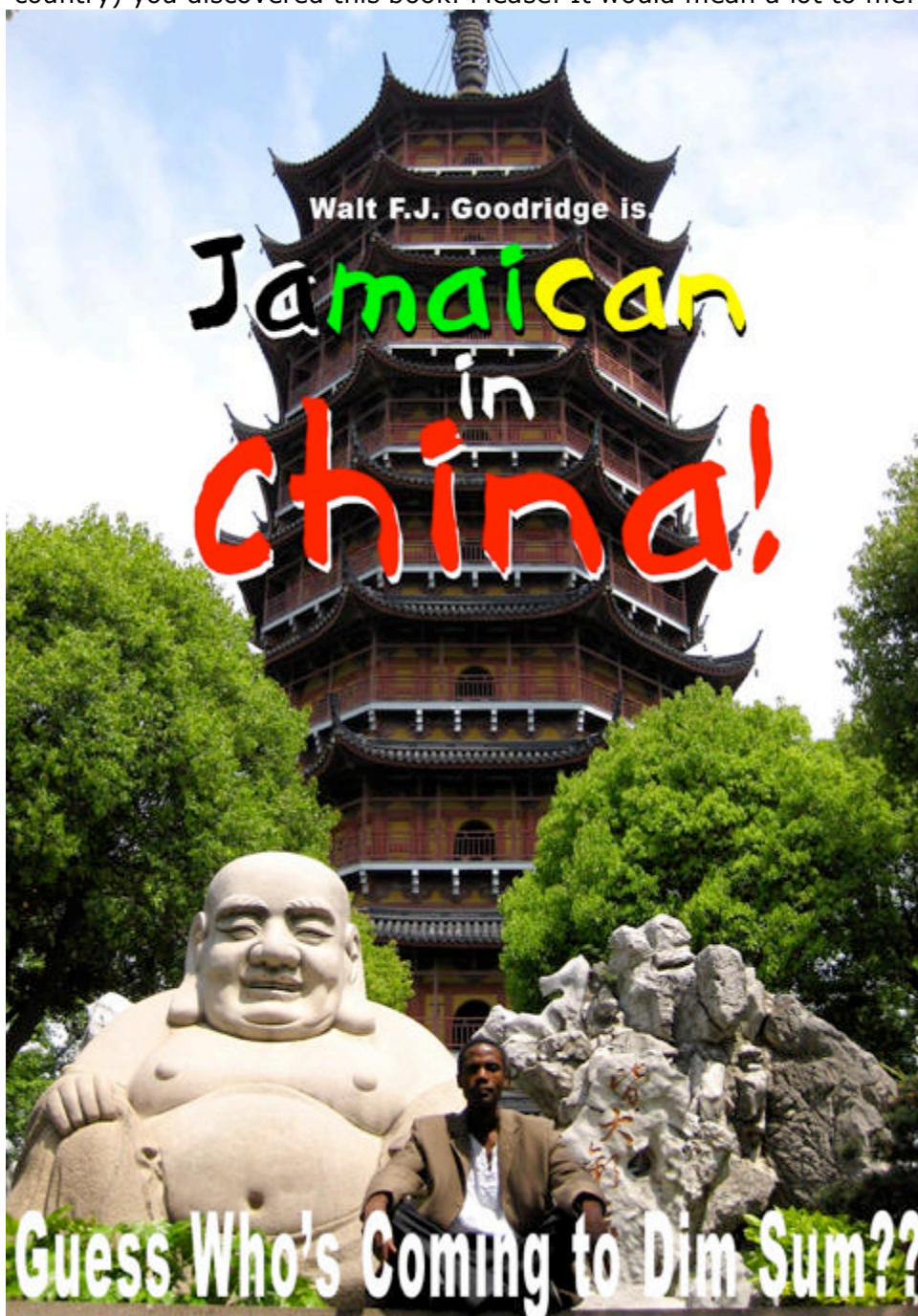


Email me at walt@jamaicaninchina.com to let me know how and where (what country) you discovered this book! Please! It would mean a lot to me!



by Walt F.J. Goodridge

Walt F.J. Goodridge, author of Living True to Your Self, presents a reality show travel guide graphic superhero crime fighting novel blog book lifestyle adventure!

Jamaican in China: Guess Who's Coming to Dim Sum
© Walt F.J. Goodridge. All rights reserved.

Published by The Passion Profit Company, an imprint of
a company called W, New York
P.O. Box 618
Church Street Station
New York, NY 10008-0618

Distributed exclusively by
The Passion Profit Company
www.PassionProfit.com
orders@passionprofit.com
Order online at
www.passionprofit.com

Inquiries to the author may be addressed to:
Walt Goodridge
PO Box 503991
Saipan MP 96950
email: walt@jamaicaninchina.com

All rights reserved. This book may not be reproduced in whole or in part, or transmitted in any form, without written permission from the author and publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

- The "Dirty Old Jamaican Cat in Hat" is a parody and is NOT licensed by Random House, Theodor Geisel or Dr. Seuss Enterprises
- The Guess Who's Coming to Dim Sum poster represents a parody of the original 1967 movie poster rights of which are owned by the Columbia Pictures Corporation. No claim of ownership of this image is being made. It's just comedy!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication

Acknowledgements

INTRODUCTION: What is Jamaican in China All About??? 5

CHAPTER 1: Saipan! How it All Began 12

CHAPTER 2: Beijing 20

CHAPTER 3: Kunming 79

CHAPTER 4: Xishuangbanna 93

CHAPTER 5: Laos 132

CHAPTER 6: Hainan 173

CHAPTER 7: Coming Black to Asia 227

CHAPTER 8: Singapore! 255

CHAPTER 9: Return to Saipan 277

BONUS CHAPTER 10: My 2009 Trip to China! 295

APPENDIX: More books from Walt

WHAT'S NEW IN THIS EDITION... that's NOT on the Blog:

- Outtake #1: Asian Woman Whisperer
- Outtake #2: "I Will Not Date the High School Girl"
 - Outtake #3: Two Great Tastes!
- Outtake #4: A little Hip Hop Revisionist History
- Outtake #5: "It LOOKS real, Betty, but I can't be sure!"
 - Expanded How to Meet Girls in Beijing
 - Being Famous in China ...and much more!

Dedication

Dedicated to:

my mother, Thelma Rose Goodridge
my father, Nyembane Ndobe Goodridge

to my grandfathers, Clement Nicholas Golding and Charles Frederick Goodridge
and to my grandmothers Isolene Rebecca Golding and Gladys Eunice Goodridge

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the friends I made in Part I of my life in Jamaica from Old Harbour Primary School, Pembroke Hall Primary School and Hughenden Housing Scheme. These are the names I've never forgotten though I've lost touch with most: Andrew Walters • Wayne Walters • Lisa Walters • Baron Brissett • Horace Hall • Ian Smith • Daighn Jones • Sharon Hamilton • Desmond Anderson • Ferdinand White • Norman Hemming • Perez Cross • Germaine Gail Scott • Dion Thompson • Richard Polack • Mr & Mrs. Sutherland • Richard Sutherland • Philip Sutherland • Mrs. Downy • Gary Scott • Mrs. Scott • Mr. & Ms Nash • Tanya Nash • Mr. & Mrs. Johnson • Gillian Johnson • Paul Johnson • Mr. & Mrs. Samuels • Peter Samuels • Paul Samuels Lorraine Samuels • Sophia Samuels • Camille Samuels • Mr. & Mrs. Barton • Marcia Barton • Herbert Barton • Wayne Barton • Mr. & Mrs. Britain • Karen Britain • Avril Britain • The McDonalds • The McGregors • The Becketts • Carl Steadman

I also wish to thank those special people in Parts II, III and more in my life: Reina Joa, Christine Karmo, Kenneth McRae, Joe Hill, Angelo Villagomez, Chun Yu Wang, Preeyaporn P. Jompeang, Ron McFarlane, Ashley Moffatt, Ernest & Kim Capers, Monica Afesi and Aaron & Stacey Spencer-Willoughby and the usual recurring cast of main characters in this and previous lives.

Credits:

- Walt at the Beisi Pagoda Tower (aka North Temple Pagoda), Suzhou, China taken by Chun Yu Wang
- All interior photographs: Walt F.J. Goodridge, unless otherwise noted.

INTRODUCTION

What is Jamaican in China All About?

What is Jamaican in China all about?

Hi! My name is Walt F.J. Goodridge, star and the Jamaican of the "Jamaican in China" blog!

Recently, after reading one of my blog posts, a friend emailed me a question.

"What, exactly, are you trying to accomplish?" he asked.

I was grateful for the question. It made me stop and think of a good answer. However, before I share that answer with you, I feel I must offer a few caveats, preambles, disclaimers, forewords, parentheticals and footnotes in order to establish some ground rules and a basis for better understanding.

First, perhaps, I should tell you just a little about myself. The short version of the story of my life goes something like this:

"Once upon a time, there was a Jamaican civil engineer living in New York who hated his job, followed his passion, started a sideline business publishing his own books, made enough money to quit his job, escaped the rat race, ran off to a tropical island in the South Pacific, and started a tourism business so he could give tours of the island to pretty girls every day....and live a nomadpreneur's dream life."

Part of living that dream life led me to fulfill a lifelong desire to visit and live in China. Hence, I've now become THE Jamaican in China!

So, what is Jamaican In China all about?

First, as a writer, it is simply the latest phase of my creative expression.

Second, it can be a travel guide of sorts, exposing others to new people and places in ways and from a perspective they may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience. I've often been told that my blog offers a vicarious travel experience for the "stay-cation" (stay at home vacation) adventurer.

Third, as the Passion Profit coach (I'm also author of 20 books including *Turn Your Passion into Profit* and *Living True to Your Self*), it is the latest manifestation of a lifestyle blog/book intended to show people one specific option to choose from. I've announced that my theme for the new year and beyond is that Freedom is Achievable! It's time to "Reclaim Your Power. Break Free. Live True to Your Self!" In addition to its entertainment value, I'd like to think my story can help people break free. How? By...

1. Showing different realities, and
2. Dispelling myths (while playfully re-enforcing others!)

Showing Different Realities

I am Jamaican. I am in China. I am vegan. I am a minimalist. (I have other predilections and peeves that shape who I appear to be, but I'll save those for later.) This is not the typical prism through which travel is experienced and chronicled.

Dispelling Myths

One of the things I'm aware that this blog and book are able to do is teach as well as entertain. Many people, myself included, have and had certain questions--and in the absence of answers--some erroneous ideas about what China is all about. I don't pretend to have a handle on a complete answer after only a few months of living here, but I do know that simply by being here and writing about my travels, I am already able to dispel certain ideas and misconceptions people have about China, its people and possibilities.

A few months ago, while in China, I wrote a Facebook post where I threatened jokingly that I would hold my next blog post hostage until people spread the word about my blog to help me increase my subscriber list. A friend wrote back about my choice of (hostage taking/ransom) tactics, "...that's what happens when you live in a communist country!" Now, for those of us outside of China, that might be a humorous statement, but it does give some insight into what people perceive life as well as the effects of life in China to be.

So, with that said, over the course of this book, I'll share my evolving answer to my friend's original question about what I intend to accomplish, along with questions you've emailed me (walt@jamaicaninchina.com) from my unique vantage point of being Jamaican in China!

Caveat 1: Could I live here?

As I write this particular section, I'm still in Jinghong City, Xishuangbanna, Yunnan Province, People's Republic of China! As the voting phase of the Jamaica Blog Awards [which you'll read about shortly] draws to a close, I'm "suspending my campaign" and slowly returning to blogging on a more regular basis.

Here, therefore, are a few disclaimers as you attempt to understand my blog and how I see the world.

Let the reader beware that the underlying question that permeates all my travels is "could I live here?" Given the things that are important to me (warm weather, sunshine, clean air, access to organic fruits and vegetables), as well as the social things (friendly people/women), as well as the household amenities (a

kitchen and internet access), once I arrive at a new destination, I make an overall assessment of what I see, and arrive at a "yep" or "nope."

If a particular destination passes this "Yep Test" AND, if the majority of my wants and wishes appear to be to my liking, then I unpack, hang out for a while, and explore the terrain.

That's one of the reasons I like to stay in a place for a few months. It takes time for the pall of the visitor paradigm to wear off and for the real rhyme, reason and rhythm of a region to take hold. And, as I've said before (and which regular readers of my blog are probably tired of hearing), I'm not a tourist!.

For me, a hotel is an unnatural setting. The ideal living situation is for me to get a real apartment akin to something a native dweller would occupy. That way, I can live like a native, and observe as well as participate in the comings and goings of regular, everyday folk. I can watch how business is done, how quickly products and services are delivered, learn what the REAL prices of things are (not

the "foreigner's price"), discover the gender roles and dating rituals, and gain an experience beyond the quick, superficial view of life one often gets through jet-lagged eyes and with passports and onward tickets still in hand.



The comings and goings as seen from my third floor apartment in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan Province, China. I think I was paying 40RMB/day (\$6US/day) for this room.

Caveat 2: The Non-Judgmental Perceiver

The second thing to know about my answers to your questions about life in China is that I'm very careful about how I interpret what I see, and how I

phrase what I say about what I see. My Meyers-Briggs personality type is INTP (Introvert, Intuitive, Thinker, Perceiver) In contrast to its opposite type, which would be an ESFJ (Extrovert, Senser, Feeler, Judger; Look it up!!) Therefore, I tend to perceive and observe without judging--at least, I make the effort. I live by the belief that there is no good or bad except believing makes it so.

For instance, it's tempting to see smokers and smoking and think "bad," or to see certain behavior and want to attach judgment-laden words to them. If you and I were talking about life in China, you might often hear me use the phrase "...what we might refer to as [fill in the blank]." For instance, I might say something like "I've noticed that in the subways in Beijing, there's a lot of what we might refer to as pushy behavior." I do this to separate the words I use to describe the behavior (i.e. "pushy"), from any judgment you might believe I am making about the behavior itself.

I've had interesting conversations with people who are visiting China who are unable to step outside of their predominant paradigm, and end up judging their experiences here based on non-Chinese standards, and end up having a terrible time rather than seeing it as the opportunity to think differently.

In my opinion, everything about China--and for that matter, any country I visit--from vehicular traffic, personal habits, communication styles, cuisine preferences, dating expectations, to gender roles provides a never-ending, fun exercise in how to observe without judgment, how to see things as others who are not raised within a western paradigm might see them. The more you know about how people think and how the system works, the more certain behavior makes sense given the new paradigm. Of course, I'm not saying anything remarkably profound here, but you'll have a difficult time really understanding certain aspects of life in China if you are not aware of to what degree your own observations and expectations are flavored by a foreign (non-Chinese) paradigm.

Of course, I have my own pet peeves. Inhaling second-hand cigarette smoke is one of them. As much as I realize that the choice to smoke and the percentage of smokers in a country are functions of many things including politics, economy, health education, cultural norms, gender roles, etc., the distress I feel when I am forced to inhale it does not lessen with that realization.

However, I'm here in China with my own agenda and on my own dime and time. As a nomadpreneur, I'm not working a job, so fortunately, I have the freedom to pick up and leave if the smoking or the (cold) weather becomes unbearable.

So, anyway, my point is simply that I strive to be non-judgmental in my observations of life in China.

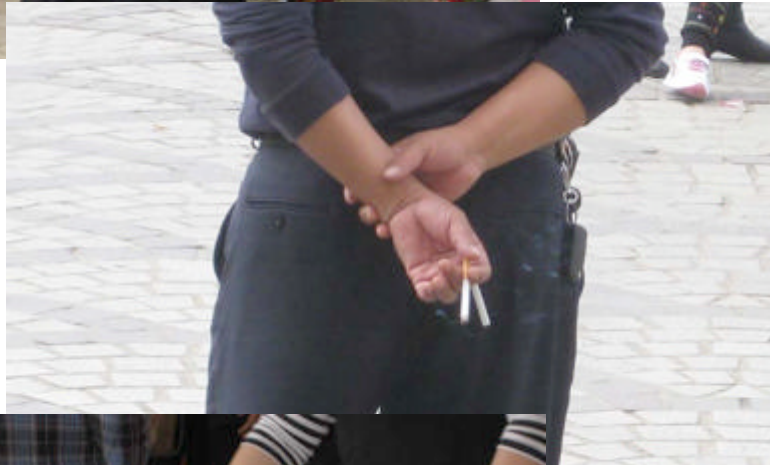
So, speaking of smoking: I went to a wedding reception the other day here in Xishuangbanna....



This man is handing out cigarettes.

You can never have too many. (A spare, in case one goes out, I imagine)

And,



before entering the hotel for the reception, you can get candy, and....wait for it....wait for it.....cigarettes!

CAVEAT #3: I Skew the Results!

I've discovered something profound. It may actually be impossible for me to ever really get a pure, untainted impression of what life in China is like. Why? Well, to borrow a concept from the Dictionary of Scientific Experiment Phrases Applicable to Jamaicans in China: "I skew the results."

To help you understand what I mean, I found this example of the use of the phrase on the web:

"If you add too much of a redox indicator you end up changing the equilibrium of the main reactants and skew the results.."

**A redox indicator (also called an oxidation-reduction indicator) is a substance that undergoes a definite color change at a specific electrode potential.*

In other words, I get a very skewed perception of people's behavior as I walk the streets of China. Very few people are acting normally once they see me. I hate to belabor a point (if you've been following the journey from the beginning) that I've covered at length here, but in certain quarters, my very presence changes the natural equilibrium of the main reactants, and skews the results!

Entire groups of people, families, tourists and little children stop what they're doing, stare, point, and turn around as I pass, then they point some more, whisper amongst themselves, giggle, (some will even turn and follow me for a while). Strangers ask to take their photo with me, or touch my hair. People (men and women, uninvited... at least the men) reach out to touch me as I walk by.

Like a redox indicator, I present simply too much of a visual difference when contrasted with the everyday norm in China. It's a bit of challenge for me to disappear into the crowd. I'm working on it, though.

Now, lest you be a bit confused, this phenomenon I'm describing is much different from the familiar "Observer Effect."

Observer Effect: *The difference that is made to an activity or a person by it being observed. People may well not behave in their usual manner whilst aware of being watched or when being interviewed while carrying out an activity.*

No, in my case—being Jamaican in China—what I create is no ordinary observer effect, this is an observer effect on steroids, or perhaps MSG! It's a situation in which those being observed themselves become fascinated observers of the observer! So, while I'm trying to observe life in China, I quickly become the thing being observed by those I am observing! So, I end up taking photos of them taking photos of me taking photos of them!

You'll hear me say the majority of people in China are friendly and approachable. Of course, this too may be a "Jamaican-specific redox indicator observer effect!" I may be getting the uniquely foreigner-curious, courageous sampling of the population who aren't nervous about testing out their English-speaking abilities. It does seem to be "everybody," but in a land of a billion people, even a miniscule sample of the population can seem overwhelming!

Many people have told me, "You're my first foreign friend!" When one woman here in town saw me, her first words to me were, "Can I be your friend?"

Now, being many people's first foreign friend puts me in a unique position. For example, I'm learning things that tourists typically never learn, and that only transplants will ever know about life, living, learning, working, dating, marrying and more in China. I'm hearing things that people might not say among familiar, perhaps more judgmental Chinese ears. For example, did you know that most single girls are--um, well, why don't I just save that for another post....or the chapter on dating?!

On the other hand, as a first foreign friend, I'm sure there are many things I am NOT being told. I'm sure there is some degree of "let's put our best foot forward for the visitor" that is happening. There may be truths about life in China that people are hiding from me for various reasons or pride or propriety.

In any case, with that said, now that you know my prime directive, the questions I ask, my stance on non-judgment, and the fact that I'm skewing the sample, I'll (finally) attempt to answer some of YOUR questions about what it's like being Jamaican in China! So, let's begin!

p.s. I'd like to add a thought about the photographs you'll be seeing in this book. I had a photographer friend of mine suggest that I crop my photos to achieve better composition. I've decided not to. (Sorry, Tony). My reason is this: One of the things about my blog is that it brings images of China into the laptops, living rooms, and lives of people who wouldn't get to see it otherwise.

This "Jamaican's Eye View" of life in China is meant to dispel myths and to show that once you get beyond the propaganda, the nationalism, the xenophobia that often exist in our society, that people are people the world over.

Therefore, in my photographs, I want to leave all the little details of life in China in place. I want you to see the buses, the benches, the backgrounds, the gardens, the garbage, the grass, the bricks, the bottles and the brooms that show up in everyday life.

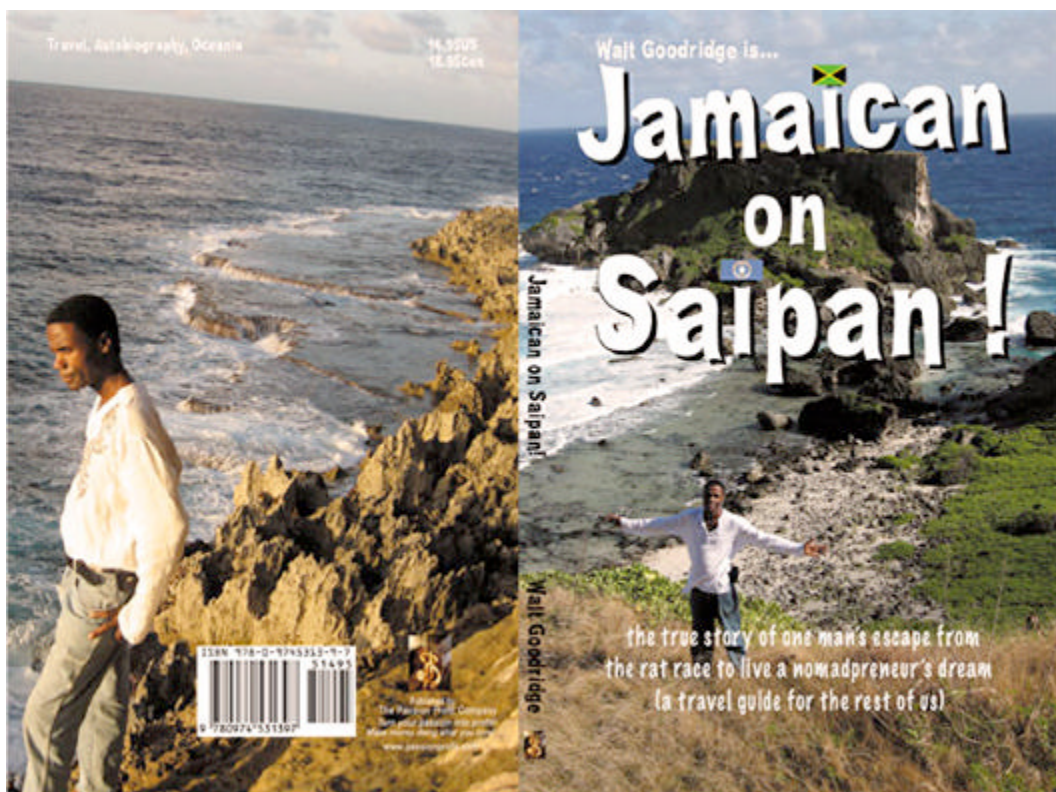
Despite the agendas that are being set by out-of-touch diplomats; despite the rhetoric of hate pushed by self-interested politicians; despite the fanning of hatred directed at foreign ideologies and individuals; despite how people are depicted in mainstream media, television and movies; at the very foundation of every society are the everyday people--people who laugh, smile, cry and love and who want the same things for themselves and their families.

I have no vested interest in vilifying anyone. I have no military machine whose existence to justify by fomenting hatred. I have no political agenda, or economic dominance to be served by censoring or manipulating these images. I simply want to show as much of my experience as the camera can capture so that you can have the widest lens possible into the experience.

This is what *Jamaican in China* is all about. China. Unplugged. Uncut. Un-cropped! (Um, okay, maybe just a bit of cropping for this paperback edition!)

Chapter 1:

HOW IT ALL BEGAN



How it all begin!

To get the full story of how I ended up in China, you'll first need to read *Jamaican on Saipan*, which chronicles the original "Walt's Escape from America," and how I ended up on the Pacific island of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas. That's a great story--if I do say so myself--and I won't retell it here. I'll simply excerpt the first "Freedom Song" life rhyme that I sent to my friends and family when I made that fateful decision to leave New York to become a "nomadpreneur":

NOTE: The best way to experience "Jamaican in China" the blog is by being part of my email list so that it becomes a "first hand, as it happens, adventure!" What you'll be reading in this book are the emails I sent (and continue to send) to subscribers to my *Jamaican in China* email list. I then archive those emails as posts on the blog for other visitors who prefer to remain anonymous.

This list of privileged subscribers includes a diverse collection of blog visitors, customers and clients, friends, family, strangers (perhaps even a few jealous enemies among them) as well as a growing number of Chinese as well as "foreign" friends I meet and who have joined the list as the adventure unfolds. As a result, the majority of comments and feedback to my exploits have typically been emailed to me rather than posted on the actual blog. Therefore, in this special blog to book edition of *Jamaican in China*, you'll experience the equally entertaining and insightful feedback loop side of the adventure that has never been shared publicly! Starting now:

Monday, Feb 9, 2006

Subject: Escape from America



hi All,

As you may have surmised, and as was hinted at in several of my recent Friday Life Rhymes (specifically #437 entitled *Freedom Song*), something's been brewing in "Walt World" for the past few months.

Ever since leaving corporate America in the fall of 1995, I've been executing a plan to create the lifestyle of a modern, minimalist, nomadic, passionpreneur based on a passive-residual income stream!

Now that I've cut all the tethers and structured a turnkey, self-sustaining, internet-based business that doesn't require my physical presence in any one location.....

(drum roll, please)

...I've bought a one way ticket to the island of Saipan in the South Pacific!

So amid sea, sand and sun I'll be living my dream in a clime that resonates with who I wish to be.

Since this is simply the first step in a journey of a thousand smiles, I didn't want to make a big deal about it until I got there and surveyed the lay of the land. But, I wanted to tell a few friends and contacts whom I felt deserve a little advanced notice...

You can still reach me at walt@passionprofit.com and I'll set up a Skype account and MSN Messenger for IMs for anyone who'd like to keep in touch, and share the experience!

Walt

p.s. I leave next Wed Feb 15 for Las Vegas, and then to Japan--my first stop on the way to Saipan! If you know of anyone there in Tokyo I might call who might be kind enough to show me around, please let me know. And in case you didn't receive Life Rhyme #437, here it is again... (www.liferhymes.com)

Freedom Song

One day you'll think about me:
Haven't seen him in a while
You'll make a note to find me
or a number you can dial

One day you'll ask about me:
Where on earth can he be found?
And learn at last I've set my sail
where sun and sea abound

One day you'll say about me:
Goes the nomad on his way
To live the life's adventure
that he said he would some day

One day you'll write about me:
There's the man who lived his dream
Cut loose the oars and left the boat
to swim a different stream

And then one day amid the noise
and hustle of the throng
You'll hear a tune first faintly
that's been playing all along

You'll know the singer instantly
you'll recognize my voice
A heart-felt freedom song
of life lived not by chance but choice...

And so began my escape from America. But let's jump ahead four years and begin the Jamaican in China story with an email I sent on August 22, 2010!

Freedom Song, Part 2

Sunday, August 22, 2010 8:27:10 PM GMT+10:00



Hope all is well with you.

A little over four years ago, I wrote the first "Freedom Song" just prior to my escape from America and my relocation to Saipan. (If you weren't on my friend's list then, you can read it at Walt's Escape from America! at www.passionprofit.com/escape.)

My move to Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, in 2006 ranks in the top 3 best decisions I've made in my life! I've never been happier with the climate, the culture, and the cuties! I've met many great people, wrote several books, started a tourism business, and felt that I was contributing to the betterment of society through my weekly column in the Saipan Tribune, which is now in its 220th consecutive week. Indeed, one of my proudest moments was receiving an official CNMI Senate Resolution (No. 15-54) in recognition of my contributions to Saipan, its residents and economy.

Ah, but it seems it's that time again.

As I said during the original Freedom Song, "Ever since leaving corporate America in the fall of 1995, I've been executing a plan to create the lifestyle of a modern, minimalist, nomadic, passionpreneur based on a passive-residual income stream!" In other words, I want to be able to see the world and not have to worry about getting a job in the places I decide to reside.

Well, the nomad part of me is acting up again. So, with that said, I offer you, on August 22, 2010: (drum roll, please....)

Freedom Song, Part 2

My Freedom Song continues
with a new exciting verse
A life afar has beckoned
and I want to tell you first!

This nomad's bell again has tolled
I answer and take wing
I've set my sights on China!
and the city of Beijing

The ticket's bought, the visa's done
I've got a place to rest
I've minimized and digitized
reduced all I possessed

They ask, "What will you do there?"
and, "What put you on this course?"
"A man named Lucas," I reply*
"Just going to the source!"

I've learned the basic language
and I've made a friend or two
Just waiting for the date now
and the day I bid adieu

So, wish me well and please stay tuned
Me? Nervous? Nope. Well, kinda...
but you know me, I'll prosper
in my brand new life in China!

p.s. I visited China once before in 2009, and vowed to return. I leave in a week for Beijing, with plans this time to visit Shanghai, Hainan (an island off the south coast of China), and other countries in the region including Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand. If you have any friends or contacts in the region, please put me in touch. It makes the experience much nicer

p.p.s *let me know if you need the "Lucas" reference explained. I'd be more than happy to oblige!



Hee, hee, ...I can see it now; you are dressed in all white except for your black Chinese slippers. As you stroll through the back streets of Beijing, 10 ninjas jump out from behind a building and warn you that in order to be with their women you have to fight all of them at once...if you are the last one standing then you have free access of all their women and more...! LOL! You get the picture.--**D**



I have an idea for a reality show for you.. You should start documenting with video...—**Ken**



I am so absolutely delighted for you, Walt...and proud of your progress. I know that all will go well for you because of your passion for living, putting yourself out there and knowing that life is a continued revolution. Thank you for keeping in touch and including me in each phase of your evolution. Please continue to take me "there!" **Charlotte Huey** [my high school guidance counselor!]

My octogenarian aunt in Canada emailed me about the Lucas reference...



Hello Walt: Congratulations on being recognized for your contributions to Saipan. Good luck, and blessings on your new project. I am, however, a wee bit lost with the reference to "Lucas", so I need to be enlightened. --**Aunt N.**

...so I'm going to share you with exactly how I explained it to her:



Well, my dear aunt,

I should probably be embarrassed to tell you this, but your nephew is modeling himself after a figure in history with a somewhat shady past. Frank Lucas was an infamous drug dealer in the US in the 60s! (There was a movie about him and his exploits recently acted by

Denzel Washington--"American Gangster.")

FROM WIKIPEDIA: *Frank Lucas (born September 9, 1930)[4] is an American former heroin dealer and organized crime boss who operated in Harlem during the late 1960s and early 1970s. He was particularly known for cutting out middlemen in the drug trade and buying heroin directly from his source in the Golden Triangle. His career was dramatized in the 2007 feature film American Gangster. Lucas's character is portrayed by Denzel Washington.*

Anyway, a friend of mine who noticed that my last three girlfriends where all from China, joked that my going directly to China was similar to Frank Lucas' "going to the source." Other people (men and women) have said similar things (drinking from the source, etc.) So, it appears (unbeknownst to me, until my friend made the reference) that the "Frank Lucas esthetic" is part of common language and popular culture.—Walt

p.s. If it's any consolation--in an effort to salvage any lingering, dwindling respect you still have for your nephew--I'm also going there for the cultural enrichment, to learn a new language, and to learn business strategies from Chinese entrepreneurs!

You sent my passport where???? American Samoa????!

Thursday, August 26, 2010 3:00:55 PM GMT+10:00

So, it's Thursday, August 26. I'm scheduled to leave for China on Sunday night...August the 29th. For some mysterious reason, my passport hasn't arrived yet (I had to send it to have my China visa stamped in it so I can enter China), so I decided to check the USPS.com (United States Postal Service) site to see if there is any information. Shouldn't be an issue, I think to myself, I've received Express Mail packages sent from the states to Saipan many times before without delay.

So, anyway, I enter the tracking number, and discover, lo, and behold...my passport is in..... American Samoa!

According to the usps.com site:



Your package has been missent, and every effort is being made to get it to you as quickly as possible.

Missent, August 23, 2010, 1:39 pm

Missent, August 23, 2010, 5:51 am

Notice Left, August 23, 2010, 5:10 am, PAGO PAGO, AS 96799

Arrival Post Office, August 23, 2010, 5:06am, PAGO PAGO, AS 96799

Processed through Sort Facility, August 20, 2010, 10:22 am, HONOLULU, HI 96820

Processed through Sort Facility, August 19, 2010, 8:04 pm, KEARNY, NJ 07032

Electronic Shipping Info Received, August 17, 2010

I see. So, just to put things into perspective, here: The flight I'm booked on is the last outgoing flight of a limited series of special charter flights direct from Saipan to Beijing. After this flight, there will be no other flights from Saipan to Beijing. The ticket is non-refundable. My car has been sold. My apartment lease is up. My friend in Beijing is ready to pick me up as planned.... AND....someone in Pago, Pago has my passport and I need it in 2 days or else the whole trip is kaput! If it doesn't arrive by 12 noon Saturday (the last day of mail delivery for the week), then I won't be able to get it until the post office opens up again for business at 9am Monday morning!

Ahhh, what would life be without a little suspense and drama?



Oh, No!!!! What an absolute bummer!!!!

Homeland Security couldn't/wouldn't help you?

I'm sitting on the edge of my chair! Do let me know what happened!

(Maybe the gods don't want you to leave Saipan yet?) -- **Ruth**



Another amazing piece of your journey!! It would be unusual if something didn't happen. LOL You know it will work out Walt!--
Stacey

Oh, well...everything happens for a reason

Monday, August 30, 2010 10:48:21 AM GMT+10:00

So, if you read the previous installment, then I'm sure you're wondering if my passport with my China visa came in sufficient time for me to leave for my trip.... Well, first I'll say that I'm a "go with the flow" type person, and when things happen that would disappoint your average nomad, I look for the hidden benefit or guidance in the situation, and take it all in stride... With that said, to answer your question...

Wait for it....

Wait for it....*[quick! Turn the page!!! hee hee]*

YES!!!!.... GOT IT!!!

On Wednesday it was still in Pago Pago, American Samoa, then, it had to go back to Honolulu, then to Guam, then to its destination, Saipan!

And the reason it happened, I surmise, was simply to give me a little suspenseful story to tell! For those of you who followed my escape, return and subsequent re-escape from America in the book, *Jamaican on Saipan*, you'll know that there's ALWAYS some little last-minute drama that "threatens" to derail my adventures! This trip to China had been amazingly seamless and smooth!

Once I realized I had a friend from Saipan who actually works in Beijing, I found a Saipan-direct-to-Beijing ticket timed perfectly to fit my calendar, sold my car in less than 24 hours from the moment I decided to, etc. Yes, everything was easy as pie! Eerie. Then, my passport ends up in Pago Pago, American Samoa! (Tell you the truth, I was actually quite relieved when the drama hit!)

As my friend, Stacey, commented on my American Samoa post: "Another amazing piece of your journey!! It would be unusual if something didn't happen. LOL! You know it will work out, Walt! It always does!"

Yep. And so it has! So, fear not, dear reader. As my good friend, Erroll Paden, used to say: "I ain't goin' out like that!"

So, even before my passport arrived in hand, I spent the last few days on



the island of Saipan saying goodbye to key people, returning, donating, and giving away more items like my bicycle, trampoline, my juicer (that was an emotional one), and finding a new home for my favorite plant (Thanks, Ashley!)

Saipan's famous Thursday Street Market, one last time....!



Angel and Lino at the Sabalu Market, my people-watching buddies. Hey, Mel!



*Saipan Tribune
editor, Jayvee
Vallejera, my good
email buddy for 225
consecutive weekly
articles! (an
unbroken streak
since April 2006!)
Thanks for
everything, Jayvee!*

*Saturday night into
Sunday morning I
had a great time
dancing at GIG with
someone who shall
remain nameless
and faceless...*



I'm scheduled for departure late, late, late on Sunday, so....by the time you read this.....I'll already be in China....unless, of course, um...something unforeseen happens! (but, I think I've met the quota for this departure)



Glad you got your passport on time for the flight. That was suspenseful! I am still bit curious how your passport could fly from Pago Pago to your hand within 48 hours. :)

Do you have a set plan for the China trip, or you will just follow your nomadic instinct?—**Jian**

~~~~~  
With a whoosh and flutter in the cloak of night  
This nomad departs, then is out of sight...  
~~~~~

[cue the music: "See the World" by Gomez.....fade to silence]

Chapter 2:

BEIJING

Beijing: arrived Sept-1-2010



Day 1. I think I'm going to like it here!

Wednesday, September 1, 2010 1:29:00 PM GMT+10:00

My flight from Saipan across the Pacific ocean to China proceeds without incident! Great!

I snapped the next two shots using the built-in camera on my Mac laptop. I was a bit too embarrassed to whip out my camera!



On the five-hour flight to China--the last charter flight Saipan direct to Beijing



The minute I step of the plane, I get besieged by people who want to take their photo with me.



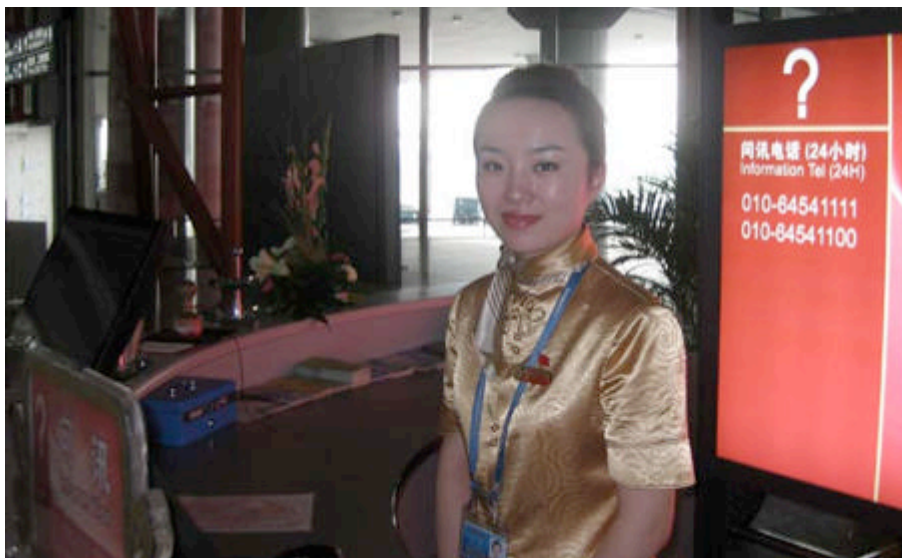
Finally got some time to take a photo by myself



We hop on a bus to the terminal

At the baggage-claim, I meet a mom and son who were returning from Saipan and exchange contact information. Yay! My first contacts in Beijing. I think I need a cell phone.

At the information counter, Jyang helps me contact the Embassy where my friend, Les, works. We exchange email addresses, and she agrees to show me around Beijing once I get settled. Hmm...I really think need a cell phone.



Jyang at the customer service counter at Beijing Airport

With the name of my destination written in Mandarin characters, I head down to street level, where I take a taxi to meet Les. I won't show you the photo of the shiesty taxi driver who tried to charge me \$70 US dollars for what should have been a \$6US ride from the airport to the US Embassy where Les works.



Beijing buggy!

While on our way to get me a cell phone, we spot a young lady who happened to be walking with a pair of golf clubs, which gave Les an opportunity to strike up a

conversation. Turns out--now get this--she's Jamaican! Her name is Anna, and she says there's about a 20-person community of Jamaicans here! I give her my email and she promises to connect and introduce me to the "massive!" (Jamaican slang for "a crowd of people!") Yup, I need a cell phone.



Anna, one of the few other Jamaicans in Beijing! Big up!



Les bargains for a good deal for my new cell!

Ok. I got a cell phone.

So, now I'm set...I've already met a few contacts with whom I'll need to share the new number for the Jamaican in China!

Yes, I think I'm going to like it here!

Les shows me around a bit more, then goes back to work, and I roam about town for a bit buying fruit and window shopping.

Last time I was in China, I had a few ok, but bland meals (prepared by chefs who I restricted to certain ingredients) and lived on cashews and raisins when I didn't have a Chinese-speaking guide to instruct the chefs. Similarly, when I went to Manila, I subsisted on lara bars and fruit for two weeks. (I didn't find the vegetarian restaurant until the night before I left). So, tomorrow is a very critical day for me.

Tomorrow's adventure: Finding a true vegan-friendly restaurant in Beijing!

Life as we know it (a missive fi di massive)

Thursday, September 2, 2010 12:36:34 PM GMT+10:00

Dear friends,

I will make this brief.

This is a special email. It is being sent out of sequence to a select group of people to share with you what just happened on my second day in China (even though you haven't received the first day's chronicle yet), because the significance of what I'm about to share with you defies adequate description in words, and can not be overstated.

Life on the planet as we know it, has been irrevocably altered.

And, in the familiar Yin/Yang "good news-bad news" construct:

First, the GOOD news:

Today, I found a VP2 style restaurant in Beijing!

For those of you who knew me in New York, you'll recall the Chinese vegetarian restaurant, Vegetarian Paradise 3 (VP3), in New York's Chinatown, which closed after Sept 11, and whose remaining sister location, VP2, is now thriving on West 4th Street in The Village close to New York University.

If so, you know what that restaurant represents to my life and gastric happiness, so you can already appreciate the earth-shattering, life-altering significance of what I've just shared with you.

The name of this restaurant is Tianchu Miaoxiang Vegetarian Restaurant (Chinese name: 天厨妙香素食(朝外店); found it on happycow.net). Out of courtesy to those who aren't familiar with VP2, I won't get into too much detail, but for those in the know, this Beijing restaurant is VP2 and then some! They've



Waiting for my first vegan meal in Beijing!

got a menu of about 20 pages, with all the mock meat, seaweed salads and veggie dishes we know and love, plus more stuff that exists here "at the source!"



A shot of the beautiful menu



What's this? Why, it's another page of the menu, of course! Because clearly, you don't understand the significance of this discovery!

The manager, Christina--as the only one on staff who speaks English--catered to me, explaining dishes, and making suggestions. (I think I'm in love.)



Me and Christina...um, I think I'm in love!

And finally, at the end of a sumptuous meal, which cost only 114RMB or about 16US, she refused to accept a tip--explaining Chinese culture and restaurant policy to me in the process. (A restaurant that won't accept tips! Can life get any better than this?? Tell everyone you know: Heaven's got a sign at the gate: "Cheapskates Welcome!")

This in a city where everywhere I go, I'm besieged by friendly Chinese ladies who stare, smile, offer their numbers, and are making life quite pleasant. So, in any event, that's the good news.

BAD news:

Now, the bad news.

um...today, I found a VP2 style restaurant in Beijing, China.

This means--my dear, sweet, close friends and family--all of you who've made my life special for all these years, and who mean the world to me--this means, quite frankly, you will likely never, ever, ever see me again.

Buh-bye.

whooooosh!

flap, flap, flap, flap, flap.... [the sound of a curtain fluttering in the breeze....]



I hadn't realized what a great sense of humor you have!
Thanks for sharing! I laughed out loud all by my lonesome!
I'm SO glad you made it to China! Guess you've just got the right
karma! –**Ruth**

[when I asked her to elaborate, Ruth replied:]

Karma to me means an aura of benevolent fate - that things just seem to work out for whoever has good karma.

That your mis-sent passport did arrive in the nick of time for you to make your flight to China - a flight that could not be re-scheduled - that HAD to be taken on that Sunday - spells good Karma to me.

That you found that vegetarian restaurant in such a short time also spells good karma to me.

One could say you're lucky - I suppose that's another way of putting it..... (though I like the good karma better!)

Does it relate to who it is that has it? Probably. After all, not everyone has good karma! One could also say you've earned it.....

It's a slippery topic!!!! –**Ruth**

From: Sandra



You never cease to amaze me!

Been keeping track of you and enjoying the many stories that you share. love it! you are so funny. so are you ever going to settle down and have little half breed passionprophets? :) hee, hee

Not sure if you got my previous email but i wanted to share with you that a friend and I recently launched a new business online. my friend traveled two years ago to Bali (inspired by the book eat, pray, love) and was further inspired by some of the jamu products that healers and masseuses were using on her. So we got together and started developing some products around the same concept and a year and a half later, we finally have our first product and the first of many more to come. our ingredients are organic, natural and botanical, great for your skin and wonderful for the earth! this product has healing properties as well so it's not just for the face. I'll send you a sample, and let me know what you think, ok? <http://mubeauty.com/> (pronounced as moobeauty)

our blog <http://mubeautyblog.com/>



Hey, Sandra, I've been using it on my face since I've been back in the New York cold. Love the scent and the fact that it's all natural. As you know, my rule is, I never put anything ON my body, that I wouldn't put IN my body. So, it's good to know the stuff is actually "edible!" I'll mention it in the Jamaican in China book I'm releasing in January!

Speaking Spandarish, Tiananmen Tour, Mock Meat & Lunch Lotto **Friday, Sept 3, 2010 3:00:55 PM GMT+10:00**

So, I met Cong (pronounced "Tsong") through the Couchsurfing.org website before I left Saipan. She graciously offered to take me around to a few places in Beijing once I got there. We agreed to meet on Thursday (Day 4). Interestingly, as I had learned through her couchsurfing profile, she speaks Spanish (quite well), and so do I, thank you very much.



As we conversed, any word Cong didn't immediately recall in English, she said in Spanish so I could understand.

(FYI: Maybe I should write the lived-but-never-chronicled Jamaican in Washington Heights saga and tell you about dating my college girlfriend who was a half-Chinese, half-Dominican Latina. Washington Heights is a neighborhood in upper Manhattan, New York, where the culture of the Dominican Republic reigns supreme!)

So, this English/Spanish/Mandarin speaking Jamaican boy in China, is hanging out with a Mandarin-English-Spanish speaking Chinese girl from Beijing, and our conversation is an interesting mix of Spanish, Mandarin and

English...um, let's see...Ok, give me a minute...Spanglarin!?! Spandarish!?!? Yeah,



that's it!

Speaking
Spandarish!

We went to the Apple store and used Baidu.com (the Chinese "Google") via the free wi-fi access to plan our day.

Then we headed on the metro to Tiananmen Square. According to Cong, for most Chinese, it's just a place to come and take pictures and where an annual festivity is held. For most westerners, the name conjures images of tanks and student protests. The Chinese people I spoke with were unaware of the iconic image of the young protester standing in front of the tank that many people outside of China associate with the name Tiananmen. In fact, while I was in China, I had a hard time actually finding that image online. However, here it is, for Cong and others who've never seen it:



You'll have a hard time finding this image online in China using the usual sources. It's accessible, but you have to find it hidden in a blog somewhere



Tiananmen Square today



Jamaican on the Streets of Tiananmen



"Can we take a photo with you, please?" (Y'know, I'm going to start charging you girls money soon!)



Workers statue in Tiananmen Square

On the way to my new favorite restaurant (my third time this week), we stopped at a juice bar where I introduced her to wheat grass. She was adventurous, tried a bit, and liked it! That's amazing! Personally, I hate the stuff! I just drink it for the chlorophyll and health benefits!

She noted that seeing me enter the store, grab a blade of grass from a tray and eat it, was just about the most shocking thing she'd seen in a while. She said it was like seeing someone stoop down on the sidewalk, and start grazing on a lawn!



Say "cheese!" oops, that's dairy....um, say "soy protein!"

So, check this out. A little-known secret of restaurant dining in Beijing is what I'm going to call "Pay List Lotto!" (If I recall correctly, the mandarin phrase for check translates literally as "pay list.") According to Cong, you can request a special feature on your check that has a scratch-off lottery option. Most times, you just win a "thank you!" but she told me she once actually won money!

The restaurants won't automatically offer the ticket since they're charged some sort of tax when they do. Even if you're hip to the game and request it, some restaurants may weasel their way out of giving it to you claiming to be out of the

tickets. Now you know!

Ahem, It goes without saying, of course, that one of the most important phrases I am determined to learn is how to ask for that darn ticket!



And, thanks to Cong, in a just a few hours, I'm already starting to recognize and understand Chinese characters on the Beijing metro!

All in all, a great day! Thanks, Cong! There had been tentative plans to attend the "Couchsurfing Foodie Night" later that evening, but I was in a stay home mood by day's end!

~~~~~  
New life to live, new things to learn  
green grass to drink, and even money to earn!  
~~~~~



Wooooooooow Walt
what a big surprise {{{(>_<)}}}
u didn't tell me u are such great writer
put it on your website...i think i will do it if u don't
it's really interesting, i laughed a lot when i readed it O(∩_∩)O~ it
was the craziest day i have ever had...your crazy is contagious –**crazy Cong**

Couchsurfing Party!

Monday, September 6, 2010 9:12:25 AM GMT+08:00

My adventure in Beijing, China continues. As a member of the Beijing group on the couchsurfing.org site, I found out about a Saturday evening gathering. As it was just a short walk from where I'm staying in Sanlitun, I decided to attend. It was well-attended with a lot of international representation.

Now, I'm more of a stay-on-the-side-and-observe-reluctant-party-mingler, but I find the atmosphere here in Beijing makes it much easier to meet people. Plus, party emcee, Trevor H, did his best to introduce me to as many people as possible. Thanks, Trevor!

There was great conversation, new contacts for future travels, and even a double proposal to punctuate the night!



The ladies from Inner Mongolia



(from left to right) America and China meet Jamaica and France



The lady from Germany



Singapore and France



No, I wasn't the one being proposed to, or doing the proposing!



The party moves outside, then to two different nightclubs!

You'll have to see some other party-goer's accounts of the rest of the night!
At that point, I called it a night and headed home!

Nomadpreneur 101--Question of the Day

Wednesday, September 8, 2010, 8:37:08 PM EDT



Hey Walt, You're actually living the life I've always wanted...to be anywhere in the world with my computer and still be making money...

So tell me, how are you able to travel around from country to country...how do you work your business? I'm curious because I'm thinking about making a move myself...—Roy

Roy is a college friend now living in California, whom I see every few years. Before I share my answer to his question of the day, let me first say that while this is a blog about my personal adventures and the lifestyle I choose to live, I've come to understand (and you should, too this about me) that everything I am and everything I do serves my life's purpose.

Before I was the Jamaican in China, I was (and continue to be) a business author known as "the Passion Prophet." My life's purpose through my books is to "share what I know, so that others may grow."

The overall theme of my writings is to help people discover, develop and profit from the pursuit of their passions. This current year's theme is "Reclaim Your Power! Break Free! Live True to Your Self!"

So when I share my Jamaican in China adventure, it's not just to tell a story, but to show what is possible, to help people break free from limiting beliefs and habits. I'm here to prove a point. And that point is: you can create the lifestyle of your dreams, and here is someone (me) who is doing it, so this is just one way it can be done. With that said, here's how I replied to Roy.....



Hey Roy,

Thanks for the question.

Right now I'm sitting outside of the Apple store in Beijing, China, using their wi-fi access.

Yesterday I had to endure the incessant jiggling at Hooters while I used the access at their restaurant. I know. Life can be tough sometimes.

Anyway, later today, a technician is scheduled to configure my Mac to access the wi-fi where I'm currently staying, and things should be back on track.

I've spent the last several years creating streams of income that don't require my constant presence. The basis of all of the ventures is the Philosophy and Formula I shared in my book, *Turn Your Passion Into Profit* (Sign up online at www.passionprofit.com to receive some free gifts and a free chapter)

At this point, most everything is on auto-pilot. The sites are up and running 24-hours a day, people order my products, and all I need to do is respond

to an occasional customer service issue and send out weekly emails. Essentially, all I need is internet access to keep track of things and "work my business."

I use Skype to if I have to make calls if I need to take orders or speak to customers or vendors directly. When my nomad schedule allows, I also do a little one-on-one coaching by phone or Skype.

Even the tourism business I started in Saipan can be run all by email with the help of the vendors on island with whom I have relationships.



You can get all the details of every aspect of how I've structured my nomadpreneur business in the *48-Hour Quickstart Manual* and learn tips on creating *Websites That Sell*

Beijing Hooters girl dance break! Do you mind? I'm trying to work over here!

Visit the PassionProfit.com site, sign up and receive access to view the products, plus a free online course.

1`

One Night in Ho Hai!

Friday, September 10, 2010 11:39:28 AM EDT

A few days ago, I met up with another couchsurfer and her friend for a tour of a famous little section of Beijing.

Seems everyone takes their foreign visitors to this part of town, but there's so much to see and do, that it's a different



experience each time!



First, we strolled down a shopping district near to Tiananmen Square chatting about life in China... (I'm learning a lot about what Chinese think about Americans. It's pretty interesting. I'm not American, but it's giving me a business idea I'll share with you at another time)

Then, took a bus to another area called Drum Tower...

Even the ducks were out that night

...and then on to Ho Hai.

Great atmosphere, gondola-style, foot-powered boats cruise a lake surrounded by restaurants with solo performers.

Nice area to bring a date!



Jamaican-style cool in the streets of Ho Hai!



*Traditional
street
performers*

*Sunny, Walt
and Suzie*

How to Meet Girls in Beijing, China

Tuesday, September 14, 2010 5:17:06 PM GMT+08:00

So, here's the scenario: You're a man. You're not Chinese. You don't look Chinese, and you're planning a trip China! Great! Congratulations!

"So," you ask, "how are the women there?" (Yes, guys ask that question...all the time!)

Good news:

The thing is, as a foreign (Jamaican) guy, Beijing is probably one of the friendliest places I've ever experienced! If your experience is anything like mine, you'll enjoy being here.

Here's what you've got going for you. Here in China, there's widespread curiosity about foreigners. People are advertising rooms for rent and "roommate wanted" situations with a preference for foreigners. Most everyone wants to learn English, and people are naturally friendly.

Bad news:

But, even so, there may be some challenges to maximizing your dating prospects. First of all, you'll be a stranger in a strange land. It's a different culture. There are different gender roles. You may or may not speak the language, and most people are probably going to assume that you don't.

But, there are also a few other challenges to meeting girls. This is an unofficial survey, but I've already heard it many times from the girls here in Beijing that "I'm afraid to talk because my English is not good" or "...many times we see a handsome foreigner, but we don't know what to say."

You see, I've also learned that a prevalent perception of foreigners that Chinese have (among many) is that there are certain things that Chinese shouldn't talk about with foreigners lest you offend them.

So think what a challenge it must be for the foreign-curious girl on the street who's culturally shy, extremely self-conscious about how good her spoken English is, doesn't know how to initiate a conversation, AND afraid she might offend you by saying the wrong thing?

So, what's a girl-seeking foreign man to do????

Wouldn't it be nice if you had some way of letting them know that you're NOT an unfriendly, selfish foreigner? (I told you there were many stereotypes)

Wouldn't it be nice if you had some simple way to show that you're open to talk, that you respect the language and culture?

Hmmm....You're probably thinking, "I wish I had a t-shirt that said, "Say Hello to me!" or one that said "Ask me anything!" That would be sooo cool!"

Well, you can thank me later, but here it is!

"Say Hello to Me!"



*Check this out: An actual t-shirt that says:
跟我说 "你好" (gen wo shuo ni hao) Mandarin
for "Say hello to me!"*

\$14.99 plus shipping

Long sleeve version

\$28.99 plus shipping

Don't like
t-shirts?

Well, check this out:



*an actual button that says:
跟我说 "你好" (gen wo shuo ni hao)
Mandarain for "Say hello to me!"*

\$5.00 each; \$19.95 for a 10 pack!

What's that? Don't like buttons or t-shirts? Well, check this out an actual baseball cap that says: 跟我说 "你好" (gen wo shuo ni hao) Mandarin for "Say hello to me!"



And the best part is (again, you can thank me later), they're all ready to order at <http://www.cafepress.com/jaminchina>

So, will this t-shirt improve your love life? Well, it might get you a smile, lessen a young lady's fear of initiating a conversation, and "get you in the door," so to speak...What you do after that is entirely up to you, your natural charm, personality and magnetism!

p.s. And you don't have to be in Beijing to wear it. It'll work just as well in your local Chinatown in the US or anywhere!. (And every city's got one!) Wear it loud and proud!



p.p.s. I imagine this will works for women too, if you're a foreign woman into Asian guys!

p.p.p.s. Forward this email to someone who'd be interested!

p.p.p.p.s. Thanks to Ava Shang for her help with my research!

Also available:

The Jamaican in China official t-shirt!



What a promotion! I'm living vicariously through you and on some level experiencing life in China. I want you to know that! –**K**



My, My! Aren't you generous - to give away all your hard-won (or whatever) secrets! Well, not all of them, but some..... :-)-**Ruth**



1 Billion Chinese.
More than half of them women.
I think I'll be alright.
W

But, on a serious note, from the search terms people are using to discover my blog, I realize there is a real need for dating advice for non-Chinese in China. So, why don't we ask a Chinese guy for some dating tips? I met Jian as he was vacationing on Saipan. He attended Tsinghua University (in Beijing) for his Bachelor's and Stanford for his Masters Degree. He's presently living in the states.



Hey Jian,

On a related note, I want to make sure I'm reading the cues and clues correctly here in China.

On Saipan, if I gave a Chinese girl my number, if she was interested she would call. Simple as that. If she said something like, "Maybe you can teach me English," that was another sign she was hinting at more intimate interaction. It was sort of a code phrase I realized was being used.

On the other hand, a Chinese girl who lives here in BEIJING told me I shouldn't attach any deeper meaning to a call or even what I would consider a "date." Many girls will just want to have a foreign friend and go out,(dinner, etc.) even though they already have a boyfriend.

So, given the cultural shyness, what should I look for to indicate a Chinese girl might be interested in being more than friends? Some things are universal, but given the strength of cultural roles, they might be going on assumptions that, as you said, work fine in dealings with Chinese men, but not with Jamaicans!



This is a tough one for me, Walt. Girls in Beijing generally have higher education than girls you met in Saipan so they might be more sophisticated and little harder to read. There are some subtle cues that I can pick up when they occur but it is something in the category of "implicit knowledge" so that it is harder to convey in a message. I will give it a try. The following cues are of no particular order.

1. In Chinese culture, bodily touch between opposite sex (except lovers) is considered indecent, while touch between the same sex is normal, which is different in the US. I like to watch people on the street when I have nothing to do like waiting. If a young man and a young lady walking by but they keep some distance from each other, usually they are in the very first dates or just colleagues. So the first sign of anything beyond a friend is the willingness of light touch, usually very quick, such a snap of your shoulder, or a knock on your arm.

2. Find out if she is willing to go out with you alone, but not activities that she does daily, like going to the pub, eating in a restaurant, or shopping. The Chinese girl who gave you that advice was right. These daily activities might give the girl a sense that you are not a "special" friend. Invite her to a hike (only you two), and see how she responds.

3. Does she call you with some flimsy pretexts? She wants to see you more, but she does not want to get hurt if you reject her right away if she says so directly. So she might use some pretexts to protect herself.

4. Is she comfortable going to a party with you? Showing up in front of her circle of friends is a good indication she is taking you as a special person.

By the way, I am not sure what kind of relationship you are looking for. If I were single, there would be three choices: 1) I would enjoy company of a female friend from time to time, without anything romantic; 2) I might want to find a lover, without the prospects of getting married; 3) I might want to find a future wife. Which one are you in for?--**Jian**



Well, what I'm actually looking for, and I've never told anyone this is



Um, sorry, but that response has been redacted. However, I did send Jian a photo of a young lady I met in Beijing, explained some of the issues I was encountering, and we continued our discussion...



Yep, she's 25 years old.

I'm still doing the research, of course, but I'm beginning to think either I'm attracting the "wounded birds" (something I've accepted about my type of magnetism), or there's a lot of naivete, unhappiness, and what we would call immaturity here in China. (something you alluded to when we met) But, of course, I haven't met a girl over 25 since I've been here, so this may all be age-appropriate behavior. --**Walt**

I also get tips from Americans who've lived in China for many years.



Next time you are in Beijing, if you have nothing to do, and need somewhere to hang out, check out the Starbucks in the Shin Kong Place Mall next to the Da Wang Lu subway stop on line 1. I was there with a potential business partner for about an hour, and both of us kept getting distracted every five minutes by hot, tall girls in hooker heels and tights. Good potential business partner, free coffee (he paid), and hot girls. It was an hour well spent. I bet there is lots of immaturity in China. That is just my feeling and what people have told me. My friends who get the 10-20 calls a day for a week after getting with girls might also agree. **B.**

O U T T A K E #1



"The Asian Woman Whisperer"

Whisperer?

When I told my friend, Howard, back in New York, of my oft-repeated pattern of finding shy girls who I nurture to new levels of erotic enjoyment, he referred to me as an "Asian Woman Whisperer." The whisperer concept was popularized by the movie, *The Horse Whisperer*. Here is the description of that movie in typical Hollywood style:

The Horse Whisperer:** Tom is a talented trainer with a remarkable gift for understanding horses, who is hired to help an injured teenager (played by Scarlett Johansson) and her horse back to health following a tragic accident. **Rated PG

This, of course, led me to create my own movie description:

The Asian Wallflower Whisperer:** Walt is a man with the unique ability to find, nurture and break shy, demure Asian wallflowers out of their introverted ways and turn them into kinky, lascivious nymphomaniacs. **(R)

And got me thinking of the other whisperers we never hear much about:

The Hoarse Whisperer:** Tom is a man with the ability to communicate with hard-of-hearing people....but he has to shout. He shouts so much that he loses his voice and becomes known as the Hoarse Whisperer. **Rated PG.

The Whores Whisperer:** Tom is man with the ability to communicate with prostitutes. A whore healer of mystical talents, he is hired by a loving pimp to nurse his main money-earnin' bitch back to health following a tragic, but not all too unexpected "accident." **Unrated.

The Divorce Whisperer:** Tom is a man with the ability to whisper into the ears of women and nurse them out of nowhere marriages and into his bed. **Rated X.

----- E N D O F O U T T A K E -----

Yes, I couldn't believe it either!!

Something has been brought to my attention that I find extremely difficult to believe. In fact, so much has it shaken the very foundational supports of my earthbound existence, that I feel I must ask YOU, my dear friends and family members, to help me do a reality check. You see, it all started a few days ago, when a member of my Jamaican in China mailing list wrote me an email and added the following postscript in reference to the banner I use for my emails:



This is the banner on my site and in my emails



She wrote:

p.s. Just love your multi-colored e-mails!



Sensing something telling about her comment, I wrote back:

R, Just to make sure we're on the same page, the colors of the Jamaican flag are black, green and gold, and, of course, China's is red. So, there's a bit of significance to the color scheme!



To which she replied:

I don't remember your telling your general readership this useful piece of info. Might I suggest that you do so -- so they can better appreciate why you picked those colors? Or is everyone supposed to be smart enough to figure it out for themselves (as I was not -- sigh)?

To which I replied to her and billions of potential readers of my blog:

You're kidding me, right???? How could you NOT know????!

Thursday, September 16, 2010 8:45:26 AM GMT+08:00

There, there, "R." Don't feel too bad. But don't feel too good either. Because frankly, I'm shocked and appalled!

Now it's conceivable, I concede, that a bit of self-important nationalism prevented me from being objective on this topic. Lord knows, it wouldn't be the first time a Jamaican was accused of such a transgression. However, I WILL argue that there have been numerous clues throughout popular culture as well as recent history such that no one on the planet with a pair of functioning eyes (as well as internet access, high-definition television, a blackberry, and tons of time to kill, of course) should be unaware of the colors of OUR flag!

I mean, come on!! There've been so many visible clues!

Remember the Jamaican Bobsled Team???



Didn't you wonder about the snazzy colors?

What about Usain Bolt???. As he ran his victory lap, and his huge black green and gold cape fluttered in the tailwind blocking the view of the finish line of the other runners who were just hitting the final stretch of the race.....



didn't you wonder about the snazzy colors?

Okay, so maybe you're not a sports fan, but surely you remember the

familiar Jamaican-American lapel pin Colin Powell would wear on his uniform????



Okay, okay. I made that one up. There was no lapel pin.



It was a hat.

Remember? He would wear it on every talk show and at every press conference. Don't tell me you didn't wonder about it?

Besides Colin Powell, whose parents were both Jamaican, there've been numerous other Jamaicans and Jamaican-Americans who have influenced US and world history and culture: Marcus Garvey, Bob Marley, Biggie Smalls... Tyson Beckford, Shari Belafonte, Corbin Bleu (I have NO idea who this is, but wikipedia says he/she was in High School Musical, which I know was very popular!), Sheryl Lee Ralph, Louis Farrakhan, as well as other artists, beauty contest winners, business owners, scientists, models, musicians, politicians....I mean the list goes on and on!

Check out http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Jamaicans for more!

And also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Jamaican_Americans

And every one of them, at some time or other, has sported the "black green and gold!" IF you were paying attention, you couldn't miss it!



Okay, okay... maybe Minister Farrakhan didn't actually wear the standard issue rudeboy wool tam every Jamaican male is issued at birth, but you can tell by his rebellious, fierce and independent spirit that he's got Jamaican blood in him (His father was from Jamaica).



Heck, I wouldn't be surprised if Barack Obama has some Jamaican in him. But, at present, this is only a theory of mine. I'd need to see a birth certificate.

Jamaican? Only the Birthers know for sure!

But even if you didn't catch the entertainment spots, the sports coverage, or the political punditry, there's still your basic, elementary school education for heaven's sake, I mean, *every* Jamaican school child learns this little saying:

"Hardships there are, but the land is green and the sun shineth."

as way to memorize the symbolic meanings of the colors of the Jamaican flag:

- Yellow: a symbol of sunshine and natural resources
- Green: the land and hope for the future
- Black: the burdens borne by the people

Um, what??? You mean they don't teach that here in YOUR schools? Then of what possible significance or meaningful value has been your so-called education????????!!!! (ahem....sorry...got a little carried away there.)

Anyway, I'm done.

For now.

You have been forgiven. But, you're not off the hook.

Don't let it happen again.

And just to show my tolerance of other people's failure to use their basic powers of observation, as well as the glaringly obvious deficiencies in the educational systems in other countries, I've included the flags of both Jamaica and China in the title section of this and all future mailings, and I've added it to the home page of the www.JamaicanInChina.com site as well, so there shall be no doubt in future.

Walt

p.s. Glad I could help round out your education, "R!" You can thank me later!

p.p.s. [from wikipedia]: The flag of Jamaica was adopted on August 6, 1962 which was the original Jamaican Independence Day, the country having gained independence from the British-protected Federation of the West Indies. The flag consists of a gold saltire, which divides the flag into four sections: two of them green (top and bottom) and two black (hoist and fly).

The present design emerged from those sent in by the public in a national competition. It was originally designed with horizontal stripes, but this was considered too similar to the Tanganyikan flag, and so the saltire was substituted.

Black, green, and gold are Pan-African colors. An earlier interpretation of the colors was, "hardships there are but the land is green and the sun shineth": gold recalls the shining sun, black reflects hardships, and green represents the land. However, that was changed to the colour black representing the strength and creativity of the people which has allowed them to overcome the odds, yellow for the golden sunshine and green for the lush vegetation of the island.

More from Jamaica!

My friend, Wayne, sent me the following email. I haven't edited or verified any of the facts and claims contained herein, but surely you understand that that little technicality won't stop me--or any true Jamaican-- from boasting about each and every one of them as undeniably true, and of spreading them (as I am doing now) in our trademark arrogance, and sometimes almost offensive zeal and sense of national pride.



Interesting facts!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

- Jamaica has the most "churches" per square mile of any country in the world. Source-Guinness Book of World Records. Over 1,600 "churches" all over Jamaica . That number is growing.
- Jamaica was the first country in the Western world to construct a railway, even before the United States ! Only 18 years after Britain !
- Jamaica is the first Caribbean Country to gain Independence .
- Jamaica is the first team from the English-speaking Caribbean to qualify for the Football (Soccer) World Cup. This was the 1998 championship.
- Jamaica stands strong in 3rd place on the list of countries to win the Miss World titles the most! [Hmmm!] The only countries to have won it more than Jamaica is India , Venezuela and the UK , but considering the size of Jamaica , you have to say that this achievement is monumental!
- On his second voyage to the New World in 1494, the tip of the Blue Mountains in Jamaica was the first land sighted by Christopher Columbus.
- Jamaica was the first commercial producer of bananas in the Western Hemisphere
- Jamaica was the first island in the Caribbean to produce rum on a commercial basis.
- The Manchester Golf Club in Jamaica , established in 1868, is the oldest in the western hemisphere!
- Apart from the US, Jamaica has won the most world/olympic medals.
- 2006-2007: World Fastest man and woman- you bet, are Jamaicans [Asafa Powell and Sherone Simpson].
- Jamaica has more multiple (two or more) live births than anywhere else in the world.

- Jamaica was the first country to impose economic sanctions against the apartheid regime of South Africa .
- Jamaica is the third largest island in the Caribbean .
- Jamaica was the first Caribbean island to enact legislation, "The Motion Picture Industry (Encouragement) Act" to promote the making of films.
- Jamaica is the first country to sign a Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria grant agreement.
- Jamaica was the first tropical country to enter the IOC Winter Olympics. The bobsleigh team's efforts inspired the film 'Cool Runnings'.
- Jamaica was the first colony England acquired by conquest. This was in the year 1655 when the Spanish were driven from the island.
- We have the second largest butterfly in the world? (The Giant Swallowtail).
- Another of the interesting facts on Jamaica is that it was the first British colonial territory to establish a postal service (in 1688).
- Jamaica was the first Caricom country to liberalize the telecommunications sector. Since then, other Caricom countries have opened up to competition.
- Another one I found to be one of the most interesting facts on Jamaica is that Jamaica was the first country in the Caribbean region to launch a web site, jamaicatravel.com . This was in 1994!
- And if you know none of the above, (which is fine) I expect you at least know that Jamaica is the birth place of Robert ("Bob") Marley [smile]
- that Port Royal in Jamaica was once labeled 'The wickedest city on Earth'?
- that the Jamaican Flag is the ONLY flag in the world, that doesn't share any of the colors of the American flag? [I did the research and found that it's Jamaica, Mauritania and Libya!--Walt]

Now my friend, get out and share you new found knowledge of Jamaica .

--**Wayne**

...and speaking of education...

The Value of an Education

Wednesday, September 29, 2010 7:48:33 AM EDT

I'm still writing my weekly article for the Saipan Tribune newspaper. Today's adventure in thought, inspired by life in China, touches on an idea that most everyone can appreciate. It is particularly targeted to those in the midst of a pursuit of a formal education. This particular post was written as a special article for the Saipan Tribune, but here it is just for you:



The Value of an Education

A special message to students from the Jamaican in China

Not many things surprise me.

Having practiced a certain amount of non-attachment to things, outcomes and people throughout my life has given me a unique take on life.

I'm not inflexibly attached to my goals. Yes, I set goals and strive to reach them, but if things don't turn out exactly as I would like, I don't resist. I go with the flow, seek the silver lining, find the lesson to be learned, grow from the experience, and reset my expectations. I believe that there is divine order at work, although it may not always seem to be so from my vantage point. I know that the universe is perfect.

I'm not unduly attached to my expectations of others. Yes, I have my standards, but if people don't behave exactly as I would like, I don't judge. I accept that people are here for different reasons and are not obligated (or sometimes, even able) to act in certain ways simply because I expect them to. I go with the flow, file the observations away for future reference, and reset my expectations. I know that people will do what people will do.

I'm not easily distracted or shaken off course. Yes, I strive to live in the moment and embrace the range of emotions that humans experience, but when catastrophes, disasters and accidents occur, I don't panic. I keep my wits about me and am able to see what actions are necessary, and take them calmly and efficiently. I believe and accept a unique insight into the nature of things. I know that stuff happens.

So, why am sharing all of this? Well, my ultimate point is actually not as profound as the lead-up might imply. First, however, I'll share with you that I'm not on Saipan anymore. In case the news didn't reach you through the usual channels, this Jamaican nomad is now in Beijing, China!

Spanish in China

But, here's the interesting part. If anyone had told me I would be speaking Spanish in order to communicate with the Chinese people I'm meeting here ("Hey, Walt, I hear you're going to China. Well, make sure you start practicing your Spanish. You're going to need it.") I would absolutely, positively, (though, perhaps, not out loud) have thought to myself, "This person has lost her mind."

You see, there are quite a number of Chinese learning Spanish, and I happened to have connected with one of them through a networking site before escaping to China. Through her, I've been meeting more and more Spanish-

speaking Chinese, and since my Mandarin is not as developed as it soon will be, and since their English isn't either, we communicate in Spanish!

Surprise, surprise!

As I said, even though I'm not easily surprised by life's often fascinating turn of events, I will hereby go on record to say the following: Every time I find myself texting or speaking Spanish to my new friends as I walk the streets of Beijing, China, I can't help but pause, smile and think, "Wow, this is pretty cool!" (Yep, that's the extent of my expression of surprise.)

Now, such occurrences are probably normal and par for the course for veteran, multilingual nomads who must often find a common language for communication with those they meet in their journeys, but for me, a Kingston, Jamaican-born, farm boy at heart, yes, it's enough to surprise me.

All because.

And it's all possible because, are you ready for my point now, finally? It's all because: I paid attention in school!

"I'm not going to be a programmer, why do I need to learn Fortran?"

Yes, but because I paid attention in Spanish class, I can put what I learned to practical use and live my dream life communicating with people who speak no English in a country where I wouldn't have expected I would need it.

"I don't know any Spanish people, why do I need to learn Spanish?"

Yes, but because I paid attention in Fortran (a computer programming language) class in high school, and in college, and learned the basic logic of IF statements and DO loops, I can figure out a fix for my own website's "shopping cart" software and continue to make money online while I'm gallivanting on the Great Wall. (See "Guess What I Did Today" on the JamaicaninChina.com blog)

"Click here to send us a verification message, so we can rob you blind!"

Because I paid attention in English class, I can spell correctly, recognize good grammar from bad, and determine the scam emails from the legitimate ones. ("I enjoyed your recent verification message!" SaipanTribune.com 7/21/2010)

Summary

So, anyway, these are just three recent examples of many that I could use to make a simple point: Everything you will ever be, do or have in life will be the sum total of all that you know and experience. Therefore, the way to be, do or have more is to learn more. Many people shy away from certain types of education believing that it won't ever be relevant to their future. However, everything from your formal education to basic skills like driving a car, cooking,

etc., all combine to maximize your future potential. They give you more options, and more points of contact with the wider world.

So, as a student, whether you are in elementary, high school or college, keep an open mind as you plan and execute your education. You never know how the things you're learning now will figure into your future life. Everything builds upon what comes before. Every bit of knowledge and information has the potential to improve your life.

And, who knows? One day, if and when you decide to envision a new life for yourself, to break free from the traditions and the shackles of other people's expectations and limitations, to run off to pursue a life that fulfills your personal and private desires, you might just surprise yourself with how much you really do know, and how much it can actually help you live the life of your dreams!

Buena suerte, hǎo yùnlì and good luck!



My Spanish-speaking, Chinese friends



Checking out a huge art exhibit in Beijing



This is where I'm currently staying in Beijing: The Golden Inns in Jingsong

I was paying about 120RMB/day for this room



From my new home in Jingsong, I head out into the neighborhood each day to meet the world. Here's an example of something that happened one day that I shared with my close friends in a private email.

Of course, not all the emails I share with my friends while I'm traveling are really meant for public

dissemination....um, well, until I decide that they are! Enjoy!

OUTTAKE #2



"I Will Not Date the High School Girl!"

While strolling through the park one day..."



Sooooo.....I'm walking down the street in Jinsong, Beijing. Minding my own business...whistling a happy tune.....and I see this girl. She's going in the same direction. I pass her. I smile. Her eyes widen. She walks to catch up to me and says:

"Where are you from?" (In English), Then asks me: "What are you doing?" (In Chinese)

I tell her I'm looking for a calling card to add minutes to my cell phone.

She offers to help me look, asks me to teach her English, gives me her email address and number, and then tells me.....

[wait for it...]

[wait for it....]

[wait for it....]

[Quick! Turn the page!]

....that she's 17 years old. BAM!

Hmmm...Any cops around?

Actually, I knew she was probably jailbait from the moment she started speaking. So, that's why I asked her how old she was. Needless to say (but it shall be said), I won't be pursuing this social track.



FULL
SUBJECT LINE OF
THIS EMAIL: strictly
for the guys, and one
or two women
who....won't call the
cops! This one is not
for public
dissemination.
Unless, you want my
blog to be renamed
Jamaican in Custody
in China.

The camera, sweetie. Look at the camera.

But, it didn't stop there! The email elicited a flood of responses and even encouragement. (One feminist friend of mine took great offense, but I'll leave that part out of this discussion!)

I will not date the high school girl....! THE SEQUEL



If you received yesterday's email, it means I once considered you spiritually advanced, emotionally stable, mature and psychologically balanced enough to appreciate the subtleties and nuances of the gravity of these types of situations enough to agree with my assessments and advise me appropriately.

Here's how you perverts responded:



"Hey, in China the line is drawn at 16. So don't mind the cops. They won't get you!"--J



"Well is she too young for your taste? Who knows, she might teach YOU a thing or two..."--D



"What's wrong with teaching the girl English? Just charge her money for it. Why would it matter how old she is?"--S

Ahem. Therefore, to make it absolutely clear to you deviants that I will not continue any interaction with this minor in any way, shape or form, I am going to quote from a little-known, but soon-to-be-published book by "Dr. Dread".

I will not date
the high school girl
nor take her out
into the world

We'd sit there at home.
We'd sit there, we two.
And she'd say, "How I wish
We had something to do!"

Too young to take out.
Too young for the mall.
We'd sit in the house.
We'd do nothing at all.

So all we would do is to
Sit!

Sit!

Sit!

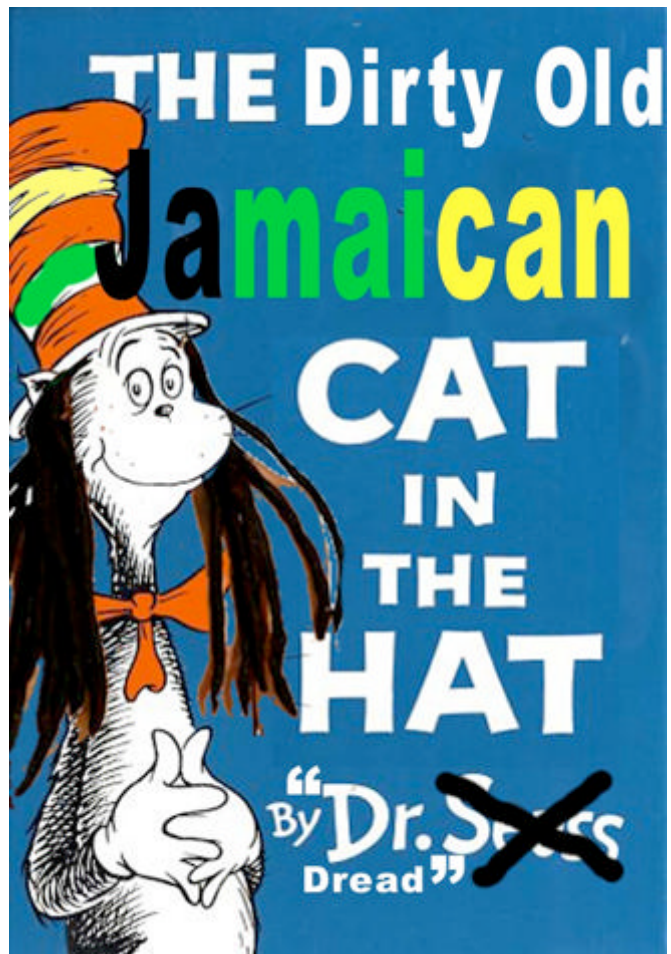
Sit!

And we would not like it.
Not one little bit.

Just ONE thing to do.
That we'd do all day long.
I am sure you can guess.
And it just feels so wrong.

No I could not tell friends.
That among life's odd crimes.
My new girlfriend and I
read nursery rhymes!

Sick, people. Really sick!



My Chinese friends not familiar with American literary culture may wish to check out the children's book, "The Cat In The Hat"

This sparked an interesting follow-up conversation, and some clarification from a Chinese male friend.



Well, I don't understand why they are sick. Maybe we are influenced by two different kinds of culture.

Yes, the girl is innocent. But what would make you guilty? I assume that you would make love with a girl only if you can connect with her. If that is true, I do not see anything wrong or to be guilty for, although I would also feel wrong. My question of whether the girl is too young for your taste is really a question of whether you can connect with a young person who presumably does not have much experience with other human beings.

The question (also to myself) is what do we feel wrong for? Because we have more experience than the girl so we are taking advantage of her or, because we are coded with the physical instinct that we should not have develop romantic relationship with a person of the age that could be our children's?--**Jian**



hey Jian,

The statement "You people are sick!" is not to be taken literally. That's why I put the smiley face next to it.

Most people (at least in the states) who read that would smile, knowing that I'm just joking with them.



Got it. This kind of sense is hard to acquire through dictionaries. Thank you for pointing out.



Now, to answer your question, I think I COULD connect with someone regardless of their age, since, in my opinion, the connection is more a function of their spirit, their energy, their "chi" and NOT how many years they've been on the planet. Typically, spending more years on the planet allows for a person to develop a perspective on life that could give us more to have in common, BUT, we all know there are people who spend more years on the planet who haven't learned a darn thing in all that time, so that, in itself is not a prerequisite.

As far as feeling guilty. Yes, there's an assumption that she should be allowed to develop romances with "boys her own age" so that she can experience age-appropriate feelings and responses and interaction at a pace and at a level that is more in line with her own emotional maturity. There's an assumption that she would be massively hurt by having experienced (and losing) an "adult"

relationship before she was emotionally ready for one. There's also a presumption that the level of sexual intensity that would ensue would also "scar" her once it ended. (I think--at least for me--there's an underlying belief that the end of the relationship is inevitable, and that the loss would cause harm to one who had not experienced and lost younger level relationships. (I don't know if that's just my own belief system.)



Perhaps it sounds cruel but I believe it is the truth: she will get "scarred" anyway, no matter what age her boyfriend is, if the relationship is going to end (and this has a high probability to happen). This is one of the life lessons she will take along the way, and some are bitter and some are sweet, but that is how a person can mature. In fact, an emotionally mature boyfriend [you] might be able to handle the ending more skillful and less painful for her than a young and inexperienced one, for example, one of her own age. If her love is genuine, I think you do not have to burden yourself too much in this relationship.



For me, I think it is more #1. I feel as if, knowing what I know...knowing how to seduce and woo a woman. Knowing how to impress someone. Knowing that simple things like listening to a person and showing an interest and being a gentleman, and the level of my experience with communication skills gives me an "unfair advantage," and even with the best of intentions and real interest in her, it would simply be a manipulation of sorts. Not that the interest isn't genuine, but she simply wouldn't have developed the ability to put up any defenses or set her own pace in the progress of the relationship--abilities that would likely come with more years spent on the earth.

I find that even with ADULT women, simply holding a door, giving a flower, or opening a car door is enough to wow them.



Well said. I find that more introverted girls are easier to woo. Married woman, especially those who do not feel love from her husband, can be quite vulnerable to other man's gentleness. The only obstacle is the "responsibility" of being sexually faithful to her husband but that can also be a weak defense at times. In general, those who are thirsty for love and care are vulnerable to wooing.



Another IMPORTANT aspect of this is the following:
In the eyes of many INCLUDING MYSELF, "resorting" to dating a 17 year old leads to the questions: "Couldn't he find a woman his own age? What's wrong with him that he had to go looking in a high

school for his dating partners?" It's seen as an indication that I am somehow damaged and incapable of relating to adult women. It's seen and felt as a sign of desperation after "failing" at finding romance among people of my own age and emotional maturity.



That is true in the US (or at least from my limited living experience in the US). What a difference it makes when you cross the pacific and talk about it in China! People would focus on the girl instead, with questions like: "what is she being attracted by this man? Money, or chance to go abroad?" as if a young girl would have no other reason to date a much older man. In addition, since you are a "black man", who are typically from less developed countries, people would be more curious of the why.

[see my response to Jian, which inspired Chapter 7 "Coming Black to Asia"]

----- END OF OUTTAKE -----

Dating the Waitress at Your Favorite Vegetarian Restaurant (And other bad decisions). The Nomad's Relationship Guide

Let's just say, shall we, in the interest of brevity and discretion, that there's now a vegetarian restaurant--of the few in Beijing--that I may have to think twice about visiting next time I'm in town. Or, at least, I'll have to ask a friend to go inside first and make sure the coast is clear before I enter... Note to self: Lesson learned: Date the girls who work in the meat-centric restaurants!

My idea of a good day....

Saturday, October 2, 2010 8:44:45 AM GMT+08:00

Today was a good day. Here I am in Beijing, China. My goal is to experience all the sights and sounds of being here just as if I was a local resident. Today starts with a walk through the streets to blend into everyday life. (They'll never suspect I'm not really Chinese!)



Parents take their kids to school



My friend, Susan, introduced me to Ritan Park. So, I headed back there on different occasions to see the morning routine and stroll through the park to watch people exercising, dancing playing games, doing Tai Chi, Gongfu, etc.



A unique combination of hackey sack, badminton and volleyball!



Lots of beautiful scenery



Girls and swords...Nice! This young lady, aware I was filming, finished her routine facing me, and gave me such a sweet smile, but I had stopped filming a split second before and never caught it! Darn! Darn! Darn!



Yep, table tennis tables in the middle of the sidewalk. Now, HERE'S a country that's got its priorities in order!



Making new friends...Hmmm....red paddle, black paddle. Wonder if there's any subliminal message here?



My idea of a "happy meal" All organic. All vegan. A meal at Beijing Vegan Hut (Wo hen gao xin: I am very happy!)



Lee Yu, owner of Beijing Vegan Hut. Stay tuned for my review on www.happycow.net, Lee!



Don't forget to look up! Vegan Hut is a little tricky to find, and is on the second floor of what looks like an office building. Search on HappyCow.net for my review and my directions which should get you there!

Doesn't take much to make me happy, really.

Yes. Today was a good day. Hoy fue un buen dia. Jīntiān shìgè hǎo rìzi!

Walt,



You are one amazing Dude. So much fun to watch your life's adventures. Appreciate being part of it. I do look forward to your emails. I have a separate folder in my Gmail account labeled Walt, just for your communications. Have to run, like what else is new.

But I will send you a more detailed email in the not-too-distant future and let you know what is going on with me.

Blessings continue to be upon you, my friend. You would make a great Global Ambassador. –**Rich**



Wow Walt. Thank you for sharing. This is so amazing!!! You are amazing!!! What an adventure! God bless and keep on keepin' on.

I love it. Peace –**D**

Seen in China

Tuesday, October 5, 2010 10:00:35 AM GMT+08:00

Just a few random shots of things seen in China!

Take me to...

"Ni Hao! Welcome to Beijing!"

"Hi, Mr. Taxi Driver, I need to find a hotel."

"Ok, I'll take you to a hotel."



"BAM! You want a hotel? Here's a hotel."

Lonely?

A little lonely, perhaps? Or maybe you've already met someone and want to spice up those hot, romantic nights? Well, now that you're comfortable in a hotel, time to explore. In New York, there's "The Pink Pussycat Boutique," "Babes in Toyland" and "Eve's Garden." In Paris, there's "Toys Me." In Beijing, there's the...Look! Over there! There it is!....um...it's the "Sex Appliance Shop???"

Hmm...something.....not....quite....warm and fuzzy, here. Or is it just me?



Here's my card. Call me. Let's talk marketing.

Click!

A few weeks ago, at the couchsurfing.org event, I met a cool fellow named Andrea from Italy. We keep in touch, and he recently shared his altervista photo album with me. This was my favorite photo because of his great timing!



Got it! (Photo: Andrea Locati <http://www.licinio.altervista.org/>)

OUTTAKE #3



Two great tastes...

Hey, Statesiders! Do you remember that television commercial years ago for Reese's Peanut Butter Cups? Two people are walking towards each other. One has a chocolate bar. The other has a jar of peanut butter. BAM! They collide, the chocolate bar falls into the peanut butter...and the rest, as they say, is history! The commercial ends with the line:

"Chocolate and Peanut Butter. Two great tastes that go great together."

Fact: I like Chinese girls.

Fact: I like table tennis.

On TV yesterday: BAM! Chinese girls playing table tennis!



Two great tastes that go great together!

And you thought Heaven didn't have a penthouse suite!



Hey guys, do you think I should share that email about the Chinese girls playing table tennis with the readership? ...is it a bit sexist?



Sexist? That's a stretch.

I am not a faithful reader of these dispatches, so if i have missed anything in my response, please forgive me. But isn't your fan base already cognizant of your predilection for oriental confection? And,

isn't Jamaican-in-Xland a traveling reality show with that consistent sub-theme of the main characters yen for yin of the Far-East Orient? People don't want droll, they want peanut butter smashing into chocolate. --**W.H.**



Controversial? Yes. Sexist? No.

The post may alienate and/or offend some of ur loyal fan base. U decide. However, I strongly believe that it is important to take a stand in this age of conformity.--**Z**



Maybe I am not fully aware of the context in which you were asking your question... I take it this is your show, and believe that you cannot and do not have to please everyone receiving your email, and they are aware of that. I don't see anything wrong with a genuine interest of Chinese girls. --**Jian**

----- E N D O F O U T T A K E -----

Taikang Space

My friend, Cong, invited me to a performance art event at Taikang Space--an artist exhibition space in Beijing: "100 people will wear a single big cloth, then they will break the cloth and leave one by one.."

The piece performed that evening was the creation of artist, Ma Qiusha.

[from the description on the Taikang space website]

"During the opening, 100 male and female models perform one after another, break away from a tightly knitted [single piece of cloth] and drift away. This will be unfolding instantly to depict the existing relationships of individuals in a modern society."

It made me think of the phrase "cut from the same cloth" *Definition: sharing a lot of similarities; seeming to have been created, reared, or fashioned in the same way. usage: She and her brother are cut from the same cloth. [from another website:] If you look back a few hundred years, families would buy a bolt of fabric to make their clothes from, so all in the family would be notably cut from the same cloth. In some communities they would maintain a certain fabric or tartan and that pattern would be identified with the specific family that used it again and again.*

I suggest that the artist is making a statement that we, whether Chinese or Jamaican (I imagine she just didn't get the memo that I was coming to Beijing and could have been part of the performance), are all essentially cut from the same cloth. And offers a great "we are the world" sentiment to end this post! J



*Giving instructions
to the participants
(photo:
Taikangspace
website)*



*Mapping out the
performance
(photo:
Taikangspace
website)*

*The performance
art begins!
(photo:
Taikangspace
website)*



See more
shots from the
performance at: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_62da1b6d0100lic4.html

And I'll see you next time! All together now....



"We are the world...."



Hemos estado siguiendo de muy cerca todas tus aventuras, disfrutalas y recuerda que la vida es solo un ratito. abrazos—**Ricky and Cristy**

The Virile Vegan? Hmmmm...I like it!

As a regular follower of my blog, Ruth was nice enough to share a link to my blog to readers of her popular Saipan column, On My Mind:

Short takes: Want to take a virtual tour of China? at least, as seen from the viewpoint of a virile vegan? Walt Goodridge - a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune and entrepreneur extraordinaire - has been sending back some fascinating tales and pictures from Beijing and its environs, where he is at the moment. Check out his webpage at < <http://www.jamaicaninchina.com/> >.



I think you should sign your posts as Ruth Tighe has characterized you -- "The Virile Vegan" With best regards,--**David**

The Embassy Girls!

Thursday, October 7, 2010 9:01:21 AM GMT+08:00

Ok,Ok...Yes, I know these are sophisticated, adult ladies, I know, I know. I just think "The Embassy Girls" has a nice ring to it, like a television series, you know? Like a Jamaican Charlie's Angels...:-)

Anyway, YES! You guessed it from the subject line, I finally made a visit to the Jamaican Embassy in Beijing, China! It was an unannounced visit, but



Welcome to our humble....um, office building

Attache and Vice Consul, Christine Barker, was nice enough to meet me at the Jianguomen train station (# 1 and #2 line) and guide me back to the Embassy's location on the 7th floor of a 17-storey building in the Jianguomenwai Diplomatic Compound! Thanks, Christine!

As this was during the Golden Week National Holiday, the Chinese staff at the embassy was out, and so was the Ambassador. So, it was just me and the girls getting acquainted during my short visit.

A long time ad campaign touted Air Jamaica, the national airline, as "the little piece of Jamaica that flies." Well, the Jamaican Embassy is the little piece of Jamaica that FILES!...Just kidding, ladies!

Minister Counsellor Jacqueline Bell, Attache and Vice Consul, Christine



Jacqueline, Keera & Christine

Barker, and Administrative Attache Keera Clarke do much more than filing. They perform a wide range of tasks! There's processing visas, renewing passports, providing support for Jamaican nationals, promoting a positive image of Jamaica abroad, as well as

sensitive communication on behalf of the ambassador, plus a host of other duties I'm sure they DIDN'T reveal to me in the interest of Jamaican national security!

Here are a few facts I learned during our chat:



1. About 600+ visas each year are processed for Chinese nationals and residents who wish travel to Jamaica. Too low! We have to do something!

2. There are only about 40 Jamaican citizens registered with the Embassy as "Living in China"! So, assuming there could be just as many who HAVEN'T actually registered, that still probably puts the total number of Jamaicans in China

at less than 100. No wonder I haven't seen any Jamaican beef pattie shops in Beijing! We'll have to do something about that, too. (Of course, give me a few months by myself to um....check out the um....you know, the um, lay of the land before you start sending any more Jamaican men. I think I can handle the, um, research on my own...I'll let you know when I'm finished here.)

This was definitely a high point of the week! Not just because of the new friends I've made or the things I've learnt, but also because of something a bit closer to home that you may have to be Jamaican to really appreciate. I mentioned this in a Saipan Tribune article when I ran into my musician buddy and fellow Jamaican, Wayne Wright, on the island of Saipan, 8,000 miles and 19 years away from where we last saw each other.

Every time you meet a fellow Jamaican somewhere overseas, you take a little trip back home before you even utter a word to each other. There is a knowingness, a tacit understanding of a shared culture, a shared experience, and what it feels like to be Jamaican in the wider world of people and places. Then, when we DO speak, to hear that familiar cascading Jamaican lilt and musical intonation,(The Trinis and the Bajans know it, too) and to be able to break into



Now, would that make me "Charlie" or "Bosley?"

our trademark patois to further forge invisible yet powerful bonds of connection and camaraderie--because the sound and syntax IS a uniquely Jamaican creation--it is familiar and comforting in a way that no song or sonnet can capture.

Of course, I'm sure every citizen of every country can say the same thing, but, of course, we feel our story is just a bit more special, a little different. From the Arawaks to the Maroons, from Bob to the bobsledders, in our story we share a little secret between us that only Jamaicans know. Because of our relatively small size as a nation, as well as our pantheon of personalities and their relatively huge impact on the world, there is a shared pride in our uniqueness and strength! We know what we are capable of. As we say in J.A, "we likkle but we talawah!"

Thanks for the trip home, ladies. I'll be back!—Walt

KEY:

"bobsledders" - The Jamaican bobsled team which first gained fame during their debut in the 1988 Winter Olympic Games in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, where they gained international fame as the ultimate underdogs, representing a tropical nation in a winter sport.

"Trinis" = Trinidadians ; "Bajans" = Barbadians

"Bob" = Bob Marley (Every Jamaican is duty-bound to quote "Bob" at least once in every serious discussion of politics, religion, or life in general)

Arawaks = indigenous (pre-Columbus) inhabitants of Jamaica

Maroons = Escaped slaves who mounted a successful 80-year resistance to British domination; and who granted the British government's request for a peace treaty which is still in effect today.

"Likkle" = little

Talawah = Jamaican patois word meaning "brave, strong, fearless"

It's all about the food!

Monday, October 18, 2010 10:42:28 PM GMT+08:00

A new friend and fellow vegan mentioned yesterday that our lives--as vegans--seemed to revolve around food. That came as a surprise to me--a slim, 135-lb vegan who eats only one meal a day--but, as I thought about it, I realized she was right!

We had just finished lunch with the Vegan Social Club of Beijing (food), and she had another dinner get-together with friends later that day (food).

I had arrived late to the social club lunch, and so I didn't eat (no food), so she agreed to accompany me to my favorite restaurant for another meal (food).

After our meal, I told her I was headed towards BHG Supermarket to get a certain brand of organic, wheat-free, breakfast cereal that isn't sold in regular supermarkets (food).

So, as we went from lunch to dinner to another dinner (for her), and to a supermarket (for me)... it seemed it was all about food!

Well, see, it's like this. Unlike most of the other folks in certain societies on the planet, I (we vegans) have to make special trips to get what I want and can eat. I can't just pop into a McDonalds, or a local bodega to get my kind of food, so it usually requires a special trip to a special supermarket or a special restaurant.

And so, the people I meet, for friendship or dating, tend to be people I meet at the places I frequent, so I end up dating girls who work at, or whom I meet at vegetarian restaurants or health food stores.

What's more, the phrases in Mandarin that I needed to learn first have to do, for example, with ordering brown rice instead of white, requesting a knife and fork instead of chopsticks (when I'm REALLY hungry and chopstick-sized portions just won't cut it) , or asking for the check.

Not only that, but the Chinese characters I've learned to recognize have to do with identifying which soy milk has sugar, and which doesn't.

And, as I start planning for accommodations in Shanghai, (my next adventure), I'm looking for apartments that have a kitchen and that are near to a green grocer or veggie restaurant where I can get organic produce. (That's about the food, too!) Hmm.... I guess Nancy was right, it IS all about the food!

Speaking of which, here are a few of my favorite recent photographs taken at, um....restaurants!



The Vegan Social Club of Beijing (Restaurant: Purple Bodhi -- 紫菩提)



Friends from the gathering...about to go our separate ways



My favorite waitress at my favorite restaurant. (Restaurant: Tianchu Miaoxiang-- 天厨妙香素食)

That's MISTER Milk to you, madam! (Language Lesson #1)

Friday, October 22, 2010 8:00:08 AM GMT+08:00

Tales of Dating and Cereal, (Cereal Dating???)

As I've said to many a friend when discussing inter-cultural and international dating, "Language is highly overrated." You don't need to share a common spoken language in order to meet, date or even marry! In fact, I had a friend in college who went to Brazil, fell in love, and married his new sweetheart all within a week or two, and he didn't speak a word of Portuguese, and his bride didn't speak a word of English!

Within a few weeks, he was speaking Portuguese and, while I haven't heard from him in many years, I'll attach my own "...and they lived happily ever after" (for as long as the relationship was destined to last) to that story. I've always believed that the right motivation is necessary to do just about anything--like learning a new language in two weeks. So, anyway, my point, as I've said, is that language is highly overrated!

In fact, in the dating game, I've found that NOT sharing a common language keeps the interactions between two people basic and uncomplicated. It forces you to get to the essence of the relationship more quickly when dealing with misunderstandings.

I've found that in a relationship with someone who speaks the same language (worse if they speak it well and have an advanced vocabulary) you can spend hours nitpicking every little detail and nuance of "what he said, she said, he meant, she implied, what did you mean by that?" until the cows come home!"

On the other hand, when you don't have the luxury (or excuse) of hiding under layers of words, or behind shades of meaning, the discussions are brief, simple, and the end result comes quicker. You can forgive misunderstandings that are caused by differences in culture and language much more easily, and get to the essential questions, and answers (Do I love this person? Will I forgive this misunderstanding and move on? Is the essential attraction and commitment still there? In other words: I like you. You like me. Let's go!)



Yep, it's pretty basic, perhaps even simplistic, I'll admit, but I never said I ever graduated to mature or sophisticated levels of dating interaction or romance. Functioning at a third-grade level is good enough for me!

However, with that said, there ARE some instances where being able to negotiate the subtleties of language are very useful:

Tones

So, I'm here in China, see, learning Chinese (Mandarin to you westerners, Putonghua to us Easterners), and like many foreigners raised with a foreign "ear," the most challenging part is learning the tones of Chinese words. Very briefly, the meaning of a sound in Chinese is determined by the "tone" you use when speaking it. There are four tones to every "word" and whether you raise, lower, keep flat, or dip-and-raise the tone of the word affects the meaning--in other words, it becomes a completely different word. This is profoundly difficult for (former) westerners like me to grasp. Tones for us, affect the emotion behind a word, not the meaning. About the only similarity we have in English, is how we raise the tone of the last word when asking a question. Know what I mean?

Check out this link which contains sound clips for each pronunciation:
<http://mandarin.about.com/od/pronunciation/a/tones.htm>

Pinyin	Chinese Character	Meaning
Mā (1st tone; high)	媽	mother
Má (2nd tone; rising)	麻	hemp
Mǎ (3rd tone; falling/rising)	馬	horse
Mà (4th tone; falling)	罵	scold

**"Pinyin" is the system of Roman character phonetic representation of Chinese characters*

To a westerner, unaccustomed to differentiating such subtle tones, mā, má, mǎ, and mà sound exactly the same. To a Chinese person, the subtlety is detectable, and very confusing in trying to understand a foreigner. (Imagine that by mispronouncing ma as "mother" rather than "horse," you end up saying "Have you seen my mother's hoofs lately? She's been grazing and galloping out in the fields for a long time. Do you think I need to re-shoe her?")

Similarly, to a Chinese person, the English words "bowl" and "ball" sound pretty much the same, and they might pronounce it as such. However, "I am looking for a bowl" and "I am looking for a ball would place you in very different locations, and produce quite different outcomes!

That's "MR." Milk to you, Madam

My friend, Cong (pronounced Tsong), is nice enough to help me practice precise Putonghua pronunciation. I shared with her some of the challenges I was experiencing during a recent shopping adventure. I had walked into a store and asked for soy milk. (I had learned that basic ability back on Saipan, for heaven's sake! I thought I was an expert!) To understand what went wrong, first let me give you a little language lesson.

Language Lesson:

Wǒ = I

yao = want (pronounced "Yow" like how)

dòujiāng = soymilk (pronounced dowjyang)

Therefore, I thought I was saying: Wǒ YAO dòujiāng, which means:

"I WANT soy milk."

However, when I practiced it with Cong, she explained to me that what I was actually saying was Wǒ JIAO dòujiāng, which means:

"I AM CALLED Soy milk."

Yep, sure. Go ahead, laugh. Picture me as I stride confidently into a store, look the sales clerk/cashier straight in the eye, and announce:

"Hello. I am called Soy Milk!"

HER: [Blank stare. Perhaps a chuckle]

ME: "I said, I am called Soy Milk!"

HER: "um...pleased to meet you? um... Milk."

"That's Mr. Milk to you, madam!"

Hmmmm. Something's not going right here.

You see, what had happened was....jiao (pronounced "Jyow" like "how") and yao (pronounced "Yow" like how) to the untrained ear (and that's how I learned it), they are pretty close. The subtle difference between yow and zyow was lost on my foreign ears, so I confused the two hoping, as I always do, that any compassionate listener would at least be able to figure out what I was attempting to communicate in the context of our conversation. (I've found that to be a very optimistic expectation, unless the listener is motivated by being a good friend or a romantic partner!)

So, anyway, in such a situation, I have two choices. I can:

1. leave empty-handed, go back home, and eat my breakfast cereal dry.



2. start using foreign hand gestures and sign language to communicate the concept of soy milk to someone who already thinks I'm a bit strange to be named after a plant-based beverage.

um...hmmmm....well...

Dry cereal's not so bad, really.

>sigh< Next time in the Language Lesson Series: Foreign hand gestures and sign language!

Bye Bye, Beijing!

Saturday, October 30, 2010 5:44:19 PM GMT+08:00

To quote the words of a famous Beatles song that I've always used as the prime directive for my life and my nomadpreneur adventure: "...for tomorrow may rain, so....I'll follow the sun!"

Yep, it's getting a bit too cold for me here in Beijing, so it's time to head south! Basically, the way I decide where to go next is pretty simple, someone tells me about a city I should visit (Kunming, Jinghong, Dali), I look the city up on the getty.edu site (one of many websites that give the longitude and latitude of any city in the world), and I choose the destination with the most southern latitude (i.e. the warmest temperature)

And, so the winner is..... Jinghong! Jinghong is in Yunnan Province, which is Latitude: 21 58 00 N degrees

For comparison:

- Kingston, Jamaica is Lat: 17 58 00 N degrees minutes
- Saipan, CNMI is Lat :15 degrees

So, Jinghong may not be EXACTLY as warm as what I'm used to (lower number=further south), but if I go any further south, I'll be in Myanmar (aka Burma), and that's an adventure for another time!



So long, Cong (pronounced Tsong)

Before I leave Beijing, I must give "nuff respek," props and kudos to my friend, Cong!

She's been a very, very key part of me getting acclimated to and enjoying Beijing to the degree that I have! She's been a one-person welcoming committee, translator, tour guide, and good friend!

I met her on the couchsurfing.org site, we met shortly after I arrived, and since then, she's been there for me to help me find an apartment, find a hotel, find vegetarian restaurants and more!

If I'm lost or having trouble communicating precisely what I want in a particular situation, I can always count on Cong to help me out. The scenario usually plays out something like this (this one actually happened): Say I'm on a bus looking for a particular station to get off so I can meet Cong for an event, but I have no idea where I am, and, since I can't read Chinese characters to save my life (yet), I need some help. So, I call Cong. Then, I tap a complete stranger on the

shoulder, smile, and hand the puzzled stranger my mobile phone. She and the stranger then talk in Putonghua, while I wait.

I've never been quite sure exactly what she says when I do this, but I figure it must go something like this:

"Hello, complete stranger. My foreign friend in front of you is lost and only speaks enough Mandarin to ask for soy milk, and even then, it's hit or miss. Could you help him, please? Could you tell him when to get off this bus so he can meet me at 123 Main street? Thanks. Now, could you hand the phone back to him so I can tell him. Have a nice day!"

Cong then relays any necessary information to me in English, the stranger and I smile wordlessly at each other, and I continue on my merry way with the right type of fried rice on my plate, the directions to the hotel I'm looking for, or whatever! (That's how I was able to locate the Taikang Space event!)

I've done this to security guards, hotel managers, office receptionists waitresses in restaurants, and strangers on buses! So, thanks to me, Cong is now pretty famous.

Anyway, Thanks, Cong! Beijing was a blast thanks to you!

To everyone else in Beijing, sorry for the short notice! I bought my ticket online just last night, and my flight leaves 9am today! The plan is to spend a day or two in Kunming, then head further south to Jinghong! Stay tuned!

Bye byyyyyyye, Beijing!



hi Walt,
i have a question about english.
what does " how are you doing" mean?
i thought it means like "how are you" or "how do you do"

but in the series: *Friends*, joey always says "how are you doing" with a meaningful tone. so how to use that sentence? can i say that to a normal freind, or it is just used when a boy interested in a girl?—**Cong**



hahahah!

Remember we talked about "stereotypes" before?

Joey's character on *Friends* is an Italian-American stereotype.

1. He's not too smart. He's worried about his physical appearance more than his brains.

2. He loves cars.

3. He's quick to fight.

4. He loves to eat.

5. He's very protective of his sisters' honor as a brother to his many sisters.

(If you remember one episode of *Friends*, where Chandler was interested in one of

Joey's sisters. Joey made sure that Chandler treated her with respect, and was even quick to fight Chandler who was afraid to tell Joey that all of his sisters looked alike and he couldn't remember which one he liked, or what her name was!)

And he's not saying "how are you doing" he's saying "how you doin'?" which is not grammatically correct, but that is part of the stereotypical Italian slang way of communicating.

Yes, the way Joey is saying it has a certain tone that English speakers understand. It is kind of unique to the way Italians speak (Joey is Italian), and is specifically meant to give the message that "I am interested in you."

Combined with the tone in his voice, and the way he raises his eyebrows and lifts his chin is all a sexually or romantically suggestive way of communicating that interest.

And that tone, with the deep voice, is specifically used by men when they talk to women. Women would NOT do the same thing. (unless as a joke) –W



hahaha...of course...thank u for your great answer now i understand

^ ^
—

and what do 2 friends say when they meet?

can they say ' how r u doing' in a normal tone to mean ' hi ' ?

at school, teachers teach us to say ' how do u do ' ' how are u ' or ' what's up ' but i wanna know what do people in the real world usually use.



"how do u do '--- TOO FORMAL and archaic. Perhaps in the 1800s, but today no one uses this today.

Whassup"---MORE NATURAL, but probably more so among Blacks in America.

You could say "hey" or "what's up?" "whassup"

I may be strange, but any sort of formal greeting among friends is too formal for me. If you notice, when we met at the elevator when you came to my hotel, I just started talking to you without a greeting. That may be just my style, but it's a waste of time to have to start from a greeting every time. You may not find anyone who agrees with me, but "how do you do?" and "How are you?" while normal, seem to me like we're starting our friendship from square one every time we meet. You don't shake hands or say "how do you do" to your mother every morning when you get up, do you? :-)

I would suggest: "hey, what's up?" W

I departed Beijing Oct-30-2010 (total stay: 60 days)

Chapter 3:

KUNMING

Kunming: arrived Oct-30-2010



There's always a song!

Sunday, October 31, 2010 8:43:46 PM GMT+08:00



*"All my bags are packed, it's early morn,
taxi's waiting, he's blowing his horn...."*

Leaving on a Jet Plane (1967/1969) by Peter Paul & Mary (Lyrics: John Denver)

Those are the lyrics from the song, "Leaving on a Jet Plane," by Peter Paul and Mary. Ok, so, in this case, it wasn't a taxi, it was actually my friend, Cong, who was nice enough to drive me to the airport for my 9:00am morning escape from Beijing!

But, I digress. I have a point to make.

My point is that if this were a video biography, I would have certain relevant songs playing as the soundtrack. Why? Because I love music!

I'm sure I'm not saying anything particularly profound or revealing, here, so I'll tell you a little about myself so you can appreciate that statement.

Once I landed on this planet many years ago and started appreciating the music here, I realized there were a few decades of recorded music that I had "missed," and that I needed to catch up. So, while a youth in New York city, I listened endlessly to every radio station I could, including WCBS101.1-FM, the "oldies" station, to catch up on the music of the 30s, the 40s, the 50s, the 60s, the 70s--every conceivable genre and artist from Ray Charles, Mose Allison, Frank Sinatra, George Jones, Ronnie Milsap, Elvis Presley, the Beatles, and everything else I had arrived too late on the planet to experience first hand. Radio is man's greatest invention! However, the most frustrating thing about the whole concept of radio, in my opinion, is that while I'm listening to one song on one radio station, another 20 songs are playing on all the OTHER stations that I'm missing!

The second most frustrating thing about the concept of radio is waiting all day to a specific station to hear a particular song, but because of my habit of listening to several stations at once, arriving back at that station only to hear the deejay say "...and that WAS "Johnny B. Goode" by Chuck Berry! Thanks for waiting all day to hear it!"

The third most frustrating thing about the whole concept of radio is arriving at a station's broadcast signal to hear the final notes and lyrics of what sounds like it was a GREAT song, and then have the deejay NOT mention the artist and song title. Aaaarggh!

Music marks the memorable milestones of life and has the power to transport me back to certain moods and moments long forgotten.

I alluded to this in *Jamaican on Saipan*, upon discovering KZMI-FM on Saipan--and all the happy memories that program director, Lewie Tenorio, and his choice of music evokes in my own life. But, here too, I digress, and delay the final arrival of my point....which is there's always a song running through my mind playing as the soundtrack of my life. So, today's episode includes a soundtrack for your listening pleasure. (And yes, these are all some of my favorite songs!)



"I'm leaving, on a jet plane, I don't know when I'll be back again..."

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fa3h3pnhg8s>
- Chinese readers: http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMzE0NTYzNzY=.html



Landing in Kunming



The bus to the terminal



Airport sign

After a three-hour flight, I arrived in Kunming, in Yunnan Province, China at about 12:30pm. As I exited the airport, I was greeted by a blast of warm air, hot sunshine, and.....while others were hustling about, queuing to get a taxi, bus or to meet their loved ones to depart the airport as quickly as possible (you can see them in the back ground), I, on the other hand, found a spot directly in the

sun, lifted my face to the life-giving rays, and just soaked it in for about half-hour!.... Of course, the fellow who took this photo must think me a bit strange.



*"I look up to the Sun,
to see if the day is done,
to see my future that lies within..."* Elements (1983) by Black Uhuru Anthem LP

• <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uK-tt2PWY6I>

So, the plan is to hang out here in Kunming for a few days, enjoy the sunshine, then I'll be on my way. Cue music....



*"We can sing in the sunshine,
We'll laugh everyday,
We'll sing in the sunshine,
Then I'll be on my way..."* "We'll Sing in the Sunshine" (1964) by Gale Garnett



*Spring Star Hotel in
Kunming*

And the beautiful ladies at the Spring City Star Hotel say hello! It's such a lovely place... Waitaminit! Aren't those the lyrics to

"Hotel California!!!!!!?"



The front desk reception team!



*"Welcome to the hotel California
Such a lovely place, Such a lovely face
Plenty of room at the hotel California*

Any time of year, you can find it here" (Hotel California (1977) by the Eagles)

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgLfoQfmSQ4>
- Chinese readers: http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMTA5MTY5MTI4.html

Hmmmm...Now, how does the rest of that song go?

"...You can checkout any time you like, But you can never leave! "

uh-oh
>gulp<

Aunt called me a chicken, but Myrna Chen is now my friend!

Wednesday, November 10, 2010 11:35:48 AM GMT+08:00

Big Tings a Gwan!:

In Jamaica "Big tings a gwan!" means "Big Things are Going on!"

1. Aspiring journalist, and new friend, Gao Ying (aka Nicole) in Beijing, found me online and was inspired to write an article about me in Mandarin for the Chinese version of Jamaican in China! (Check out <http://www.jamaicaninchina.com/cn>)

2. I was recently interviewed by Aimee Groom of ChinaTravel.net*, the sister site to Ctrip.com (the largest online travel service provider in China), and my story, "A Jamaican in China and Nomadpreneur Lives His Dream!" has just been featured in their China Blogger Profile on the site! [* ChinaTravel.net is a travel resource providing up-to-date, quality content and information on destinations, attractions, news and events for people traveling in, or planning to travel to China.]

Wow! With articles in Chinese, ChinaTravel.net's thousands of visitors, their 50,000 subscribers, Facebook page, and twitter feed.....um, I'm thinking you'd better make nice with me now before I get too famous and have no time for the small people! I'm just sayin'! You know how these things happen.

Or, as they would say about me in Jamaica, "im get rich and switch!"

Now, a little review and geography lesson, especially if you're new to the adventure: The story so far: I'm Jamaican. I'm in China.

I am chicken, see me run!

In my ongoing nomadpreneur escape from the rat race, I left the tropical paradise of Saipan to see and experience China! I was in Beijing for the past two months. (See "B" on map above.)

Things were great, but as the weather got colder, I found myself spending more and more time indoors, retreating to bed and the warmth of the covers earlier and earlier every day. That was no way for a sun worshipper to live. So I decided to jet!

In my previous post, I mentioned that I was escaping the cold weather of Beijing, to head south to Kunming, and then to Jinghong. (See Yunnan Province, east of Myanmar, on map) to where it's warmer.

Well, my Aunt Nye, who lives in Canada (think frozen tundra, and obscenely cold winters), and whose milestone birthday celebration I chronicled in Jamaican on Saipan (my escape from America), replied:



Dear nephew,

Well! My first thought was "chicken -- he is actually running from the cold", but then I said, "who wouldn't, if it were possible?" So, it's good luck to you and I hope all goes well as you follow the sun in Jinghong! –**Aunt Nye**



Well, for those of you who might be thinking the same thing. I'll share my response to my aunt:

LOL! Chicken???

Absolutely! See my feathers? Yes, just as a real chicken would run from a pot of boiling water, this Jamaican chicken runs from cold weather as fast my little legs will carry me! (and, fortunately, as you know, we Jamaicans have the sprinting genes for it). Yes, I have no shame in admitting in my distaste of cold weather! And, for the record, that's "MISTER Chicken" to you, madam!

p.s. The funny thing about this is....remember the "That's MISTER Milk to you, madam" blog post from a a while before? Well, I actually adapted that line from a friend of mine (Erroll P., a very funny guy). Years ago, when we were driving in Maryland, we passed a Mexican restaurant in Silver Spring called Señor Chicken.

He's got a great wit, and after reading the sign, turned to me and said, offhandedly with a tone feigning icy contempt, "That's MISTER Chicken to you, buddy!" and we died laughing. Anyway, now that my aunt has called me a chicken, I finally get to use the line the way it was originally "performed!" That makes my day!

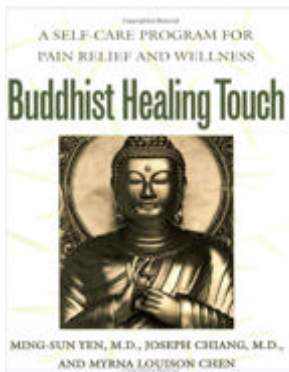


Kunming

While checking out the free breakfast that the Spring Star offers (you get a meal ticket to be used at a nearby restaurant), I was befriended by Myrna and Michael Chen, and their friend, YunYun. Myrna noticed that I was dining alone, and invited me to join them!



Myrna, YunYun, me, and Michael



While dining, I discover that Myrna is also co-author of *The Buddhist Healing Touch*, and she's had a desire to publish more books--this time independently--something I know a little about, and have promised to help her with! Check out the book online!

After breakfast, we meet up again so I can share some self-publishing tips, and I got to meet a special young lady in Myrna's life and current mission. According to Myrna:

"Je Lan finished high school through a scholarship from the Peach Foundation. She had trouble getting into the college and was despondent. She started to call me in the States. I kept close contact with her, explain her options and encouraged her to study hard and try again. She did, and finally got into an occupational(?) college which she's happy with. I'm so proud of her, and know that she can apply herself when she graduates!"



Je-Lan "Lucky Orchid," Myrna and Me. There's value in an education, Je-lan!



Michael and Myrna head back to the US, where they've lived since 1966.

So, yes, my aunt called me a chicken, but Myrna Chen is now my friend!

But It's Still Too Cold!

Saturday, November 13, 2010 1:06:35 PM GMT+08:00

Things have been moving fast, but before we go any further, I'd like to express my thanks to some friends I made during my two months in Beijing:



- To Shang Mei, one of the first people I met outside the Apple Store, who was just so sweet and friendly and who helped me look for apartments in Sanlitun. Thank you so much!

- And, thanks to Ben, whose Chinese language skills I envy, and whose insights into the Chinese female mind made for great conversation...(oops, sorry, Ben, was I not supposed to say that in public?)

Beijing buddy, Ben!

- To Susan, my couchsurfing guide, who helped find one of the cheapest hotels in Beijing and has a book's worth of money-saving tips for anyone living and visiting the city! Thank you!



Guess Who's Coming to Dim Sum? A meal with Susan and friend in Beijing

Now, those of you who know me know that, for healthy lifestyle reasons, I NEVER use air conditioners. "Conditioned" air is unnatural and often toxic, and furthermore, I love heat! I've lived in Jamaica in the tropics, New York during hot summers, and Saipan for four years, and never used one. I mean never. So much so, in fact, that I didn't know you could get warm air from an air conditioner until Cong told me during my last days in Beijing! However, since I'm told that the heat in China doesn't get turned on until November 15, I had to make an exception and use one to blow warm air into my room!

So, once I arrived in Kunming, and once I realized it was still a bit too cool for me here, and once I discovered that the hotel I was staying didn't have an air conditioner for me to use to warm the place, I switched after one day to another hotel (thanks, again to Cong!)



This one was called the Dock Inns--a set of modified studio apartments on several floors of an apartment complex a bit outside of the city center. The daily charge was only 129RMB.

Dock Inns. My second home in Kunming



*The Dock Inns
front desk*

Great room, nice view, and an air conditioner for warmth. I requested a room on the side of the building where the sun shines. I had to do some scouting

and had a fun time communicating my wishes not speaking enough Mandarin!

*The view from my
window*

So, things are improving. I'm starting to feel more alive. There's sunshine streaming through my window. That can only mean one thing: Time to eat!



My room in Kunming



Thanks to HappyCow.net, I had discovered there's a vegan restaurant in Kunming. It's called Yu Quan.

I knew I was in the right place, when shortly after I entered,

a troop of Buddhist monks entered and went upstairs to the special dining room.



Hey! Here come the monks! Okay....play it cool...try not to be too obvious that you're taking their photo. Keep the camera on the table.



No chopsticks, you ask? I told you, when I'm really hungry, I go with the fork. I can get more in my mouth that way!

Even though I'd visited it on two occasions, Yu Quan restaurant was an expensive 30RMB taxi ride from my hotel. Su Qun (aka Michael), the manager of the hotel, was nice enough to drive me there for my third visit, while showing me the bus route I'd need to take to get there on my own in the future.



Su Qun (aka Michael), manager of the Dock Inns. (Lest you think I only meet and take photos with women here in China) Note the colors of my scarf--the colors of the Jamaican flag.

There will be the customary test for extra credit.

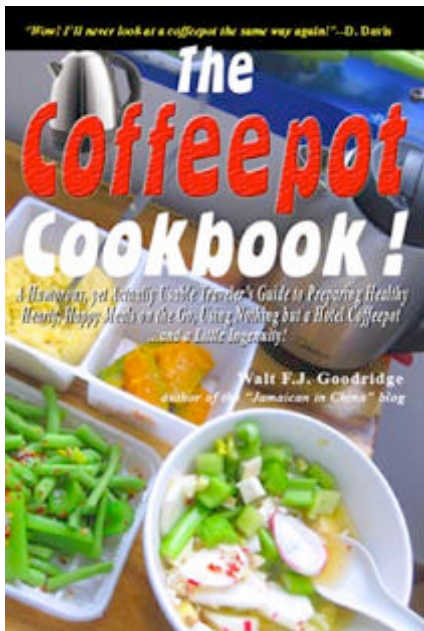
The First Coffeepot Cookbook Meal!

Still, with the cool temperature keeping me indoors, I'd rather just cook



something simple for myself rather than venture out. Which brings me to this: With only one veggie restaurant way on the other side of town, my Dock Inns room in Kunming became the site of the

preparation of the first coffeepot cooked meal! It's amazing the things you can do with fresh vegetables, a hotel coffeepot and a little ingenuity! Don't tell Michael or the Dock Inns management about this, of course. They may want some residuals from the sale of the cookbook!



I eventually compiled a real cookbook to help other nomads! Check it out at www.coffeepotcookbook.com

So, yeah. Kunming is pretty cool, but it turns out, as I said, it isn't as warm--temperature-wise—as I thought it would be. When I chose Kunming as a place to run to escape the cold of Beijing, what I failed to include in my calculations was the elevation of the city. If I had paid more attention in geography class, I would have recalled that it's

not just the latitude that determines the climate of a region. The higher a spot is, the further from the warmth of the earth, and thus the cooler it is. Why didn't anyone remind me???? Damn you people!

So, just for your edification, perhaps, and for mine, I'll share what I discovered. Here are a few elevations and latitudes of some cities for comparison. (higher elevation means higher up; lower Latitude number means further south)

- Jamaica's elevation is 9 m (30ft) above sea level (Lat: 18 degrees North (N))
- Saipan's elevation is 474 m (1554 feet) above sea level (Lat: 15 degrees N)
- Kunming's elevation is 1,900 m (6,200 feet) above sea level. (Lat: 25 deg N)
- Jinghong, Xishuangbanna: 490 meters (1,600 feet). (Lat: 22 degrees N)

See? Kunming is pretty high up there in elevation, so even though it is 25 degrees N latitude, the weather is still too cool--at least this time of year--for my taste. It's just not my dish.

On the other hand, while Jinhong isn't as far south as Saipan (where the temperature is ideal), and is just a BIT further south than Kunming, it's got about the same elevation as Saipan, and thus should be a bit warmer!

Did you follow all that? Anyway, the point is: It's time to say, "Goodbye, Kunming!!" See you in Jinghong!



Just to verify....that elevation that you're giving for Saipan is Mt. Tapochau's elevation. Airport elevation is about 220 feet. --Ron [my friend, Ron, the Jamaican Pilot on Saipan. He should know!]



Brother Walt,

Thank you for including me on your list to inform of a modern day Black explorer, which is our original nature.

You have me saying, "*Wow, this brother just got up on day (after some vision) sailed into the South Pacific, set up residence for a bit, then smelled some 'no-dat' Chinese cooking and sailed to the place holding all the American debt.*" God Bless you Brother for your fascinating story that will be most appreciated by our teenage brothers and sisters. Have a powerful weekend. –

Brother Leroy



*"For tomorrow may rain,
so I'll follow the sun!"*

I'll follow the Sun by the Beatles

Chapter 4:

XISHUANGBANNA

(pronounced: shee-shwang-BAN-na)

I arrived in Xishuangbanna Nov-4-2010



Xishuangbanna Living, Part 1

November 16, 2010 10:31:47 PM EST

CHINATRAVEL.net asked me to do a series of special posts on what it's like to live in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan Province, China as a Jamaican nomadpreneur vegan minimalist. So, that's just what I did!

CHINATRAVEL.NET INTRO: "In this first of a three-part series, Jamaican in China Walt Goodridge moves from chilly Beijing to China's sunny south and the balmy warmth of Xishuangbanna. A tropical paradise more usually experienced as a backpacker stop en route to neighboring Myanmar, Laos or Thailand, Walt invites us to join him in getting away from the tourist trail and living from a local perspective, as he sets up home in the capital Jinghong. Over to you, Walt! ">>>

"I am not now, nor have I ever been a tourist."

As I mentioned in my ChinaTravel.net interview, "When I visit a new place, my goal is NOT to be a tourist. The goal is to blend in to normal, everyday life and experience what it's like to be one of the local folk. So, I typically don't do or write about the touristy things that others do. I walk around the city and explore each neighborhood by taking commuter buses from terminus to terminus. I shop in the local stores and open markets not the tourist malls. I'm not too much into snapping photos at the usual attractions. I take photos of friendly people or ill-named sex shops (you'll have to check the blog for that one!), I meet and interact with shop-keepers, waitresses, students, street vendors, and enjoy casual encounters with the neighborhood residents. For accommodations, I look for apartments with kitchens or, if I must, hotels off the beaten tourist path. I learn about the culture through couchsurfers rather than guided tours...."

My journey to China is not a quest for scenic spots, sacred edifices, tall temples, big Buddhas, or even great walls. It's not a diversion to snap photos, rush through guided tours and return to a "regular" life. There is no regular life for me to return to. No job. No time card. No contracts. This is it. There's just me and my mood, my passion and my preferences, my desires and my dreams. [cue music:]



"When your heart gets restless, time to move along

"When your heart gets weary, time to sing a song

"But when a dream is calling you,

"There's just one thing that you can do

"Well, you gotta follow that dream wherever that dream may lead..."

Follow That Dream by Elvis Presley, 1962; (One of my favorite songs at age 10)


The "dream" is simply to find a place comfortable enough to live approximately the same life I would live anyplace else. I wander, I wish, I watch and I write. I contemplate, I crave, I cook and I clean. I live, I learn and I love, just like everybody else. And if I can do all that in a nice environment that meets a few requirements, then so much the better. Those requirements are pretty simple, really: heat, sunshine, internet access and a kitchen. (Not necessarily in that order of importance.)

That's really pretty much it. Of course, there are "deal-breakers" to any specific location: cigarette smoke, pollution, crowds, etc., but those four--heat, sun, internet and a kitchen--are my non-negotiables.

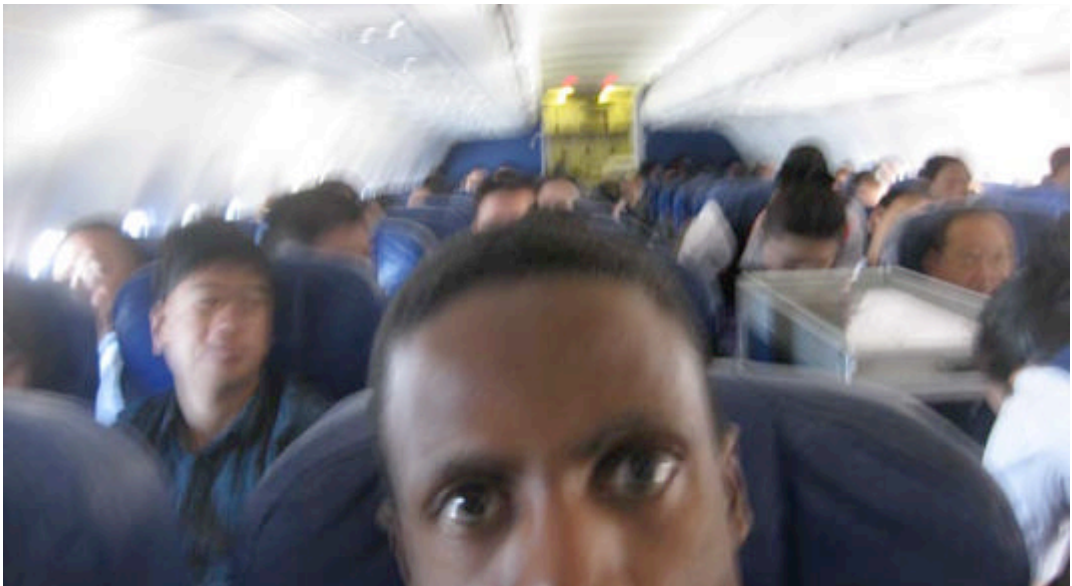
So, this is NOT a travel blog. Since I consider myself a "teacher," in the broadest sense of the word, I use this blog to share ideas. This is a blog about lifestyle choices, about courage, about freedom. It is here (like me) to make a point. It is used to show a different option and different possibilities.

As you enjoy the highlights and details of this my simple life, know that, like you, I am living life doing the daily things that I do. And, like you, me and everyone else, the best of life is not blogged. Not blogged are the warm smiles, the kind gestures, the tender touches, and the little interactions and sweet words that get etched on the walls of our minds and create the memories that we carry for a lifetime.

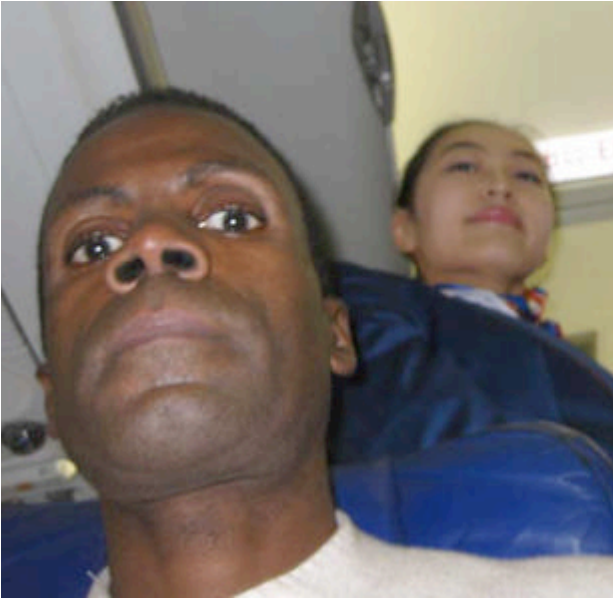
What you can never experience through my blog are the feelings that living this dream are allowing me to experience. Those are mine alone. Mine alone because this dream is a personal dream. But, the GREAT thing about coming along with me on this journey is that you can use your imagination to place yourself in these settings and situations right along with me--in the planes, in the buses, in the hotel rooms, in the apartments (um, no smoking, please). You can use my life as a metaphor for your own imaginings. You can dream along with me. Through Jamaican in China, I invite you bring your dreams into the boat with me and together we will row!

 *"Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream,
Merrily, Merrily, Merrily, Merrily,
Life is but a dream"* (Row, Row, Row Your Boat (Nursery Rhyme est. 1852))
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Row,_Row,_Row_Your_Boat

So, with that said, let's head further south in China-- to Jinghong--in search of warmer climes.



No, this isn't turbulence or a crash landing...and you don't need to get your eyes checked. it's just a blurry photo, but it's the only one I have of me on the flight.



Not my best side, but I like the flight attendant's zen-like gaze in this shot



Jamaican backpacker? (Note the glaring sun in the background)



Getting off the plane in Xishuangbanna!

Yes, I am now in Jinghong, the capital of Xishuangbanna (shee-shwang-BAHNA). Xishuangbanna is a prefecture (i.e. district) of Yunnan Province. It borders Laos, Myanmar and is a short ride to Thailand.

The owner of the apartment that my friend, Cong, found for me sent a taxi to pick me up at the airport to take me to where I'll be staying. It's a housing complex a bit outside the central area.



The front gate to the housing complex.

Dong, the villa owner, showed me two apartments I could choose from. The first is "Villa A" and I'll call the second one, "Villa B."



Villa sweet villa. ("Villa A") There's a balcony on the other side with a southern exposure which gives me sunshine all day.

I would be staying in a four-bedroom, two-story apartment. My room is on the second floor with my own bathroom.

Option 2: "Villa B"

"Villa B" is also a four-bedroom apartment, and also quite nice (see photo). It's also much closer to town. However, it did NOT have the gas stove, and more importantly, Dong informed me that other guests would be arriving in a few days to occupy the other 3 rooms. Bummer.



Posing in Villa B

On the other hand, if I chose "Villa A," I would have the entire villa all to



myself for at least a week or more, so I went with Villa A! Easy choice! (Guess, I'm a bit anti-social when it comes to my living space. I don't like crowds.)

So we headed back to Villa A for me to settle in.

Dong and me in front of my new flat in "Villa A"

So, after two months of hotel living in Beijing and Kunming, I am about to do a bit of "regular" living in Jinghong, Xishuangbanna, Yunnan Province, China. So, until next time, I

Oh, waitaminit! Almost forgot! Let me grab my checklist! Just a second. Ok, ahem.



Sunshine? Check!



Heat? Check!



(approx: 17°-29°C, or 62-84°F, per wunderground.com/global/stations/56959.html)



Kitchen? Check!



Internet access? Check!



Ahh! Life is great!

Jamaican in China!-- Xishuangbanna Living, Part 2!

NOTE: Technically, I'm in Jinghong City, which is in Xishuangbanna. However, I just love saying "shee-shwang-BAN-na" so much that I take every opportunity to do so. Keep in mind, therefore, that to get to the places you're seeing in my blog, you should search for Jinghong city on maps and websites. With that said, time for Xishuangbanna Living, part 2!

November 23, 2010 2:40:09 AM EST

My friend, Stacey, in New York--knowing what she knows about my lifestyle preferences--asked, "Where are you now? Up in the hills, somewhere?"

Yes, and no. Xishuangbanna is considered Rural China in the travel guides, but where I am in Jinghong city, it's a small town (as far as small towns go in China!) surrounded by mountains.

Today's post is just a collage of shots taken during a regular day heading out into civilization. Typically, after waking up at 5:00AM, or 6:00AM, checking email, monitoring website sales, handling customer service issues all online, I leave my apartment at about noon, and catch bus #4 to head into town.



Welcome sight: The number four bus coming to take me away!

Today, however, I'm heading into town on the preferred mode of transportation in China: the moped! Traveling from the outskirts of town into the heart of the city. View the full video here: <http://www.jamaicaninchina.com/images/moped.mp4>



Moped Me

The air in Jinghong is definitely cleaner than, um...other places I've been. There's bright sunshine, vegetation, and friendly people. (same ol' same ol')



I wander around and end up at the local college where I see table tennis tables, flocks of them in the compound! So, I do what any red-blooded Jamaican would do!



Posing with my table tennis partners

The streets of Xishuangbanna



It's amazing the people you meet walking around Xishuangbanna. I overheard this couple speaking English, so I said hello! Turns out he's a West Indian!

Chinese Guyanese Ken and his wife visiting from Toronto, Canada, pose with the Jamaican in China on the streets of Xishuangbanna.

I've since heard from Ken:



"Hi Walt,

This is Ken, from Guyana. It was a complete surprise to see a West Indian in XiShuangbanna. My wife and I were looking for an electronics store when you heard us speak english and introduced yourself (We didn't find the store). We are now back in Canada, where it is cold and raining. We had a good time in China!

Most backpackers doing research online, as well as incidental tourists will have heard about Mei Mei cafe and Mekong Cafe. So here are a few photos to help you recognize it when you find it. The street they are on can be a bit tricky to

find as Mei Mei has changed locations, and therefore, some of the maps and directions on some of the travel websites are a bit outdated.

However, if you can find the Banna Hotel on the #4 bus route, you'll be within walking distance of the cafe strip, and you can ask at the hotel for directions.



Mei Mei Cafe

But those spots are for the tourists, expats, and for those who want life easy--as in, those who want to deal with people who speak English. Me? I prefer a bit of a challenge. Now that I have a kitchen, I don't do my eating out. (No offense, Mei Mei & Mekong) I'll cook for myself.



Mekong Cafe

So, for my sustenance, I head to the local markets.



Ahh, yes! Just what I'm looking for! Fresh! Sweet. Ripe. Tender. Soft, and beautifully displayed! A treat for the eyes!



....um, the fruits, you perverts! I'm talking about the fruits!

So, time to do some produce shopping and then head back to the villa for some "Jamaican Vegan in

'Banna" style cooking! Get your appetite ready!



I don't want to seem like I'm gloating, and I'm not trying to make my friends feel bad about wherever they happen to be living, but it's like a gatdam party here, and I'm the guest of honor!

This girl on a bicycle saw me, waved, did a u-turn and started following me around even though we barely spoke complete sentences to each other. (I'm learning fast, though) (see video)

At first I thought, "Oh no, she's going to cramp my style," but as we kept walking, she ran into her best friend whom she introduced me to, and who I gave my QQ number,



Then we went shopping, and she helped me pick the best veggies, got me good prices on stuff,

So I treated her to some food she liked, and then she gave me her QQ number and we said goodbye!

This is how it is EVERY SINGLE DAY I LEAVE MY HOUSE!

Just wait until I can actually have a decent conversation and tell them where I live! I'll be dangerous!



LMAO WALT!

OUTTAKE #4



A Little Revisionist Hip Hop History from Xishuangbanna, China

You've got it all wrong!!

You thought it was the homeboys from Brooklyn who originated the "cap cocked to the side" look? Perhaps it really all started in China, when grandma just wanted a little shade from the hot sun burning through the bus window.





*Chillin' in
China.....sup*

----- END OF OUTTAKE -----

Jamaican in China!-- Xishuangbanna Living, Part 3! Vegan Living and My Secret to Health!

November 23, 2010 11:42:22 PM EST

Before I left Saipan for China, people told me that it would be difficult to be a vegetarian here. However, I have not found that to be the case. Beijing was full of vegetarian--even vegan--restaurants and a few health food stores, and Kunming had a few spots as well--albeit a bit far from where I was staying.

I imagine what they meant was that if I ate at your average restaurant in China, that I wouldn't be able to guarantee that I wasn't eating some residual meat flavoring, sugar, salt, MSG or seasoning powder. However, since I don't eat out at "regular" restaurants, I haven't had that issue. As long as I have access to fresh fruits and vegetables and a kitchen (though at present I eat about a 50% raw food diet, and could increase that percentage if I had no kitchen), it's really pretty easy.

There are a few things I'd like to try here in China, out of a newcomer's curiosity, but since I have no Chinese-speaking shopping partner at present, and since I can't read many Chinese characters to verify the ingredients, I generally stay out of supermarkets and stick to the basics. (Don't need an ingredient label for a tomato---unless, of course, it's genetically modified.)

I eat according to a simple philosophy: I only eat real food.

Here are a few quotes from the book, *The Ageless Adept*, that may help to explain what food is, and what it isn't, and why I don't shop in supermarkets.

"Just because something can be put in your mouth, chewed and swallowed does not make it food."

"Just because something is sold in a supermarket or restaurant does not make it food."

"Just because something tastes good, does not make it food."

"And finally, just because something is referred to as food by a great number of people, does not make it food."

"...there'll come a time when you see the average supermarket for what it is: a repository of ostensibly edible products created for the sole purpose of making a sale; cans, boxes and plastic containers of altered, boiled, cured, dyed, denatured, engineered, fried, frozen, flavored, filtered, hulled, injected, modified, pasteurized, preserved, supplemented and tainted objects that pass for food."

To the Market!

So, this is primarily where I do my shopping in Xishuangbanna. It's a big outdoor market on Mengle DaDao road (main thoroughfare, accessible by buses #2, #3 and #4). There you can find all types of local and non-local fruits, vegetables, spices, grains, (lots of rice,) nuts, honey, and even bee pollen



Jinghong Map courtesy of mekongcafe.cn



Today's haul was pretty typical. I buy enough for a day or two and then, by the next day, I'll do it again. "Why not buy enough for a week?" you ask. Well, there are a couple of reasons:

1. I find that since I have no self-control when it comes to certain

items (cashews for instance), I've learned throughout my life that if I buy two packs of cashews, I will eat two packs of cashews in one day! If I buy three, I will eat three. I find that no matter how much I have, I cannot stop enjoying the experience until it's completely done. This applies to Lara bars, blue corn chips, tamarinds and certain women.

2. I find that for other items, my tastes may change unexpectedly. I only eat one meal a day, and some days I may simply not eat for various reasons. If I

commit to a week's worth of oranges today, there's a good chance that most of them will go bad. I find that I cannot commit to a particular taste for an extended period of time. This applies to many fruits, green vegetables, and also certain women. (Okay, I'm kidding, a'right?)



A day's take: 59Yuan or \$9.75 US worth of food

3. It gives me a compelling reason to get out of the house and meet people (If I'm writing a book or site design/programming project, I've been known to sequester myself and fast for a few days to heighten my creativity.)

Here's today's shopping: The exchange rate is 6.8CN Yuan = 1.00US

Expense	Yuan/RMB	US Dollar
Bus to town	2.00	0.29
Almonds	9.80	1.44
Cashews	9.00	1.32
2 coconuts	10.00	1.47
Qing zao	3.70	0.54
2 guavas	2.00	0.29
Bokchoy	1.00	0.15
Soy beans	2.00	0.29
Watermelon	5.70	0.83
Tamarind	5.00	0.73
Scallion	1.00	0.15
Greens	1.00	0.15
Mint	1.00	0.15
oranges	6.10	0.90
Rice (red bag)	5.00	0.73
Garlic	3.00	0.44
loofah	1.00	0.15
Bus back home	2.00	0.29
Total Transporation	4.00 Yuan	\$0.58 US
Total Food	66.30 Yuan	\$9.75 US

What a bargain!



So, using my daily stash of food, here are a few of the cooked meals I might treat you to when you come to visit me in Xishuangbanna!

Broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, bean sprouts, scallions, garlic, cashews, sea salt



Bok choy, bean sprouts, tumeric, sea salt, garlic, onions, and, oh yes, cashews!



brown rice, lima beans, and a broccoli/string bean/cashew stir-fry

My First Secret to Health While in China

If I can't plant it and grow a new one, I don't eat it. That's my philosophy. Therefore, a raw diet is my ideal. However, since I can't verify the growing methods and handling of all the vegetables I'm currently purchasing, I'm doing a bit more cooking and steaming and less "straight out of the ground" raw eating than I normally would, but the basic philosophy is the same:

I don't eat anything in cans, boxes, frozen, powdered or reconstituted. No salt (Did you know most commercial brands of table salt have dextrose (that's sugar) in them? No sugar, no meat, no eggs, no dairy, no coffee, no alcohol, nothing processed. Everything should be as close to its natural state as possible--just off the tree or out the ground. If it wasn't in the garden of eden, it's not real food. (There were no KFC's in the garden.) If I can't put it in the ground and grow a new one, it's not live and natural (ever try to do that with a pizza?)

For me, that also means no milk, butter, eggs, cheese, chicken, all dead meats, no foods with artificial flavor, preservatives or color of any kind, no alcohol, sodas, fried foods, hybrid rice and wheat products, processed white flour, coffee and genetically modified foods, and, of course, I don't smoke, and except for a few desperate days in Kunming, I don't do air conditioning!

My other Secret to Health

While we're on the topic of food and health, here's another secret I'll share with you:

One of my greatest frustrations in life is not being able to communicate to friends and family some of the things I've discovered about health and wellness that have served me well over the years. I see my friends suffering from ailments and seeking conventional treatments, and I realize that many people are trapped in a paradigm of health based on faulty information, that is actually keeping them from enjoying life, really making a difference in the lives of those they love, and becoming truly prosperous.

I don't tell people my age, but those who have a vague idea have asked me how it is that I look younger NOW than when I was in college. The way I've been able to stay healthy, reverse certain persistent and elusive health issues and even recover from bacterial infection while here in China is because of a reliance on health advice and natural supplements (zinc, oil of oregano, chlorophyll) and other practices that keep my body pure and healthy. [Jan 2012 Note: Check out my *"How to Reverse Aging using special foods, vitamins, supplements and a few little-known, secret practices"* that I created just for you!]

Anyway, this is how I'm living!

See you next time!



Dear Jamaican in China email newsletter subscriber,

I'd like to double the number of people who are on the Jamaican in China mailing list! Can you help me? If you have just a few moments, could you tell at least just ONE other person--a boyfriend, a girlfriend, your mom--your facebook and twitter friends--to email me a request, or sign up at <http://www.jamaicaninchina.com>?

In my workshops, I teach that people are moved to action by different things. So, let's see what other strategies* I can use here.

1. **Fear of loss & The limited-time offer:** Act now! The holiday season is coming! This would make a great gift. Don't miss out on this opportunity affect those you love this holiday! 2. **Altruism:** "You could make a difference in so many people's lives by sharing my story with them."

3. **Fun:** "Once ALL your friends are following along, think about how exciting it will be to talk about that crazy Jamaican in China!"

4. **Information:** "This is not just a personal blog, there are important insights, observations and commentary, as well as facts and figures of what life in China is really like from a unique perspective. This is a valuable resource that can educate people and help reduce the chasm of cultural ignorance."

5. **Money & Status:** "You're among an elite first group of list members. You are a leader. You are the trailblazing maverick your friends depend on to introduce them to new things like this! um...and the money? What 're you kiddin' me? Okay, Okay. AND, I'll give you penny if you do this."

6. **Guilt:** "You know, my friends tell me that if you really loved and appreciated me and our relationship, you'd do this for me."

7. **Extortion:** "Do this now, or you'll never see the "Un-rated Episode" I have in my possession."

8. **Pity:** "I cry myself to sleep each night just hoping that you'll tell someone to join my list."

9. **Withholding Love:** "I won't be your friend ever again if you don't do this for me." (and, of course, the ever-reliable....)

10. **Shame:** "Frankly, I expected more from you. Here you are enjoying my adventures, and didn't think just once that you could share it with your friends and family? You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Typically, I teach the first 5 of these as practical marketing strategies!. However, if any of these techniques compels you to forward this email to all your friends, or share me/like me/tweet me with or to your social network, and actually encourage a few people to sign up, that would be great!!!

That's it. You can do it. Just click the "Forward" button. There you go. Now that wasn't so hard was it? Now, add all your friends in the "BCC" space on your email form. Good. Good. You're doing fantastic. I'm so proud of you. Now, say something compelling like:

"I thought about you and I think you'll like these emails from this really cool Jamaican guy in China. Please sign up." OR

"This nutcase is holding his next blog post hostage until enough new people join his mailing list. Please do me a favor and join, so he can stop whining, for Pete's sake!"

Today I thwarted a pickpocket

November 30, 2010 3:20:05 AM EST

*thwart: to oppose successfully; prevent from accomplishing a purpose.
(That part of my vocabulary comes from too many comic books growing up.)*



Since I've been in Jinghong City, Xishuangbanna, I've seen two pickpocket attempts. Now, that doesn't necessarily mean there are more pickpockets here. The fact that I never saw any such activity in Beijing might simply mean that THESE guys here are just not that good at it! (i.e. easy to spot)

Both times I saw it, in fact, it was at the same bus stop, at about 2 or 3 in the afternoon as I was waiting for the #4 bus, to go back home.

So, it works like this:

The "perp" (short for perpetrator) will hang around at the bus stop as if he, too, is waiting for a bus. As the bus pulls in to pick up passengers, the crowd of people waiting will rush towards the door. The perp also rushes in with the crowd. Using the chaos, single-minded focus, and distraction of people pushing and shoving attempting to board the bus, the perp will swoop up behind his "mark," (victim) employ a "slash" or a "grab and run."

I think what I saw the first time was a bag slashing. Having watched where his mark places her purse, the perp will walk up, and use a blade to slash the bottom of the handbag and the purse will slide out. He rushed up, then did a quick "about face" and walked away hiding something under his shirt.

To the casual observer, it would appear that he rushed up to the door of the bus, like everybody else, then simply changed his mind and walked away. To those of us ex-New Yorkers who can spot suspicious behavior a mile away, we know something bad just happened.

I caught on to what he was doing just a split second AFTER he made the grab, so I didn't actually see it happen. I knew for a fact what he had done--a guilt confirmed by his abrupt departure from the scene, and the hiding of his hands--but I hadn't actually seen it. By the time another bystander alerted others boarding the bus that a pickpocket had just struck, he was gone.

I felt bad for the rest of the day. I should have done something. I should have chased him down, retrieved the purse and brought it back to the victim. I thought about that for the rest of the day.

So, this time, I did something. Today, when I saw the same scenario about to play itself out again, I was ready.

While waiting for the bus at the same stop (I'm always now more vigilant at that specific stop since the first incident), I noticed a lurker. Different fellow, this time, but he was easy to spot.

Perhaps living in New York most of my life has given me a survivor's vigilance, "street smarts," as they say, or simply heightened paranoia. (*There's an old joke that goes: I had to move to New York for health reasons. I'm extremely paranoid, and New York is the only place my fears are justified.*)

In any event, keeping a watchful eye means I always know who is around me at any given moment. I'm never lost in a moment such that I'm oblivious to who is in front of, behind, or to my side when I walk, play or when I drive.

So, the moment I arrived at the bus stop, out of ingrained habit, I scanned the scene to note who was there. And there HE was. He was just sort of drifting aimlessly back and forth, just waiting-- but not for a bus. People waiting for a bus have a different body language. So I kept conscious of where he was at all times.

Sure enough, as the bus approached. I saw him make his move. And this time, so did I. As he rushed up to the crowd of boarders, I, too, moved quickly towards HIM.

As he moved into the crowd seemingly to board the bus, I could see his eyes darting furtively among the unguarded bags and possessions looking for a mark. As he was just about to make his move I practically body-blocked him by forcing my way in-between him and a young lady who was boarding the bus, and whose bag he was reaching for. Everybody else had their backs to him as they, too, were boarding. I, however, was facing him, and like a basketball guard, preventing him from striking. He backed off. My own actions must have looked kind of strange to anyone looking. But I wasn't trying to hide what I was doing. I wanted him to know that I was being deliberate.

I kept my eyes glued to him. With my own laptop and sidebag firmly in my grip, I stared at him letting him know that I KNEW what he was doing. He back off some more, having given up on that attempt, but he lingered a bit more until a second bus appeared....I kept my eyes on him....he looked at me. Then slowly, he moved out of my field of vision--behind a tree--and soon disappeared.

I have a suspicion that there were others working with him on the scene as there were about 2 others who also disappeared as well, though that could have been coincidence as I wasn't tracking them.

A few people at the bus stop had quizzical looks on their faces as they had no idea what was going on.

His mark--the young lady whose bag he would have slashed or snatched--was none the wiser. She had already boarded the bus and was on her way home. She's probably (hopefully) at home counting her money after a day of shopping.

I, however, feel a little better knowing that THIS time I took action and that some young lady somewhere in Xishuangbanna is at home with her purse still in her possession thanks to my interference. I just can't stand idly by when such an obvious crime is being committed.

[cue time-worn audio clip from old Hollywood western:]

"Don't worry, ladies. There's a new sheriff in town!"



Next time, I'll take pictures of the perp and post it on my blog. (I don't expect that any Xishuangbanna residents or their purses will be saved as a result, but perhaps in some way, it might help someone, somewhere.)

Notes & Commentary:

From what I've seen, the pickpockets are targeting "locals."

It's true I haven't seen many foreigners here--and two crimes do not a valid survey make--but something tells me that a pickpocket who makes his living finding marks, would feel more comfortable and be more familiar with the moves and rhythm of the local population. I'm sure a careless tourist could fall victim, too, but knowing how to gauge a potential victim, knowing who is vulnerable, knowing the schedules and movements of his victims is something that is developed from watching the local population, not the tourists.

I'm just speculating but, I suspect that HIS unfamiliarity with the ways of foreigners would make ME, for instance, less of a potential target. I could be wrong. Why take the chance that the dark foreigner with the bag of cashews might just be a Jamaican who could outrun him and grab his stuff back? I'm just speculating.

[cue Superman opening sequence sample:]

"Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane!"

"It's...It's.... Jamaican Man!"

Yes, today I thwarted a pickpocket. Life.



COMMENTS

Hi Walt, [Regarding "Today I thwarted a Pickpocket"]
Good story! and GOOD action!

However, I'm not surprised to read this story as it is a common practice by thieves: steal in crowd when people are rushing for something. Next time, you can call police (number: 110) station saying there is pocketpick in bus station XXX or just shout out "Thief" (Xiao Tou!) If I'm on side to spot this, I often scream in extravagant way to arouse people's attention and interrupt thief's "pace" of intention.

Generally thieves don't steal from foreigners because they don't want to bring themselves too much trouble by contaminating image of China, but exceptions happen, so be cautious.

Beijing is quite safe at this point, but still some bus thieves are active in bus stations out of downtown. I'm not afraid of that because I always keep my wallet in a safe place, or hold my bag in front of me when I feel too crowded.

China is a huge forest you can find any kinds of birds, incl. evil ones!
haha! Good trip!--**Susan in Beijing**

I want to say I am proud of you! But who am I, to make such a statement?
Thanks for sharing. And thanks for taking on the role. Once again, you serve as an inspiration to others..... --**ruth**

Wow! A very kind, compassionate, and selfless deed. --**S.P.**

COOL!!!!!!! --**Norman**

thank u for helping the innocent woman --**Massoud**

Funny. I just got off a bus here in Shenyang with the Chinglish sign: *Defense care pick sincerely*. I think, it meant to say, be careful of pickpockets.

Harbin, Heilongjiang late February this year, as I was walking with other pedestrians on the famed Moscow street when a young lady looking like she was barely 14 sidled up to a matronly lady in front of me and quickly flipped the top of her shoulder bag, almost unnoticeably pulling out her wallet, but I screamed at her as a reflex response. She did not run away; she just stared at me and smiled, then segued to the left and blended with the oncoming walking traffic headed the other direction. By then, the matronly lady became alert of what just transpired and after securing her bag, wanted to run after the wallet picking waif. Of course, she was gone.

Desperate people take desperate measures. Pickpocketing, like the trade of pleasure in Saipan, is just another entrepreneurial enterprise; illegal but no worse than their respectable cousins, first, where one legitimately but surreptitiously schemes after my assets, or the second, when we trade our soul for activities we hardly would otherwise tolerate without the pay. Take your pick. Obama is said to have hung out with street urchins in Indonesia. I probably would do the same were I younger.

Anyway, make sure your perpetuators have a way of escaping when you do anymore thwarting, unless you have police assistance in sight.

Take care. --Jaime

Wow! That was fantastic. Your statement that the dark foreigner with the bag of cashews might just be a Jamaican who could outrun him and grab his stuff back reminded me of an incident in New York when my friend Joyce's daughter-in-law was robbed. The guy didn't have a chance. She ran after him as if she was competing in the 100yd. dash, tackled him, and got back her stuff. Have a great day. --**Aunt Nye**

Wow! Wow!, Wow!

Now that is what I call adventure! I love it! I couldn't stop reading it! I am so looking forward to your book!

Seriously, this was an awesome read. When you were at the bus stop the second time around I actually picture you in all white and black Chinese slippers, your hands behind your back, your head up high, nothing moving but your eyes...LOL [cue the Under-Dog opening] THERE'S NO NEED TO FEAR "The Jamaican Crime Fighter is HERE"!

"Underdog, Shoeshine Boy's heroic alter-ego, appeared whenever love interest Sweet Polly Purebred was being victimized by villains. Underdog always speaks in rhymes, such as, "There's no need to fear, Underdog is here!"

Underdog - March of the Monsters
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSbQMsbxJ6g&NR=1> --**Diamond**

That was a heroic act, Walt! Very well written as well.

Whenever we travel, the locals would come up to me and point at my handbag and would gesture me to hold it in a more deliberate fashion (closer to my body). I would always comply as I understand it is a friendly advice. Actually, I seldom have anything valuable in my handbag. All the important things are closer to my body and more difficult to reach place, such as the pants pocket near the calf. My theory is that it is difficult to bend down and reach. --**Myrna**

Damn fine fellow! Good show! The Ancestors always prized good character & you have not disappointed.--Vanessa

Nice graphic for your Jamaicaman belt buckle for your Kung fu belt, I think you are going to need it. --Uel

Hi Walt,

My thought on reading this were: 1. How come Walt did not take a picture of the perpetrators, or get some other kind of evidence instead of putting his own life in jeopardy? 2. What, if the group ganged up on you? 3. What is to prevent these perps from continuing in perpetuity without adequate evidence to have them locked up. It seems to me, the local authorities would be very interested, if it starts to affect the tourism industry. I suppose that presupposes, they care.

I had been the mark of a pickpocket in a crowded market in Guatemala years ago; it was a small boy, who had both hands in my front left pocket, trying to steal my wallet. Fortunately, I had the wallet in my front pocket and kept my hands on it in the jostling crowd. It had an unsatisfactory ending, in that, I only pushed the kid away and did nothing else. I am sure he had adult handlers. In retrospect, I should have dragged him over to the policeman I saw earlier. On the other hand, you never know: sometimes the police are in on it, since they often make so little money. --**Ken**

Which brings us to the Xishuangbanna Word of the Day

The following was seen on an electric circuit box on the 2nd floor of a local supermarket here in Jinghong City, Xishuangbanna:



Yes, boys and girls. The word for today is "damgerous." It means "Dammit, it's dangerous!" An example of the ever-efficient Chinese. (No need for two words when you can use one!)

Now then, being the stickler for correct English that I is, I would do a disservice to my exceptional Jamaican

education, and would furthermore be remiss if I didn't point out the correct spelling of the word damn is "D-A-M-N." If used as a modifier, it would be D-A-M-N-E-D, as in: "He's a damned Jamaican!" which, in itself is a damned silly statement, since everyone knows Jamaicans are not damned, but are, in fact, blessed and highly favored. Or, as we say in Jamaica, "we a God-blessed pickney!" But, I digress. Enjoy the word of the day!

Did you say Wild Elephants?!!!

December 2, 2010 10:45:40 PM EST

When I was growing up in New York, I used to watch Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom on television every Sunday. (I'm dating myself, I know). Like many children, I was fascinated by animals. So, these days, while I'm not much into paying to see man-made structures and gardens as a tourist adventure, I WILL go see some wild animals if I get the opportunity! And, I've heard that Xishuangbanna is famous for its wild elephant sanctuary!

So, off I went! It's a 50-minute bus ride from Jinghong City--where I'm staying--to the Elephant spot.



"We're off to see the wizard.... "

oops, wrong lyrics...same tune:

"We're off to see the wild elephants

The wild elephants of Xishuangbanna!"



My first real touristy outing in Xishuangbanna. Look at the mountains! Breathe in that fresh air! It's so exciting. Isn't it, guys? Um, guys? [I turn to my left to get their agreement...]



What the...? Hey, you guys! Wake up! You're missing all the great scenery zipping by!



Elephants at the gate! Dwellers at the threshold

Well, we got to the spot. I think I was the only one on the bus who got off. Everyone else was on their way elsewhere. I paid my admission fee and joined the

throng of people heading to see the elephants. In the middle of the compound there were elephants tethered to posts for photo opportunities. 20 yuan to have a photo taken. I was sort of expecting to trek through dense forest, on hidden pathways to sneak glimpses of rare elephants in their natural habitat while a seasoned wild elephant expert (the Marlin Perkins of Jinghong) engages us (albeit in Chinese) to help us understand all the mystery of these amazing creatures.



It's possible I might have missed that part since I can't read the signs and opted not to take the Chinese-language guided tour.

Not quite "in the wild," but, I can now say I rode on an elephant. Hope I'm not too heavy for you, big fella.

DISCLAIMER: On a very serious note, it's important for me to say here that I don't condone keeping wild animals in captivity. Mankind commits many thoughtless acts and atrocities against sentient beings in the name of food,



*entertainment, clothing and ultimately, financial reward. For a very revealing documentary on many aspects of this, see *EarthLings The Movie* (also viewable on youtube or other sites.)*

And then, the usual fun started! As I made my way around the compound, I started to get requests from people wanting to take photos with me. Sometimes, if they're too shy to ask me to take a photo with them, what the girls will do is: one will pose for the camera while I'm approaching, and the other will snap a photo just as I

walk by in the frame. I've seen this strategy a few times, so I decided to be nice(r) this time, and just walk deliberately into the shot and put my arm around friend #1. Upon seeing this, friend number 2 gave the camera to a passer-by and joined us in the shot! Upon seeing this, a nearby monk gave his camera to someone else and joined me in a shot of his own! All this is done with just smiles and gestures. No words.



I now make it a point to give MY camera to whoever is taking photos of me, so I can get a copy, too, 'cause you wouldn't believe me if I simply told you what happens!

If I stayed there any longer, a line would have formed. Yes! Can

you see it?! A booth! A sign! I'm charging 10 yuan a head!

Dream sequence:

"Step right up! Young and old! Come take your photo with the Jamaican in China! Only 10 yuan!"

Business is great!

Then.

I felt bad for the elephants.

So, I stopped.

...closed the booth.

...tossed the sign.

...um... ...kept the money.



So, anyway, after fulfilling my obligatory quota of daily shots for strangers, I decided to stroll around the grounds and get some shots of my own...



I think this is a guest house on the premises. Now THIS would be a cool place to live..if it wasn't for the smell of elephant dung wafting through the kitchen every so often.

Then, I got down to business.

I started trekking through the dense forest, and on hidden pathways to sneak glimpses of rare elegance in its natural habitat, and like a seasoned expert (Call me Marlin Perkins), I engaged them



(albeit, in the little Chinese I know) to help me discover all the mystery of these lovely creatures. Fortunately, I was able to grab some great shots! Wanna see'em?



Not sure exactly what her job was, but she was simply out standing in a field (get it?) (literally) with her parasol, so I asked her if I could take her photo. Perhaps her job is simply to look elegant so that intrigued Jamaicans will ask to take her photo.

Well, it worked!



The Massage Girls and me....



Zhang Li, at the front gate. She organizes the guided tours



Jamaican up in the hills, somewhere in China..." (photo by Parasol Girl)

Yes, it was a great experience. After a few hours out, I headed back home.



The bus back home!

Expenditures:

14 yuan for the bus ticket to the Elephant Spot (\$2US)

65 yuan admission fee (\$9US)

14 yuan for the ride back (\$2US)

Not bad for a day's outing, some cool memories and photos, and a bunch of QQ numbers.

QQ mascot



Oh! Did I mention that I now have a QQ number? What's a QQ number????? Hold up.

Did you just ask me, "What's a QQ number????"? Come on now, get with the program, will you! Here in China, the second most asked question I get after "Where are you from?" is "You have QQ?"

Practically everyone in China has a QQ number. You can't be officially Chinese without QQ. So, now I'm on QQ. So now it's official. I'm Chinese.

I may not be able to SPEAK fluently in Putonghua YET, but, with the help of the "Google translate" software, I can CHAT in Chinese with all my new QQ friends. I won't publish my QQ number here. Things could get out of hand.

The Greedy Inn Keeper



(originally published in the Saipan Tribune)

The Greedy Innkeeper

I was going to begin by saying that I don't understand greedy people, but that may sound a bit naive. So, don't get me wrong. I know what greed is. I recognize it when I see it, I think. It's just that, when it comes to business and life, it's not in me as a personality trait, so I can't endorse it as a strategy for success and happiness. However, I'm sure there are others who can and do. Whenever I encounter it, however, it gives me pause, and raises some unanswerable questions.

I'll share a recent little travel experience to illustrate. As you may know, I'm currently following my passion traveling through Asia. In one of the cities I stayed, I asked an apartment-owner for a special deal for a 30-day stay. I had already stayed three weeks, and was willing to stay longer.

As a "tourist," staying day to day, I expect to pay a premium for my accommodations, and I was. I was paying the equivalent of \$529/month for a room, kitchen and living room, in a four-bedroom townhouse.

However, I had made friends in town, so I knew that the going rate in that part of town-at \$220/month-was considerably less than what I was paying. So, I offered to pay the innkeeper \$300/month. He refused insisting that he could go no less than \$440/month.

I even offered to pay him as much as \$350/month. However, since he was familiar with the other options in town, he was convinced that he had a bit of

leverage as he thought (and even told me) I would not be able to find short-term rental in the neighborhood at the rate I was offering. He wouldn't budge.

However correct he was in his assumptions, he was, in my estimation, simply being greedy. He had already received almost a full month's "premium" rent from me, and was now being offered a second full month at a rate that was still above the local rate.

Additionally, as I was staying in a four-bedroom suite, he would still have three additional rooms to rent to other travelers throughout the month at a premium, even while I paid him more than the entire apartment could be rented to local residents. He was, in my estimation, simply being greedy.

Every right

Now, as a business owner myself, I respect his right to insist to be paid what he thinks his accommodations are worth. And, according to the "law of obligation" philosophy that I live by, I know he's under no obligation whatsoever to negotiate this deal to my satisfaction.

However, I felt he was being unreasonable. Having stayed there for three weeks already, and being witness to how infrequently the other rooms in the suite were being rented, I knew that it would be difficult for him to maintain full occupancy or even half-a-month's occupancy. So, given the choice of a guaranteed \$300/month, or an uncertain struggle to maintain occupancy, he chose the struggle. In other words, he didn't know I always have a plan "B."

Plan B

I say "he chose the struggle," because I then did what I always do whenever I feel a single individual is using their perceived leverage unreasonably, or is too much in control of my options. I left. I found another option.

Within just a few hours after making some phone calls, I learned that a friend I had made in town was leaving for a few days, and she let me stay in her now empty apartment—a similar four-bedroom townhouse just a short walk away—absolutely free of charge. So, I moved out of the innkeeper's suite the next day, and even got some of my money back since I had prepaid a few days in advance. Things have a great way of working out, don't they?

Throughout my business and personal life, I've always lived by the philosophy that "any plan or strategy that relies on a single individual or entity for its success is a flawed plan." In other words, I never allow any one person to hold all keys to all the doors I wish to enter—figuratively, and literally. I always have a "Plan B."

When it comes to greedy business partners, or people who steal my clients, I don't worry about revenge, or about taking them to court, or about fighting over money. My time is too valuable for that. I simply walk away and

create new experiences that elevate me and make me prosper. I know that my success in life cannot be restricted by any single human, entity or country. And when people try to control, restrict or adversely affect that success, I remain above their level of thought and action and continue my forward-upward trajectory.

At the same time, because I am aware that there are people who will always choose the greed option, I always plan my strategies and execute my plans with a backup plan in place, just in case a person I am working with fails to produce the desired results.

For example, if I'm looking for someone to print my books, I always have two (or more) options. If I'm depending on someone to perform some activity or relay some information, I always make sure I have a strategy in the ready in case they drop the ball. I'm rarely derailed by greed, malicious intent or general incompetence by others.

Um, did I just kill the goose?

I don't spend too much time contemplating the mentality of the greedy. However, there's an aspect of the ways of greed that I've always found fascinating. Do the greedy weigh the potential consequences of their greed? Do they see the potential harm to long-term relationships that their greed causes? Do they have any regret or remorse over their choices and the consequences to themselves and others?

As the greedy innkeeper now sits with an empty apartment earning \$0 per day and \$0 per month from me, and now having to struggle to maintain occupancy, does it occur to him that perhaps he was being greedy? Does it occur to him that his "bird in the hand (that he has now lost) was worth two in the bush?" Does he recognize that he just killed the goose that laid the golden egg?

Does he consider that he should act differently next time? Does he imagine that greed may not be a viable strategy in the larger scheme of things? Does he realize that now the relationship has soured and that there may be no future dealings or referrals from me, further limiting his future income?

Sadly, I imagine that he does not. I've learned that most people are doing the best they can. In other words, when a person knows better, they do better. Most people are living according to a fixed worldview, a fixed personal paradigm, and they choose from the only set of options they feel are available to them. Experts also say that a person cannot engage in an activity he/she knows to be wrong, so there must be some justification that occurs that makes him/her feel it is "right" for him to engage in the activity. (The man who steals a loaf of bread justifies it by his or his family's hunger and lack of options.)

Greed and scarcity

Such greed is often based on a scarcity mentality. The scarcity mentality essentially says, "I must get as much as I can NOW, for there may not be the chance tomorrow, or even a tomorrow." Combined with a capitalist imperative that makes success a win-lose proposition that justifies one person's success at another person's expense, such a paradigm reduces the other individual in any negotiation or transaction to mere "dollar potential," available only in the immediate moment for immediate benefit only.

I imagine that the innkeeper, therefore, did not see me as long-term potential. After all, to him I am just a tourist-here today, gone tomorrow. I imagine that even if he regrets this loss, he likely believes there'll simply be another tourist coming along at some point with whom he can try his strategy again. Of course, I'm only speculating, here. I'm hoping our interaction can serve as a bit of behavior modification.

In the future

Perhaps I'm not a good businessman. Perhaps I, in fact, was the one being greedy and unreasonable. Perhaps, in time, I will learn the answers to these and other questions. What I do believe is that there are consequences to greed that limit the future potential of the individual who practices it as well as the society as a whole in which it is practiced. Eventually there will come a limit to the sustainability of the greed-as-an-option strategy. Resources dry up. Relationships dissolve. Revenues decline. Prosperity diminishes.

What I *do* believe is that there are other options to greed. If the sages are correct that life can be a win-win proposition and fair exchange is the basis of true prosperity, that there is enough for everyone's need, but not everyone's greed-then such options exist for us to practice, and if we wish for the ultimate prosperity of the planet as a global community, we must choose and practice them.

It may be a sad conclusion to reach, but the very people who choose and practice greed as a business or life strategy, and who are most in need of changing their behavior, are inherently incapable of recognizing those other options. The evil do not know they are evil, and the greedy cannot see their greed.

The good news, however, is that unlike the greedy innkeeper, you, my friend, can choose these options. I hope you do!

-[end article]

Therefore, without naming names.... I'm now staying at a new friend's apartment just a short walk from my villa! My friend will be heading out of town while I'm in Laos, so I have a duplicate key for when I return.

Email from a Chinese male:



Hello Walt,

I think it is a great idea that you are seeking questions from your readership for your upcoming posts on Laos. I have never been in Laos but I am interested in the following:

- what are the general Laotian attitude towards China as a country, and the Chinese people? what about US and Americans?

- What do you feel as an outsider about happiness of Laotian in general? Do they smile a lot? If they are happy/unhappy, what are the major reasons? How does that compared to the things you see in China and among the Chinese?

- Are they open to talk to travelers from other countries?

- Do you feel the major cities in Laos commercialized?

I also have a question that is somewhat off-topic: is there any particular reason you choose Laos?

I like to read your email. They are like one of the windows open to the outside world. Good job! --J



cool! Thanks! Great questions.

I sent some of the questions to a friend who is living further south in Laos and in a much more commercial area. Hope she replies.

Meanwhile, I chose Laos since (1) it's right on the border of where I'm staying in Xishuangbanna

(2) the bus ride is only 5-6 hours and only 70RMB and only 210RMB for the visa (still cheaper than going to Hong Kong as most visitors do in order to satisfy the exit requirement)

(3) I have a friend from Saipan who now lives there, and one of the plans was to visit her there.

So, it's time to say:

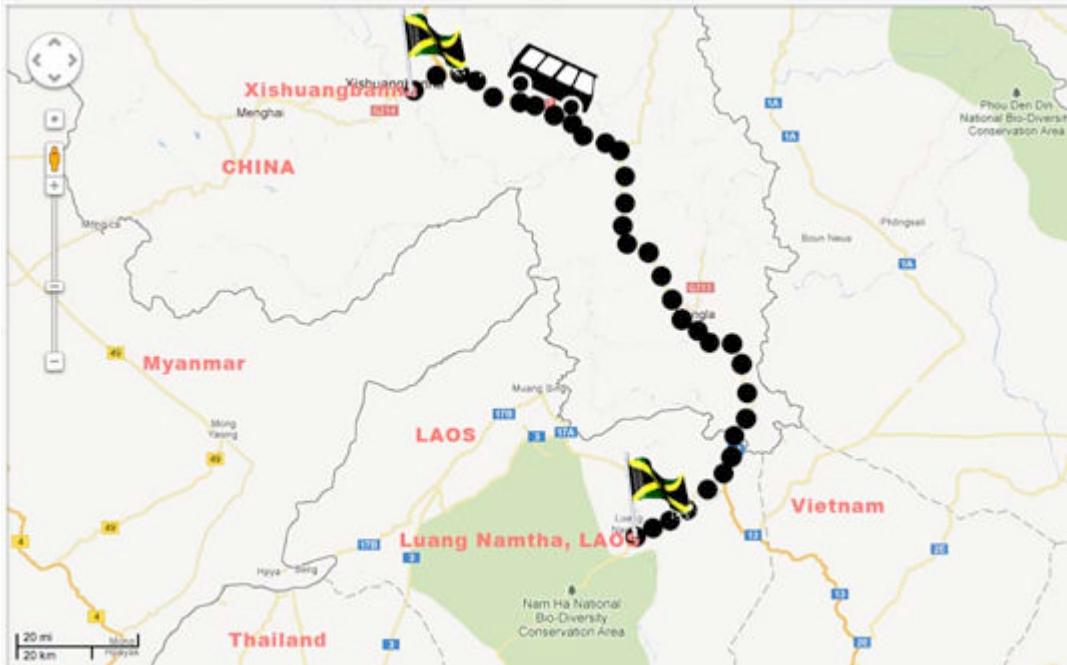
So long, Xishuangbanna!

I departed for Laos Nov-30-2010 (stay: 26 days)

Chapter 5:

LAOS*aka Walt's "Mekong By Bus" Tour!*

I arrived in Laos Nov-30-2010

**Eight Days in Laos--Day 1!****December 2, 2010 10:45:40 PM EST**

So, here's the deal. As you may recall, I have a multiple-entry visa for China. That means each time I enter the country, I can stay here for up to 90 days. Well, that 90-day period is ending, and I must first depart China in order to return for my next 90-day stay.

When I was planning this journey from back in August on Saipan, I had anticipated that a trip to Hong Kong might be in the cards for my first exit, since no visa is required for entry to Hong Kong, and I thought I'd be in Shanghai at this time. However, since I'm actually in southern China--Yunnan Province-- I decide to head to Laos for few days. Laos is just a 6-hour bus ride from where I am now in Jinghong City, Xishuangbanna (Yunnan Province), and the cost of the ticket is only 70RMB (approx \$10US; much cheaper than a round trip airplane ticket to Hong Kong).

The bus from Jinghong to Luang Namtha, departs at 7:00am each day.



The bus I will take tomorrow

I purchased my bus ticket the day before my trip. Just so you know (for when YOU take the same trip), the earliest you can purchase your ticket is the DAY

BEFORE your expected date of travel. The schedules can change at any moment. The reason? There are (usually) two buses between Jinghong/China and Luang Namtha/Laos each day. There's a Lao driver who comes from Laos with a load of goods and passengers, then picks up passengers in Jinghong to return to Laos. And, there's a Chinese driver who leaves from China with a load of goods and passengers, picks up passengers in Laos, then returns to China. By the evening before any given day, they will know whether the bus driver from Laos is indeed coming to Jinghong and can, therefore, be added to the day's schedule.

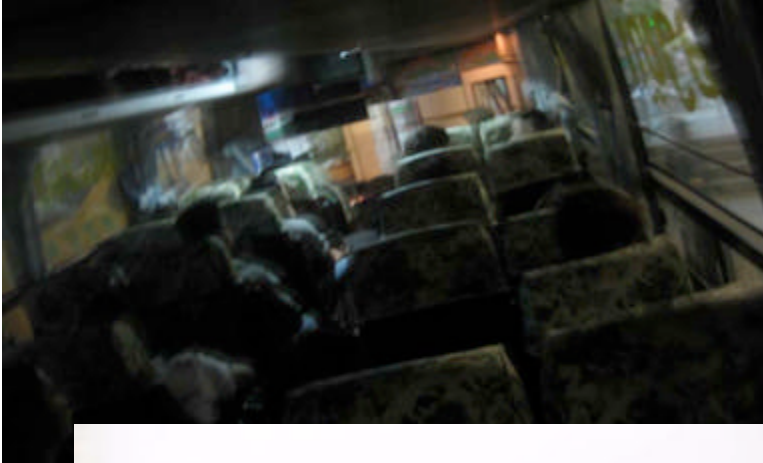
The taxi picks me up at 6:30am. I take the short ride to the bus station, and I'm on my way!



Gi me di Morning Ride! (obscure cultural reference for Jamaicans only)



Packing the undercarriage. I always like to see what's going on with my luggage.



Row of seats to myself. Everyone's sleeping. No smoking. Aahhh, yes! This is going to be great!



Mountain morning mists over Jinghong



Sunrise on the road to Laos

My Chinese friends always want to know what life is like in America. So, here's a little something:



IN AMERICA

In America, practically NO ONE would dare smoke in an enclosed space like an elevator or a bus! The awareness and acceptance that cigarette smoking, and more importantly, second-hand smoke is hazardous to one's health is widespread and gets government endorsement AND enforcement. Smoking is even prohibited in restaurants and office buildings! In winter time, your American coworkers have to take breaks and go stand outside in the cold to do their smoking. And when someone does break the rules, we here in America, get to be smug and condescending and flash them mean, disgusted looks and ostracize them because they're not playing by the rules! We can TELL them to put the cigarette out. Or, we can call the waiter or bus driver and have him/her do it. And he/she will! In America, the non-smokers have the power!

However, I'm in China. And, not wanting to be the pushy, out-of-sync foreigner, I would just bear it and not say anything, like most every other Chinese person. However, the fellow on this bus who was smoking was in the seat directly in front of mine, and I just couldn't fathom the thought of five hours of inhaling his second-hand smoke wafting its way back to me.

So, at one of the rest stops along the way, I asked a fellow traveler named Logan--the only American on the bus-- to teach me how to say "body" in Chinese. Then, while we were sitting inside the bus waiting for the driver to return, I tapped the smoker on the shoulder, bowed politely, and said with a smile, "*Ni Hao. Wo bu hui shuo Putonghua, danxi, wo shiang shuo: Wo bu xiwang shi yen. Wo de shen ti bu hao,*" which, roughly translated, means "*Hello. I don't speak Mandarin (well), but I'd like to say that I don't like cigarette smoke. My body is not good.*"

I didn't like "lying" to him, (since my body is actually, um... perfect, I've been told, hee hee!), but I figured I would soften any perceived chastisement, and save him any lost face by appealing to any sympathy he might have for my "failing health."

Now, it's not in my nature to impose a Western standard of behavior on others. In America, feeling well within my rights to insist that others follow the stated law for the benefit of my health, I might say, "Excuse me sir, would you

mind not smoking, please?, and he would comply. However, such a scene would never even happen in America, because, as I said, by now everyone's on the same page with the smoking rule.

But, here's the cool part. That was actually my first completely expressed, multiple-sentence, unsolicited thought to a male stranger here in China*....AND HE UNDERSTOOD ME! Yay! Which means my tones were correct--or close enough-- and I succeeded in getting my message across. At first he replied that he wasn't smoking at that exact moment. (In other words, "Hey, it's not me!"), but his seat-mate added a bit of clarification on my behalf, and then he understood that I was asking him not to smoke for the rest of the trip! He complied. So, I achieved successful Mandarin communication, PLUS no more smoke (at least from him) for the duration of the journey! YAY! A double victory of sorts.

**I know that communication is pretty basic, but hey, in my defense, I've sort of been letting the language "grow" in me organically through immersion and out of necessity. I'm definitely getting better at communicating, but the truth is, I've made a lot of English-speaking Chinese friends, and for the people I meet who don't speak English, I've gotten into the habit of using sign language rather*

than forcing myself to practice my vocabulary. Shame on me, I know.



Anyway, we get to the border, depart through China Immigration, and emerge on the other side into Laos!

*Across the border into
Laos!*

Logan, who has taken this trip several times, explains: "Once through the CHINA Immigration departure terminal, we have a choice. We could wait for everyone on the bus to finish their processing, re-board the bus and then drive

the few hundred feet to the LAO Immigration arrival terminal and get off the bus.... Or, we could walk there now and get things done a bit quicker."



Easy decision.

Walking to the Laos border station

At the border entry station to Laos, I get processed rather quickly as I had purchased my Laos entry permit visa from back in

Jinghong. (210RMB, or \$30US; even with this expense, it's still cheaper than a round trip plane ticket to Hong Kong!)



Granting me easy entry to Laos.... People, you have no idea what they've just done!



Logan helps out a fellow traveler complete her paperwork

Travel websites and schedules say this is a 6-hour bus ride. For the record, I'd say it's actually a 3-hour bus ride that just TAKES six hours!

um,....so remind me what we're waiting for now, Mr. Bus Driver....please? Um....guys? I think everyone's ready now.



We reboard the bus, depart, and about an hour later, we pull into the Luang Namtha, Laos bus station and everyone gets off the bus. I ask the bus driver to change 100 RMB of my Chinese money into Lao currency, and ask for some directions. He tells me I need to take a shuttle into town.

(FYI: 1 US dollar = 8080kip; 1 RMB= 1200kip)

The Mekong Cafe in Jinghong recommended the Zuela Guesthouse as the best place for me to stay. So that's where I was headed. I hadn't been able to contact Zuela by phone to make a reservation, but I was told there would be many guesthouses within walking distance of each other, and that finding accommodations in Luang Namtha shouldn't be too much of a challenge.

So from the bus station--with Logan's help--we found a waitress at the bus station bar who knows of the Zuela Guesthouse to write the name and location in Lao, and then I found a 'tuk tuk" to take me to town. A tuk tuk is a small open sided van (a pick-up with a cover) used for local transport. It's what we might call a "Jolly-bus" in Jamaica back in the old days! A ride in a tuk tuk costs 10,000 kip. I know this because I first asked my China-to-Laos bus driver told me what the

"local price" should be, before I ventured out into Lao territory. That way, I was prepared for, and didn't fall for the old "charge the foreigner 5 times the going rate" trick that one driver tried to get away with.

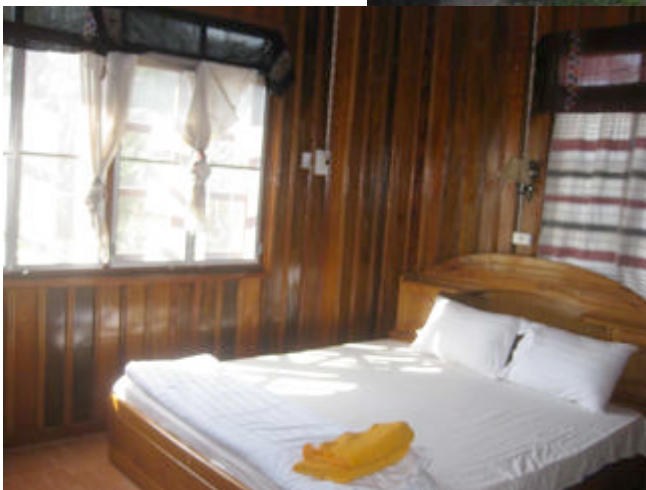


At the bus station; Tuk Tuk to the right.

Logan and I say our goodbyes, as he's continuing further south, and I head to the tuk tuk.

The tuk tuk takes me to town (say that 10 times fast), and I get to the guesthouse strip of town, and check in to the Zuela Guesthouse.

My room (#22) is right above the guesthouse restaurant. That's my balcony just under the coconut tree branch. The daily rate is about 70,000 kip/day (about \$9US/day) It'll cost more if you want air conditioning. I don't.



This is where I'll spend the next few days in Laos



Zuela Guesthouse, Luang Namtha, Laos

So, now I'm in The Peoples Democratic Republic of Laos!
Let me get my checklist again.

Sunshine? Check! Internet access? Check! Kitchen? None.
But, I'll be heading out into town shortly to find a good restaurant for my short stay! Stay tuned.



Hi, Walt,

What a splendid idea to go into Laos to care for your passport issue. I also liked the way you handled the smoker. Actually, they are not supposed to smoke on the bus. Putting it nicely to him definitely helped save his face. I believe that Yunnan will be the last province to ban smoking; it is their largest crop!

Please keep your trip to Laos coming. I understand it is a very beautiful country.—**Myrna**

Eight Days in Laos....Day 1, continued

December 9, 2010 9:50:00 PM EST

So, I'm walking down the main street in Luang Namtha checking out the scene. The people at Mekong Cafe back in Xishuangbanna were correct: every other entrance is a guest house, with a restaurant and trekking adventure service, but I'll talk more about the local economy later. Now, we have more pressing concerns: Food!



Sidewalk entrance to Minority Restaurant

Just a few feet south of the entrance to Zuela Guesthouse I pass the entrance to a place called Minority Restaurant. Minority?? I'm offended! I'm appalled!.....I'm hungry.

I'm attracted by the notice on the sidewalk billboard that states they have vegetarian meals. So, I take a look.



I walk down a passageway...

20-meter passageway to the restaurant

...and at the other, end I'm greeted by the owner.



"Sawadee" (Hello) Vanxai Inyasone, owner of Minority Restaurant,

I get a good, calm vibe from him, and his place. We chat for a bit (Vanxai speaks English fluently, by the way). I tell him what I DON'T want

in my dishes (MSG, dairy, eggs, meat, seasoning salts, butter, sugar, etc.), and he says no problem. So, I look over the menu and choose a few items.



Whistle a happy tune while I wait.

Get served in good time, (no one else in the restaurant at 3:00pm in the afternoon), and prepare to enjoy my first meal in Laos.

The Namtha River Experience office behind me while I wait for my food



Care to join me?



(1) Fried Big noodles & Veggies, (2) Fried river seaweed, (3) Black Mushroom and vegetable soup. The real star of this show!



>slurp< >smack<
aaaahhh! All done.

Actually, please don't take those sound effects literally. Having grown up in a British-influenced society of with an

emphasis on impeccable manners and meticulously-enforced "proper" eating habits, the worst offense one could commit in my family is to make noise when one chews. Consequently, chewing while talking to me on the phone, for instance, is an unforgivable transgression. I've disowned friends and even a few distant family members because of this. (And, I'll hang up the phone...politely, of course, if you call me up to test me.) It's a deal breaker for a potential relationship if, on a first date, my date slurps and smacks while eating. Yep, ranks right up there with ugly feet as one of the non-negotiable, one-strike-you're-out deal breakers. But, forgive me. I digress.

Back to the meal. It was fabulous! It's the best meal I've had in a long time! (HmMMM...maybe I should change that line. It doesn't reflect well on my own cooking, does it?)

Know what? I think my plans have changed. I WAS going to spend just two days in Laos and then head back to China. However, the fried seaweed at Minority Restaurant has thrown in a random variable, and unexpected element/loop/monkey wrench into my plans.

I think I'll be staying in Laos just a wee bit longer.

15,000kip for the seaweed

15,000kip for the noodles

15,000kip for the soup

45,000kip TOTAL (approx \$5.50US, or 37RMB)

Good deal!

Yep, Minority Restaurant gets five stars from Walt the Wandering, Virile Vegan! You can read more about the restaurant and the reason for the name by checking out the website: http://www.namtha-river-experience-laos.com/our_restaurant.htm

While you do that, I'll be having dreams of sugarplum fried seaweed fairies dancing around in my head! You think I'm kidding, don't you? You have no idea.

p.s. I know EXACTLY what I'll be doing tomorrow.

Eight Days in Laos.....Day 2

December 10, 2010 7:16:54 AM EST

You know what? I haven't been in a sauna since leaving Saipan. And you know what else? I've never had a professional massage.

It's something I had wanted to do in Beijing, Kunming and Jinghong, but just never got around to finding a location. Well, here in Laos I found one.

There's an Herbal Massage and Sauna spot located on the same premises as Minority Restaurant. So, since I'm here, there's no need to put it off any longer!

So today's agenda is simple. It includes:

(1) Sitting in the sun.



'Laxin' in Laos

(2) Getting a massage in the evening.

Yes, I do have a photo of me getting the massage, but you'll have to be a member of my extra-extra-EXTRA special mailing list to see it. Okay. Okay. If you insist...here it is:



Yep, in the sales pitch for this book, I promised you action, drama, controversy, and hot sweaty nights.... Well, this is the "hot sweaty nights" part. Enjoy it and stop complaining.

The sauna room is

constructed of bamboo. It's a little hut that sits atop some wood columns. Out back, behind the sauna, there's a huge pot sitting over a fire, with a hollow bamboo pipe positioned to direct the herbal steam into the hut. It gets pretty hot in there. Dare I say, even "oppressive!"



There'll be no eating at Minority Restaurant today since today was one of those days I didn't eat. Reason? The sauna shop opens for business at 4:00pm each day. So, I kept an empty stomach all day in preparation for the massage and sauna, and the lovely Lao ladies didn't finish squeezing and boiling me until about 7pm-ish, which is too late in the day for me to eat.

I'll eat tomorrow.

Eight Days in Laos....Day 3!

December 11, 2010 11:07:21 AM EST

Sooooooooo....to recap: I'm in Luang Namtha, Laos. Since you may not be inclined to do the research, I've invited the prototypical, documentary-style, voiceover man to share excerpts from wikitravel.org as well as Vanxai's namtha-river-expericence-laos.com website for today's episode. Okay, narrator, you're up!

Luang Namtha lies on the banks of the Nam Tha river, and the meaning of the name is "The area (luang) around the Tha river (nam Tha)".[Wikipedia]

Now that I'm here...What to do. What to do????

The international award-winning Nam Ha Ecotourism Project was established in 2000 as the first community-based ecotourism project in Laos. organize community-base ecotourism-forest trekking, Hiking, Kayaking, Rafting, Biking, River trips and Village home-stays-designed to produce economic benefits for local people, protect cultural heritage and raise funds for environmental conservation. [namtha-river-expericence-laos.com]

So, let's see. I could go trekking. Luang Namtha is known for its trekking adventures. I could do a 1, 2 or 3-day trek.

Naw. I like to be on my own clock. Maybe next time.

Or, I could go whitewater rafting. I did that once many years ago with some college friends. It was fun. But....been there. Done that.

Or, wait! I could rent a moped and go out on my own and see the countryside. Now that's appealing, except, the moped engine is a bit noisy, and based on the free and unencumbered way I like to travel, it's a bit cumbersome.

Waitaminit! I know! I remember seeing some bicycles for rent Just at the street entrance to Zuela Guesthouse. It's only 10,000 kip/day to rent one!

Now, the truth is, 10,000 of anything is a lot of things, but in terms of money, that's about \$1.20US. I can deal with that. A bicycle. It's quiet, easy to maneuver, plus I can get some exercise and work up a sweat, and an appetite at the same time. And, I'll still be contributing to the local economy without contributing to the local pollution! Yep. cycling through Laos. That's the ticket!

I'll head north out of Namtha towards Muangsing.

Luang Namtha is a mountainous province, located in northwestern Laos bordering Myanmar (Burma) and China with 5 districts (Namtha, Muang Sing, Vieng Phoukha, Muang Long and Nalea) and a total land area of 9,325 square kilometers. The population in 2005 was about 152,285 people or some 16 people per square kilometer. [namtha-river-expericence-laos.com]



This was one of the nicest experiences. I love riding bicycles, so to sail down mountain roads in lush country, with clean air blowing through my dreadlocks.... (um, oops, that's my other Jamaican identity) was a treat! You can see video of this day at <http://www.youtube.com/jamaicaninchina2>



Lush vegetation, clean air....



Kickstand the bicycle, use the seat for a tripod, set the 10-second timer, walk briskly to position myself....and voila!



Same strategy, different pose

...and



again

Most people in Luang Namtha live in small rural villages and practice agriculture as their main occupation. There are over 17 ethnic minority groups in the province, making it perhaps the most ethnically diverse place in the entire country. [namtha-river-expericence-laos.com]



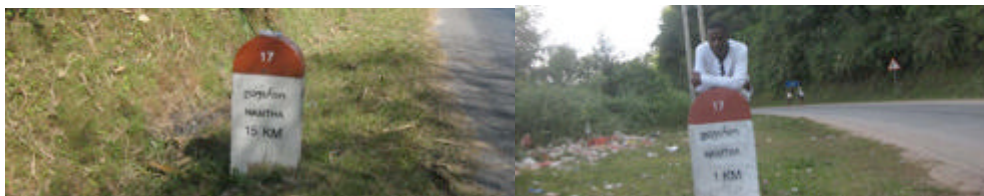
The chain on these kids' bicycle had come off and gotten wedged between the gear and the wheel. I pulled it free for them while they stared and pointed at me. What? Haven't you ever seen a Jamaican in Laos before?



Dam. That's a lot of water. Get it?



Forget the glass house in the desert. My new dream home is a wooden, summer retreat in the mountains of northern Laos.



Ended up riding 30 kilometers....15

....and 15 back

Luang Namtha province has a wide range of guesthouses. With the prospects of getting more tourists with the new No.3 Road and the upgraded international airport, many new guesthouses have been built in recent times and new hotels are being planned in the center of Luang Namtha town. In Luang Namtha Province, there are about 73 hotels and guesthouses with 951 beds and 144 restaurants. [namtha-river-experience-laos.com]

And, speaking of restaurants, after a day of cycling, there's nothing better than to replenish the lost electrolytes and nutrients than with a Minority Restaurant Happy Meal!



fried se Fried rice with vegetables....(I've found it a challenge to get brown rice at restaurants throughout Asia, so white will have to do this time)

I think I had a third dish, but I really got into the experience, and forgot to have it pose for a photo.

To do my part to make life more pleasant for vegan nomads as well as the restaurateurs who serve them, I tweaked the Wikitravel.org mention of Vanxai's Minority Restaurant and added a link to his website. Check it out at: http://wikitravel.org/en/Luang_Namtha



How nice. You stir up fond memories of my past trip to Laos which was only one year ago. I spent a month going up and down the hills, just in the northern part of the country. It was really great. Enjoy.--
Andrea, Italy

Eight Days in Laos....Days 4 through 7!

December 11, 2010 11:07:21 AM EST

So, by now, I've established a daily routine... I'm up at about 5am to work on the computer until sunrise.

Then, I head out to the market...

At the computer



Luang Namtha Morning Market

...watch puppies and
monkeys playing...



"Which way did 'e go? Which way did 'e go? This little chimp is makin' a monkey outta me!" (Video at www.youtube.com/jamaicaninchina2)



...make new friends...

Tik, from Minority Restaurant on her way to evening English class.

...do more more cycling on Day 7

Cycling and sunning



THE MAKING OF "JAMAICAN IN...."...Garbage cans, bicycle seats, tops of automobiles, rocks, and branches of dried trees, all make great tripods for snapping photographs for the Jamaican

in China, Laos and beyond..." adventure. Here's the twig on which I perched my camera to take the previous shot. Now you know!



and more photo opps to remind myself I was in Laos

...and wrap it up with a meal at Minority Restaurant.



Big Noodles & Vegetables (2) Fried veggie spring rolls, (3) Tofu Soup

I've also started to talk with Minority Restaurant owner, Vanxai about Jamaica, about Saipan, about Laos, about America, and about the tourism industry in Luang Namtha. I offer to update the webpage for the restaurant a bit to make it a bit more appealing, and give a few tips on places to promote the restaurant on the web.



*Introducing
Vanxai to
HappyCow.net*

He also teaches me about the eco-tourism/adventure business and we agree to keep in touch upon my return to Jinghong.



*Make sure you go
Kayaking with Vanxai.
That's his passion!*

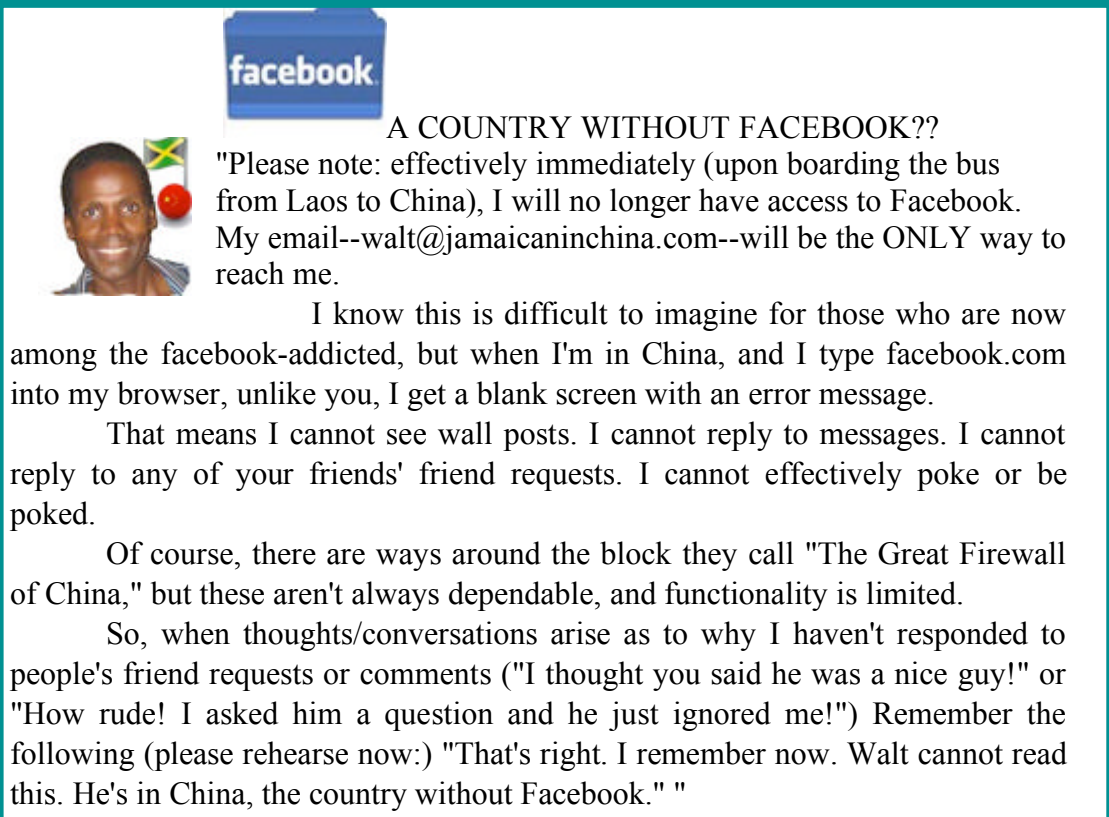
Tomorrow morning, I return to China!

**Eight Days in
Laos....The first
Jamaican to.....!
December 13, 2010
7:48:21 PM EST**

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!
Let it be known by one
and all that...

On December 8, 2010, at approximately 10:20am, Walt F.J. Goodridge became the first Jamaican to cross from Laos into China!

It all started innocently enough with an early rise to catch my 7:30am tuk tuk to the bus station. As this would be the last time I'd have unrestricted access to Facebook (as well as Youtube, Twitter, Blogspot and other subversive US media), I penned a special goodbye to my facebook friends which read:



The screenshot shows a Facebook post. At the top left is a small profile picture of a man with a Jamaican flag and a red tomato next to it. To the right of the profile picture is a blue Facebook logo. The text of the post reads: "A COUNTRY WITHOUT FACEBOOK?? 'Please note: effectively immediately (upon boarding the bus from Laos to China), I will no longer have access to Facebook. My email--walt@jamaicaninchina.com--will be the ONLY way to reach me. I know this is difficult to imagine for those who are now among the facebook-addicted, but when I'm in China, and I type facebook.com into my browser, unlike you, I get a blank screen with an error message. That means I cannot see wall posts. I cannot reply to messages. I cannot reply to any of your friends' friend requests. I cannot effectively poke or be poked. Of course, there are ways around the block they call 'The Great Firewall of China,' but these aren't always dependable, and functionality is limited. So, when thoughts/conversations arise as to why I haven't responded to people's friend requests or comments ('I thought you said he was a nice guy!' or 'How rude! I asked him a question and he just ignored me!') Remember the following (please rehearse now:) 'That's right. I remember now. Walt cannot read this. He's in China, the country without Facebook.' "

And with that, I was on my way to check out of the Zuela Guesthouse in



Luang Namtha, Laos. The tuk tuk would pick me up at Minority Restaurant, so I would have a chance to say a final goodbye to Vanxai.

Vanxai Inyasone, owner of Minority Restaurant. See the website to meet his wife and staff.

After a short tuk tuk ride to the station, the bus to Jinghong arrives, passengers board, and we're soon on our way!



Bus station. "Hope this helpful stranger gives me back my camera before the bus pulls off!"

And then, it happened.

On December 8, 2010, at approximately 10:20am, I became the first Jamaican citizen to attempt to cross from Laos into China!

I know this because the border agents told me so. And soon, everyone else on the bus would know it, too, because since the border agents had never seen or processed a Jamaican passport ever before at this port, the processing of my re-entry into China delayed the entire bus load of people for



Wait a moment, please. Have a seat. I will go upstairs.

almost an hour! Yes, a bus load of Lao, Chinese, two Americans, and an (equally annoyed, but ever polite) bus driver were camped outside in the parking lot waiting for the border agents to do whatever it is that border agents do when they encounter a passport they've never seen before.

Meanwhile, taking advantage of the opportunity, I got a chance to practice my Mandarin with the agents who were waiting with me. (Always willing to educate border guards to learn more about Jamaica than simply "Usain Bolt!")

As time dragged on, however, I realized that I had to do something. This processing delay could turn our six-hour bus ride into an overnight trip. I was already feeling bad about delaying the other travelers, so, when the bus driver edged ever closer to the immigration checkpoint, and started giving me an encouraging sign to go upstairs to where the agent had taken my passport, I was in agreement with him and headed upstairs to put a little pressure on the process.

I started wandering around the second floor of the Immigration Center peeking into each open door to find the agent who disappeared with my passport.

Soon, another guard spotted me in the (official/restricted) area, and approached me. I communicated to him that my passport was being held up in a process, and I pointed down to the waiting bus driver and passengers some of whom had gathered at the Immigration exit area to see what the delay was.

"Do not worry," the guard said, "the bus will wait for you."

"I *know* they'll wait. That's just it. I don't WANT them to have to wait. The whole bus is being delayed because of something that I know has nothing to do with the authenticity of my paperwork--since my passport is valid, and I have my valid entry-permit, but most likely has to do with the administrative stuff in YOUR computer system." (*Of course, that's what I WOULD HAVE said had I been able to speak fluently in Putonghua. Instead, I just said, <<"I know.">>*)

Soon, the young lady agent who had been scrolling through microfiche for that hour saw me outside her door, and came outside. The guard communicated to her the delayed bus situation, and, quite agreeable, she told me she would photocopy my passport and continue whatever it is she needed to do while she let me go through the immigration processing.

I retrieved my passport from her, headed quickly downstairs, and, whoaaaa! I encountered a long line of passengers from another incoming bus who

were attempting to go through Immigration, too. However, not wanting to wait any longer, I called to a guard and asked (signs and gestures) if he could assist.

He understood my intentions and told me to go to the front of the line, and then explained to the waiting queue that I was to be next on line. (At least, I imagine that's what he said) Thanks, dude!



"You go first."

NOTE: Um, by the way, as one of the guards told me earlier, there's no photo-taking allowed inside the immigration area. I have no idea how those last two photos got into my blog post! Wikileaks?

One rubber stamp later, I was out the door and--along with the driver and few other passengers by my side--heading towards the parking lot and back on the bus. To tell you the truth, no one on the bus really seemed that perturbed, but I didn't like the thought of being the one responsible for delaying the "3-hour-trip-that-takes-6-hours" bus ride any more than it had to be delayed!

So, please make note of this new bit of international Jamaica-China-Laos foreign-relations trivia. Here it is, again, in case you missed it: On December 8, 2010, at approximately 10:20am, Walt F.J. Goodridge became the first Jamaican passport-holder to SUCCESSFULLY cross from Laos into China! (There may be a test later, or it may come in handy for a "Jeopardy" or "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire" question. Pay attention, and you won't need to use one of your lifelines!)

So, about an hour later, we're on our way! Over hill and dale; ever northward through scenic southern China!



Scenic southern China



Back on the Number 4 bus!

Back to Jinghong City, Xishuangbanna, Yunnan Province, China!



Back "home" in Jinghong! What's that, you ask? Ha! THAT'S nothing! Wait until I show you a photo of FOUR people on a moped! You think I'm kidding?



Dear Walt,

I happened to stumble upon your blog while googling comparisons between China and Jamaica. Glad to know there's another Jamaican in Yunnan! I'm sorry to have to burst your bubble [how would we say that in Jamaican? sorry mi haffi bus yu gladbag(?), but that border agent misspoke. 你不是第一个牙买加人从老挝穿过了中国边境。 [translation: You're not the first Jamaican crossed the Chinese border from Laos] You're not the first. There has been at least one other Jamaican before you to cross successfully from Laos into China-- namely, me! My processing a few months earlier (July 2010) didn't take quite as long as yours, but they did have to scrutinize my passport (happens a lot in China), and I managed to hold up the bus.

If you're ever back in Kunming, drop me a line. **-Linda**



Hi Linda!

Wow! It DID strike me as odd that in 2011, there wouldn't have been at least ONE Jamaican ahead of me, but China has only recently "opened up" as they say. In any event, don't worry, my glad bag is still functioning and ready for deployment! In fact, I'm even 'GLADDER' that I can reach other Jamaicans like you through this blog!

The border agent probably meant it was the first Jamaican passport SHE had seen! But, who knows, we might yet find ANOTHER yaadie who claims the mantle of FIRST, but...I'll pass it on to you....for now!

Departed Laos: Dec-8-2010 (Okay, so it's really 9 days!)

Arrived Xishuangbanna: December 8, 2010 (Dec 8 starts the second entry and 90 day stay for my double-entry visa!)

Jamaican in China!--Uncensored! Make that the Long-Awaited, Highly-Anticipated, Shockingly-Revealing, X-Rated and Uncensored Episode


December 20, 2010 2:21:19 AM EST

Yes, it's time to follow through on my promise to provide you with some "grown-ups only" material for those who like a little more heat from their literary experience....

Okay.

It had to happen. I could keep this blog [book] G-rated for only so long.

I mean, I'm a single guy, after all. I have needs. And, I've got hot, Jamaican, island blood running through my veins. So, send the kids out of the room. Turn down the volume on your computer.

 *"You know, I've rambled all around,
Like a rolling stone, from town to town.
Met pretty girls I have to say,
But none of them could make me stay."
--Highway 40 Blues by Ricky Skaggs*

I met many women in Beijing, but none of them could make me stay.

The scene there was too cold.

That's why I came to Xishuangbanna. I heard things are hotter here! (With a name like Xishuangbanna, it HAD to be good!)

And, by hotter, I really mean hotter....if you know what I mean! heh! heh!

So, now I'm doing it every chance I get.

Early in the morning.

In the afternoon.

Usually, I'm on my back....it's more comfortable that way.

Sometimes I do it on the balcony of my apartment.

I did it in Laos, too.

Anytime, and whenever I'm in the mood. (Feels good to finally sweat a little bit....)

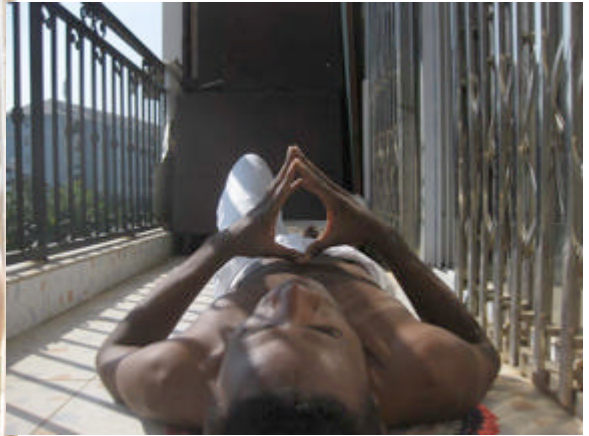
I don't care if the neighbors see. I mean, it's a perfectly natural thing, after all. Isn't it?

First, I take off my shirt..... and then....

and then.....

[Quick! Turn the page!]

I lie in the sun..... ahhhhhhh!



REALLY x-rated did you? I have to keep this blog *somewhat* respectable. My mother reads it....and so does my aunt in Canada. :-)



Wow! Thank God for mothers and aunties!

For a minute I thought I would have to tell you this is too much information for the internet....and that things stay online forever! LOL That was a good one!



You're silly.—
Carolyn



All I want for the holidays*.....

December 24, 2010 6:56:41 PM EST

My blog has been nominated for "Best Jamaican Overseas Blog" at the Jamaica Blog Awards! Please vote for "Jamaican in China" at: <http://www.jamaicaninchina.com/jbacomments.html>, and I promise I won't ask for anything else for the rest of the year!

*p.s. Whether or not this time of year represents a season or offers a reason for celebration, observation or holiday for you, please accept, at this time, my best wishes for your life path, my utmost respect for your worldview, and best wishes for an environmentally conscious, sentient-being-sensitive, socially responsible, low stress, non-addictive, gender neutral, orientation-oblivious, winter solstice holiday (though, arguably pagan in origin), practiced within the most appropriate traditions of the religious persuasion of your choice, and with respect for the religious persuasions of others, as well as those who choose not to practice a religion at all, without infringement on your rights, free will, free speech, or self-determination.

And, best wishes for what, by your definition and right, constitutes a personally fulfilling, medically desirable, and overall (but not necessarily fiscally-focused) prosperity now and in the coming Gregorian calendar year of 2011, but not without due respect for the calendars of observation of other nations, cultures and belief systems whose contributions have helped make our global society great, without regard to what many choose to define and recognize as race, creed, color, religion, physical ability, sexual orientation, or choice of computer platform or, (in anticipation of such future delineations) dimensions of existence, or planetary affiliation of the wishees.

LEGAL DISCLAIMER: This holiday greeting from Walt Goodridge, hereinafter referred to as "the wisher" and the content of the greeting, hereinafter referred to as "this greeting," or "this wish" is subject to modification and/or withdrawal at any time. It implies no promise by the wisher to actually implement any of the wishes for her/himself or others, is void where prohibited by law, and is revocable at the sole discretion of the wisher. It is freely transferable, and excerpts of this greeting may be bestowed on others without the permission of the wisher.

This greeting is applicable for a period of one year, or until the issuance of a subsequent holiday greeting, whichever comes first. Warranty is limited to replacement of this wish or issuance of a new wish at the discretion of the wisher.

MEDICAL DISCLAIMER: Not intended to diagnose or cure any illness.

The above "politically correct" greeting incorporates language from other similar greetings widely available on the web, and is therefore the re-packaged creation of the Jamaican in China. All rights reserved. AND DON'T FORGET TO VOTE:

On Becoming Famous in China!



Hey Ben,

Let's say, for the sake of argument, that I wanted to become famous in China as a Jamaican health advocate, self-help author or blogger, or whatever!. Do you know of anyone with a westerner's sensitivity and a knowledge of Chinese worldview who does Public Relations or marketing in China?



I cannot think of a specific name right now, but I must meet a dozen of the, who say they do at every conference. Some are freelance and others are tied to larger firms. A lot of them I feel do not understand what they are talking about. I can look through my card collection if you want. I may have thrown some away.

Who is the most famous westerner in china? Gao Shan. He is Canadian who speaks flawless Chinese. Why is he famous? Because he speaks flawless Chinese. Granted, speaking flawless chinese is a feat, but something about the level he has risen almost solely just to speak doesn't seem right. Beside his language skill you never hear anything else. He has no opinions. He does nothing but speak.

If you want to be famous in China I think you have to speak Chinese very well. One's language ability is the first thing people remark about you. --**Ben**



1. Wow! Wow! Wow! Now THAT'S the westerner's sensitivity that I'm talking about! Maybe I need to hire YOU to be my PR advisor!

2. So, Gao Shan is just a novelty act. Nothing wrong with that! I've experienced that on a small scale simply being "Jamaican" (code for Black) in China! I could simply be "that Jamaican guy who speaks flawless Chinese!" :-)

3. A friend of mine commented that I could capitalize on Chinese people's awareness of Jamaicans' athletic prowess (Beijing olympics; Usain Bolt) as well as my vegan/health knowledge, and use that to be some sort of health/fitness guru/advocate in China. (Don't know if I sent you the link to the organic farm in Beijing http://www.littledonkeyfarm.com/en/introduct/nav_11_22.aspx but he suggested that a non-Chinese perspective on eating healthy might be of some value. What do you think? Is the "expert from afar" phenomenon (where Western ideas from a westerner hold more sway) alive in China?

4. And speaking of going around doing lectures and workshops: are things there in China such that I would have to worry about being "asked to leave" if I went around encouraging Chinese people to think differently, live true to themselves, stop smoking, eat healthily, and become entrepreneurs?

5. Yes, please do look through the Rolodex.

6. I'm going to ask a friend I met in Beijing to start my language lessons. I'm thinking that I might have more than one teacher. What do you think? Overload? Conflict? –W



2. GAO Shan can speak Chinese flawlessly. By that I mean he can take the Chinese pronunciation test and score above a 98.5%. To be a radio or tv journalist you have to take a test that tests how accurate your tones and pronunciation is. To be a national reporter you have to score at least 98.5%. My former language partner had fantastic pronunciation and had wanted to be a journalist but only scored a 98.3%. So there is a difference between fluent and flawless in the minds of Chinese. So yes, a novelty act in most respects. Lots of people are fluent which draws attention, but flawless is a different animal altogether.

3. Experts from a far...alive but dying. The Chinese are confusing in their love/hate relationship with the west. They despise the imperialist past but won't live in a villa unless it is designed like something the imperialists would have built in China. They proclaim China has a rich culture that is the longest and best in the world, but go out and in many ways try to copy others. As one person told someone who was coming here hoping to be a sole-proprietor consultant, "You missed that boat by about ten years." However, one never knows how gurus are born, so you never know. It could work.

4. Education is quite tightly regulated. I heard many foreign owned language schools do not have an education license. I think they provide professional services. A lawyer told me never to try to register an 'education company' as you'll surely fail at getting the necessary permits. I am not sure how this would affect you. I am not a Chinese law expert - but don't expect the 'law' to help if you annoy someone. Living true to oneself? I hate to say it, but that might be a foreign concept that is not understood in China. Lying about everything is a daily occurrence. Companies about what they can do. They steal other company's work and call it their own. People lie about just about everything. There is a mentality of grab it if you can. Everyone wants to be an entrepreneur so you might get it there. Lots of get rich quick stuff. Their stock market is dominated by

technical traders who think they can read the tea leaves of price charting better than everyone else -- everyone is stupid except for me mentality. Also on the living true to oneself, it goes against the Chinese theory of 'eating bitter'. You suck it up for a long, long time, but it is worth it in the end. What the end result is, nobody is too clear about. That said, there are people out there like Angel (Feifei) who might listen. Loads of people here. The government started an anti-smoking campaign but then stopped because all the tobacco companies are state owned and those companies and taxes on cigarettes are a huge source of income for the government. The campaign died a silent death. Did you know it is illegal to smoke in bars and restaurants in Beijing? It is but nobody cares.

5. I'll try to remember to look tomorrow through my contacts.

6. Multiple teachers is not bad. Everyone uses different vocabulary so it is good for that plus you'll probably talk about different things. One of my friends complained that his Chinese is not improving because he and his wife pretty much only talk about the same subjects in Chinese. He and his wife converse in Japanese, Chinese, and English. It sounds like though each language covers different topics that don't intersect. To really be effective studying, you probably have to put in the same amount of time outside of class studying as you spend in class. Language partners can be more of a drag than a bonus. A good language partner is great; a bad or mediocre one is a waste of time -- and they will just want to speak English. --**Ben**

Dollar-a-day Nomad!

January 20, 2011; 01:35am

As mentioned, I moved to a new location--a friend's apartment--just before I left for Laos. However, once she returned, she helped me to find my own, cheaper place in Xishuangbanna.

Now, as I travel and live like this in various cities in China, I'm able to establish a routine, norms and requirements for my happiness and comfort. Depending upon how "furnished" my accommodations are, I may need to purchase a few items at each destination. At my first villa in Xishuangbanna I didn't have to purchase much in the way of household items. However, this new place that my friend helped me to find was simply an empty, unused hotel room which the hotel owner equipped with a single-burner stove, and a small gas-tank to allow me to cook. Therefore, I had to buy everything else except toilet tissue.

Here's what I ended up buying, and which now constitutes my standard shopping list for new nomad destinations.

This is for those of you who think it's expensive to do what I do.

Item	RMB	USD
Sponges	1.20	0.17
Bleach	13.00	1.91
Mop	29.00	4.26
Plastic wash basin	22.00	3.23
Hooks	8.97	1.32
Manual water pump	15.00	2.22
Dustpan/broom	9.00	1.32
Dishwashing liquid	9.00	1.32
Hangers(12)	5.90	0.87
Stove adjustor	2.90	0.42
Small pot (rice)	9.95	1.46
Bulbs (3@.97each)	2.91	0.42
Cutting board	9.95	1.46
3 floor mats	15.00	2.20

Total cost in US \$23.31

That's it! See? It's not that expensive at all--particularly if you're on a US-based/derived income. Of course it helps if you're low-maintenance minimalist, willing to shop where the local people shop, but the fact is, your dollar can go much further in many destinations overseas.

Notes:

- I get a mop and broom as I prefer to clean my own room (have you seen the mops and dirty bucket water in most hotels?)

- the "stove adjustor" is that metal ring that sets atop the stove burner for accommodating smaller pots

- the "hooks" are a paste-on 5-hook thingy on which I can place utensils (spoon, strainer, etc.) that I use for cooking

I'll compare the above prices to those on Hainan in a future post (rumor has it things are much more expensive there). So, my point is, when you think to yourself that traveling around the world is something you could never do, remember the Jamaican in China--the dollar-a-day nomad!



Room, sweet home!



All the purchases in my Xishuangbanna mansion

My life and scenes in Xishuangbanna

Now, with my own place, I spent the next several weeks here enjoying life in Xishuangbanna! That's when things got really great!



*Hey! That's DAMgerous!
Hotel housekeeper
cleaning windows...*

Typically, every
day....



*I simply set out
to walk the
neighborhood...*



*...enjoy the
beautiful scenery*



...make new friends..



..go on friendly dates



...and simply enjoy the pace of daily life



Zhang Li from the elephant spot (4th from left) invited me to come watch her basketball team play in my neighborhood...Jinghong city



...wishing everyone goodbye



Here's something interesting. Almost without exception, all the jade



Sultan, Rohanna and me!



jewelry stores in Xishuangbanna are operated by Myanmar nationals. I was fortunate enough to meet and become friends with Rohanna and Sultan, proprietors of one of the stores near to my apartment. As we became friends, I spent time hanging out in the store, talking about life in America versus life in Myanmar, and listening to music from all over the world including my new favorite song "Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna" ("Never Say Goodbye"; from the soundtrack of a 2006 Bollywood film) Now, every time I hear that song, it takes me back!

When the time came to leave, I gave Rohanna a copy of *Turn Your Passion Into Profit* and some other books. I think Rohanna is doing business in Shanghai now...Hope we'll meet up again soon, friend!

Xishuangbanna was the best time I had in China! But, it's time once again to say....

See you later, Xishuangbanna!

Yep, you guessed it! I'm on the road again! This time I'm heading to Hainan, a little island off the southern coast of China!

I departed Xishuangbanna, Jan 18, 2011 (length of stay: 42 days)

Chapter 6:

HAINAN

I arrived in Sanya, Hainan Jan-18-2011



Hello, Hainan!

January 19, 2011 00:50AM

Every since hearing about the island of Hainan from back on Saipan, I've been curious to check it out. It's an island similar to Saipan in many ways! To get to Hainan from Xishuangbanna, I would have to fly north back to Kunming, and then south again to Hainan!

Sanku Bay Marsh

As we taxied towards the terminal after the flight from Kunming to Sanya, Hainan, I listened intently to the flight attendant make the standard arrival announcement. She was half-way through the announcement before I realized she was speaking English!

It wasn't just the usual rushed, slurred delivery that many flight announcers are guilty of after giving the same announcement flight after flight, day after day for many years. This was different. I didn't get the impression that she was giving a hackneyed speech, at all. In fact, as I'm often the only visibly non-Chinese passenger on many of these inter-city flights, I often wonder if the announcement would even be made in English if I wasn't on the plane!

Anyway, as I did my best to listen and decipher what the flight attendant was saying, I realized that even in the context of an airplane flight, where I have a good idea of what she SHOULD be saying, I was still having difficulty understanding her. Of course, there's the "accent", the intonations and the way the Chinese tongue, teeth and lips pronounce unfamiliar English consonants and vowels after a lifetime pronouncing more familiar Chinese sounds. But, I also got the sense that she might not have been actually speaking English at all, but merely reading the phonetic equivalent of the English words the same way I might read the phonetic equivalent (goo-roo EEE-Key) of my Chinese name, 顾瑞奇 without really understanding what it is I'm saying. It brings to mind a similar experience of just a few days ago.

The other day, I walked into a local restaurant here in Hainan to determine if, at some future point in time, I might be able to dine there given my vegan proclivities. However, even in the context of being in a restaurant speaking about food, my attempts to communicate in Mandarin that I didn't want MSG or

seasoning powder (very simple sentences, mind you) were met with blank stares by the wait staff. They, too, had no idea what I was trying to say!

Just goes to show that there's more to speaking the language than just mimicking the right sounds. Even in a familiar context, one's meaning can be utterly lost or otherwise indecipherable without the right subtlety--a subtlety that comes only with time, practice and a basic foundation in the language.

If you're just mimicking sounds, you really don't know where one word ends and another begins. You don't know when to make the correct pauses in your delivery to convey the right meaning. And you're never really sure if your

phonetics is an exact replica or just a "reasonable facsimile thereof." And, particularly in Mandarin, using the wrong tone can skew everything entirely!

Which is not to say that context is irrelevant. For instance, if I were a non-native English speaker, and said to you, "Sanku Bay Marsh" out of context, you might not really understand what I was trying to say. However, if, after you gave me a birthday present, I accepted it, nodded, smiled and then said, "Sanku Bay Marsh," you might then get it, and reply, as any decent English-speaker would, "You're very welcome!"

Sanya airport



On the bus ride from the airport





My first impressions of Sanya



*Beach vendors selling papayas, melons & more
....those things weigh a ton!*



Afternoon on the beach

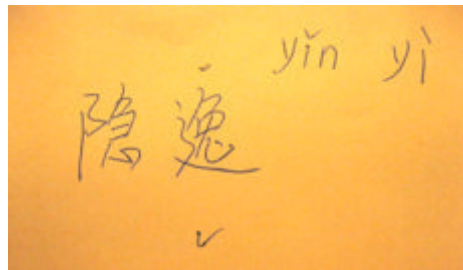
My new Chinese name!

January 19, 2011 22:50pm

I have a new Chinese name! From back on Saipan, my Chinese friends would ask me if I had a Chinese name. I'd gotten a few suggestions from everyone from girlfriends to waitresses, but none quite seemed to work. Whenever I would take an unofficial survey of a name with other Chinese friends, the responses would be lukewarm, and the names just didn't seem to fit sound-wise or meaning-wise. For example, this name was suggested by a sweet waitress in Beijing. I took a photo of the post-it she wrote on and sent it to Cong:



Cong, is this a good Chinese name for me? What does it mean? Does it say anything about the person who suggested it for me?—**Walt**



隐逸: Hermit. live in seclusion, withdraw from society and live in solitude it seems like monk's name.--**Cong**

So, recently I asked my friend, Jian, to help me set up a Renren account (the Chinese version of Facebook; social networking site). In doing so, he chose a name for my profile. He chose (顾瑞奇; "Gu Rui-qi" in pinyin; goo-roo EE-key).

When he told me about it, something clicked! So, I asked my friend, Nicole, in Beijing what she thought. She replied:



"Yes , in Chinese characters "瑞" means lucky and good , "奇" means special and rare. This Chinese name sounds good."--
Nicole

I like it, too. It sounds a little like Goodridge. It has the "guru" sound in it, and, as Gao Ying mentioned, the meaning is one I can definitely get used to!

If you go to <http://translate.google.com>, you can hear how it is pronounced. (copy and paste 顾瑞奇 into the box and select Chinese to English, then click "Listen") So, from now on.....

You can call me 顾瑞奇

I also have a kaixin account and a Chinese blog account. If you're a member of either of the social networking sites (renren, kaixin, please do add me to your friends list!)

Here's my Chinese social network connection information to help fulfill my destiny to conquer China:

RENREN: <http://www.renren.com/profile.do?id=351725782>

KAIXIN: <http://www.kaixin001.com/home/?uid=98428953>

SINA.COM BLOG: <http://blog.sina.com.cn/jamaican>

Opinions from China

As a member of H.A.R.O. (Help a Reporter Out), I receive occasional requests for expert opinions and input for potential newspaper, television and radio articles. Here is one I received for input on Amy Chua's book (Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother) mentioned in a recent Wall Street Journal article entitled "Why Chinese Mothers are Superior."

QUERY 1: Did you have a strong reaction to Amy Chua's Wall Street Journal Article about Asian moms and their strict upbringing of their children? Did you blog about it? I'd like to hear reactions in support and in contrast to her point of view for a summary I'll be posting tomorrow on ShePosts.com.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704111504576059713528698754.html>

So, I sent my friend, Jian, a copy, and here's how he responded:



Walt, I happen to have read this article recently. I have also read a few pages of the comments to that article--there are 200+ pages of it. Many readers gave excellent points there. I will only give my own observations. I have heard from time to time that Chinese students are smart because they usually get high grades in exams. It is not a surprise if one considers the following:

-- Most Chinese families are first- or second-generation immigrants. Because of the selectivity of U.S. immigration policy, the Chinese population tend to have higher education level than native-born Americans and other immigration groups that are highly based on family relations.

-- Chinese parents generally put much more time on improving their children's school performance than their American counterparts.

-- Chinese parents are more willing to pour money in their children's studies. They are willing to work two jobs to make enough money to send their kids to private schools.

I agree that Chinese parents--not only mothers--are generally more strict on their kids compared to American parents, but I do not think that it is necessarily "superior". I myself had an extremely strict father. He would call me stupid, or pig, or other humiliating things when I was a child. Yes, I went to the

top schools and did well according to his standard. Do I think myself a success? No, and I will never let my children have the same father as mine.

I do not know how happy Amy's two daughters are and how they love playing the musical instruments. There is a big difference between loving something genuinely and loving something because of the praises (or fame, money, etc.) it generates by playing it good. The latter never gives deep satisfaction.

My friend, Susan, is a Chinese female living in Beijing who loves traveling, kids and education. She graduated from university with her Bachelors degree in Electronic Engineering and worked in IT, translation and education for over 20 years. I asked her another question I received from H.A.R.O. to get her response from a Chinese perspective.

QUERY 2: Is it OK to reprimand other people's kids?



Chinese usually deal with this problem the way like this:

1) If the kid is with teacher or parent or any other adults, we come to them and ask them to behave the kid. Such as " That's dangerous, so could you ask your kid" " Watch out, your kid is doing blur blur" " In this way, we make the adult to be aware of the misbehavior of the kid and show our concern to that. Normally, it's not your turn to reprimand kids if they have adults accompanies.

2) If the kid is alone, everybody has the obligation to correct his/her behavior, but in a polite and persuasive way.

A Chinese saying goes like this: Respect other's parents as your own, take care of other's kids as your own kids. This indicates we need to have broaden mercy and obligation to educate kids, including correcting their wrong behavior. Another saying goes like this: Good suggestion may sound harsh, as good medicine tastes bitter", and this ask people not to get angry or upset when they are behaved or disciplined strictly, as this is for the benefit of community rather than individual's preference.

Breaking my fast

January 20, 2011; 23:46

I'm breaking my fast today! Yay! I've been on a water-only fast for the past 6 days. I started about 2 days before leaving Xishuangbanna, and have been on it for the past 4 days in Sanya, Hainan. So, if I look skinnier than usual in any of the Hainan photos, now you know why. So, this morning, I will have a

watermelon, then rambutan, papaya and other fruit throughout the day to break the fast. In my initial travels around Sanya, I've found a protein bar and some wheat-free cookies and I'm anxious to taste them!



*Found a good way
to pass the time
while I fast*

Meanwhile, I'm currently staying at a youth hostel near the airport. In between jaunts on the beach, I've been on a quest for an apartment

with a kitchen here in Sanya. I have found a 80RMB/night hotel a short ways away (no internet). The challenge is that Chinese new year is coming up on February 7, and all the hotels and landlords raise their prices to take advantage of the rush to celebrate new year on Hainan. I was paying 40RMB/night(\$6US) (for my third floor hotel room in Xishuangbanna with internet access. Here, the cheapest hostel charges 120RMB/night (\$18US). Some of the quotes I'm getting for a one-month apartment rental start at 6,000RMB/month (\$909US). I REFUSE to pay \$900 for an apartment! That's a New York price!!!

The secret, for those of you planning a similar trip, is to go out and find the smaller hotels that are NOT listed on the internet. (you can only do that once you get here, of course, or if you have a friend on the island)

Recipes from the Coffeepot Cookbook!

January 23, 2011

Okay, there's something you need to know about me for when we hang out together for the Jamaican in Russia adventure: I take my diet very seriously. At the same time, I'm not ruled by my gut, at least not the same way other folks are.

So, when I say that I don't eat meat, I don't mean just for today. I mean yesterday, today, tomorrow, the next day, and the day after that. I'm not suddenly going to forget and take the piece of pork you're offering me because YOU forgot that I don't eat meat. (I had a hard time explaining that on a date in Xishuangbanna.) I've been vegan since 1992, so I mean never. It also means I don't eat fish, because last time I checked, fish aren't vegetables.

When I say I'm fasting, I just don't mean "just for right now," and then proceed to take the rice you're offering because it's after 5pm. When I fast, it means I'm not eating.

And when I say I don't eat MSG, or meat flavoring cubes or white sugar or table salt, that's just what I mean.

So, today as I slowly resume eating from my fast, I felt like I wanted something warm rather than the fruits I've been eating for the past 2 days.

However, for reasons I've just stated, I won't eat in a non-vegan restaurant, because I can't be 100% sure that even though I request no MSG, no salt, no meat oil, no eggs, etc. I can't be sure that the chef will honor those requests to my satisfaction.

So, even though there's no kitchen in my hotel room I will still cook today, because I have..... wait for it....wait for it.....The Coffee Pot Cookbook!

That's right, ladies and gentlemen, The Coffee Pot Cookbook by Walt F.J. Goodridge, healthy meals you can make with just a coffee pot and a little creativity! I had the idea for this back in Kunming, but didn't get around to blogging about it, so now it's time. [Jan 2012 note: At this time, this was just a joke. Now, it's actually a real book that is selling well online!]

Today's dish is Walt's Nomad Veggie Soup and noodles from Chapter 7 of the cookbook.



EQUIPMENT:

- Electric Hotel Coffee pot (provided in most hotels)
- Soup bowl (borrowed from the hotel front desk)
- Knife
- Spoon
- Empty water bottle



INGREDIENTS (from local supermarket; grab extra plastic bags while there)

- 4L bottled water
- Rice noodles (optional)
- Bok Choy (not shown)
- tofu
- scallion
- garlic
- Ginger
- Sea salt (ordered from iherb before leaving Xishuangbanna)

DIRECTIONS:

Before beginning the process below, If you've only got one bowl, you can pour hot water over dried rice noodles, let soften, remove from bowl, place in hotel teacup, and enjoy as a side dish or include in soup.

Wash bok choy, tofu and scallion with your bottled water. If no basin or pot is available, cut the top off a smaller empty 1.5L water bottle (shown) you've been saving in your room for just this sort of thing, insert vegetables, pour in water, cover with palm of hand and shake vigorously.

Finely dice garlic, ginger and scallion. If no cutting board is available, spread a piece of plastic (the extras you got from the produce section of the supermarket) across the wooden desk of your hotel room. Dice gently, then discard the sheet when done.

Dice tofu into cubes

Chop bok choy

Place diced ingredients, tofu and bok choy into soup bowl.

Boil water in coffee pot.

Pour boiling water over ingredients in bowl. Cover with plastic sheet or plate if you have one. Let simmer for a few minutes. Stir occasionally.

Add sea salt to taste. Enjoy!



Total preparation time: 10 min

EXPENDITURE (RMB)

tofu: 1.50

garlic: 1.20

scallion: 1.70

bokchoy: 1.00

ginger: 0.60

water: 10.0

noodles: 4.70

Total: 20.70RMB = 3.18US

Next time, we'll make brown rice in a coffee pot. This could get messy.

From Russia with....you know the drill

January 26, 2011

There are many Russians vacationing in Hainan, China. I know this because as I walk or relax on the beach, all of them have come up to me to ask me to pose for a photo. ... The photomeister....Takin' photos....makin' friends...Papparuskies takin' photos with the Jamaicameister....(Saturday night Live? Rob Schneider? Remember? Anyone?)



Jamaicans have all the fun!



The lady from Baikal



My friends from Serbia



*Finally,
someone as
skinny as I
am!*



*But, of
course, I'm still
rebuilding from the
fast...*



*Babushka has a
daughter who
visited Myrtle
Beach, Florida,
and fell in love
with a
Jamaican....Can
you blame her?*



What??? No new friends?? Give it a minute...



On December 29, 2011, as I was putting the finishing touches on this book, I reconnected with one of my Russian friends, and she sent me this photo. Turns out she had snapped this pic of me before we had actually met!

On a moped built for FIVE!!

From back in Xishuangbanna, when I showed you THREE on a motorbike, I promised you a photo of 4 adults on a moped. I've seen a few throughout my travels, but I just wasn't quick enough on the draw to catch it with my camera. Well, this time I was! But this time it's FIVE! There's actually a little child right between daddy, and big brother in the white jacket. You can make out his hand in the close-up. Well, since this is mostly children, it really doesn't count. I'm determined to catch a snapshot of 4 or even 5 adults on a moped....just so you know I'm not making this stuff up!



Close-up. Check out the little arm in blue behind Dad and in front of son in white.



Homeless on Hainan & High Season Hysteria

January 31, 2011

So, here's the deal. I'm in the city of Sanya, in the southern part of Hainan, an island off the south coast of the People's Republic of China. It's a favorite tourist destination for many people, not just Chinese. It's January 31, 2011. Chinese New Year is 3 days away on Feb 3rd. As a result, this is what's called "the high season." Yep, everyone's high, but not a chemical high. There's hysteria in the air. Not just the high, hysteria and excitement that comes with ringing in a new year, but the high that comes with the possibility of making a financial killing charging exorbitant prices on everything from food to hotel space. (Would you pay 20RMB for a papaya that should cost 5RMB? More on that later.)

Anyway, I'm currently staying at the Lost Youth Hostel. I'm currently paying 120RMB/night. It's a nice place, friendly staff, piping hot water, and internet access. (No kitchen, but you know how I roll with the CPC! (i.e. The Coffee Pot Cookbook) I would stay here at the hostel indefinitely, but on Feb 1st,

I must leave because my room was booked in advance by others who planned to be here in Sanya and who did their planning with a bit more foresight than I do.



Lost Youth Hostel

I also have to leave because on Feb 1, the rates go up from 120RMB/night (18US) to 450RMB/night (68US). That's right, four times! Quadrupled! (That's why they call it the "high season!" But, again, there are no rooms available in the hostel anyway, even if I was desperate enough to pay that price.



My room 403, Lost Hostel

So, soon to be homeless, I've been looking for a new place around the island. Here's how it works. You

walk around the neighborhood you're interested in, look up at the buildings, and you'll see typically huge orange banners with phone numbers on the balconies of specific apartments/rooms that are available for rent. They're everywhere. You call the number, and...if you're Chinese, you get one price. If you're a foreigner, you get quoted another price. But, to be fair, while foreigners are, in fact, singled out to pay more (I hear the Swedes have it the worst), everyone, Chinese included, are paying "high season" prices to ring in the new year on Hainan!

Signs are everywhere



I've been looking around and asking for a 30-day deal and a kitchen. Because it's the high season, I've gotten quotes of

3,500RMB/month (\$530US) and as high as 9,000RMB/month (\$1,363US) for a single room. I was paying \$250US/month for my studio on Saipan, but that's another story.



It's just a room and a hot plate, but she wants 4,000RMB for 30 days. Someone will pay it. It just won't be me.



Helpful Hainan!

While on the bus on my way to check out the 3500RMB apartment, I met Wang, who was seated next to me, and, after striking up a conversation with me, was nice enough to get off at my stop, call the landlord on my behalf, help me find the place, and help me gain entrance by communicating with the current tenants who were inside. Oh, so helpful Hainan!

The place that Wang helped me find was nice. The owner wanted 3500RMB/month (roughly 120RMB/day), and after checking it out, I was going to take it, but she wasn't willing to bargain AT ALL. Neither would she let me pay for the first 10 days (rather than 30). You see, as nice as the place was, it

didn't have internet access, and I just didn't see the point of committing to 30 days at 3,500RMB and still have to figure out how to get online (there's no Starbucks, and I can't use my laptop at internet cafes)



Modern, shared kitchen, fridge, 3500RMB/month, but won't budge on the price or terms



The cool kids at the Lost Hostel have been nice enough to make calls for me to help me find a place

return to normal. Any deal I commit to now will be based on the high season prices. Why should I lock myself into paying 120RMB/day, for instance, and then

The other reason I'm realizing I don't want to commit to 30 days is this: In about 10 days, this will all be over. By about Feb 10, the festivities will be over, all the tourists will leave Hainan (except for a few stragglers like me), and prices will continue to pay that rate once Feb 10 has passed? So, the new plan is, I'll figure out a way to survive until Feb 10, and then I'll approach some of the same owners anew to renegotiate based on the "not-so-high season" hysteria.



Making calls

So, in my quest to find a cheap place to ride out the high season, I went back to a part of town where I had found a hotel at which I had been quoted 80RMB/night, only to discover that they now wanted 200RMB/night! I walked out. Someone will pay it. It just won't be me.



Was 80RMB/night a week ago. Now, it's 200RMB/night

And then, it happened. A few hundred yards further down the street, I walked into a nice establishment, and there was a 15 year old kid at the desk! Jackpot! I knew what was about to

happen. I mimed for him to show me a room. He did. I asked him the price. He said 60RMB/night. I tried to contain my excitement. He was a naive, wide-eyed kid, and I was likely the first Jamaican he had ever encountered (trust me, I can tell), and I knew for a fact he was quoting me the "Chinese price." Given the rarity of seeing a foreigner hotel-searching in this part of town, Mom and dad likely hadn't forced Junior to read the part of the training manual entitled "How to Make a Killing Selling to Foreigners." I accepted, and paid for 7 days in advance. (7 days x 60RMB/day = \$420RMB).

He gave me the key, and I told him I'd check in tomorrow. He didn't ask for my cell phone number, but I gave it to him because, even though I now had my receipt and a key, I sort of knew what would happen the moment I left, and the boss (mom or dad) found out what Junior had done!

So, in anticipation of that phone call I knew I'd be getting, I stopped at another hotel and started some negotiations for a room there as my "Plan B." After much sign language, Pidgin-Putonghua, and calls to the helpful staff at Lost Hostel who translated for me, I found out why I was having such a difficult time getting the receptionist at this second prospective hotel to give me a quote for a 7-day stay. Turns out, that she could give me a room for 150RMB for TONIGHT, BUT she didn't know what the rate was going to be for TOMORROW. This is like the freakin' stock market!!

In other words, her boss--the hotel owner--gets up the next morning and lets her know what the rate for the day will be. So, conceivably, I could check in today at 150RMB, and then tomorrow, I could be told the rate is 200RMB (see?

high season hysteria) based on any number or quality of random criteria! I said goodbye, and head back to the Lost Hostel.

Sure enough, about an hour later, once I return to the Lost Hostel, I get that phone call. It's from an adult at the hotel where the 15-year old rented me the room. Turns out that the price on Feb 3rd is going to go up to 200RMB. But, I will get Feb 1 and Feb 2 at 60RMB/night! What a steal! So, tomorrow, I check out of Lost Hostel, and check in to a great 60RMB/night room on HighNan...I mean Hainan! Stay tuned, I'm sure this story will get even better.

p.s. Now, I know what you're thinking: I took advantage of a minor. Well, the way I see it, I took the opportunity to get the money into their hands. With a paid customer, this close to the new year, I figure they have two options: (1) They could give me back my money (possible, but unlikely, given that as I've learned, putting the money directly into the hands of someone you're negotiating with is great leverage; (2) They could honor at least a part of the agreement that Junior made (which they now have done), and attempt to extort me for more money after the first 2 days is up (which they are already preparing me for).

I'm sure they feel THEY have some leverage once I move in. However, the way I see it, is that I'VE got more leverage 'cause I'm not afraid to move out and sleep on the beach if I have to to make a point on principle!

Now, I know what ELSE you're thinking: "Pay the &(\$&(\$ money, Walt, even at 200RMB it's still \$30US a night which is WAAAAAY less than you could get anywhere in the US or its territories!" True, but what you don't understand, my friend, is that I am now Chinese, and I think in terms of RMB like any other Chinese person, not in USD, and as all cheap people are fond of saying, "It's really not about the money, it's the principle!" Any way, we'll see what happens! Wish me luck!

Note from Walt: If you'd like my personal recommendations of places to stay in Sanya, check out <http://www.sanyastay.com>.



This has got to STOP! This is like a soap opera where they always leave you hanging at the end and you can't wait for the next day to see what happens! Whew! let me go do some work!--D



Walt! After so many years of knowing you I did not know you had such a great sense of humor. I had been pissed most of the day but after receiving your email I have been laughing ever since, hee hee hee hee..... Now I will tell you this, it's not the end of the world, you will survive, I assure you, and if you do decide to go stay on the beach be sure to get you a spot with a million dollar view, hee hee hee hee..... By the way how much do they charge for tents there?—UH



I am sorry to hear that! My suggestion is you do not want any trouble in Hainan because it is not in your country, so give them the price they want you to charge, and live peacefully and happily in the rest of your China days, as a friend of you, I do not want you to get in any trouble in China, it is difficult to say that there is a weak legal system here. So if you still can not endure all the situation, you can also find a native excellent lawyer to negotiate, or call 110 to tell the police to help you! N

Fret not thyself....everyone's happy, well almost

February 3, 2011

First of all, thank you for the support of all who emailed me about my last post. Apparently, my dramatic writing flair was better than I expected, or perhaps my friends are accustomed to the drama I often welcome into my life. In any event, to set things straight: I am not actually going to be homeless on Hainan! I repeat, I am not going to be homeless on Hainan! So, fret not thyself, and stop sending out thoughts of worry and despair--you're killin' my buzz! (However, you can still send any money you'd like to send if it makes you feel better to do so.)

Perhaps I forgot to mention that there are ALWAYS other options, and, while I said I'm not above sleeping on the beach, I'm also not above paying extra if it's practical. After all, there are no electrical outlets on the beach for my laptop.

Anyway, let me tell you what happened!

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

In our last episode, I told you the tale of the Hainan heist, the hotel that charged me 60RMB/night and then proceeded to raise the price once I was there.

Well, To paraphrase Country singers Garth Brooks (as well as Mark Chestnutt for those who think I don't know Country), I have friends in high places, low places, and other-worldly extra-dimensional spaces who keep me grounded, guided and gifted with great advice and support.

A good friend back in the states suggested that I have a Chinese friend physically accompany me and check in to the hotel with me, and tell them that they have to honor their contract with me, or otherwise they could lose their license. He suggested that I tell them I'll call the police -- since I have a receipt of sale to prove it. (Having a Chinese person there will make them feel more accountable, let them know that I have "Chinese connections," and make them feel less free to swindle the foreigner).

My friend also thinks I didn't take advantage of "Junior," and I agree, since it's unlikely that Mom and Dad would entrust that responsibility to him unless he knew how to handle it.

I also sent an email to some of my friends across China, and here are some of the responses I received. Essentially, my Chinese friends agreed that I should seek a compromise.



"What I would do is tell them that you will take all evidence (receipts, anything they wrote, pictures of signs showing prices, etc.) and file a complaint to the Sanya Bureau of Business Administration (工商局) and Bureau of Tourism (旅游局), but at the same time trying to negotiate a price a bit higher than what promised by the "Junior" but lower than the market. I believe they will be happy to do so.

This is the Chinese way. Chinese people usually do not like to push things to the extreme (such as complaints or lawsuits). Instead, they are more willing to find the "middle" way both sides can accept. If you are willing to step back a little by accepting a higher price, it will be easier for them to offer you a price lower than market. If they do not, then they lose all cards, and they will be looked bad in the eyes of regulators if you do file a complaint."

So, long story short, after much back and forth with my friends, I decided to do things "the Chinese way" and have my friend, Jian call the owner.

Here were the terms I asked Jian to communicate for me: Having already agreed to pay 60RMB/night, I told him (to relay to her) that I would be willing to pay 90RMB or 100RMB. In other words, it would have to be LESS than the 150RMB/day that my "Plan B" hotel down the street was going to charge, and furthermore, it would have to be LESS than double the current price (2 x 60=120RMB), since 120RMB/day was what I was paying at the youth hostel for a room in a better neighborhood that included internet access.

Jian called this morning, (new year's eve) and without resorting to threats to get the authorities involved, she agreed to 100RMB/day for a ten day stay!

So, the upshot is I'll get through the high season on Hainan paying 100RMB/day which is still effectively less than the 116RMB/day that the 3,500RMB/MONTH apartment with the shared kitchen in the other side of town was asking, and less than the 120RMB/day I was paying at Lost Hostel!

I'm sure the owner is a bit happier.

As I told a Chinese friend, "...this is very different from the American way of *'you've got the proof and the legal right, so sue 'em for all you can get!'*"

Me? Well, for various reasons, including the fact that I'm in China, (and since the owner has access to my room), I'm content with taking the middle road.

Even though a few friends with US mindsets also chimed in that it IS about the principle, the fact is, when you compare it all in US Dollar terms, I'm still paying only \$15US/night for a Hainan High Season Hotel! And I can relax a bit for the next 10 days and not have to worry about trudging through the streets of China with my suitcase and back-pack, and sleeping on the beach as crowds of

inebriated and intoxicated celebrants look on and point....under the fireworks and moonlit night sky of New Year's eve in China!

But, come February 11, after the 10 day stay, the adventure shall continue!

p.s. Tonight, I'll do something I don't normally do. I don't typically buy into these "arbitrary lines" of this day or that day. However, tonight, as I spend New Year's eve on the island of Hainan, People's Republic of China, I shall head out into the maddening crowd and participate in the festivities! Stay tuned.

p.p.s. The one drawback of this new hotel is that I have no internet access, but....the universe is perfect. I'll roll with the flow. In ten days, I can accomplish quite a lot without the distraction of constantly checking website stats, and email!

Update on The Jamaica Blog Awards: acceptance speeches February 4, 2011

Oh, maybe I should say first, I did NOT win for Best Overseas Blog in the recent Jamaica Blog Awards, but The Universe is Perfect. Competing in it made me improve my blog; being featured on the JBA website gained me new fans and followers, and I can still add "Jamaica Blog Awards Finalist" to my site and to my list of accomplishments."

Yes, the contest is over. The high-pressure campaign is done, but that doesn't mean I have to toss out my acceptance speech! That's right, I had written my acceptance speech from way back on January 8th or so (at that time, the voting would end 3 days later on JAN 11, and the reveal ceremony was still 8 days away). When I told a friend that I had written my speech, she asked, "Does that mean you know you won the Jamaicablog contest?"

I replied to her, "The two realities need not be linked."

In other words, writing my speech in anticipation of, and incorporating it into the visualization of a desired reality has nothing to do with the reality as it may be presently perceived. However, I couldn't tell her that at the time, because that would have been admitting that the reality was NOT yet manifested, and that would have violated one of the foundational principles of success thinking which you'll find in every book from Think and Grow Rich to The Cat in The Hat! In other words, the way to create a desired reality is to "live from the feeling of the wish fulfilled" (Neville), "act as if the thing you desire has already manifested" (Napoleon Hill), and "...all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Jesus) In any event, here is my speech!

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH VERSIONS 1 AND 2

(Written 5:41pm Canton Time, Saturday January 8, 2011)

1. YANKEE VERSION: First, I'd like to thank the Academy, and, ...oh, waitaminit, wrongspeech....Just a minute....Okay, here it is.... I'd like to

thank everyone who voted for me. And I'd like to thank Angelo Villagomez, Joe Hill, Ruth Tighe and Joe Race on Saipan, who rooted for me and risked the ire of their own mailings lists by advocating to them repeatedly on my behalf! It's finally over, guys! I'd like to thank Xavier Murphy and Jamaicans.com for hosting my blog so that it could be viewed more easily by audiences in China. I'd like to thank everyone who is photo'ed and featured in my blog, you're my co-stars! This awards is really yours!....But, I'll hang on to it for you!

And, I'd like to thank the organizers and sponsors of the Jamaica Blog Awards, and, of course, the island and people of Jamaica, West Indies, where I was born, raised and who deserve this award as much as I do, but again, it's my name on the marquee, so.....See you soon!

2. YAADIE VERSION: Lawdamercy! Me'd a like tank all a di massive weh did vote fi me, seen? Mi wah tank Angelo, an' Joe an' Rute an' de nex' Joe oooh did big me up to dem people-dem nuff time. It done! Mi wah tank Xavier fram Jamaicans.com'caw dem a di one weh did put up di blog'pon fidem site so di people dem inna China could sights it, seen? An' mi wah tank all-a-unnoo oohfa pikcha deh pon di blag. Mi really wah give dis prize to unnoo, but mi wi jus' kip it a my'ouse, seen?

An' lawce but not lease, nuff respek to di people dem who did put on disya award show, and to all a mi yaad bredrin and sistren. It come in like you an me a mek flim tige'dda, but seein' as'owis MY name mention inna di tikle fi di flim, mi wi jus' hol' onto it fi you...Caw....nuh soh it goh sometime in award, eee, star? nuh soh it goh sometime in award?* Said speed! Likkle more! Runnins! Laytah!

*Paraphrasing dub poet Linton Kwesi Johnson from "Di Great Insohreckshan" LP: Making History

As promised, to see how your comments have been forever preserved and immortalized, visit <http://www.jamaicaninchina.com/jbacomments.html>

A Patois Primer

February 4, 2011

While we're on the topic, here is a Patois Primer for you!

For those who have asked: Jamaica's language is English. As a former British colony, the Jamaican political and educational system culture, habits, worldview, and social norms are influenced by British culture. (I believe my aunt in Kingston still has her 4pm cup of tea every day)

If you've visited Jamaica you might think otherwise, but trust me the local "patois" spoken in Jamaica is English, but it also has elements of European (British, Spanish, Portugese) African (Ghanaian, Ethiopian), and Asian (Chinese,

Indian) languages thrown in because of the range of influences--colonial, captive and immigrant--that have passed through Jamaica, its people and history.

Patois is not a full-fledged language, per se, but shares many elements of a distinct language.

In much the same way that two speakers of a shared language can cloak themselves in a bubble of privacy in a foreign land, (while it may be considered a bit impolite to do so), two Jamaicans in the middle of a group of people who also speak English can do the same. If you, as a native English speaker are trying your best to eavesdrop on a conversation in patois, you will have an increasingly difficult time to follow because once the Jamaicans are aware you are listening in, they can dive deeper, speak faster, even use non verbal sounds (Jamaicans: think "kiss teet" ; others: stay tuned for audio and video) and other slang to avoid detection. The speed of delivery, the choice of contractions, as well as the intention behind its use all affect how decipherable it is to non-native speakers.

Patois is associated with the average man, the common folk. Therefore, when someone of more elevated status in Jamaican society uses it, he or she is going back to basics, forging a bond with his audience based on the essence of Jamaicanness that unites all Jamaicans regardless of their individual social status.

When a person speaks in patois, she wants to let the listener know that this is something heartfelt. This is something serious stripped of the pretense, pomp and parade (and even duplicity) often associated with the Queen's English. (mek mi tell yu someting weh come fram mi 'art [heart])

However, because patois IS essentially English, everyone in Jamaica understands it, and everyone in Jamaica speaks it to varying degrees of convincing authenticity. Jamaicans often joke that the unique thing about being a Jamaican educated in the Queen's English is that *"I can understand the English man, but 'im cyah unnastan' me!" (can't understand me)*

Those born and raised in Jamaica--or in Jamaican families abroad--understand both. It wouldn't be unusual to hear a conversation between a common man and, say, a judge where the common man is speaking in full back-a-bush patois, while the judge is responding in the full parliamentary-style Queen's English. Each understanding the other perfectly. And while practically everyone in Jamaica can understand and use patois, (although some of higher social circles may deny it and distance themselves from that fact), it isn't considered "polite, hoity toity" language.

So, when you hear it in settings where the more standard English is called for, there is often an underlying humor associated with the choice to use patois. When I choose to use patois to make what should be a polite, sophisticated acceptance speech, for instance, there is a tongue-in-cheek aspect to it. It is not literally a "translation" into "Jamaican." The underlying humor comes from the understanding--among Jamaicans--that I am also assuming a persona. And

depending on my tone and inflections and choice of phraseology and syntax, I have "become" a common man, a country farmer, a market woman, a ganja herbsman, a Rasta Elder, grandma and grandpa, or the politically-opinionated man on the street who knows everything there is to know about Jamaican "politricks."

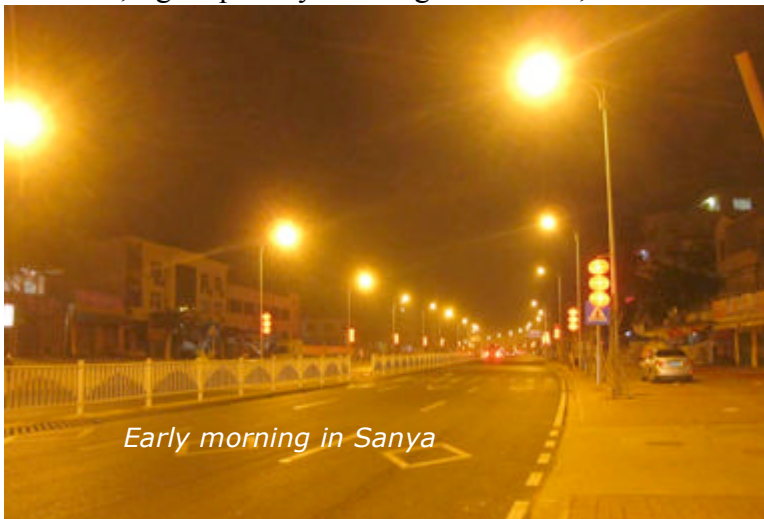
So, with that said, there are elements of the humor of my acceptance speech which may elude your full grasp if you are not Jamaican. And for that I apologize as this is a blog for everyone. Learn the language, please. Keep up!

This is not a comprehensive treatise on Jamaican Patois. These are just a few thoughts I'll probably amend at a later date. For more erudite essays on Jamaican culture and language, do a search for the works of Louise Bennet (Miss Lou in Jamaica), and also to hear the combination of Patois and English in recorded works, I'll refer you to the works of "dub poets" Linton Kwesi Johnson, Mutabaruka and Oku Onuora.

See? I'm not the only one!

February 5, 2011

Since I don't have internet access in this new 100RMB/night hotel on Hainan, I get up every morning at 5:00AM, trek the 2 miles to the Lost Hostel and



use their wi-fi. Have to do it early, since the speed of the internet connection slows down as more people wake up and get online. So, off I go today, whistling a happy tune, walking the empty morning streetlamp-lit streets of Hainan.....



Yep, just me and my thoughts, an occasional car, a few chickens....a rat....



*flashbacks of
Jamaica....*

Wait a minute!
What's that? Up
in the road....a head?
Yep, it's a head
alright....and a neck, a
torso and a body!



closer....

closer...

See? I'm
not the only one
who's prepared to
sleep on the beach
make a point.



He looks European.

Let's hope he didn't have a suitcase, backpack or laptop next to him when he went to sleep last night, 'cause this morning.....



"I'm not the only one....

Bonnie Raitt

The Hainan Word of the Day!



The Jiahuicombineprosperemporium

Yes, boys and girls, the Hainan word of the day is Jiahuicombineprosperemporium. "No, I don't want to buy a vowel, Jack. What I'd like buy is a "space." Four of them, please?"

A Chinese Capitalism Primer Or "Would You Buy a Used Papaya from This Man?"

February 7, 2011



Here on Hainan, with its warm tropical weather, and no kitchen in my hotel room, I'm doing less cooking and, instead eating more raw fruits and vegetables. Now, I've discovered that all the produce in China is priced per 500g. So, when you see a sign announcing 2.20RMB for a papaya, it actually means 2.20RMB/500g, or 4.40RMB/kg. Now, then, I've figured out why they do that--it's simply to confuse the tourists! No, really. I can prove it.

*Water melons**Papayas*

Most tourists, say an American (or a Jamaican who used to live in New York) for instance, thinks in terms of pounds. 1kg is actually 2 lbs, so when I see 2.20RMB, I think it's 2.20RMB per pound, but it's not. That's confusing enough, but here's where the trick comes in. The street vendors who sell produce use an entirely different system of computing prices. It's called "free market, mood-based, opportunity capitalism." In other words, they charge by the pound, gram, kilogram, weather, nationality of the purchaser, color of your shirt, or day of the week, it really could be anything, depending on the mood of the seller.

In 2009, when I first visited China, I walked into a shop in Shanghai--within about an hour of landing at the airport--to buy a small 250ml bottle of water and asked the price. The storekeeper told me 2RMB. Now I know enough to know it should be no more than 1RMB, or perhaps I was simply sensing intuitively that "the game" was on. I stepped out of the shop, called my translator in (at the time, I was traveling with Chun Yu Wang, author of *Chicken Feathers and Garlic Skin*), and had her ask the price. She's Chinese. Caught in the act, the owner shyly admitted to her it was 1.00RMB. We all laughed at his obvious, failed attempt to play and win the game.

One day, in Wuxi, I walked into a store for a bag of cashews (7.50 RMB) and a bag of dried fruit (12.00RMB) with prices plainly written on the items. When I placed my items on the counter at the register, the shop cashier/owner punched in the prices in a calculator (she didn't use the scanner as she did the day before), turned the small screen toward me indicating that my bill was 30RMB.

Ahem. Now, I may not speak Mandarin, lady, but I went to school to be a civil engineer. We covered basic addition. First day, even. Heck, I can even do that one in my head. I took the calculator, silently punched in the numbers myself, turned the small screen back toward her showing her I would be paying 19.50 RMB. She waved her hand in disdain, took the 20RMB bill, gave me my .50

RMB change--all this in a wordless exchange of calculator buttons, bills and screen displays.

Here in Hainan, I went to buy some nesberries, (that's what we call sapodillas in Jamaica). The street vendor put my three nesberries on the electronic scale, punched some mood-based numbers, and asked for 20RMB, I gave him 10RMB, he laughed. I took my fruit and walked out. Say it with me now, "Someone will pay it....it just won't be me!"

Around the corner from the Lost Hostel here in Sanya, there's a vendor selling fruit. The asking price for a small papaya? 20RMB. Now, I shop at the Wang Hao supermarket in the city centre, so I know that a small papaya costs about 5RMB. I laughed and walked away.

The next day, as I returned from shopping and passed by the same vendor, I decided I wanted a mango. I knew about what it should cost from my supermarket shopping experience. So, I walked towards Mr. Papaya's stand, and fortunately, at the same time, there was a Chinese woman also buying mangos. So, sensing an opportunity, I delayed making my purchase, pretending to browse a little longer, so I could linger for a bit to give the lady a chance to pay for her mangos. Then, I watched the screen of the electronic scale carefully, and noted that Mr. Papaya punched in 17RMB/kg for her mangos. (A day before, he had entered 29RMB/kg for my mangos.) So, now that he had *her* mangos on the scale and told her the price, I immediately approached him at the scale.

He knew right away that I had seen the price per kilogram that he had just



Would you buy a 20RMB papaya from this man?
(Mr. Papaya)

punched in for her. I knew that HE knew that I saw the price per kilogram that he had punched in for her. So, perhaps to avoid embarrassment, he had no choice but to give me the mangos at the same price he had just given her. I could be mistaken, but he didn't seem happy,

though. I paid 15RMB for my two mangos (about what I would pay at the supermarket). He gave me my fruits and said "goodbye," (An unusual thing for him to say, actually. I've never had anyone tell me goodbye before. Guess he wanted me to say "goodbye," too (in other words: Leave!) before I discovered the "local Chinese" prices for everything on his stand! Yep. I feel proud of myself!

I imagine that some people would have paid Mr. Papaya the 20RMB for various reasons: (1) to avoid a scene because they dislike confrontation, (2) Feeling ill-equipped to communicate effectively because there's a language barrier, (3) It's still cheap given the conversion rate to their native currency, and (4) perhaps for other reasons of culture and propriety I simply can't relate to. However, there's just something in me that won't allow me to knowingly pay for something when I know the price is being inflated simply out of what I perceive to be opportunism based on a stereotype of "the unaware, easily-manipulated, easy-target foreigner."

It's a way of business I've seen in many places--different prices for different customers. It's done in the tourism business on Saipan. It's done in Laos, and everyone who travels has likely experienced it to some degree. Business in many places is about seizing the opportunity to get the most you can get at any and every given moment. Prices are variable and not based on any pre-determined intrinsic or objective value, but upon the ability and willingness (unwitting or otherwise) of the consumer to pay.

Now, maybe I'm being too forgiving, but I'm not mad at the people who practice this type of "opportunity marketing." You know, In some ways, it's no different from a hair stylist charging John Edwards \$400 for a haircut. Yes, it's a bit stressful for me, since I already hate shopping. But, I don't want to impose an outsider's standard of how business should be done. However, that still doesn't mean I have to go along with the game. But, I'd like to hear what YOU think.

After he negotiated a good rate for my High Season Hainan hotel room, my friend, Jian, emailed me the following:



"hey Walt,

I read the news last night. People are complaining to the media that the whole tourist industry of Hainan is taking



Enjoying my papaya and longan

advantage of the Spring festival (Chinese New Year). The local Chinese government official commented simply: "This is normal." (that is, no big deal. Don't fuss.) Now you see why people say the Chinese capitalism is actually more real than the western one.—

Jian

It occurs to me, as I enjoy my 5RMB supermarket-bought papaya here in Hainan, that my friend Jian is right!



Hey, Walt!

The reason they do everything in half kilos is tradition. The traditional unit in China is the Jin which is equivalent to 500 gram. The reason the price varies is due to another Chinese tradition: get the best deal you can even better when the other doesn't speak the language or know how much things should cost.—**Ben**



Walt,

Interesting stories! I would like to comment on why they use 500g as the unit of weight. In the past, the Chinese used the traditional unit called "jin", which was exactly 500g (do not ask me why it is so exact, I will need to do some research). Then about 15 years ago, the government decided they wanted to adopt the metric system so for a while, things were priced by kilograms. However, the old habit was hard to change so people started to complain because they could not get used to the new standard. Here comes the compromise: no kilograms, and no "jins" either, how about...500g? It looks like the government has achieved their goals--hey, we are using grams!--and the people just plainly think that mysterious 500g thing is the same as the plain old "jin". Everybody is happy.

Now the mangoes and papayas. You are absolutely right that doing business is sometimes to seize every opportunity to sell your gears at the highest possible price. You are not local? Good, then you might know how much the mangoes should sell and maybe you don't even know where to buy, why can't I charge you a little more? Especially, I do not expect you will come back anyway. This happens to street vendors everywhere. What was happening in China was that many years ago, when China was still closed to itself, the government was doing this as well! If a foreigner was to book a hotel room in China, he or she would get the price for foreigners, which was usually double the "domestic" price. Those days were long gone for sure, but the idea of "you can milk the foreigners a bit more" stuck.—**Jian**



My daughters and I were there in 1992 and surprised that they were so open about "communist price" and "capitalist price". One time my youngest got so into dickering over the price of tangerines that she realized later that she was fighting over 30cents it's the principle!—**Barbara**



Yeah, when I first came to China in 1995 most official things had three prices (with multiplier)

1. Chinese national Price (1X)
2. Overseas Chinese (Taiwan, HK, and if you look Chinese) (5X)
3. Foreigner (40X)

I remember the Chinese price to get into the Temple of Heaven was 0.5 RMB and I had to pay 40 RMB...but I briefly joined a German tour group as they entered and got in for free. I traveled with my friends from the US who were all "ABC" (American Born Chinese), and every time I had to pay 10-40 times as much as a them I practically had a brain aneurysm.

The non-official prices were basically the same and I was happy if I could get only a 50% markup. When I came in 1998 or 1999 that official price structure was gone. But the effects linger on.—**Ben**



Hey Walt, Enjoyed the heck out of this one ...lol,

Being married to a Chinese national, well you can just imagine how often the price changes. I believe that yes they're extreme capitalists and as they see it, why not? We as Americans earn about five times their income.. with the advent of the information highway ... these folks see us coming.. Black/White/Brown We are the Rich Touristas Glad that you maintain your humor.. bottom line is a smile will always, always open doors and hearts... after all We all are one, We are the same person... as Bob Marley would say ;)—**B**

Nomad's Log. My syntax is changing, yes?

February 6, 2011

Freedom. The final frontier. These are the voyages of the Jamaican in China. His life long mission: to explore new world views, to seek a strange new



life in different civilizations. To boldly go where no Jamaican man has gone before!

Cue theme music:

Nomad's Log. Day 6.

The year of the Rabbit.

As I spend more time in China, I've noticed something strange happening. I've noticed

that my writing syntax is changing. I wrote an email to a friend yesterday and wrote something like: "You were planning on giving up that hotmail account, yes? In another instance, I wrote something like, "This is what you wanted, no?"

As you may know, to form a question in Mandarin, you add the word "ma" to the end. "Ma" turns a statement into a question. For example, Nǐ de hái zi means "your child."

When you add "ma" to the end, you get "*Nǐ de hái zi ma*" which means "Your child, [question?]" or "Your child, yes?" or "Is that your child?"

So, as I remain longer and longer in China, I find myself asking: "My syntax is changing, yes?"

[The image of the star ship Enterprise is property of CBS Paramount Domestic Television (now known as CBS Television Distribution, the current rights holders for the Star Trek television franchises). No claim of creation or ownership of this image is being implied by its use in Jamaican in China!]

Secret Sanya Sea Salt Safari! (shhhhhh...don't tell anybody!)

February 26, 2011

The ebook edition of *Living True to Your Self* is completed, but my writing energies are still being diverted towards completing the paperback edition. However, even while locked away doing my writing, I've been able to raise my standard of living here in Hainan. Let me explain.

I was able to locate sea salt here in Sanya! Now, that may not seem like earth-shattering news to you, but it is for me. I don't eat table salt (check the ingredients of your favorite brand of supermarket-bought salt, and note the dextrose (sugar), aluminum (think "Alzheimer's"), and other unnecessary anti-caking and otherwise harmful ingredients. Sanya, being a coastal town should have natural sea salt readily available, right? You would think.

However, the authorities have convinced the people that consuming sea salt is bad and that it is most often contaminated. Whether true or not, it takes a

bit of asking and searching to find it, as vendors are forbidden to sell it openly, and one has to ask (with the help of a Chinese person), the right questions, the right people, and, presumably not appear to be a government official searching for violators.

I won't reveal my methods, my contacts, or my supplier. I'll just show you the hand-off.



Pssst. Buddy. Wanna buy some sea salt?

On the road again!



Well, I made it through the high season! I'm checking into a new hotel on another side of Sanya (Dadong hai), and I now will have internet access! While I was in the High Season Heist Hotel, I didn't have internet access, and that allowed me to

focus on some writing. I'll be making an announcement soon! Stay tuned!

Dadonghai

I'm now at the UFO hotel in Dadonghai, Sanya, Hainan. It's much more centrally-located, close to supermarkets, a small, but great beach and many



The young entrepreneur proprietors of UFO, a great, small hotel in the heart of activity in Sanya.

visitors from Kazakhstan, Russia and all over China. Note for travelers on the Jamaican in China tour of Hainan: If you take the #8 bus from the airport, get off the bus at Summer Mall (夏日百货 in Chinese; Dadonghai Square), then walk back down Yuya and you'll see an 18-story building (next to City Hotel). the entrance to UFO is behind the

18-story building.



Scenes from Dadonghai



She sells sea shells by the Sanya sea shore



Tourists on Hainan



um, even more tourists on Hainan

Shhhhhh...the tiny grass IS dreaming....



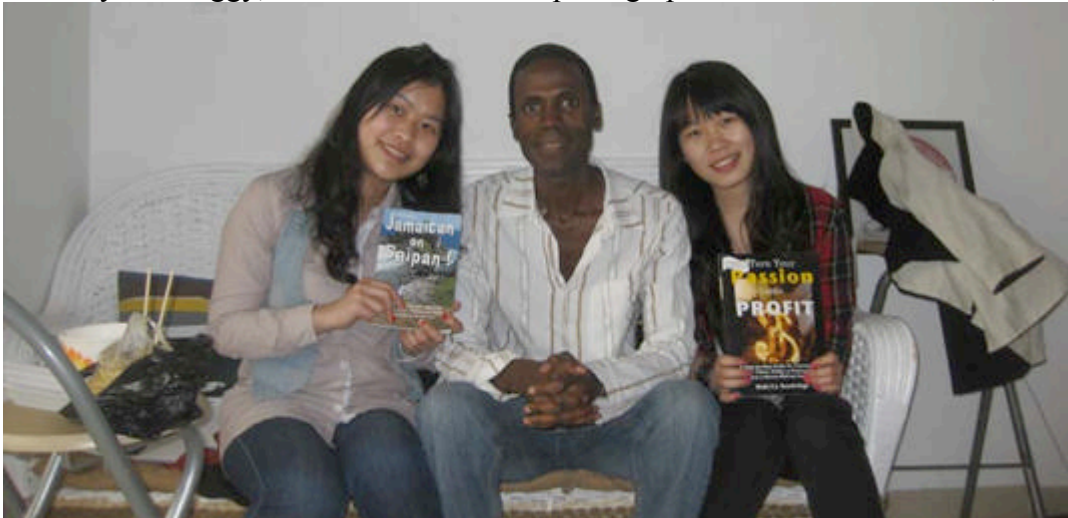
Okay. Yes, these ladies (and gent) are out back, chopping and preparing the vegetables that will soon be served in the restaurant. The vegetables are on the ground. Ahem. Here's all I'll say about that: I finally now understand why my Chinese girlfriend would wash her vegetables to what appeared to me to be an almost fanatic degree, before she would cook them. I've been told that our western concept of the "germ theory" as it relates to illness is not a widely-held cultural belief, but is catching on....I'll get into this more one day on my blog!



Cleaning vegetables out back

On the day before my first day at UFO--while I was using their wi-fi, I met Peggy and Fanny from Changsha, college students on holiday who came to Hainan to see the ocean for the first time. Peggy (left) is studying English (to be a translator), and Fanny is studying to perfect her artistic talents.

I always travel with a copy of my book to show people what I do, impress the girls, or to persuade border guards to let me into their country. Just kiddin! The truth is: I vary rarely show people my books as I don't want them to treat me in any special way or charge me more money if they think I'm rich; and I definitely don't want to form any friendships or relationships based on any perceived difference in status, and the border guards haven't been a problem. However, Niko had discovered my books in our conversation, so she mentioned it to Fanny and Peggy, who then asked to be photographed with them....and me, too!



The girls were nice enough to go shopping with me the next day to help



me communicate and locate some items I'd been interested in getting. So, we met at 8:00am the next morning and headed out by bus to the Number One Market!

Can you help me find some fresh soy milk?



Coconuts anyone?

Returning after a morning of shopping



As is the custom at many of the hostels, Fan lei (Fanny) made her mark on history by adding a painting to the wall of the UFO hotel.

Fanny



and me



Fanny, Niko and Peggy outside the UFO!

The girls had to leave to catch a train to Haiku, and then a boat to their next destination. So we said our goodbyes at the bus stop across the street!



Heading home! See you on QQ!

The perpetual pursuit of the perfect, plump, plausibly-priced papaya!

February 27, 2011

In the previous installment of the Papaya Chronicles, I shared with you that the best price I was able to get for a papaya was about 5RMB, at the supermarket. Whenever I shop at independent vendors, I get the foreigner price. Seems they can always tell I'm not originally from China. I think my accent gives me away. In any event, last week, when I went shopping with Peggy and Fanny, they took me to an outdoor market and introduced me to their favorite papaya vendor. I selected my single papaya, he placed it on the scale, and announced the price 2RMB. I couldn't help chuckling out loud. He laughed, too, likely because he knew foreigners don't often get to hear those words, "Two RMB," attached to anything in Sanya (or China) except perhaps a bus ride.

So, I asked the girls to tell him to remember my face (hee hee), so that when I returned, he would treat me like a regular ol' Chinese customer since I most definitely planned to return. Then, "happy as a pig in papaya juice," I took my new acquisition back home and enjoyed it.

Yesterday, I returned to the market and found Mr. Fair Deal Perfect Papaya Man! He remembered me (he has a good eye for faces), and sold me TWO papayas for 4RMB. I'm not exactly sure what the unit price is (my ability to palm and weigh in kg needs some work), but what I do know is that this papaya....



...yes, this papaya cost me 2RMB, not 5, not 8, and not the 20RMB Mr. Papaya near the Lost Hostel wanted me to pay!

So, here's my traveler's tip for you: when YOU come to Sanya, Hainan, and want a plump, perfect, plausibly-priced papaya, take any of the numbers 8, 16, 10, 2, 7 or 10 buses to the stop closest to original Wang Hao Supermarket

#1, not the Wang Hao nearest to the bus station, but the one that's now the new location of the original Wang Hao after the owner of the building they were renting from didn't renew their lease, forcing them to move to the new location near the International Hotel, (got it?), and then walk through the mall, out the back, across the street, through an alley, past the covered area with the meat vendors, past the vegetable vendor ladies who may gawk at you if you're Jamaican, step over the dog lazing in the exit, and into the open area where the fruit vendors are located, make your way through the crowd and find this man....



*Mr. Fair Deal Perfect
Papaya Man!*

Say, Ni Hao
in your best
Putonghua, and then
tell him that Walt,
the Jamaican in
China, sent you. Pay
the reasonable price
for your papaya, and
enjoy!

[While you're
at it, sing him this song I wrote to the tune of "Candy Man" by Sammy Davis Jr.]



*"Who can take papayas, strip away the greed
throw away deception so the foreign mouths can feed
Papaya man can! Oh, Papaya man can!
Papaya man can 'cause he sells his fruit with love
and makes the world taste good!"*

More observations of life in China!

My buddy, Ben has been in China for several years. Let's ask him a few questions, shall we?



Hey Ben, 1. What's been your experience using certain types of humor that involve sarcasm, feigned anger, role-playing, etc. with your Chinese friends? I find that some of the responses to my blog posts/emails indicate they're taking some of what I say too seriously and literally, and I have to make sure they know I'm not really angry and just playing.... (I know humor is a particularly tricky thing to achieve across languages and culture, but just curious if you have any thoughts or similar experiences)

2. I get the impression there's a lot of moving around within China. One minute they're working here, the next week, they've quit and are in a different part of China. Several of the people I've met are already in other cities working in other jobs. I may, of course, be moving with a more "jet setter/high turnover" type crowd (couchsurfers, college kids, waitresses, expats, etc.), but it seems things are a bit more fluid here....

3. I also get the sense of a somewhat "speeded up" time perspective. I attribute some of that to the rush to get married before one is branded non-marriage material. Another factor is the drive to earn money. Here's what one girl in Hainan wrote to me about a recent blog post:



the pictures are so good.you has been a lot of country. right? singapore is my love . if i have chance i will visit to. i must work hard to make the money .make money money money

(I'm still processing that statement and wondering if I should "RUN! RUN! RUN!!! as fast as my little legs can carry me"



1. Chinese and sarcasm...

I have friends who are convinced that Chinese don't use it even in Chinese. I doubt that, but it is certainly difficult to translate cross culture/language. There was a Chinese girl in our office who I chat with a lot on QQ and she uses a lot of sarcasm in both English and Chinese. Most Chinese have a sense of humor so it might just be lost in translation.

2. Yes. China is very dynamic in job movement. After being with this company a year and a half, I am the fourth longest staying employee of 25!

3. Yes. Married before 30 otherwise you are too old. Divorced people are really damaged goods and have a lot of trouble. Everything in China is sped up. When I have to work with our US office on a project they don't understand "we need it soon" to mean "I need it tomorrow". They think soon is in three weeks. There is a rush to grab what you can. That is why the Chinese will sacrifice a long-term relationship for a short-term gain. Example, furniture manufacturer delivering furniture to the Hilton hotel tried to totally rip them off by delivering subgrade stuff. Hilton is building 100 hotels in China over the next 5 years. My thinking would be, "Great! I'll give them a great product and service and get a bunch more orders over the next few years! Making a decent profit along the way." The Chinese guy thought, "I'll rip them off, get a quick buck! Suckers!" Some people say it is because of the uncertainty over Chinese history with many rebellions, Cultural Revolution, etc. so you get what you can now. There is a definite money culture especially in big cities and Guangdong.

Nǐ kàn shénme? (translation: Whatchu lookin' at??)

March 1, 2011

So, the other morning, I'm running bare-chested on the beach in Dadonghai, and, for some reason, people are staring at me. I'm really not sure

why. Was it my slim, svelt, sexy physique? Was it the fact that no one else does this strange jogging thing in China except a few crazy Americans rarely spotted this far from the mainland? Was it the fact that I'm Jamaican? Was it the fact that I was the only one half-naked at this time of day (There's a nude section of the beach, but those guys don't come out until after sunrise). Well, I can't be sure, but at least a few Chinese tourists thought it warranted taking a photo to document and share the strange things that happen on Hainan.

After my jog, I approached one of the paparazzi, and mimed and signed and pidgin Putonghua'ed a request while handing him my email address. Seems I was successful in my communication, since I just got an email containing this!



*The subject line was
沙滩慢跑, which
translates to "beach
jogging"*

*I met Jan Erik from
Norway while
jogging on the
beach...*

From: Fanny



from: 日出-印象

I think in China someone bare-chested jogging in the beach is not strange ,maybe because you are a foreigner,so they all staring at you .but you don't have to worry about it ,I think it usual.

I cannot understand all your email, because my english is not good enough ,but I can get the main ideas,so you can always send email to me ,it can help me to improve my english~~~

SO if you have something interesting in Sanya ,you can share with me

About a month later, I had an interesting exchange with a new subscriber



Hi Walt,

Funny you ask how I found you. I am booking my wedding in Jamaica for a year from now, so I was reading blogs. I ran across your blog through seeing the word China in it, and became curious because I am living in China this year. Also, I spent the Chinese New Year in Sanya at Dadonghai Beach and I swear I saw you there running on the beach. Ex-pats always recognize other ex-pats here. Small world, I suppose. Interestingly enough, I didn't read your blog until yesterday, but when I saw the picture of you I knew I had seen you in Sanya.

Anyways, I thought your blog was quite intellectually stimulating, and I understand you've written a book about finding yourself and your true passion. This topic is very close to me, as I plan to write about my own experiences on this journey. I don't have a blog because I'm a bit shy; but hundreds to thousands of journal entries to sort through in the next 10 years.

If you return to China before July, feel free to contact me and we can meet up in Hangzhou for a day. Also, I'll be in Negril the second and third week [redacted] for my wedding. Any advice on "getting the locals' price at the market in jamaica" would be greatly appreciated! Thanks for the link to your blog subscription and it's a pleasure unofficially meeting you.--S

Here's something else you'll see on the beaches in Sanya:

O U T T A K E #5



" It LOOKS real, Betty, but I can't be sure!"

The visiting Chinese tourists from deep in the heart of China walk the beach in Sanya and simply stop, stare, point and ooh and ahhhh at things they've NEVER before seen.

There's no discreet peeking. There's no shyness. There's no self-conscious, demure turning away of the eyes when they are caught staring. Nope. They just stop as a group. Right in front of the thing they are staring at. There'll be comments, giggles, and just plain, outright, unabashed, no holds barred staring.

One thing they might stop and stare at, for instance would be...um...ME!



These girls are not posing. This is simply how they gathered to stand in front of me and stare....and whisper quietly amongst themselves....for what seemed the longest time.... so, this is how I took their photo.)

Then, they'll walk further down the beach, and stop, stare, point and ooh and ahhh again....



"Since you're no longer the flavor of the moment, what are they looking at now, Walt?" you ask. Well, let's see....



They must be thinking Sanya is a strange, wondrous and magical place.

----- END OF OUTTAKE -----

Last Days in China....

March 7, 2011

These last few days in Sanya, have been a bit hectic. I met a lot of nice people, finished a second book I'll be announcing soon, found a great, reasonably-priced apartment (with a kitchen) for anytime I return to Sanya, and two days before I was scheduled to leave, my camera died, which meant I had to do something I hate doing: shopping. (I think I have evidence the camera I got is knock-off...stay tuned.) But before I tell you where I'm off to next, I'll share some shots from The Last Days in China.



Met up with couchsurfer, Gemma at one of the hostels in the area!



Enjoying the rides in Dadonghai

Met a new friend at Wang Hao Supermarket, and we hung out a few days later at the amusement park near the UFO hotel. Turns out the ladies are new Mary Kay reps in Sanya! I have a warm spot in my heart for Network Marketing companies, as the one I had joined many years ago helped free me from corporate confinement to live true to my self!



Hang on, ladies!



Afterwards, we had dinner and a great time!

Sanya at night is very beautiful...



There's always some activity...I saw night dancing in Xishuangbanna, and here in Sanya, too



Moon over Sanya Bay



Said a few goodbyes to the ladies at Wang Hao who had gotten in the habit of seeing me come to buy my raw cashews every day at the same time!



The Wang Hao Girls!



Meeting June!

I met June at Wang Hao supermarket. She was right behind me on line and helped me out when I was having trouble asking for change for the bus. She ended up being a vital part of my gastric happiness in Sanya (think "sea salt," but keep it a secret)....

June also helped me purchase the camera I now use to document my travels.



The sales girl who took my money!



Sales girl and me



Hung out with June and friend at a cafe overlooking Sanya Bay!



Posed for the obligatory Jamaican in China photos

and again...and again....



Norway meets China. Harald, from Norway and Pan Hui, from China! Harald and Pan Hui helped me look for apartments...Harald, a dentist from a former life, is a great thinker and conversationalist..



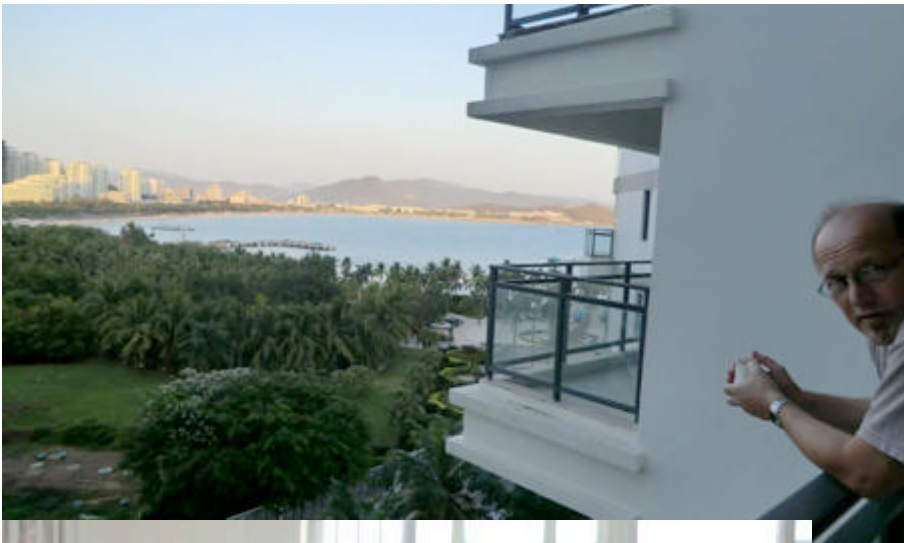
Solving the world's challenges with Harald.....(Next time, look at the camera, Harald!)



Had the greatest vegetarian meal in Sanya, courtesy of a dinner invitation from my friend from the beach, Norwegian artist (painter) Jan Erik, and his author wife Feng Xian Lin. They've also co-authored, designed and published various books. You can check out Jan's paintings at www.willgohs.info



One of the books Feng Xian Lin authored is a Hunan cooking and culture book. So you know I was treated to some great food....my last night in Sanya...darn....Wish I had met you guys at the beginning of my stay in Sanya! Now, I'll have to wait until I return to show up un-announced with my chopsticks in hand and nothing in my stomach!



Beijing transplant, Sandy and Romanian expat, Adrian... Can't wait to hang a bit longer next time!



Sanya, on the beach!



Eyes on Singapore!



As my time in China draws to a close, I'm not quite ready to go back to Saipan. What to do? Hmmmm. My friend Ben had mentioned something about Singapore a while back. Let me see if I can find that email....

.....Did he say, Singapore?????

Yes, he said Singapore, but before we cross the water, let me share with you a special chapter:

I departed Sanya Mar-7-2011 (stay: 49 days)

Chapter 7:

COMING BLACK TO ASIA?

Brother, You Have NO idea! A curious and observant nomad dispels some myths, allays some fears and corrects some misperceptions of what "traveling while Black" in Asia really means. Tales of Black Privilege in China (and Beyond)



So, what do you think? Me and Lucy Liu, plus Jackie Chan and Michelle Yeoh as the Chinese parents; Tell them all I'm casting now!

For months, I've been hinting, promoting and promising a "Black Privilege in China" post on this blog. Well, it's finally time! It's time someone spoke out. This is a secret that has been kept for much too long.

I'm going to speak in a frank and open way about a subject that many are afraid to discuss; a topic about which many are misguided, and of which many are simply unaware for many reasons including bias, ignorance or misinformation.

Yes, this chapter is about "traveling while Black" in Asia.

This chapter is for the enlightenment of all who are curious, but is specifically for the benefit of my Black brothers, fathers, sons, uncles and friends—particularly those living in the US—who have thought about traveling to other lands for fun, freedom, finances, fantasy or to chase a personal dream.

By sharing a few of the things I've experienced firsthand, seen happen to others, or been told by men and women overseas, I hope to open a new vista, encourage a new understanding, mold a new self-perception, and at the very least, offer what I find is a fascinating topic of conversation. Feel free to share this with everyone you know.

DON'T HAVE TIME TO READ THE WHOLE PREVIEW?
HERE IS A SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS:

1. When it comes to travel guides, make sure you know who's talking!

Much of the information that exists about traveling abroad is not written by or for Blacks. Before you take anything you read or watch as universal truth, remember that travel writers, particularly if they are American, will be seeing the world through a limited lens.

2. The world is not as negatively hung up about race as is the US.

Those of us steeped in the U.S. brand of white racism, believe it is a universal affliction of all whites. It is not. Even European whites have commented how caught up on race people in the U.S. seem. Beyond "The Great Wall of America," free from the brainwashing of US mainstream media, many people have at least a neutral impression of Blacks. At the same time, Black athletes, celebrities, singers, rappers and political figures have created an overwhelmingly positive mystique around Blackness that has affected the world. Thank Muhammad Ali, Tiger Woods, Usain Bolt, Malcolm X, Michael Jordan, Michael Jackson, and most of the NBA & NFL players, etc. for paving the way for you!

2. Women and culture abroad are vastly different.

Gender roles, femininity, masculinity, dating, and the availability and demand for men differ vastly. Unlike in the states, gender roles are not adversarial. Women and men are comfortable acknowledging the innate differences between the sexes.

4. You are perceived as the epitome of masculinity.

Masculinity, virility, prowess, and cool have historically been defined by Blackness. Women respond instinctively to this. There's a tall, dark and handsome man in most women's fantasies. Will that man be you? When it comes to sex, the physical differences between Black men and "others" is known in every corner of the world. Whether you embody the myth or not, the curiosity is there!

5. *Don't perpetuate the stereotype.*

As long as you don't confirm or perpetuate the stereotype that many people have of Americans in general, you can write your own ticket and create a unique experience unencumbered by the biases you leave behind (that is, of course, if you are American)/

6. *Come Black to Asia with a better understanding.*

If you're coming Black to Asia, there are a few things you might want to be aware of as it relates to your ancestors' presence in the region.

Why I Wrote This Chapter

I was born in Jamaica, West Indies. I spent most of my life in the US--specifically the borough of Queens in New York City. I lived in Silver Spring, Maryland, for a few years, and visited a few states (Texas, Massachusetts, California, Florida, Minnesota, Georgia, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Illinois, New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, Connecticut and Ohio). I've also visited Canada and Mexico.

I finally "escaped" to live on the Pacific island of Saipan, from where I now travel to various parts of Asia. I've learned a lot in my few short years of "nomadpreneurship" (a term I coined to describe my personal lifestyle strategy for creating income, prosperity, freedom and mobility). Much of my "research" for this chapter has been culled from several years of living on Saipan, visits to Guam, several trips and months living in China, as well as jaunts to Laos, Singapore and The Philippines, as well as a whole slew of observations and conversations everywhere I go! The more I traveled, the more I listened, the more I heard, the more I learned, the more I realized that life abroad was decidedly and markedly different from what I had been accustomed to. Specifically, I met other Black men who had been living a very different, and very enviable lifestyle.

The fact is, as you read of my exploits in China, know that such experiences aren't unique. In fact, by comparison to those of other, more seasoned travelers I've met, they're really quite tame. Those travelers' experiences and exploits would make mine look like boring walks through a park! However, it seems those seasoned travelers are too busy living their dreams to stop, sit and write about them. So, that's where I come in!

The idea for sharing my (and other Black men's) experiences has been brewing for quite some time. Every now and then, I would read or hear a statement that would add more fuel to the fire under that brewing pot of an idea, prompting me to write.

The more I read, the more I realized that the general public's perceptions and beliefs about what it's like to be Black in Asia were a bit limited, to say the least. Let me give you a few examples.

1. Shortly after I started living in the Pacific region and as I started to see more of Asia, I happened to be on the phone with a friend. After a while listening to my adventures, he asked: "How's the racism there?"

That's such a sad and revealing question, when you think about it, isn't it? He didn't ask "Is there racism?" He didn't ask "What's it like being Black there?" He asked, "How's the racism?" implying that it was a foregone conclusion it was something he would have to contend with if he, too, were to travel abroad. With expectations like that, I can understand why some of my Black friends are reluctant to travel, as they wouldn't want to experience a brand of racism they are

not accustomed to. They might be thinking "Heck, if I'm going to be discriminated against, at least I can understand white American racism better than Asian racism. Maybe I'll just stay here."

That's one reason I wanted to include this chapter.

2. Another motivating reason was that I would occasionally read forum posts by white males traveling abroad who had the same limited perspective, and who would offer their opinions on what the dating scene for Blacks might be in a country they were visiting, and I would think to myself, "You, sir, are completely misguided. I hope no one Black is reading this and taking your views as truth." As my own experiences accumulated, I became more convinced that if more Black men knew what actually awaited them once they escaped from America, then surely the lines at the airport would extend out the building for miles! I needed to write about this.

3. Even more recently, I visited a site called HappierAbroad.com. Great site! The posts on the forum echoed practically every conversation I've ever had with expatriates (Black and white) who left their lives in the states to find their (dating) happiness abroad. I realized, though, that there was still a unique perspective that was missing from the discussions. I needed to write about this!

4. Actually, now that I think about it, my awareness of the void in public awareness of the Black traveling experience abroad started way before I actually left New York for Saipan. It started when I was searching in a bookstore in New York for information on what life would be like in the Pacific region. The books on Micronesia-- where Saipan is located--were few, and the authors were primarily white males and females. Had it not been for a Black male friend of mine who had actually been to this region--and who had enjoyed a fabulous experience--I would have had a very biased account of how things would be. In fact, when he first told me about Saipan, my friend's exact words were "It's a Black man's heaven!"

And by the way, the "heaven" he spoke of is not just about dating possibilities. There's a reception, a friendliness, a welcome that Black men and women experience--particularly in Micronesia, and in China from my experience--that extends to even day to day activities like shopping, dining, paying bills, even dealing with the Department of Motor Vehicles (imagine that!), driving or just strolling down the street that gives a sense of privilege and will put to shame what we've accepted as the norm--particularly if you live in New York as I did.

In fact, shortly after settling overseas, I returned to New York for a visit and, the contrast in realities was so stark that I was "inspired" to write an article entitled "New York. The Good, the Bad, the Unnecessary Roughness" which was published in the Saipan Tribune.*

*<http://www.saipantribune.com/newsstory.aspx?cat=3&newsID=76547>

Yes, the omissions, misconceptions and the stark contrast between life "here" and life "there," were piling up and further increased my motivation to "share what I know."

Finally, I could ignore the call no longer. So, I wrote this chapter in the hopes that by the time you finish reading, you'll have a quite different, compelling and motivating understanding of what exists beyond life in the states.

I wrote this to confront and correct misinformation, to dispel some myths about racism abroad, to fill in the blanks with a perspective that's not often chronicled, to speak to a demographic that is underrepresented, and to empower those in that demographic to live outside of any perceived limitations and have some fun at the same time, by sharing with you the truth, my brothers, that traveling while Black is far from a disadvantage in many parts of the world, and particularly in parts of Asia in which I've traveled.

Why I waited so long

As I mentioned, the motivation for sharing this has been brewing, but there've been some other reasons why it's taken me this long to speak out.

1. I have a dear friend who has three daughters.

During my most recent six-month stay in China, I would often write private emails to my friends in the states letting them know everything (and more) that I'm sharing with you in this book and this chapter. Once, I even joked that I should write a book about dating overseas for Black men. One of my female friends half-jokingly, --but with a real exasperation at the underlying reality it hinted at--asked me not to write such a book encouraging mass exodus, as she wanted the pool of eligible and available Black men to be there for her daughters when they reach dating and marrying age. She didn't want me diminishing the pool by telling men what they could be experiencing overseas. (Seriously. I'm not kidding.) So, while I haven't forsaken my friend's daughters, I'm sure she'll understand that in the words of the great philosopher, Mr. Spock, "the needs of the many, outweigh the needs of the few."

2. This may offend some.

Yes, a sense of political correctness and politeness prevented me from revealing this until now. But again, the needs of the many... And I'm inspired by my friend, "WH" whom I've already quoted in Chapter 2, who said, "People don't want droll. They want chocolate smashing into peanut butter!" No truer words.

3. I have a reputation to think about!

Another reason has to do with my brand identity. You see, I've spent the last few years crafting a brand identity for my Turn Your Passion Into Profit™

books, philosophy and formula. I've always felt that blogging about my personal life, and specifically talking about dating would compromise that brand.

However, the fact is, I'm also an advocate of "Living True to My Self" and what I've come to understand over the years is that I am here to live my life as an example for others. Consequently, I've learned that the more I incorporate the totality of who I believe myself to be at any moment, into what I do and what I write, the more people relate, the more people respond, the more people I affect, and the better life gets.

Well, it just so happens, in addition to having written 20 books and hundreds of articles, in addition to coaching people on business ideas and marketing, and doing workshops, etc., I am also Black. That's part of the totality. And while it was never something I grew up feeling self conscious about, I've come to accept that in the wider world of people and perceptions, it has significance which cannot be ignored. More to the point, I chose this identity and physical form as part of the totality of my incarnation on the planet (check out *Living True To Your Self* to discover my belief system) I believe, therefore, that it is part of my mission and purpose and soul's intention to use this physical form to learn, to grow and to share what I know with others.

4. The Secret Oath to the Brotherhood!

The other reason I waited was so I wouldn't betray my "oath" to "The Brotherhood." You see, when I first landed on the island of Saipan, there was an overwhelming ratio of women to men. That's because there were a few dozen garment factories employing thousands of women from China, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines. Once I was accepted into "The Brotherhood," there was an unspoken (no, spoken) request to keep the secret safe. After all, who would want to spoil a good thing by telling everybody!?

However, things have changed. The garment factories have closed. The tourism-based economy has been declining a bit, and so the ratio of women to man (plural to singular form is intentional) has changed. Saipan is still a great place to live, but from a dating perspective it's not like it was a few years ago. However, there are still many locations around the world where the women to man ratio is what Saipan once was, and where The Brotherhood does quite well. However, to honor the oath, I won't share those destinations here. You'll have to travel and make friends with a member of The Brotherhood in order to get the memos. I'm sure you understand.

5. I'm a modest sort of guy.

It's true. Believe me. "So, why now?" you may ask. Well, as I said, the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. What's life without a little bit of controversy? Time to start upsetting the apple cart.

Caveats

Before we get started, however, (you can see that I'm big on preambles, disclaimers, caveats and prologues) I'd like to suggest a few attitudinal adjustments for getting the most out of this discussion.

This is primarily for Black males living on the US mainland.

Why? Having lived in America for most of my life (technically, I'm still in America here on Saipan), I have a much better idea of the experiences in the US, as well as how those experiences contrast with the reality in certain parts of Asia.

However, rest assured, whether Black or white, the ability to experience what I and others have experienced being in Asia will have more to do with your expectations, energy, personality and willingness to see things differently than with the color of your skin.

I don't take any of this too seriously!

I don't know about you, but I've got a sense of humor about all this. I consider myself an ambassador of sorts. When I travel, I am not at all offended if people ask me "Can you break dance?" or if people walk up to me to touch my skin or take a photo with me. I can laugh about the stereotypes I encounter (eg. "all Jamaicans run fast"), and take it all in stride (pun intended).

Okay, I'll admit that it's a bit uncomfortable when people gather outside on the sidewalk to stare at me while I'm eating in a restaurant in China, but that's my own fault for sitting near the window. I know better now.

My point is, you'd be wise not to take any of this stuff too seriously, either. Yes, in many regards, we are talking about a serious subject. However, it is what it is. Don't get angry. Don't get offended. You'll be wasting YOUR time.

Your agreement is not required.

The reason you really shouldn't get too bent out of shape about all of this is because your agreement is not required. Your unwillingness or reluctance to believe or accept what you read here won't change that fact of its reality. I'll say that again: Whether or not you choose to believe the reality I describe is completely and utterly irrelevant. Girls will continue to approach me and other Black men in China, Thailand, Bali, Russia, etc., whether you like it or not. As I posted on HappierAbroad.com about my nomadpreneur formula, and which I'll share in relation to my experiences traveling while Black: "I'm not here to convince, justify, defend or apologize for my beliefs, choices or lifestyle. I'm not here for validation, vindication, approval or to respond to your personal attacks. I'm here to share a philosophy & formula that work! And in a world of 6 billion, if ONE person can do it, it MUST be possible for at least ONE other!

Your mileage may vary! (Everyone's experience will be different.)

Your vibe, your demeanor, your expectations and your magnetism will attract and/or create the experiences that will resonate with you. I'm sure there is some Black male right this very minute who is planning to write a book about what a terrible experience he's had traveling in China. It happens. Everyone's experience may differ.

I've always had an affinity for Asian women (from a previous life, I'm sure). So when I walk down the streets of Beijing, I'm sure I give off a different energy (think: kid in a candy store) that makes me more approachable. The ironic thing is, I don't consider myself a particularly outgoing person. I'm a private person. I like my own company. I don't enjoy crowds. In fact, when I lived in New York, people told me that when they would see me walking down the street, I looked "intense" and unapproachable. Women have even called me "intimidating" on more than one occasion. However, even with this introverted personality, my experiences in Asia have been great! A Chinese woman in Beijing told me that the reason I have good experiences with Chinese people is because they can look into my eyes and see I have a good heart. Take that for what it's worth! Your mileage may vary.

Some may seek to create offense.

One cannot write a book that's "pro" women, without alienating a few men. One cannot write a book that tells workers to unite, without pissing off a few bosses. Similarly, one cannot have a discussion about the positives of being a Black man in Asia without offending a few others who aren't Black men--especially when such discussions are perceived as empowering, threatening, or even a betrayal of sorts, and may be purposely framed as divisive--pitting one group against another--when presented by others so as to stir up controversy and sell newspapers, magazines, subscriptions, etc.

From what I've observed, white males can (and have) written books about how great things are for them in the Philippines, for example. Everyone's got a niche. None of this is meant to detract in any way from the reality of YOUR experiences, whoever you are. This is not a contest to see who is more desirable.

So this is my advice to you if you are NOT a Black male who is reading this: do not fall into that trap that others will attempt to set for you. Tell the rabble-rousers that the world is big enough for everyone to have their paradise. Live and let live! So, here we go! (Finally!)

The Truth: A few Anecdotes

For the record, the overriding premise of my message is this: Your dating prospects as a Black male in Asia are absolutely, positively NOT at a disadvantage. In fact, it's quite the opposite-- you are at a distinct advantage as a result of coming Black to Asia!

Unlike many of the men I've met, the strangers I've heard about, and even some of my friends, I'm not "social butterfly" (read: man whore). I've been told I'm very picky, and I don't spread myself too thinly by indulging all comers or chasing all runners.

However, during my limited dating experiences abroad, and in my travels through Asia, I've dated Chinese, Russian, Korean and Thai ladies, and have seen and experienced enough to develop some theories, engage in some experimenting, and come to some conclusions about what is going on.

When guys get together--especially guys who have lived in the states, and who now make their homes in the Pacific or in Asia--the conversation invariably turns to women. The anecdotes of how drastically the women and the dating scene abroad differ from back in the US mainland are legion and legendary.

Quite simply, among the women in this region, there is an intriguing fascination with "things Black" (music, sports, and of course, men). The curious observer in me asks why?

Imagine...

Well, imagine for a moment, that you are a Chinese girl living in a remote area of China, or a Laotian lady in the hills of Laos, or a Pacific Islander on a small island with limited exposure to the outside world. There are no Blacks in your neighborhood, so where do you get your impression of what they're really like? Rumors? Hearsay? Rare visitors to your town? Friends and family who have had the luxury to travel? Perhaps.

Most likely, however, it will be from a combination of all of these sources, in addition to and fueled by your limited exposure to television, movies, or the internet. As a result, your impression of Blacks may be a bit distorted, a bit stereotypical, and perhaps a bit biased as a result of media portrayals, but one thing is for sure, it will be fascinating! Yes, television, the Internet, magazines, sports broadcasts, all exported as "made in the USA" entertainment and consumerism, has helped make the image of Blacks (men and women) a fascination to the outside world. Some anecdotes:

>>> *A feeling I can't explain.*

I had a shy Chinese girl tell me, she doesn't know quite why, but when she watches movies, she gets inexplicably more excited when she sees the Black actors on the screen.

>>> *Just what I've always wanted!*

A friend told me that months after he started dating his Filipina girlfriend, he found "Black Guy/Asian Girl" porn on her computer. She shyly admitted that she's always wanted a Black guy.

>>>*Can I be your friend?*

While walking down the street in Jinghong city, I greeted a young lady who was on break from her job. She smiled broadly and said, "Can I be your friend?" (She turned out to be crazy, but it's the thought that counts.)

>>>*Can I touch your hair?*

Variations on this theme include "Can I touch your skin?" "Can I touch your eyelashes?" Within a few minutes of our first meeting in a Xishuangbanna bus station, as we struggled to communicate with my limited Mandarin, and her limited English, "Suzy" couldn't resist touching her fingers to my cheek and telling me "Hěn xìngǎn" (translation: "Very sexy") in reference to my skin color.

>>>*Verdict on Sanya beach: "We same same."*

As I'm walking on the beach in Sanya, Hainan, People's Republic of China, a Chinese man shifts his gait and heads towards me. (In New York, I might start preparing for a confrontation.) He smiles, lifts his sun-baked arm, puts it up next to mine to show that we are almost the same complexion, and then gives me a thumbs up. All this with not a word being spoken between us.

>>>*"Quick! Turn on the game!"*

I had a Thai girl tell me that her friend really wants to have a Black boyfriend. She watches basketball, and is really hot for the guys she sees on television.

>>>*Me? Really?*

My Black male friend told me that he was his Filipina girlfriend's first Black boyfriend. She had always wanted a Black boyfriend but had resigned herself to the fact that she didn't have the physical "assets" that she had heard that Black guys prefer.

>>>*EEEEEE! Wow!*

I've had women gasp and others scream when I cycled past them in Laos (And no, she wasn't screaming while running away, she was screaming in fascination while running towards me!)

>>>*They treat me like crap!*

My well-traveled, army friend tells the story of his travels with his white military friends. They would go to bars, clubs and restaurants together, and after a while, his friend would state, "Hey, how come they treat YOU like a king, and treat ME like crap??"

>>> *"I've never met you, but..."*

One day, while living on the island of Hainan, I returned to my hotel room, and opened up my QQ* account to read this:

你好！我也没见过你，但我同事说你经常来超市买东西，她说你很有意思！可能我们的时差很大现在你们那可能是晚上叫

GOOGLE TRANSLATION: *"Hello! I have not seen you, but my colleagues said you often come to the supermarket to buy things, she said you are very interesting! Now we have a great time difference may be that you might be at right?"*

>>> *Black American famous in Japan*

And I'm not the only one, and it's not just in China. Check out this story of what Black American actor, Dante Carver, experiences in Japan: <http://mto.mediatakeout.com/external/45436>; or google *"Dante Carver Japan"*

NOTE: After reading the postings on many travel forums, I slowly started to realized that when many guys ask "how are the girls, there?" they're referring to ladies whose company can be purchased (i.e. "bar girls") who make a living selling their time and talents. It's a fact of life. Travelers with limited time in search of warm bodies, who don't care to start relationships in every town seek an easy solution. So, let me say for the record that in all the previous anecdotes, I was NOT talking about purchased companionship. There are far too many regular "girls next door" who want boyfriends or new experiences for a man to have to pay for companionship. (My friends who know me know I'm way too cheap for that!) However, if you're traveling while Black, and bar girls are YOUR cup of tea, check this out:

>>> *We've become the show!*

My friend and I went to Angeles City in Manila. It was our first time. All his friends had told him about it, and he wanted to do the only thing one does in Angeles City--visit all the girlie bars. Well, in just about every bar we entered, the dancing girls, stopped, stared, then started hooting and hollering and clapping, and many came off the stage and rushed over to where we were, leaving the "other" guys alone (I did feel sort of bad for them), and spent an inordinate amount of time with us, chatting and um, groping.

>>> *Look out! Manila girl ambush!*

At another club we visited, the minute we walked in, a girl literally jumped on my friend's back to claim him for herself. She wouldn't let him out of her sight or clutches for the entire night. All for money, you say? I would have thought so, too, but my friend ended up being propositioned by her, they spent the night together... no charge, even becoming Facebook friends to boot!

I could go on, but modesty, humility and political correctness prevent me from sharing every single anecdote of what it's like being Black in Asia. My goal is not to make anyone else feel bad about who they are, but to increase the rolls of those who feel GOOD about who they are and who are not discouraged from traveling because of ingrained fears of rejection based on racism.

The Why and Wherefore

So, why are all these cool things happening to me and my Black friends? Why is dating so easy? Why are the girls so friendly and inviting? Let's explore a few possibilities, shall we?

"IT'S A FOREIGN THING, NOT A BLACK THING!"

Many people will say that what I've experienced is just "a foreign thing." In other words, the attraction and fascination is purely because your different, and would happen whatever color you happen to be. That's certainly true in many instances. Especially in China, there is a mad rush to learn English and to have English-speaking foreign friends.

Back in Xishuangbanna, I walked into a restaurant with a date. The minute we walked in, all heads turned, and after a few moments, a girl, who happened to be a friend of the girl whom I was with, emerged from the crowd and approached her. I was some feet away, and since I couldn't understand Mandarin as well as I'd like to, she told me afterwards that her friend was very impressed that she had a foreign friend. ("Wow! You have a foreign friend? I didn't know YOU spoke English!")

Her stock value increased because she had a foreign friend which implied she knew how to speak English--a skill and ability that is evidently in high demand and held in high regard in many circles.

In Sanya, Hainan, I walked down the street with a young lady I met in a supermarket. We passed some of her friends who had wide open mouths, and gave her double-takes as we passed by. She kept telling me how special she felt just being seen with me. By the same token, my own stock value increases when I walk with a Chinese girl, because, as is the case in any country, when a man is seen with a woman, he becomes more desirable. (Admit it, ladies!) In this case, when a foreigner is seen with a Chinese person he becomes more approachable. Whenever I'm with a Chinese person, complete strangers will feel empowered and will stop and join in the conversation. Yes, it's pretty odd, given how that would be received if you tried that in New York!

So, yep, it may be a foreign thing, but, like I say... "Even if it's not happening BECAUSE I'm Black, it certainly is happening! So that means being Black is not STOPPING it from happening."

In other words, don't ever feel as if you'll be deprived of any great experiences because you're Black in Asia. In fact, once you get over the fears and expectations that you've become accustomed to by living in the states; once you open up your eyes and recognize what's really going on, and notice how you're really being perceived and treated, you'll realize that you are in fact, being treated with more respect, more interest, more curiosity and more desire than you may be ready for. You're a hot commodity!

I had a hard time convincing my travel buddy of this. He seemed to think that the girls in the clubs were being extra nice just to get money. He seemed to believe that what we were experiencing happened to everybody. That is, until I pointed out to him what wasn't happening with the other guys in the club. We hung out together and would sit and observe the goings on. I alerted him to certain looks, certain glances, certain smiles, and certain treatment we were getting that other people weren't receiving, and that he wasn't noticing.

Being observant helps a great deal. One day, we were standing outside together, and as it was obvious to me, I spotted a girl sort of loitering around. I saw it in her eyes. So, I told my buddy, "Don't look right now, but that girl over to your left is going to start talking to you in a few minutes."

Sure enough, she edged closer and closer trying to appear nonchalant, and soon struck up a conversation with him. Seeing the interest in ladies' eyes is something quite obvious to me. We were just two Black guys standing on a sidewalk shooting the breeze.

Speaking of being observant: after I'd been in Beijing for a while, I started to notice how that whenever I would see a couple approaching up ahead, the Chinese guys would spot me, then hold their women's hands or pull them closer, or reposition themselves to be between me and their girl once they saw me approaching. Made me smile.

That's just YOUR experience, Walt!

Yep. You might be right. My experience in China, may not be everyone's experience in China. However, everyone's got their niche. For instance, because of my Black male friend's attraction for Filipinas, he evidently gives off a different vibe (again, think: kid in a candy store), and got much more attention than I did when we were in Manila, whereas the roles would likely be reversed if he and I were together in China!

The girls are different

Yes, the girls in Asia are different. If you're not aware of this fact, I encourage you to visit a site called HappierAbroad.com. Site owner, Winston Wu, has done a great job of compiling information and creating a place for guys to share their takes on just what those differences are. Here's a brief excerpt from his executive summary:

Happier Abroad is a movement started by Winston Wu and his Team in 2007 to bring exposure to the nationwide epidemic of loneliness and poor mental health in America that has made it one of the worst cultures for Dating, Social Life and Mental Health, and to offer a Proven Overseas Solution based on the Dating, Social and Mental Health benefits overseas.

The truth is, relationships, social connection and mental health in America have eroded to the point of being dysfunctional, hostile, fake, apathetic and inauthentic. There is a vast silent epidemic of loneliness, isolation, social dysfunction, sexual frustration and poor mental health that has made America a lonely miserable hell for many men, but is taboo to even mention. In short, the following patterns dominate in America:

- The lifestyle and environment are devoid of human connection.
- Dating and relationships are a no-win nightmare for many men.
- The cultural environment tears down self-esteem & mental health.

Whereas overseas:

- Human and social connection flow more freely.
- Dating and relationships are more natural and fulfilling.
- You feel more accepted, whole and authentic.

[For more, see www.HappierAbroad.com]

The bottom line for Black men dating in Asia is that women who aren't forced by a culture of fear to fall in line, will act out their natural desire for masculine energy in more overt ways than those who fear cultural repercussions of what others will say or think.

Yes, I know this is a volatile topic.

In a perfect world, where we are all God's children it shouldn't matter who we date, should it? I mean, ask yourself "Who would Jesus date? Would Jesus only date "his own kind?" However, because of the sick, divisive, repressive and oppressive way that western society has developed, we consider this to be a taboo subject. We call it interracial dating. In the US, Black women feel ostracized. White men feel threatened. Black men feel guilty. It's all quite sick, and causes such self-destructive behavior.

A Black male friend once told me that if he were in a black nightclub, and he saw a pretty Asian girl in the club, that he would be afraid to approach her, even if he found her attractive. He would be afraid because he feared that the Black women in the club, upon seeing him approach her, would no longer be receptive to his advances towards them, and would freeze him out. In other words, he would deny his own happiness and desires because of what other people thought about him, and an irrational fear of being ostracized.

Similarly, in the states, there are non-black women who are afraid of dating "outside of their race" because of how the society (family, other men, women, etc.) might respond.

Yes, in the US, there's a stigma attached, more backward- thinking (and acting) as well as a societal structure that keep people in line and afraid to act on their desires. That's why western women go to the Caribbean, Africa or South America and willingly pay to live out their fantasies and indulge their desire for Black men before returning to their societally "acceptable" lives in the US.

The media attacks don't exist

Another reason these cool things are happening is that the media attacks don't exist. Unlike in the states, people in other countries aren't being inundated with daily newspaper stories and nightly six o'clock news reports of the contrived image of the "dangerous black male." So, people overseas are left to their actual encounters, and natural wiring to determine their impressions of Black men. Women find them sexy. They love the skin color, and there's something about the masculinity that appeals to their basic feminine wiring. In other words, you can create your own first impression without being pre-judged by the impression created by a fear-mongering media.

People see through the deception

Speaking of media, another reason these cool things are happening is that many other people aren't being fooled by the character assassinations and the "whitewashing" of maleness. I had a Pacific-Islander friend tell me that it's pretty obvious to him and everybody he knows what's going on. As he told me, you only have to look at who the heavyweight boxing champion is, who the best golfer is, who the best basketball players are to realize that what can only be ACTED in the movies by some is actually LIVED in reality by others. In other words, there is only one place on the planet where a non-black man is heavyweight boxing champion of the world, and that is in a movie theatre! This sort of obvious stuff is taboo to say in the states, but people all over the world see it clearly. Therefore, when given the opportunity, women abroad go for the real thing, not the "reasonable facsimile thereof." (My apologies if anything I say is offensive to some, but I'm not obligated to share delusional thinking just to be polite.)

The Obama Factor (aka "The Usain Bolt Factor" if you're Jamaican in China)

I can't tell you how many times I heard the world "Obama!" shouted playfully to me as I walked the streets of China. However, once people discovered I was Jamaican, they would start gesturing or running in place to indicate they also knew of my countryman's lightning bolt world record status!

The breeding factor

As a function of natural selection, women do the choosing and are wired to choose the strong male who can protect, and who has the genes to complement her own and produce viable offspring. (Diversity = adaptability and survival.)

Remember, for many of these girls, they've lived their entire lives having ONLY men of the same ethnic gene pool to choose from. What a thrill to have some diversity!

I had one lady on a small Pacific island tell me that whenever she meets a potential boyfriend who was born and raised on the island, she has to tell her family just to make sure she's not related to him in any way! Imagine how exciting to have a guy land on your island who is obviously NOT of the same gene pool, and who looks like the hot athletes and singers you've only seen in magazines, on television and on websites!

Thought to myself: You know, as a Jamaican, if I had dreadlocks, it would be an entirely different (as in better) ballgame....but I digress.

Dating tip: don't be afraid to be a man; Make the first move! From what I've seen and what I've been told, at least in China, men don't typically walk up to women, introduce themselves, strike up conversations and do the "pick up" thing that we do in the west. People meet their girlfriends and boyfriends through introductions and family arrangements.

Fortunately, however, foreigners are not expected to play by these same rules. Women absolutely love being approached by a tall dark foreigner. Trust me. Remember what that girl in my "How To Meet Girls in Beijing" post said?

*"...many times we see a handsome foreigner,
but we don't know what to say."*

...think what a challenge it must be for the foreign- curious girl on the street who's culturally shy, extremely self- conscious about how good her spoken English is, doesn't know how to initiate a conversation, AND afraid she might offend you by saying the wrong thing?

I repeat it simply to remind you of the interest in meeting foreign men that was communicated to me by my Chinese female friends.

[And don't forget to read "I Want to Date a Jamaican in China!"]

The Bottom Line

The bottom line is: there's a whole different world of acceptance and desire out there. And for those who read this and wish to offer a contradictory take on the reality I present here, or for those of you who are still in a state of doubt, skepticism and disbelief about all the benefits of being Black in Asia, I'll say it again: "Sure, it may not be happening BECAUSE I'm Black, but it sure as heck IS happening. So, being Black is certainly not STOPPING it from happening!"

Why Haven't I Heard About All This Before Now??

"So, Walt, if things are so great, how come I've never heard about any of this until now?"

Well, my philosophical answer is "when the student is ready, the teacher appears," but I'll give you a more practical set of responses you might prefer:

The Wrong Teacher

As I've mentioned, travel guides and articles are typically not written by and for Blacks. That's just the way it is. These publications may believe they are offering one-size-fits-all information, but I'm here to tell you that it makes a world of difference who is doing the traveling, the guiding and the writing.

The Wrong Clique

Unless you have a circle of Black friends who travel outside of the US, (military, merchant marines, nomads, etc.) you simply won't know what's been going on, nor how well you are received as a member of "The Brotherhood."

Wrong Newspapers, Magazines & Television shows!

Except in rare instances, you're simply never going to hear the colonizer sing the praises of the colonized, nor the oppressor of the oppressed. It just doesn't make for good historical reading to write "we felt them superior and ourselves inferior, so that is why we resorted to guile and physical force and weapons to enslave them to work for us"...but that's a whole other tangent about which others have written more extensively and eloquently. Similarly, for reasons of ego, no self-respecting non-Black writer is going to write about his adventures abroad and write that he would be treated better if he were Black. First of all, he likely wouldn't notice that such a reality exists, and, however he is, in fact treated abroad, he would simply believe that his experience is universal.

The Brotherhood Oath of Secrecy

Of course, as I've said, a lot of guys simply wish to keep it to themselves. They're too busy living the reality to write about it.

But all of that doesn't matter! It doesn't matter why you hadn't heard before. Perhaps you weren't ready. ("When the student is ready, the teacher appears"). The good news is now you DO know about it! It's real. It's out there. And, what's more, you can experience it! But, wait, before you start packing....

The Down Side

I would be remiss if I didn't prepare you for the downside to this Traveling while Black" love fest.

Bad Reputations

Being Black in Asia is not always all peaches and cream. When I was in Singapore, a hostel manager told me that a few guys from a country in Africa made a bad name for themselves by getting into illegal activity. She told me that most Singaporeans can't tell the difference between a Black American, African or West Indian, and so everyone gets lumped together. So, while she was still a gracious host, she felt it was incumbent on me to overcompensate for the bad image that some Singaporeans have of blacks.

Keep in mind, however, that this sort of stereotyping happens to just about everyone of every nationality everywhere. A Polynesian fellow told me that in Japan, people often gave him the evil eye because he resembled Brazilians who had made a bad reputation for themselves there in Japan.

A Chinese man in China told me that he doesn't like to rent to whites because they destroy his property.

Whites have told me that they're often embarrassed and ashamed as a result of the loud, disrespectful, entitled way their "race mates" conduct themselves in foreign countries (i.e. the "ugly American" syndrome).

That's just the way it is on every continent. We expect that sane, rational intelligent people will assess an individual's merit as a human being on a case-by-case basis. However, most of us don't take the time. It's so much easier to use stereotypes. I do it, too. And everyone gets lumped into the same pot. As we say in Jamaica: the good will suffer for the bad.

However, even on the down side, at least here in China, there's still a cordiality and graciousness that's extended to foreigners until you prove you don't deserve it. At least that's what I've found.

Always on Display

Now, being Black in Asia is not for everyone. If you don't like being the center of attention when you walk into a store; if you get nervous being followed around the streets by ogling families; if you are offended by people coming up to you and asking to touch your skin or your hair; if you would prefer that girls not approach you and ask to be your friend or lover, then this is not for you. The boundaries of "personal space" as westerners define it, are often not recognized in China as an example. If, when you travel, you simply want to disappear into the anonymous crowd, you'll have quite a difficult time doing that being Black in Asia. It's almost like being a celebrity. There's always someone watching. It can get overwhelming. My own opinion, however, is that it's something everyone should experience at least once in a lifetime! Hey, you never know, you might like it, and actually get used to it!

Conclusion

Well, there you have it! I hope you enjoyed this little "Traveling While Black" Primer from your favorite nomad in Asia. A world of great experiences awaits you! The girls love chocolate men! The men think you're cool. Everyone wants to hang out with you. You're the answer to the fantasy of at least 50% of the women in the room. And the other fifty percent? You'll probably never meet them! You'll be too busy wading through the bevy of beauties who want to be your friend. You can experience the interest, the curiosity, the fascination, the thrills, the excitement, the adoration, the camaraderie, the cuddling, and whatever else goes along with Coming Black to Asia! Okay, now you can start packing! Have fun! And tell everyone that Walt sent you!

How about a few travel tips?

Tips for Traveling While Black in Asia

By now you know my message. Despite what's going on behind The Great Wall of America, there's an inviting reality that exists for Black males on the other side of that wall. In order to experience that reality, you need to travel with a clean slate and an open mind.

Of course, like a lot of people, the first time you travel, you might actually attract negative experiences. Why? Perhaps, like my friend who asked "how's the racism?" it might be because you expect and seek out those experiences. And in life, you often get what you expect. You get what you believe.

The other reason is that you may be acting "American!" Here's what I mean. There's a sense of entitlement that's the default setting for most everyone who grows up in America. There's a feeling that the world owes you something. There's a feeling that everyone else outside the great wall is inferior. These "American" attitudes can end up attracting to you the very racism and mistreatment that you left behind. I've seen it happen. You've got to become a humble, respectful citizen of the world, not just of America.

Don't perpetuate the stereotype

When most people see you (and they can tell by your demeanor, clothing, hair, etc.), they'll automatically think "American." Do not perpetuate the stereotypes of what people have come to associate with the word "American." (The stereotype: loud, obnoxious, rude and other negatives that turn people off)

A Chinese girl in Beijing told me I didn't act like the other Americans she'd met. I didn't immediately remind her that I'm not American, I'm Jamaican, but I asked her what she meant, and she mentioned that most Americans are loud and talk all the time. In fact, she said, I had Chinese ways about me. She felt very comfortable with me. Take that for what it's worth.

In other words, you should be soft spoken (do your best, even if it's not your usual personality), respectful, gracious, mannerly, and, if at all possible, do your best to learn a few words in whatever language is spoken in the places you travel. Dress appropriately. Say please and thank you. Be the first one to smile, and generally strive to act like a guest in a stranger's house.

Travel and grow

The more you travel, the more you will grow.

With the experience of travel comes the ability to step outside of one's self and the improved ability to see one's self the way others see you.

With the experience of travel comes the ability to actually SEE that what others see may not be what you THINK they see.

With the experience of travel comes the ability to change and DEFINE how the world sees you separate and apart from how others see, or have historically sought to define you.

With the experience of travel comes the increasing awareness that when the world sees you, these words often come to mind: Fascination. Curiosity. Interest. Desire. Fantasy. What happens next is entirely up to you! ENJOY THE JOURNEY!

Your friend Walt

Oh! One more thing: before you embark on your travels, let me share this:

Coming Black to Asia?

Always Black In Asia

True students of history will find nothing remarkable about this fascination, about this acceptance, about this respect and adoration of things Black throughout Asia. True students of history know that Blacks out of Africa were the first travelers and explorers and nomads. Negroid people were the first settlers in many parts of Asia including the Philippines, Japan, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia, and in China [The first two dynasties of China were founded by people from Africa. These Black people spoke Dravidian and African languages. The first civilizations were called Xia and Shang. They were ruled by emperors called Xuan Di "Black Emperors".] At one time a belt of Black populations covered much of Asia, and left their DNA far and wide everywhere across the region. Today, their descendants are found in the "Negritos" (little black men) of the Philippines, Southern Thailand, Taiwan, and other countries.[See Chapter Appendix and/or search online for "negritos" "Blacks in China" etc.]

Perhaps, my friend, being Black in Asia is not such a unique thing after all. Perhaps there is such a thing as racial memory. Perhaps the desire to touch

and feel and mate is nothing more than the desire for a reconnection of sorts. Perhaps it is nothing more than a recognition of a shared humanity, and common ancestry; the desire to access and reunite with a distant yet hauntingly familiar DNA that stills runs through the blood despite being separated by years of history and ethnic mixing. Perhaps being Black in Asia is nothing more than a pleasant reunion with your brothers and sisters from whom we've been separated for so long. Perhaps, the whole point of this chapter is not to incite, not to enflame, not to divide, not to anger, nor to alienate, but to continue the education that under the skin, we are all the same.

Coming Black to Asia? Get ready for the time of your life. Brother, you have no idea!

p.s. As fate would have it

A friend of mine currently living in the states recently met a young lady from China. Since I've spent a lot of time in China, he sought my advice as to how he should proceed, this being his first time developing a dating experience with a Chinese woman.



Walt,

Honestly, this is the first time that a Chinese woman has ever paid any attention to me at all, so I could really use your input.



You had her at hello.

You're already leaps and bounds ahead of what she's used to. Just continue to calmly talk in a deep voice :-)) and show interest.

Continue being masculine.

Continue being Black.

It sells itself.—**Walt**

So, there you have it!

CHAPTER APPENDIX

1. A Primer on White Supremacy in America
2. Further Reading
3. Epilogue

1. A Primer on White Supremacy in America

Here's an email I shared with a Chinese male friend to explain a little about racism in America. Our email conversation was about race relations in general, but included references to dating, so I share it with you here. This email includes some anecdotes and observations I've already included in this chapter.



Hey "J,"

Every time I hear you mention something about the perception of Blacks, I have to hold back sharing some things that I think you may be unaware of. I had a friend on Saipan who said something similar once, but, because I never want to say things to make a person feel less positive about themselves, I refrained from sharing. However, since you're not the direct subject of what I'm about to share, I'm going to let you in on a little secret. :-)

I'm going to share something with you that typically you'd only hear if you were Black, hanging out with other Blacks, and specifically those who travel outside of the US.

Not having lived my formative years in America, I've been fortunate not to be burdened with the self-hatred, and low self-esteem that comes with growing up in a racist, society--specifically growing up Black in white-supremacist America. What that means is, it offers me a different perspective of myself in relation to others. But even so, what I'm going to share is something that most any Black (American or not) person who travels outside of America will have the opportunity to experience first hand.

First, let me say that those of us who are aware of the history of Africa, the power of the earliest African civilizations, their influence on world culture, religion, art, music, science, astronomy, etc., have a slightly different perspective on the world and about ourselves.

Books have been written on the theft of Black culture--everything from religion to rap--by whites. (I can give you lists of books if you like). Books have been written (many by whites, themselves) analyzing the obvious pathology of white racism as well as its genetic and cultural origins. These books are not mainstream for obvious reasons.

Those of us who are aware of history are aware of: the whitewash of the earliest images of Christ by the Roman Catholic Church which depicted Christ as

Black; the lynching and castration of Blacks by whites during slavery (and today); the African influence on Greek and Roman civilization and on an on...

My point is this: If you are coming into an understanding of yourself as Black, or an appreciation of your history as a member of the African Diaspora, while living in America, you will be poorly served by how Blacks are depicted and perceived in America.

Did you ever wonder WHY whites seem to despise Blacks so much? One answer is that there is an underlying fear of annihilation that whites feel when confronted with the physical, as well as perceived genetic superiority of Blacks. Whiteness is a recessive gene. In other words, any coupling of a white person with a Black person, or any person who has melanin in their skin, results in offspring that is no longer white. If you do some research on the white supremacist groups that exist in America, you'll discover that THEY are VERY aware of this and this is what permeates much of their literature. Whites oppress and fear Blacks and other people of color for the simple reason that to allow "integration" on any level results in the destruction of the white race. It has nothing to do with the "inferiority" of Blacks, and everything to do with the actual inferiority of whites.

Here are three good books to read on the subject:

1. *The Iceman Inheritance: Prehistoric Sources of Western Man's Racism, Sexism and Aggression.*

It was written by Michael Bradley, a white Canadian. One of the opening lines of the book is "The problem with the world is white men."

Here's a review from the Amazon.com site: "Michael Bradley, as a member of the Caucasian race, has bravely stepped forward with a valuable contribution to the analysis of Caucasian group behavior, or should I say misbehavior, toward people of color. No matter what your political affiliation or race, anyone who engages in a discussion of race relations is in reality examining why people who call themselves white have such a seemingly inherent animosity to people classified as non-white. Mr. Bradley also asks why Caucasian culture has an adversarial relationship to the planet Earth. It is a rare white person who will even admit the existence of the global system of white supremacy, let alone one who will acknowledge that the group mentality of his race is indeed the source of the racism, pollution, and resource depletion that plague the world." <http://www.amazon.com/dp/1879831007/>

2. *The Isis Papers* by Frances Cress Welsing.

I would say that this book literally saved my mind! I was able to see things clearly about life in America in ways that saved me from being swept up in the delusion and the white-supremacist brainwashing.

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/0883781042>

3. *Post Traumatic Slavery Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing* by Joy Leary (to understand the psychological effects slavery and white supremacy have on the minds of its victims) <http://www.joydegruy.com/ptss/index.html>

There is a historical fear of Black male superiority that comes across and acted out in police brutality, lynching, enslavement, castration, emasculation, character assassinations, etc.

Now, I don't make this stuff up, nor am I alone in my awareness. I simply comment on what countless others more educated than I am say and write. Here's something I found while I was looking for the Tim Wise site. It's a review and commentary by "TRUTH Minista" Paul Scott of a song entitled "Why U Hate?" by the rap artist, Piles (named Algernod Washington at birth).

from the article entitled: "Why They Really Hate You" [begin:] The question that Piles has posed is complex and can be answered on many different levels. However, to get to the root of white hate you must go back thousands of years. According to Canadian writer Michael Bradley, in his book *The Ice Man Inheritance: Prehistoric Sources of Western Man's Aggression*, the problem stems from the hyper-aggressive nature that the European developed as a survival technique for coping with a frigid climate. This led to their need to conquer the whole planet.

Also during the Transatlantic slave trade the Europeans used the myth of racial inferiority to justify slavery. After the Civil War, according to WEB DuBois in his book, "Black Reconstruction," Northern industrialists and members of the Southern aristocracy (the planters) manipulated poor whites into hating the newly freed "slaves" in order to exploit them.

It must be noted that much of the hatin' on black people is based on fear. Dr. Frances Cress Welsing author of "The Isis Papers" has suggested that Caucasians have a fear of genetic annihilation; believing that eventually, through the amalgamation of the races, the white race will cease to exist.

Also there is the fear of "the big pay back" where African Americans will seek revenge on whites for the atrocities committed against them. Over 200 years ago, as Bradford Chambers writes in "Chronicles of Black Protest," Thomas Jefferson predicted that the "deep rooted prejudices of whites" and the "10 thousand recollections by the blacks of the injuries they have sustained" would produce a division that "would probably never end but in the extermination of one or the other race."

Also, black psychiatrists William Grier and Price Cobbs wrote in their 1968 book "Black Rage," "long after slavery, many whites are haunted by a vision of being oppressed, exposed to the whims of a powerful cruel black man."

It must also be noted that this fear also influenced public policy, as during the Civil Rights/Black Power Era, FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover, set up COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program) to prevent the rise of a "black messiah" that could electrify the youth.

Which leads us to why "they" hate political Hip Hop, since it has the potential to convert rap fans into revolutionaries.

However, white America does not really hate "gangsta" rappers like Piles; she (America) created them. What they fear most is Algernod Washington, the business man who is rumored to have been valedictorian of his high school class and a former college student; the proverbial "fear of an educated black man." The Piles of the world are just thugged -out versions of Frankenstein's monster who have been programmed to never turn on their masters. [end of song review/commentary]

You've heard the phrase "Once you go Black, you never go back" yes? That refers to the sexual prowess of Black men that many non- Black women experience and who then become hooked on something that they realize they weren't getting before. I have a friend whose cousin dates white women exclusively--and regardless of how crassly he treats them, they keep coming back for more--for this reason.

So, here's my point. Once a Black person--particularly one who has not been self-defined by US culture--travels outside of the American borders, a hidden world opens up. I've experienced this in Manila, Micronesia, and now here in China. There is a fascination that many women have with Black men that you will not know about unless you are the Black male recipient of this fascination.

Of course, I'm aware that at least half of any sampling will reveal those who have been brainwashed by white depictions of Blackness (movies, news, etc.) to fear and reject Blacks.

However, there are those who have NOT been. I would say, the majority depending on where you travel. (The more westernized, the more brainwashed).

When my friend, [name], and I went to the girlie bars in Manila, the girls would stop, stare, gasp, applaud, and ignore their white clients and make us the center of attention. They would run towards us, gather 5,6,7 at a time while the other clients (white males were left alone)

Girls here in China (strangers) will wave vigorously at me, and smile and giggle and come right up and talk.

My friends who've been to the Czech Republic, Germany, and many other parts of Europe will tell me they never have to lift a finger, buy a dinner, or anything because the women so want a Black man that they will basically "keep" him living lavishly.

My Ghanaian friend on Saipan, who first told me about China, would tell me about many African men who are kept in suits and cell phones (seeming to be business men hustling about the city), but are simply being provided for by girls who want to be with them.

I've had white female friends who share with me their dissatisfaction with their men, and even their shame at being white given what to them are the obvious

reasons their men in America fight against Black men and attempt to keep them down. To quote one woman I heard, "It's all about the [phallus]!"

Were you to meet the merchant marines, the military men, and the nomads I've met (and whose ranks I have joined) on my travels, you'd have a completely different view of what it is to be Black outside of the American experience. Again, you won't read about this in any travel guide (usually written by whites), or in any news report. If you are a white male, you won't hear about it from your white women. (You may experience it second hand, though, as did a white male friend who hung out with one of my Black male army friends stated: "How come when we go out, they treat YOU like a king, and they treat me like crap?") This might have been in Manila or some other country in Asia. I don't recall.)

There's a fascination, an attraction, an obsession, if you will, that women have with "going Black.: It comes from the physical prowess (Who has been the World Heavyweight Boxing Champion since Blacks entered the sport? Who dominates Basketball in the states?)

Now, if you're a white male, of course you won't hear it from any Chinese girl you're dating, because she perhaps belongs to the 50% of the sampling who may prefer whites, or who doesn't make any distinction*. But, of course, it's the ONLY thing I hear, over and over again, because the girls who end up in my bed are the other 50% of the sampling! :-)

(At the same time, I should add, again, that I've found that many girls don't even make a distinction in their minds between color, but more so nationality. An American is an American, Black or white)

So, like I said, it's not something anyone else will tell you or know unless you're part of the affected group.

So my point, again, is this. Every time you mention something about the perception of Blacks by Chinese, I keep thinking "he's been living in America too long." The other thing I think is that there's another side of the coin that you'd never hear about for a few reasons, because

1. the girls aren't going to tell their Chinese boyfriends, lovers or husbands this,
2. Unless you move in certain circles, you're not going to hear it
3. The mainstream perception is going to include it.

Similarly, I realize that I'M not going to hear the other side of the coin, because the girls who are with me, are the ones who like Blacks! So, my experience is completely different! :-)

There's so much more to this topic, but I don't want to make this email TOO long! Just wanted to share this. There's another good book entitled "*How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*"

So, the point is essentially this: "people who can think critically, and who understand what's happening and what happened don't talk about Black inferiority, because that whole idea is a myth created to cover up a quite obvious

recognition of superiority, and can be likened to what psychologists refer to as "projection" where one's own attributes are "projected" onto another (i.e. whites project THEIR OWN feelings of inferiority, and violent tendencies onto non-whites). However, people DO talk about "white hate" and "white pathology," because THOSE are real issues.

People the world over see what those in America are unable to see clearly: The issue of race, of racism and inferiority and the low regard people in America have towards Blacks is not a Black problem, it's a white pathology that extends to other non-white groups as well. It is a construct whites have erected to further a particular agenda. The civil rights struggle is NOT about Blacks achieving anything to make them more equal, it is about Blacks being the moral compass for a white society that has been too damaged by a tradition of racism to "play nice" with other groups.

As I said once in a radio interview on Saipan about Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, "whites have come a long way in their ability to live harmoniously with other groups." I did that to stress the point that people should look clearly at what the whole struggle is all about. Whether it's Ghandi, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, non-whites have always been the moral compass for white society. It is non-whites who have forced whites to look objectively at themselves and address their pathology in the interest of peace and harmony. The civil rights "struggle" is not about Blacks overcoming. It's about Blacks forcing whites to overcome.

Throughout my life, I've had Koreans and Chinese as well as other groups express their distrust and animosity towards America in particular and whites in general. They tell me that they see how whites treat Blacks and ask me why. I had one Chinese girl here (in China) express her inner happiness at the 9/11 attack because it represented a much-deserved retaliation for what white America is doing all over the world. Sad, but true.

MORE

1. I was going to put together a reading list for you, but Tim Wise (who is white) and who lectures to whites about their race's pathology has already done it. Check out his blog for some eye-opening articles, and his reading list just to get a sense of the ongoing discussion.

<http://www.timwise.org/> and <http://www.timwise.org/reading-list/>

All this is important to understand the paradigm within which Blacks in America are living, but more importantly to begin to isolate what's really going on when you talk about perceptions of Black and white in that country.—**Walt**

[END OF EMAIL to my Chinese friend, "A"]

Further Reading

BOOKS:

- The Filipinos of Yesterdays, by Pedro A. Gagelonia
- The African Presence in Early Asia, edited by Runoko Rashidi

ARTICLES/ESSAYS:

- The Global African Presence: by Runoko Rashidi:
<http://www.cwo.com/~lucumi/runoko.html>
- Blacks in China: <http://clyde.winters.tripod.com/junezine/id1.html>
- The First Chinese: <http://www.africaresource.com/rasta/sesostris-the-great-the-egyptian-hercules/the-black-african-foundation-of-china-the-first-chinese/>
- The First Chinese Were Black: <http://www.edofolks.com/html/pub95.htm>
- World's First Civilization: <http://members.fortunecity.com/jrmoore1959/africapart16.html>

WEBSITES:

- www.HappierAbroad.com
- www.Timwise.org

Chapter Epilogue



Hi "Jay,"

I'm in China right now. As I travel more and more, I realize that the impression that many people have of African-Americans (and Blacks in general) is pretty positive for two reasons:

1. They have direct contact with Blacks and have formed their own opinions based on personal experience.
2. While they have a fascination with the Black experience in America based on videos, sports and music, they have not been brainwashed by 6'0'clock news distortions.

However, as more countries get pulled into the paradigm of corporate capitalism and consumerism, and as more corporations get a foot-hold in countries like China, it will be vitally important to control our own images.

A simple blog like JamaicaninChina.com, that shows positive interactions of Chinese with a Jamaican can go a long way to maintaining the positive image that people have, not just of Jamaicans but Blacks in general.

Talk to you soon!

Your friend, Walt

Chapter 8:

JAMAICAN IN SINGAPORE

I arrived in Singapore on Mar-7-2011

**Escape from China!**

March 9, 2011

Someone made the following comment on the previous "Last Days in China" post: "Good luck on your trip home. I enjoyed following your travels."

Home? Who says I'm going home? But for that matter, where is home? As I say in *Living True To Your Self*, I'm a minimalist, vegan nomad. *"I function with less, won't eat any flesh, and my home's where I rest."*

The story is simple: my China visa expired on March 7, so as is, um, advisable, one should leave when one's stay has concluded. In the famous words of Felix Unger: "Never overstay your welcome, or you'll never be welcome to stay over." However, I do plan to return for more fun and excitement. In the famous words of Walt Goodridge, "There will always be a Jamaican in China!" (And the blog title will be the same wherever on the continent I roam....

Which brings me to, drum roll please....Jamaican in Singapore!

Here's what my friend, Ben said about Singapore:



1) fruit juice...cheap...big glasses -- maybe \$1 per pint
Lemonade, Limeade, Mango! Mmmmmmm....!

2) Interesting food due to the European, Chinese, Malay, Indian, Indonesia, Thai, etc influence. Not sure about vegan, but Singaporeans LOVE to eat. It is about all they seem to talk about. At least go visit some of the hawker areas to see where Singaporeans go to eat.

3) Singlish -- incomprehensible Singapore version of English. Be prepared to not understand what they are saying even if they are speaking English.

4) Nice, friendly people...cute girls too.—**Ben**

Well, that's good enough for me! Sold! Where do I sign up?

So, I'm in the region. It's a quick flight, and Singapore, Bali, Indonesia,

Malaysia have been on my list for quite some time. So, off we go!

My escape from China started with an early morning 5:30AM taxi ride to the Sanya train station. It takes about 30 minutes and costs 25RMB (on the meter) from the UFO Hotel.

Taxi ride



I have to take the high speed train to Haikou since that's the international airport on Hainan. Cost of train ticket: 88RMB. Length of ride: 1 hour 20 minutes.



high speed train

Sunrise from Sanya.



Conveniently, the MeiLan station puts you in the basement of the Haikou airport. So a few escalators up and you're there! In order to make the 20kg limit on checked-in luggage, I had to throw away a few items....final weight: 19.8kg.





Whew! That was tiring....After I took this photo of my plane departing, I had to run real fast to get back on it before takeoff. But the pilot was a real nice guy.



I land in Singapore and change 300RMB to Singapore dollars (SGD) (Exchange rate: 1 SGD = 0.20RMB) so I ended up with about 60



Singapore Dollars for my taxi ride to my hostel.

Hey! Is that the same little

red car I spotted on Day 1 in China, Beijing??? Hey, you there! Are you following me?

My friend, Greta, had suggested Prince of Wales Hostel as a place to stay. This experience will be a bit different as I booked a bed in a dorm! The cost is 22SGD/night. That's about 17US dollars per night. That's about what I was paying for a single room on Hainan, so I didn't want to go higher than that. That means

I'll be giving up my privacy and actually sharing living space with people!! Haven't done that since....well, I'VE NEVER done that! Okay, that's not true, when I was a homeless, entrepreneur upstart, I did "couch surf" with friends until I got on my feet!



Prince of Wales hostel



and where there's free fruit, coffee, tea and pastries and in the morning!

In any event, Audrey shows me the accommodations, shares the rules. (No outside food allowed on the premises; no food in the dorm. So I guess there'll be no coffeepot cooking here.

Audrey shows the dining area, with washing machine, sink and stove,

First order of business after settling in: food! (I don't eat airline food, and I typically don't eat less than 24 hours before a flight) I checked Happycow.net and found a list of vegetarian restaurants. On the way to check out one on the list, I discovered this one, which was a bit more inviting. It was a bit before the evening shift, and the cooks were sleeping, but my new best friend (whom you'll meet soon, was nice enough to get the cooks started a little earlier than usual. I simply had to wait about 20 minutes, and while I waited, I had some dessert.

Have you noticed how "flat" some of the photos appear? I'm wondering if that means the lens is sub-par and thus an indication that the camera in China might be a knock-off. What do you think the chances of that are?



Flat foto

Chloe, my new bestest friend, and first official Jamaican in Singapore photographer. She just started working at the restaurant a few days before.



The food





The fan!



The finale



Singapore nights!

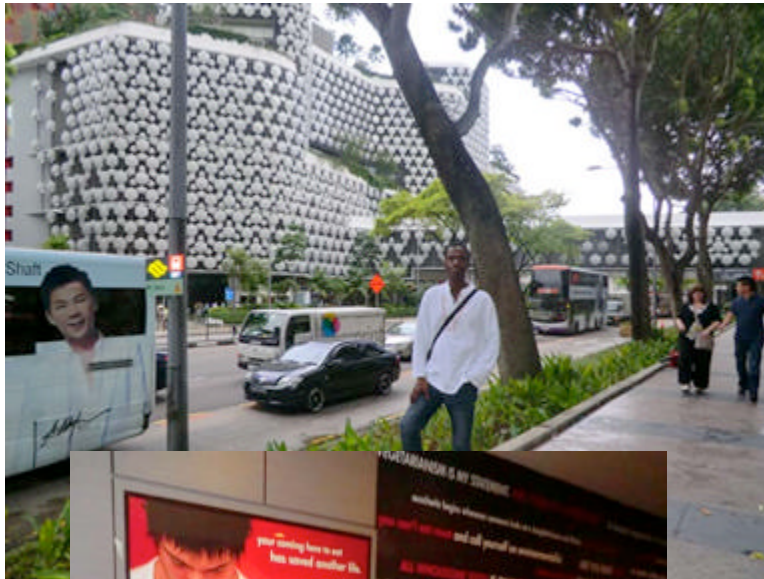
I should tell you that Singapore seems to be the most vegetarian friendly place I've ever been to! There are huge vegetarian signs

everywhere!!! I mean everywhere! There will be no shortage of places to indulge my proclivities.

Later in the evening, I met up with some couch surfers and we hung out on Arab Street in Little India until about 11:30pm! Great first day in Singapore! Stay tuned!

Singapore. aka: Vegetarian Heaven!

March 10, 2011



Today I headed into Chinatown to look for another hotel to stay, but got distracted by a vegetarian restaurant.



Thousand Veggie Restaurant.

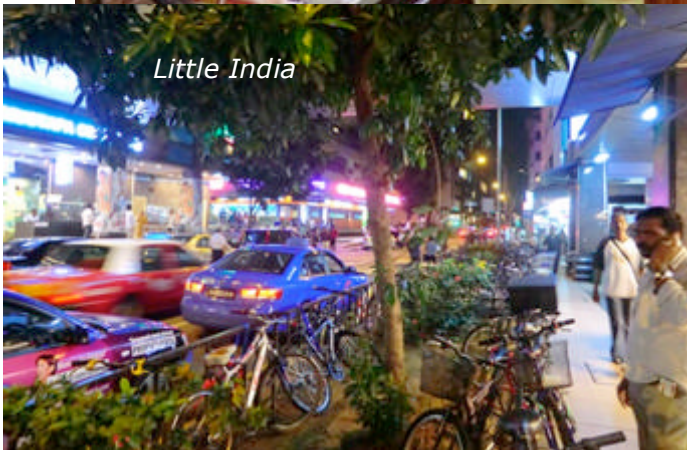


Care to join me?

Later, I checked out Four Seasons Organic Store in City Center Mall....



Green Juice! Fresh squeezed!



Little India

I'm in a part of Central Singapore known as Little India....



Mustafa Centre

Singapore days! Singapore nights!

March 17, 2011

So, here in Singapore, I'm doing things a bit differently. As mentioned earlier, I'm staying in hostel dorms rather than singles. Prices are a bit higher here, so a bed in a 6 or 8-person dorm costs from \$20SGD to \$30SGD/night. The exchange rate between US and Singapore is 1USDollar = 1.28SGD (Singapore dollar).



So, a \$25SGD room is about \$19US. Since I'm still thinking in Chinese RMB, that's about 125RMB, about what I was paying for a single hotel room on Hainan, and WAY MORE than the 40RMB I was paying in Xishuangbanna. Yeah, yeah, I know it's a different country, but I've been spoiled!

That's NOT my bed, I swear. I don't wear sneakers.

In any event, it's not so bad. It'll only be for a few days, and people pretty much keep to themselves (or maybe it's just me). And, anyway, as a nomad writer, I've got to experience new things and survive to write about them!

I wanted to take a photo in front of a "definitively Singapore" landmark, but I've been told that the famous Merlion Statue is under construction.

[The Merlion is an imaginary creature with the head of a lion and the body of a fish. This half-lion, half-fish sculpture rests on undulating waves. The lion head alludes to the legend of Singapore's founding by Sang Nila Utama, a Palembang Prince who, on his arrival on the island, saw what he thought to be a lion and thereafter renamed Temasek, Singapura or "Lion City". The fish-tail represents Singapore's links to the ancient sea-bound island which was Temasek and its long and successful association with the sea, reflecting how the forefathers traversed the oceans to come to Singapore and the nation's subsequent dependence upon it as a port.]

So, if it weren't under construction, my photo would look like this...



...except with less people, and with a Jamaican hue. (Use your imagination) And to answer your question, I have no idea who these people are, but that's what can happen when you post photos to a public blog. If you know who they are, please let them know they're in my

book!

Shao Yi, a couchsurfer I met online, gave me a little tour of the Little India part of town, and told me where I could find a "reasonable facsimile" of Merlion....

Shao Yi...(Let me know how the book develops, Shao Yi)

According to Shao Yi, said facsimile exists at a tourist spot called Sentosa where I took these photos....



A reasonable facsimile

Thanks to my friend, Greta, in Beijing (who's originally from Singapore), I made some new contacts here. We met for dinner and then headed to a friend's birthday party. A fun time was had by all!



Walt, Emilie, Kay and Michelle dining in Singapore



Ketan, the birthday boy

By the way, how do you like my new shirt? This is my favorite style, so I bought three, and may go back and get some more before I leave Singapore. So,



don't set your fashion expectations too high as it concerns the diversity of my wardrobe in upcoming posts. No names, but some of you (Ken!) have a tendency to comment on this as if it mattered to me.

Luigi, from Italy! Great conversation, Luigi. I'll let you know when the Dating in China for Foreigners book is out!



Kay, Emilie (with the Ukelele), Michelle, Ketan

The "Jamaican in China" Singapore Restaurant Review!

March 23, 2011

>crunch....slurp....gulp....smack, swallow.<..huh?? what?? Oh, hi!....>burp<

Ahem....Forgive me....Got a little distracted there....Ahem..Now, then....

Hi!!!! My name is Walt F.J. Goodridge, Jamaican in China! Welcome to today's episode entitled "Vegan Heaven in Singapore!"

Because of both the Buddhist and Indian influences, there's absolutely no shortage of vegan and vegetarian restaurants here in Singapore. In order to fully appreciate the plethora of pigless perfection, the fantasy of fleshless feasting, the cacophony of cruelty-free culinary cooking that is Singapore, I suggest to you that the appropriate unit of measurement is "square inch," as in "there are more vegetarian restaurants per square inch in Singapore than in any other city in the world, and that includes New York, Los Angeles and Beijing!" (However, my research shall be ongoing)

Now, while many restaurant signs in New York squeeze in the word "vegan" in small letters in what amounts to a reluctant, fearful whisper, so as not to alienate the majority population; and while some restaurants in Beijing simply add two or three dishes, or--if I'm lucky--a whole page (wow!) of "vegetarian-friendly" options (which means they'll be friendly to you while they remove the pieces of visible meat from the dish you just ordered, so you can be happy, you fanatic freak), here in Singapore's Little India, it's different--I counted several blocks, each with 4, 5, or 6 different restaurants one right next to the other each with the word "VEGETARIAN" as an integral part of the restaurant name, in big, bold letters in what amounts to a proud and unapologetic scream for all the world to hear! Yes, Singapore bulges with a buffet of beefless--oh, oops, I already beat that style of description to death already.....

This is Vegetarian Heaven, "supersized" at no additional charge! This is Vegetarian Heaven with a deluxe/elite ticket option upgrade! This is Vege....okay, you get the point. As such, the challenge has been to sample as many of the restaurants as possible in the few days I planned to stay. In fact, I had to leave Singapore for a short four day trip, but then I returned just so I could eat at more restaurants! I kid you not.

As I related in an earlier post, the first restaurant I found on my first afternoon in Singapore (found through HappyCow.net) was Fo You Yuan on Kitchener Street in Little India.



Fast service, clean, healthy meals! I went back every morning for their yam paste and ginkgo nut porridge.



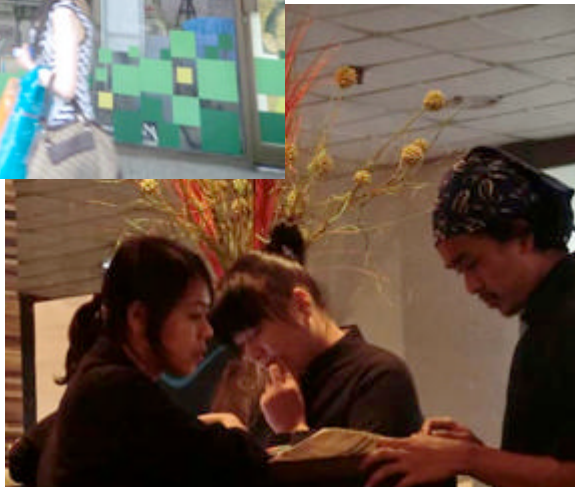
"Take photo first. Eat second."

Fo You Yuan gets the highest marks for sweetest wait staff!

The next day came Zen Japanese Vegetarian Restaurant on Middle Road. It's on the second floor of Midlink Plaza.



*a few of the staff at
Zen Japanese
Vegetarian*



If you're fortunate enough to also know and dine with my friend, Michelle, then you'll also have some cool conversation.... otherwise, you'll simply have to envy me!



Zen wisdom: Envy is a dish best served slightly warmed.... with noodles, edamame and a bit of ginger to aid with digestion.



Zen gets high marks for most exciting assortment of meals!

As mentioned earlier, while strolling through the streets, I came across City Center Mall, Singapore's first eco-mall and found Four Seasons Organic store on the third floor. I didn't eat full meals there, but it became part of my daily routine to pick up food bars and fresh squeezed green juice.



And, of course, there are other reasons to keep going back....



4 Seasons gets high marks for greatest assortment of "other reasons" to keep going back! Ladies, next time I promise I'll bring copies of my books for you to see!



Next stop was 7 Sensations, also in Little India on Madras Street



Korean rice, yam soup, veggie roll wrap, green juice. Zen gets the prize for most esthetically pleasing presentation! The restaurant, the meals, and the menu are all expertly designed and presented! Try the durian cake and avocado/tofu cake for dessert.



See you on QQ, ladies!

Just a short walk from the hostel I was staying, is Big Bites Pure Vegetarian Restaurant. Many of their pastries and snacks have ghee (butter), or milk, but I did find a few snacks made from dahl and spices. So, that became part of my daily routine as well.



No, no, no....Just take the picture. That's the point, I don't want to look at the camera....I'm trying to look cool....while I pose next to my empty bag of just-eaten masala snack

Next was Lao Di Fang Vegetarian Restaurant in the Park Mall in the basement of the Park Mall, Central Singapore





It was a little out-of-the way from where I was staying, so I only went there once, but next time....oh, man, next time....!

Next was Nature Vegetarian Delights -- Hougang, Northeast Singapore...a buffet-style restaurant.



So that's how I spent my days in Singapore, green juices, food bars, vegan dining and bunk beds in hostels.



Encore at Fo You Yuan! Brought some friends along!

Looks like fun, doesn't it? Blissful, right? Yup. Uh huh.... WELL YOU'RE WRONG!!! Those few days in Singapore were extremely stressful!! Why? Well, you see, every other place I've lived, I find one, perhaps two restaurants that I can eat at, and then life is easy.

Monday: Restaurant ONE.

Tuesday: Restaurant ONE.

Wednesday: guess what? Same restaurant! Restaurant ONE. This I can do.

OR, if I feel like I can handle a bit of increased complexity in a city with two restaurants, I might do:

Monday: Restaurant ONE.

Tuesday: Restaurant TWO.

Wednesday: Restaurant ONE again.

Tricky, but manageable. This is what I'm accustomed to.

Here in Singapore, however, I have the stress of choice. On my last day, I was actually on my way to one restaurant, had a change of stomach, made an about face on the sidewalk and then started walking to another restaurant, then ended up going past that restaurant and ending up at a third restaurant where I finally had my meal. I don't know if I could handle that sort of stress on a daily basis. I might go mad.

That's the advantage of life on the lunatic fringe. Predictability. Now I know how omnivores feel!

As lengthy as this post is, there are still some other shops, stores I didn't include in the list. Like I said, Singapore is heaven for vegetarians, but beware....You might not be able to handle it!

Now, as I wrap up this episode, I'd hate for you to think I was biased only towards vegetarian restaurants. I, and my blog pride ourselves as being fair, non-judgmental, ecumenical, all-inclusive and exercise political correctness and compassion and tolerance for all, regardless of their lifestyle, culinary and dietary choices. So, with that said, if you're not into vegetarian fare, I imagine you can always eat here:



In case you can't read the sign, it says...."Free coffee with every purchase of a bowl of Pig's Organ Soup."



Nothing like a hot cup o' joe to chase down the pig's organ. Bon appetit!

Until next time, this is Walt F.J. Goodridge, Jamaican in China!

See you in Singapore!

CUT!! Ok....are we done? Good....roll the credits, and don't disturb me again, ok?!!!

>crunch....slurp....gulp....smack, swallow.

I spent a few weeks in Singapore eating food, walking around town, meeting people! It was great! I'd definitely go back just for the food!

But, sadly, my time in Asia is drawing to a close. But before I leave Singapore, let me share a few more of the exciting, thought-provoking sights I enjoyed here (as well as a few from China).

Forgive me for asking, but....



Excuse me, ma'am, forgive me for asking, but is there also a height requirement for eating here? (China)



Excuse me, ma'am, forgive me for asking, but what exactly DO you do here in the Head Building? (China)



Excuse me, sir. Forgive me for being naive, but what kind of services DO your clients require exactly? (Singapore)



Excuse me, ma'am, forgive me for asking, but um, er....oh, never mind.... (Singapore)

I departed Singapore on Mar-21-2011 (stay: 16 days)

Chapter 9:

RETURN TO SAIPAN!

I arrived back on Saipan March 21, 2011!



Recap of My Adventure!

That was great! Here's a quick recap!

Beijing: arrived Sept-1-2010; departed Oct-30-2010 (60 days)

Kunming: arrived Oct-30-2010 departed Nov-04-2010 (6 days)

Xishuangbanna: arrived Nov 4, 2010; departed for Laos Nov 30 (26 days)

Laos: arrived Nov 30, 2010; departed December 8, 2010 (9 days)

Xishuangbanna: arrived Dec 8, 2010; departed Jan 18, 2011 (42 days)

Sanya, Hainan: arrived Jan-18-2011; departed Mar-7-2011 (49 days)

Singapore: arrived Mar-7-2011: departed Mar-21-2011 (16 days)

Saipan: arrived back on Saipan March 21, 2011!

**Dec 8 starts the second entry and 90 day stay for my double-entry visa*

"It's not over!" said the Jamaican back on Saipan.

March 30, 2011

How dare you assume that the Jamaican in China adventure is over!?! I've gotten emails that say, among other things, "I'll miss your emails," "When are you coming/going back?" etc.

Does that mean you think I have nothing interesting to say or experience if I'm not Jamaican in China??? Shame on you!

I'm offended! I'll have you know--thank you very much--that my life and commentary can be just as compelling, creative and captivating whether I'm in Kunming or Croatia!

With that said, I'm now Jamaican on Saipan! Now my friends in China will get a perspective of my life outside of China. So, first order of business (bear with me if you know this), is to let you know where Saipan is located. I'll borrow a map from my friend, Mike Tripp's website, *The Underwater World of Saipan*.

Saipan is located in the western Pacific Ocean, about a 3.5 hour flight from Japan, and about 5 hours direct to Beijing. It's in a region known as Micronesia. It's the capital island of a 15-island chain officially known as the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI, for short).

I first moved to Saipan after my Escape from New York in 2006. I chronicled that escape and a lot of general Saipan information in my book, *Jamaican on Saipan*. You can also read more on Saipan's wikipedia page. (I'm honored to say I'm mentioned on that wikipedia page as co-author of a book entitled *Chicken Feathers and Garlic Skin*, which chronicles a period in Saipan's recent history. You can also get an eclectic overview of life on Saipan by visiting the WeLoveSaipan.com site.

Let the adventure, um, resume!

The short happy tale of 41 Australians & the Jamaican on Saipan!

April 5, 2011

Now it can be told! One of the reasons I returned to Saipan specifically when I did was to arrange a special tour for a group of visiting Australians to the island of Saipan. Way back in October of 2010, while I was in Beijing, China, I received a request through my *DiscoverSaipan* site from Narelle M., one of the activity organizers on a 45-day Sun Princess Cruise Lines tour originating in Sydney, and then continuing to Hong Kong to Japan, a few Pacific Islands and back to Australia. (One of the beautiful benefits of running internet-based businesses is the ability to do so from any location on earth with internet access).

Narelle and I continued our communication throughout my China adventure and we built the excitement as the date approached. However, by the time the cruise kicked off in early March, Narelle was not able to be physically present on the cruise, so I continued organizing with Gaye H. As things

progressed, the "Cherry Blossom Tour," as it had been billed, had to cancel its stops in Japan due to the recent events there. However, the Pacific island leg of the tour was still on!

Most of the arrangements for transportation were made back in November (Thanks for the assist, Miki!), and as the number of interested cruise passengers increased, I had to add more and more vans to handle the ever-increasing group.

Once I returned to Saipan, I met with Scott Russell, of the Mariana Council for the Humanities, as well as local saipanpreneur, Catherine Perry, and Gordon Marciano of PDI, who graciously helped pull things together in the few days before the ship was to arrive.

I wanted to offer our visitors a Saipan experience unlike the standard "big bus, big guns" tour most visitors receive. I wanted to show them the Saipan I fell in love with: the fantastic scenery, the local culture, the warm-hearted residents, and simple daily lifestyle that make Saipan a secret paradise and coveted escape from the ills of modern living. For that, I would need to assemble a special team.

Both Catherine and Scott suggested "Uncle" Lino Olapai as a representative of Saipan Carolinian culture (Lino is author of a book entitled *Ropes of Tradition*, which can be ordered here), and John Castro as a

representative of things Chamorro.



John (left), Lino and I meet at Java Joe's to discuss the tour

My friend, Norman Xing, suggested a Chinese NMC liberal arts student and former tour bus driver who would also be part of the team.

And, to add some feminine energy to the team, John recruited Catherine Shai, homemaker and former cultural dancer.

I awoke on the morning of Tuesday, March 5, 2011, to an auspicious Saipan sunrise. The past three days had seen rain and overcast weather which, if it continued, would threaten the fun and excitement of my Saipan in a Day Tour.

The sunrise on the morning of the tour.

We learned a day or two before that, due to an issue with a faulty engine, the ocean liner was delayed and scheduled to arrive at 11:45am.



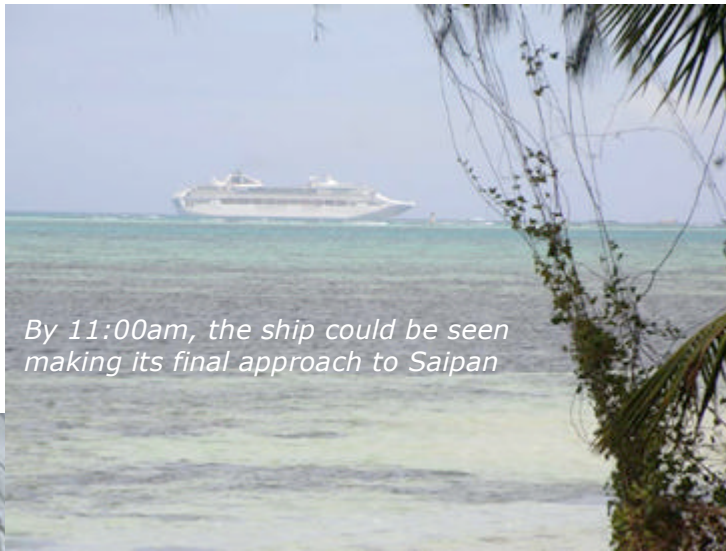
Vans are rented....Thanks Layer and Monica at Hertz!



The team met, vans were picked up, logistics were arranged, and all was proceeding well.



The A team: Chamorro Korean Catherine, Chamorro John, Carolinian Lino, Chinese Tom, Jamaican Walt Thanks Doug! Great Photo! And thanks Cheryl and Jenny at Microl Toyota!



By 11:00am, the ship could be seen making its final approach to Saipan

We arrived at the dock, and as the members of our 3-van/1-SUV caravan waited for our turn to enter the restricted area, a torrential downpour began at about 12 noon!



Storm clouds gather ominously!

After about half hour of rain, the clouds began to pass and we were able to see breaks of blue sky coming in from the south. I knew this would be a good day!



By the time the passengers started to alight, the sky over Saipan was a stunning blue!

We met our group, headed out to my favorite spot, did our special welcome, and did our thing!



Lino leads the group of visitors towards our vans



Welcome, introductions, flowers, mwars and the fun begins



Looking on intently

As I told the visiting Aussies (and New Zealanders and at least two Americans): There is only ONE Lino Olopai on Saipan, and we've got him! If you want local expertise on Chamorro culture, there's only ONE John Castro, and we've got him on our tour too! I assured them, that once they returned to the ship and compared notes with the other passengers, they would have had an experience like no other!

I'll have to keep some of our Secret Saipan tour, well.... a secret, you understand, but I'll just say that based on the feedback we received, as well as the happy goodbyes, a good time was had by most!

An adventurous ten took Walt's trek to the best scenic spot on Saipan:



As it was requested by some of our guests, we decided to incorporate some of the big guns into their experience





Lino holds court at the Micro Beach Pavilion.... for lessons in history, culture and more!

As the evening drew to a close, I noted to myself that the cloudy evening sky obscured one of Saipan's greatest assets: the famous Saipan sunset. However, almost on cue, even with an invisible sun, some streaks of hot pink emerged to color the sky and water in front of Micro Beach seemingly just for the benefit of



Sunset on Saipan...just for us!

our guests. It lasted no more than 5 minutes, but was enough to elicit some oohs and ahhs from the crowd, and provide a nice end to a special day!



We dropped our visitors back at the dock and said our goodbyes.... You should have been there!

And thus concludes The Short Happy Tale of the 41 Australians, the two Chamorros, the

Carolinian, the Chinese, and the Jamaican on Saipan!

The Singapore Seating Puzzle

Now, you know I'm not one to cause trouble, but I need a little help with something I saw while I was Jamaican in Singapore.



Reserved seating sign on Singapore MRT

comfortable (and clearly identifiable with a big arrow pointing towards them) while they wallow in their obvious, understandable and pitiable misery at being different from the rest of us normal people. I support this.

So, with that said, this is a reserved seating sign on a train in Singapore. You with me? So far so good. Now, here is the same sign upon closer examination.

Additionally, as the afore-mentioned advanced society, rather than waste valuable ink using words and sentences to describe the types of people we want to put in the "look at me I'm different, debilitated, or otherwise dependent or desirous of special consideration" seating, we use graphic icons.

These icons are cleverly designed to be universally self-explanatory--given our increasingly global, multi-lingual and culturally diverse society--and I'm proud to say, being the intelligent and sophisticated world traveler I am, I've been able to figure out most of them. They're rather easy, really.

Please give your seat to men with argyle socks, carrying dinner trays (Don't YOU prefer to sit if you have to eat on the subway?)

As an enlightened, ever-advancing global society, we've all agreed that there are people with severe disadvantages and life situations who require our sympathy, and pity, and furthermore, as a public show of our condescending attitude towards such individuals, we offer them a tiny seat on a bus or congested subway system so they can at least be





Please give your seat to men with ill-fitting dresses, or women who are obviously hiding stolen items beneath their skirts. (presumably so the Singapore police can easily locate and deal with both these types of social deviants) Note: I also support caning.

Please give your seat to men with ventriloquist dummies on their laps, or to Mike Myers and "mini me" should they happen to visit Singapore. (we must make our artists and celebrities comfortable)



See? Like I said, fairly simple. However, here's where I'm a little perplexed. I seem to be having a little trouble with the next icon, and this is where I need your help.

Could you tell me what exactly is that, um, thing that appears to be originating, protruding and hanging out from this man's crotch area that's causing him to be noticeably pulled forward?

Like I said, I'm not one to cause trouble, but IF I've deciphered this icon correctly--being a Jamaican man, you understand--I've always considered such a condition to be rather advantageous rather than debilitating to tell you the truth....

However, had I known this before I left Singapore....

Friends in High Places....skewing the distribution

April 10, 2011: URGENT MEMO TO ALL AFFECTED PARTIES:

Somewhere in the western Pacific there exists a little island of 46.5 square miles in total size. A mere thirteen miles long by an average of 5 miles wide, Saipan, CNMI (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) is home to an indigenous population of Chamorros and Carolinians, as well as Filipinos, Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, Thai, Vietnamese, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans, Australians, Americans, Russians, Canadians, Yapese, Chukese, Palauans, and other Pacific islanders. The total population of Saipan is approximately 40,000--but varies depending on whom you talk with.

8,794.6 miles away in the Caribbean Sea, exists another island of 4,411 square miles. 146 miles long by 51 miles wide, Jamaica is home to an indigenous population of Arawaks, as well as displaced Africans, Maroons, South Asian Indians, Chinese Americans and Brits who all proudly call themselves "Jamaican." The total population of Jamaica is approximately 2.5 million.

Jamaicans can be found in every corner of the planet. This is by design. It is our job to integrate the global community to make everyone aware of our greatness. In fact, the JPDPD (Jamaican Person Dispersal Prime Directive) requires an even distribution of Jamaicans across all latitudes and longitudes and on all continents. We've been given the task of holding key positions in politics (Colin Powell), music (Bob Marley), sports (Patrick Ewing), revolutionary thought (Marcus Garvey), etc., and of occupying the full range of professions and industries. So it should come as no surprise that there is at least one Jamaican on the tiny, remote island of Saipan. The plan demands it.

According to said plan--the details of which remain closely guarded on a "need to know" basis-- there should be at least 1 JPPM (Jamaican Person Per Million) people in every population.

However, it appears that somewhere in the Jamaican Person Dispersal Prime Directive Personnel Department [that would be the JPDPDPD], there was a miscommunication, a misdirected memo, or some type of clerical error. For on April 9, 2011, on the tiny, remote island of Saipan, CNMI, with its population of only 40,000 people, there were not the minimum requirement of one, not two, but



THREE Jamaicans, all clustered in the same room!!! Furthermore, if that weren't bad enough, TWO of them held the coveted position of airline pilot! TWO!! (We're not sure about the occupation of the third one, but we're investigating).

This is not an "even distribution," people!! Somewhere on the planet, there's a population missing a Jamaican!! I don't need to remind you about the ramifications of this! I want a full report on my desk by 5:00pm!

Heads will roll!



Winston Delroy Trevor Courtney Bogle, III
 Policy Director, Jamaican Person Dispersal Prime
 Directive Personnel Department [That would be the PD of the JPDPDPD]

"I want to date a Jamaican in China"

June 20, 2011

Just had to share this with you.

I have tracker software on my blog. Tracker software is a wonderful feature of the internet that provides vital information that's especially valuable for marketing products and services online. For example, a tracker can reveal who visits your site (no names or emails, just cities and countries), how long they stayed on your site, and even what they typed into a search engine like google in order to find your site. So, this morning, as I was checking the tracker statistics for this blog, I noticed this:

21 Jun, Tue, 01:00:57	210.23.83.199		blogs.jamaicans.com/jamaicaninchina/
21 Jun, Tue, 02:00:03	62.243.128.163		Google: coffee pot cookbook download
21 Jun, Tue, 02:30:49	GATEWAY6.DCAA.MIL		www.jamaicans.com/
21 Jun, Tue, 04:12:02	119.158.178.117		Google: cbm in china
21 Jun, Tue, 05:09:15	60.21.206.190		Google: i want to date a jamaican in china

Someone in Jinzhou, China went to their computer, got online, opened up google.com, and typed in "I want to date a Jamaican in China." My site popped up in the search engine results, and voila!

This, of course, leads to some interesting speculation, and of course some vital questions: First of all, if she (hopefully a she) is searching for a Jamaican in China and found my site, then that might indicate that she didn't know about my site before she searched. That's very interesting. How on earth would that subject (and that desire) come up in conversation on its own???? Did she have a friend who dated a Jamaican (or perhaps even THIS Jamaican), and now she wants one of her very own?

Second, she's in China already. Is she a Chinese woman who has heard the rumors? a non-Chinese woman, who now finds herself in China, and who wants to recreate a past experience? Fascinating.

But, I think you'll agree with me that the most important question, all kidding aside, and beyond a shadow of a doubt, is, well....

HOW MUCH SHOULD I CHARGE?

Presenting: "I want to date a Jamaican in China!"

JAMake a Date, Inc. presents
"I Want to DATE a JAMAICAN in CHINA!"
A division of Rota Rooter Plumbing Service. Not affiliated with "Rent a Husband."

 If you don't already live here, you can fly to China to date a Jamaican!


AIR CHINA

Be the envy of your friends!
Experience:
Fun! Adventure! Reggae Music!
Good Conversation! Vegetarian Food!
plus: wit, charm, and other stuff, too!
'cause you know what they say:
"Once you go Jamaican.. all others are forsaken!"

Emergency Service
24 Hours/7 Days
Free Estimates
Residential & Commercial
(don't ask)
Long Term & Short Term
(better make that short term only)

***Request an Application**
Call 1-800 Ja-make-a-date!
***Must meet certain requirements.**

This could be you!
This could be you!

JamaicanInChina.com

Yes, ladies, this could be you (and your friends, too, don't be selfish now!) For just a nominal hourly, weekly or monthly fee, you could be the envy of your friends and strangers throughout China when you stroll by with your very own foreign Jamaican "date."

That's right. They'll ask (and you'll NOW KNOW the answer to all the questions everyone is curious about). What questions? Use your imagination, ladies, and don't play coy with us. We know.

Some restrictions, but big benefits apply. Inquire now for details.

Um, don't they have laws to describe this sort of thing?

A World Without Borders

January 1, 2012

Well, that's my story, and I'm sticking to it! I really had an absolutely, positively, wonderful and life-changing time being Jamaican in China, Singapore and Laos, and I hope you enjoyed reading about it.

In addition, I hope you got something much more from Jamaican in China than just an entertaining read. I hope it expanded your awareness and consciousness in some small way. Wherever in this world you may call "home," (even if you already live in China), I hope it gave you a little peak into a reality that you might not have otherwise been aware of. I hope it showed you people, places and possibilities in a way that affects how you see yourself, your world, and your place, role and identity within it. I hope you can see a little bit higher above and a little bit further beyond the misconceptions and fears that often flavor our perception of "others" and those we consider "not like us." The fact is, we are and have been manipulated to live in such fear.

It seems an unavoidable outcome of this manipulation, and the fractionalized, brainwashed society that we live in as a result, that people are taught to, and thus become inclined to identify and separate themselves according to arbitrary and meaningless national, ethnic, racial and religious lines. We are taught to fear these supposed differences and thus we perceive "others" who are "not like us" as threats to our individual and/or collective identity, control, autonomy and survival.

This fear leads to a false sense of elitism, then to bias, prejudice, preferential treatment, discrimination, and attacks of psychological, verbal and even physical nature.

This is all a construct. It is not natural. We are not wired to fear, attack and ostracize others because of these differences. This is all learned behavior. If you don't believe me, then simply watch young children--before they've been brainwashed--playing with each other in harmony if you wish to observe the instinctive, communal, inclusive, welcoming "wiring" that we are born with. Yes, something has been taken from us.

As the Occupy Movement in the states, as well as on-going protests worldwide reveal, people are ready for a change of the existing paradigm of manipulation, fear and the strategy of divide, conquer and exploit. People are agitating for change. They want to take that thing back-- that thing that has been taken from our natural wiring. It can be done. It is being done!

The internet and our technological age makes possible the reality of life without borders and other arbitrary lines that separate humanity. It can be used to encourage the sort of boundary-breaking, limitless, expansive and inclusive thought and action that will unite and free us. *Jamaican in China* is just one of many real-life adventures which offer alternative ways to be, think and act in the pursuit of such freedom.

Now, it may be presumptuous or naive of me to hope and believe that my little nomad adventure, and a relatively obscure book about it all can somehow contribute to the massive paradigm shift in consciousness for which the world yearns, and for which it now seems poised. However, I'll share with you a thought that caught my eye some time ago. It's a truth with which I resonate profoundly, and it represents an ideal to which my life (and thus this 6 month chronicle of my life) is a testament.

"To create a just, sustainable world, nothing is more important than being able to think and act across borders. Whether our passion is protecting the biosphere or preventing war, we will succeed only if we have the passion and courage to cross the national, ideological, ethnic, and religious borders of our time." --Mark Gerzon, author of *Leaders without Borders*.

These borders are all arbitrary lines. They do not exist in reality. They are all learned and superimposed upon the now fragmented minds and thinking of individuals who should be a thinking and acting as a global community on a single planet.

In my naiveté, I believe that *Jamaican in China* has the power to plant the seed of a thought about "others" who are "not like us" that says "Perhaps things are not as I've been led to believe. Perhaps these people are not my enemies. How do I know? Well, there's this Jamaican guy who went all the way to China, and let me tell you what he experienced....!"

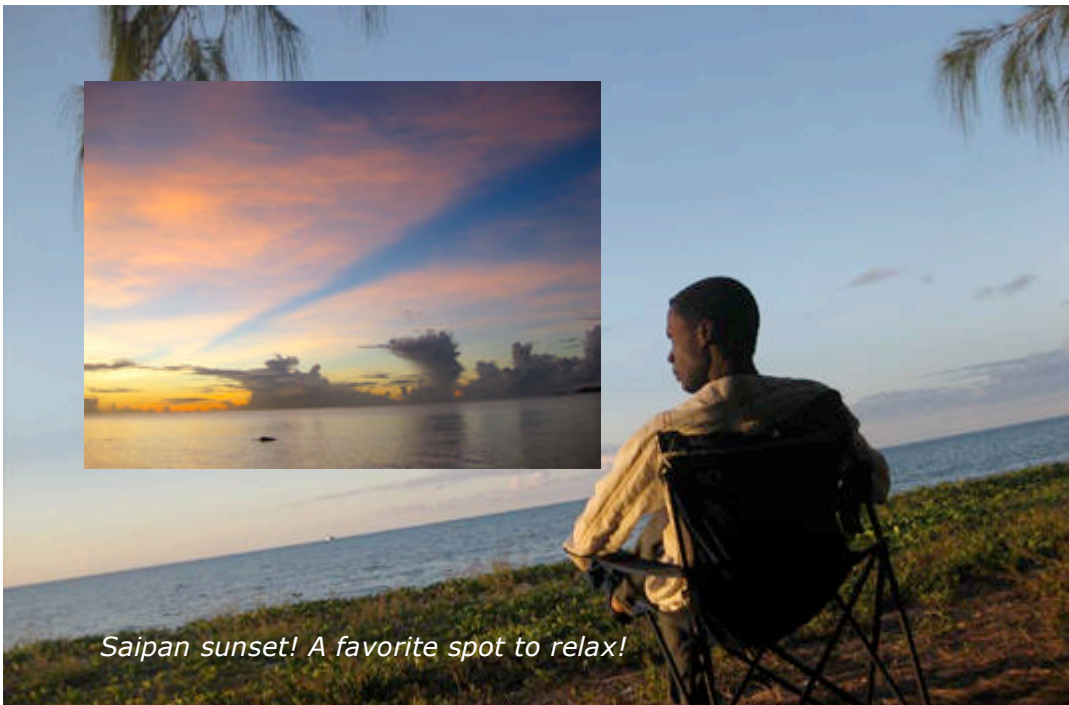
And with the single click of button or a tweet of technology, you can use this book to change someone else's perspective as well. It only takes one.

There's more of a global ideological shift going on than we may realize. The "social networking" paradigm which has existed for millennia has now been dramatically enhanced by the Internet. It has changed everything. Videos go viral, protests proliferate, movements gain momentum, and individuals are impacted in meaningful ways by a "tweet" or a "like" or a "friend" an upload, or by a single post in a forum often by a single individual on a single gadget, Nook, Kindle or keyboard. Yes, my friend, keystrokes and a click can change the world!

It is from this place of sincere respect for the power of communication in general, enhanced by the potential of the internet in particular, that I write and blog and "share what I know so that others may grow." I hope you will fulfill my humble request to use my adventure to communicate some new possibilities to at least one other person somewhere else across the arbitrary, imaginary (and slowly dissolving) lines that seek to divide us.

If you are reading this on a Nook, Kindle, iPad or any e-reader, you have the ability in most cases to share this book electronically with others. I encourage you to do so. Feel free! Please share a link or a like or a tweet with someone in your world, and thanks for being part of my adventure!

Walt F.J. Goodridge
*"I share what I know,
so that others may grow!"*



Saipan sunset! A favorite spot to relax!

And, as I sit here on the beach on Saipan, gazing into the western sunset, I wish that you have the courage and the passion to make some or all of your dreams come true. And if the freedom to travel is one of your dreams, then remember that the Jamaican in China says:

"Freedom is Achievable. You can reclaim your power. You can break free. You can live true to your self!"

I'll see you next time.... in China!—Walt

The Final Word

*....and he disappeared into his dream....
and was never seen or heard from again.*

The End.

I've always wanted to write a book and end it with that line, but as much as I'd like to disappear into my dream, I have an obligation to my fellow Jamaican, vegan, entrepreneur nomads out there (all 3 of us) to continue documenting my adventure. So, with that, please stay tuned, and meanwhile, please enjoy....

The Nomad's Credo

These lines do not define me
for I live beyond the fringe
my sense of who I am
on border guards shall never hinge

My spirit soars unfettered
past the sheltered and the walled
I live a life called freedom
and I go where I am called

I see myself in others
as this world I duly roam
From whence we came we all are one
I call this earth my home

For seeker is my nature
I am wanderer by choice
I plot my life's adventure
as I heed the still small voice...

Freedom is Achievable.

"BONUS" CHAPTER 10!

JAMAICAN IN CHINA: THE PREQUEL!

My FIRST Trip to China in 2009!

Includes shots from my private photo album



You've cheered at "Walt's Escape from America! You've sighed at his life in paradise as the "Jamaican on Saipan!" You've been inspired by the "as told to" story of "Chicken Feathers and Garlic Skin!" Well, it's time, once again for another thrilling, action- packed nomadpreneur adventure. That's right, he's back! But this time it's going to be a whole different bowl of noodles! Yes...Walt Goodridge is ON THE ROAD TO CHINA!

Introduction

Note: As exciting and new as my Jamaican in China adventure was, it wasn't my first trip to China! In 2009, I visited three cities in China along with Chicken Feathers and Garlic Skin author, Chun Yu Wang. It was her first time back to China since collaborating with me on her groundbreaking memoir of her experience as a garment factory worker on Saipan. The following took place between April 20 and May 4, 2009.

- Day 1: Monday, April 20, 2009: Saipan & Shanghai
- Days 2-4: Tuesday - Thursday, April 21-23, 2009: Suzhou
- Day 5: Friday April 24, 2009 Hangzhou
- Days 6-10: Saturday - Wednesday, April 25-29, 2009 Wuxi
- Day 11: Thursday, April 30, 2009: Shanghai reprise
- Days 12-14: Friday-Sunday, May 1-3, 2009: Suzhou reprise
- Day 15: Monday, May 4, 2009 Shanghai & Saipan

Day 1: Shanghai!

Monday, April 20, 2009

Our flight from Saipan landed at Shanghai International Airport.



Welcome to
Shanghai



*Mud cloth in
Shanghai*



After clearing customs and immigration.... ..we found a local agent at the airport who offered to get us a hotel. Even though he worked for The Radisson (?) he apparently gets a commission for booking any incoming customer to any of the multitude of hotels in the area. We waited for the bus and checked out the scene in Shanghai.

We chose our hotel based on price, 200 RMB (the

exchange rate is 1US=6.75RMB, so that's about \$30/night) and when we got there, we found out just why it was so cheap. (I really should have had the first clue from the beat up van and the disheveled [i.e. drunk] driver who took us there, but, being my first time in China, I was willing to be open). The place was so bad, we never even sat down on the bed, we checked out right away, got our money back and headed back to the airport. Once there, the same agent put us immediately into another beat up van to go to another hotel. He promised us, however, that this one would be better. As it was about 11pm at night, I was willing to simply pay a higher price rather than risk the back and forth.

We got there, checked out the room first, this time, and, once satisfied, checked in. The standard practice here at all the hotels is to photocopy your passport and enter you into their computer system (The government's way of keeping track of all the potentially subversive Jamaican foreigners!) I'm told that next time, since I'm in their system, that I'll qualify for a discount.



The next morning I bought some fruit, some socks (hey, I simply forgot to pack some) and an adaptor so my three-pronged laptop power cord could fit the electrical outlet in the hotel.



(Don't be fooled by the rustic shacks in the background, Shanghai is a sprawling modern city. This particular area happens to have a little make-shift community of people from other cities who've come to sell their wares.)

Chun informed me that my laid back, collar-less style shirt--my trademark fashion statement on Saipan--just wasn't cutting it here in China. She said it

looked like something people would wear as pajamas! So, while I was in the hotel checking my email, she went shopping around the area and got me a jacket.



Chun and me at the Xiangyuen Grand Motel



Our driver from the Xiangyuen Grand Motel

Our driver from the Xiangyuen takes us back to the airport, where we find the bus station, purchase our tickets and settle in for a two-hour ride.



On the bus to Suzhou



Tickets, please!



Sprawling Shanghai!



Day 2: Suzhou!

Tuesday, April 21, 2009

Once we got to Suzhou, a taxi driver accosted us and took us around to a few hotels, and we ended up at the Gold Bridge Hotel! After checking in, we went walking around town.



Posing in Suzhou

Suzhou was nice...Busy streets, but not too congested, lots of shopping, fruit stands all along the sidewalk.



Rambutan for sale! My favorite!



We went to the Tiger Hill Scenic Spot.

Admission: 60RMB, or about \$8.50US



Trust me, I felt silly when I did it, and I feel silly now showing it to you. But, I did promise you some outtakes and deleted scenes, so here you go!



Tiger Hill Scenic Spot...like the sign says



Meditating at Tiger Hill

Then to the Humble Administrator's Garden.
Admission: 70RMB, or \$10US.



Sitting and Watching at the Humble Administrator's Garden, Suzhou



You know, this garden is pretty elaborate and extravagant for a guy who calls himself the "humble" administrator



*Practicing my "swave and deeboner"
("suave and debonair") look*

*The author and her creation, Chicken
Feathers and Garlic Skin*



Then we went shopping.



Then to a nearby restaurant.

We gave the waiter instructions for the chef asking him NOT to use MSG, any meat oil, or soy sauce or eggs, and asking him to use ONLY sesame oil to prepare three dishes for us. The three dishes, plus a fried rice (without soy sauce) came to 90RMB or just under \$13US.



Next: Final Day in Suzhou, and then on to Hangzhou

And to my friends who've said they've NEVER actually seen me eat or chew food in public, this is as close as you'll get!

And just for the record, I DO in fact know how to use chopsticks, thank you very much!

INTERLUDE 1: STOP AND STARE!



A word of preparation, or perhaps an invitation of sorts: Prepare Thee Well for Being Jamaican in China!

As I go about my sightseeing and tour of China and the Chinese people, I am, oddly enough, providing sightseeing and photo ops for the Chinese people themselves!

I suppose being a minor celebrity of sorts, and having been in the public eye doing workshops and network marketing presentations for many years has prepared me for this, but if you're not ready for it, it can be a bit overwhelming. I'm referring, of course, to the attraction, attention, curiosity, entertainment value, social prop and dating aid of being of

African descent and darker-hued in China!

On the assumption that everyone's experience will be the same, here's what happens: Heads turn, jaws drop, eyes widen, gasps are uttered (yes, I

actually heard a gasp while at the Administrator's Garden in Suzhou; I thought those only happened in comic books) cameras click, people stop what they are doing, look, ogle, point, and then move on, smiling and talking, having had a little distraction from years of seeing only Chinese features and flesh day after day.



Maybe he won't see us staring with this plant blocking us.



Mommy, look! (in a waiting area of a local hospital)



Honey, over there in that other bus!

There is no way for me to adequately convey to you

how constant the attention is. If you're Black and accustomed to disappearing into the anonymous crowd in your city, you can just forget about doing that here!

Want to pick your nose? Be careful, somebody's watching.

Want to scratch your, um...? Forget it, somebody's watching.

Struggling to eat with chopsticks? You've just entertained the ENTIRE restaurant, staff, and the people outside walking by.

Practically every single person turns to look. Shanghai. Suzhou. Hangzhou. Wu Xi. "It don't matter!"

Some will say "Hallo" and engage in small talk to practice their English.

Some will reach out and actually touch you as they walk by.

Others will ask where you are from.

Some will want to take photos.

IT..... DOES..... NOT..... STOP.

Oh, and speaking of being Jamaican (yes, that's what I was speaking of), most people here now know about Jamaica's Usain Bolt and his Olympic accomplishments. So, being Jamaican adds another level to my celebrity and their comfort level.

From the Immigration counter woman who smiled broadly (almost giggling) while questioning my stay in China, to the store owner at a shoe store who started running in place right in the middle of the mall to mimic Usain Bolt's performance, there is a bit of a benefit being born a yaad! ("yard" =colloquialism for Jamaica; i.e. home)



Sorry I didn't bring a shirt with a Jamaican flag or colors on it, as my friend Joe Hill on Saipan had suggested.

And all that I've described is how people act out in public!

Inside the clubs (I visited about five of them last night), it's a whole 'nother story altogether. (consider adding the effect of alcohol, dancing to hip hop and reggae, and a "here

to have a good time" mindset to the mix, and you might start to appreciate the scene! But, more on that in *Jamaican in China*, Day 6.)

So, all of that to say this:, I write books, create life rhymes, write columns, do radio interviews, create websites and blogs and endeavor to be famous..... and all the time, all I ever had to do was simply be.....

.....Jamaican in China!

Life is great! Life is faaaaantastic!

DAY 4: Suzhou Finale and Hangzhou

Thursday, April 23, 2009



On the final day in Suzhou (Thursday), we go for a ride in one of the traditional leg-powered bicycle cabs.



Chun runs a few errands, we do some food shopping, stop in a small shop for breakfast, and then take a bus to another popular tourist site: um, I have the ticket for this place, I thought it would have the English name on it like some of the others, but no luck, sooooo, we'll just call it the Tower place in Suzhou. (Ok, ok, I'm looking it up on the internet...wait,...wait...ok, it's called the Beisi Pagoda Tower, or North Temple Pagoda in Suzhou)



Jamaican at the Beisi Pagoda Tower



Overlooking
Suzhou from Beisi
tower



Next, we
head by bus for
the two-hour ride
to Hangzhou.

We arrive
at the Hangzhou
bus station....

The Way Out Bus Station



bust station



Potty station

... make a call and Chun's cousin comes to pick us up. "Cousin," about 34 years old, has a successful trucking company that is doing very well.



Chun, Cousin and Me in front of the East Holiday Hotel

Cousin drives us deeper into Suzhou, checks us in and treats us to a two-night stay at the East Holiday Business hotel

And to my buddy Ken who says I looked like a secret agent with that previous jacket, all the previous pictures with the jacket were, in fact, taken during just two days. Right before leaving Suzhou, however, you'll be glad to know I bought two new jackets, ok?



Now, one thing you should know about me is that I'm a Motel 6/Super 8 Hotel kinda guy,

myself, and a hotel for me is a just a place to keep my bags and shower in private so I don't upset the social order, get arrested for public indecency, or steal the women away from the less fortunate and jealous guys (ahem), but this higher-classed hotel was kinda cool, and at least gives me something to write about.

The room had a living room/waiting area in front, and with the glass walls, you could see straight into the bathroom....



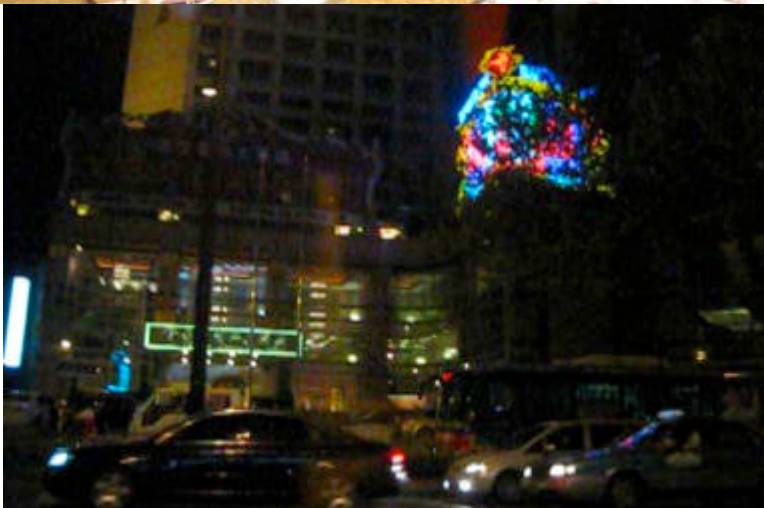
...and through another glass wall to the bedroom. The computer and internet access are pretty standard in the moderately-priced hotels we've been to.



Later that evening, Cousin treats us to dinner in one of the hotel's private rooms. His son and wife round out the small gathering.



In the evening, Cousin drives us around Hangzhou to see the sights!



This is a still shot from video "Drive through Hangzhou"

As a side note: You know, it's interesting that many of us on Saipan would

never imagine that the Chinese girls we see working in the factories, and living in single-room barracks are often from huge, modern cities that outpace Los Angeles and outspend Fifth Avenue. As China continues to elevate itself economically, the

lure of the then 8 to 1 (now 6.75 to 1) RMB to US dollar exchange rate becomes less of a draw. You might be able to read more about that if Chun decides to do her own "Wu Xi Girl Returns in China" blog, but this is the Jamaican in China Show!

By the way, after I shared yesterday's "Stop and Stare" Interlude about being Jamaican in China, my aunt in Canada relayed a story:



"There is a guy here, with a Canadian passport, who was being harassed in Africa. As a matter of fact, he was just at the point of being made an unknown quantity, when somehow or other something he said made an impact on one of his kidnappers, and he was asked where he was born. Jaws dropped, eyes popped out, apologies were made. He was treated for the wounds he had already received, and set free, but prior to the apologies was the question, "Why didn't you say you were from Jamaica? We have great respect for all Jamaicans, and then they gave the reason (which I do not now remember as unfortunately I did not make a note of it). This is an incident that happened about 40 years ago to a student traveling in Africa."



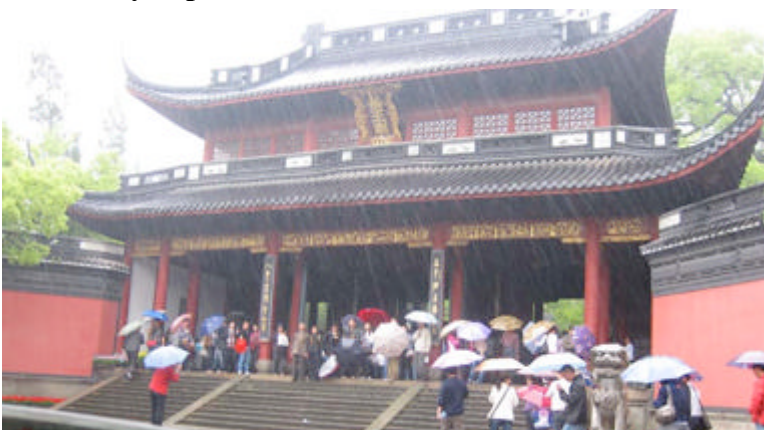
That's good to know, my dear aunt. Hopefully, I won't get kidnapped here in China, (unless its voluntarily, and into the nefarious clutches of a roving band of marauding, pleasure-bent Geisha [yeah, I know: that's Japanese]), but perhaps, thanks to Usain Bolt, such respect and favorable treatment by my would-be kidnappers will extend here as well!

Well, that was all on Thursday (Day 4) of this Jamaican's time in China....

NEXT: Day 5--Hangzhou tourist!

DAY 5: Hangzhou!

Friday, April 24, 2009



After breakfast at Hangzhou's East Holiday Hotel dining room, Chun's cousin picks us up early and we head out to see the sights of Hangzhou. It's a rainy day. We check out three spots.

Neither rain, nor sleet will dampen the tourist spirit in Hangzhou



Money and coins for good luck at one of the scenic spots



Amazing wood sculptures depicting the Legend of White Snake and other Chinese legends





I could have gotten a free tour....but I don't understand Mandarin well enough....the opportunity was lost!



The original Parasol Girl

Strolling through the park along the river



Chun's cousin has a business meeting, so he drops us off by about 1:00pm and we walk around the vicinity of the hotel, and call it a day. Too tired to check out the nightlife, but tomorrow is Saturday!

*Next: Day 6:
Wu Xi, here I come!*



DAY 6: Wuxi!

Saturday, April 26, 2009

Breakfast at the East Holiday hotel in Hangzhou, again. Trip to the bus station, again. Two-hour bus ride, again.

And, we're now in Wu Xi (pronounced Woo-Shee). Home of the Saipan Factory Girl. This is the city from whence Chun Yu Wang cometh to Saipan.



Wuxi by day

Wuxi by night



I had a chance to meet several of the people in Chun's book, *Chicken Feathers and Garlic Skin*. This is Ling, she was the one featured in the heartbreaking story in Chapter 9: "Return to China."



Chun's friend, Ling

Ling takes us to some of the night clubs in Wuxi. There's a particular stretch of street with about 10 or 12 clubs.



Inside a club 1

Inside a club 2

Here's the deal: The clubs here are all free to enter. There's no cover charge. But, from the moment you step into the foyer, a skinny waiter with a bad haircut and a headset attaches himself to the undersole of your shoes as you walk in--man, he's so close you can feel his heartbeat. He escorts you all around the club until

you find a high table. He then hounds you until you either order a drink, or (as we did) leave in utter frustration.

And there's no dance floor to speak of. It's just a sardine can of smoking, drinking people undulating occasionally (and looking at the black guy!). But, I will say this. I've joked in public and private, based on my experience with the Chinese girls on Saipan, that they--to parody the Janet Jackson album *Rhythm*

Nation--are the "Rhythmless Nation." After seeing the clubs in Wuxi, and the girls and guys dancing TO THE BEAT to Hip Hop and Reggae, I must now humbly retract that tease, and remove that dubious distinction from the mass of humanity known as Chinese girls.



Dancing! Yes! To the beat! *I think it's real, Barney, but I can't be sure!*



Tissue, please. Yes, it looks like I'm leering and salivating, I know, but that's the best pic of the lot of me inside the club!

The three of us check out several clubs, including this one that was having an "Eighties Night" replete with afro wigs and funky clothes. But, of course, as novel as it was, and as flattering as it may be, it just wasn't my scene. So we bounced.



The next morning, Chun will travel to another part of town to see some of her family. So, I'll be on my own for the next few days.

NEXT: Wu Xi on my own

Days 7 – 10: Wuxi on my own

Sunday, April 26 to Wednesday, April 29, 2009

While Chun visits with family, I spend time on my own in Wuxi, China.

In every city I've been to, I've had the option of signing up for bus tours of the scenic spots and historical monuments (cost=140RMB+), but I opt for another method of seeing the cities. I don't really like doing the tourist thing for a few reasons. First, I like to be on my own time. Second, I don't like being part of a

herd, and thirdly, they're narrated in Chinese, so I wouldn't be much better off knowledge-wise anyway.

The Green Tree Hotel is right across the street from the WuXi Bus & Railway station, so I have a large choice of bus routes to choose from to

take me all around the city. So, I'll usually choose a route at random, and take the bus all the way to the last stop. The fare is usually 1RMB or 2RMB, and this way, if I see something interesting during the ride, I can hop off and check it out on the ride back. That's how I roll.



NOT a typical street scene in China. This is the far end of a bus route in Wu Xi.

My idea of good time is just mingling with the populace, doing what they do, traveling how they travel, and seeing the regular day-to-day sights--you know, just blending in so everyone thinks I'm Chinese. I think it's working.



Ready for your close up?

Vendor girl selling fermented tofu (you'll never forget the smell!) and hot dogs.



*Can we take a picture with you?
Xie Xie, Ni!*

Bus route 82 takes me to the part of town where CCTV (broadcasting station) films their movies. I pay my 70RMB, walk around the various lots and activities, fulfill photo requests from Chinese tourists who seem to think I'm one of the walking fantasyland actor/props...



Ok, ladies, I don't mind posing for pictures with you, but see that guy over there....?

yeah, him!
...the one with the funny clothes, and the different look who looks out of place?

HE'S the movie lot prop! Not me.... Um, waitaminit... Funny clothes? Different look? looks out of place?, um...ok, I'm sorry...I can see how you might have been confused...

And, of course, I've got my own fantasyland photo requests, too!



Another advantage of doing my own local bus route tour is that the local ladies are quite friendly, and I can meet people on a less hurried pace, and make friends for my return trip!



Wu Xi girls, Wong and Jiang, Bus route 203 tour

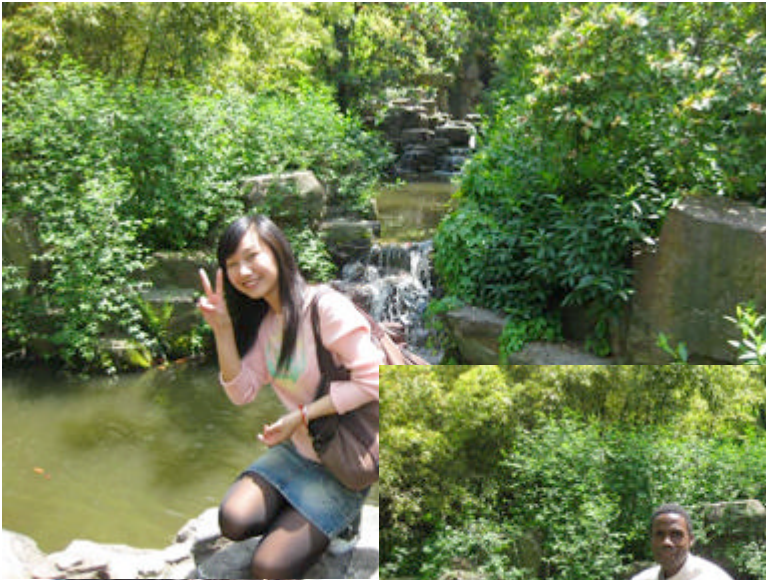


Posing by the rock

There was Ting Ting, from An Hui, China, who I met while doing Walt's walking tour of a scenic spot off bus route 203, joins me and I break out my limited Mandarin vocabulary (and a lot of English) and do my best to engage, while she uses her limited English (and a lot of Mandarin) to respond, as we hang out together.



Me and Ting Ting



More scenic temple and tower shots. Really, this is just an excuse to show off my jacket a few more times since I probably won't be wearing it much when I'm back on Saipan!



*Different jacket.
Same Jamaican.*

Day 11: Shanghai Reprise

Thursday, April 30, 2009

It's Thursday morning, April 30, and we end our five day stay in Wuxi with goodbyes to the trio of cutie-pie receptionists at the Green Tree Hotel check-in desk...



*See you next time,
ladies!*

....walk across the street to the train station, purchase our tickets, find the gate, then start moving with the crowd as boarding begins. I'm generously picked out of the crowd for special assistance by the army security guy who offers to carry my suitcase...



I've perfected the art of snapping photos over my shoulder while I'm walking; hope I've aimed this one correctly!



...and enjoy the scenic 1 hour ride on the 159km/hour monorail to Shanghai where Chun is scheduled to sit for an interview for ChinesePod.com's News and Features podcast.

We arrive at the Shanghai Railway Station, and the drama begins! We trudge with our four heavy suitcases down two flights of stairs, through a long corridor lined with stores and tons of people traveling for the May 1 holiday, and up another flight of stairs, and out into the holiday throng.



"People mountain! People sea!" [There's a Chinese idiom (人山人海) that translates literally as "people mountain, people sea"--a mountain of people, a sea of people, i.e. huge crowds!]

Then, the predators pounce. The hawks-in-waiting offer their services--cheap taxis, less expensive buses, even bike-carts--to take us wherever we want to go. I find a payphone, and call Sarah Edson at Praxis Languages who tells me to find the (Yellow) Metro Line 3 which will get us to a location which should then be a ten-minute walk to her offices.

Sooooo,.....we head back through the holiday throng, back down the flight of stairs, back through the long corridor lined with stores and tons of people traveling for the May 1 holiday, asking directions along the way, find the ticket booth, purchase the tickets for the metro, squeeze through the narrow unforgiving turnstiles, walk up another long flight of stairs to the elevated platform and wait for the train.

We push through the holiday throng with our cumbersome baggage causing havoc to commuters and travelers, and arrive at the Jongshan Park station.

We trudge with our four heavy suitcases down a flight of steps, attempt to squeeze through the unyielding narrow turnstiles, but find them uncooperative as well as unyielding and have to take our tickets to the service booth to have them reprogrammed in order to be accepted by the exit turnstile (we must have made some mistake in the original purchase).

Once downstairs, we end up waiting for about 40 minutes on the sidewalk outside the metro station, as taxi after taxi tells us they had no idea where the hotel we were looking for, or where the offices or street Praxis was situated. We asked vendors who told us "go that way" and police officers who told us "go the other way!"

By now, we had spent all of our pre-meeting hour waiting on the street, so there was no time to find the hotel.

Finally, we found one taxi driver who knew how to get to the Praxis Language center, and we piled our 4 heavy suitcases into his trunk and back seat, hopped in, and breathed a sigh of relief.

But wait! There's more! As we make our final approach on WanHangDu Road and start seeing 2455, 2453, we know we're getting close, we start looking eagerly for 2452, and the taxi driver, too, is looking around to find the right building, and then, and then....

...Wait for it...

...Wait for it...

!!!WHAM! CRUNCH!!!! He collides with another car attempting to inch around him.

They start arguing. She doesn't back up. He reverses, and I notice there's no damage, just a smudge on her white economy car (a Geo Metro, or something like that). I realize we're close to the Praxis offices, so I tell Chun to exit the car, and I start to move our four heavy suitcases onto the sidewalk while the driver gets out of the tax and starts arguing with the other driver. A crowd gathers. The road is blocked. Traffic is at a standstill. There's a truck behind us. Horns are blaring. The taxi driver and the woman are still arguing. Meanwhile, I can't find the release switch for the trunk where are two other suitcases are. So, I pull the key out of the taxi's ignition, and attempt to use it to open the trunk. No good. Doesn't work.

Chun puts 15RMB (the fare was 10) in the taxi driver's hand while he's arguing with the woman, and asks him to open the trunk. In mid-argument, he walks back to the car, pops the trunk, and I hand him his car keys. He looks

confused (wondering why I have his keys), and Chun tells him I was using it to open the trunk.

We lift our remaining suitcases from the trunk, and start walking away from the accident, and the cars, and the arguing drivers, and the blaring truck horns, and the gathering crowd, and head to the Praxis center....not before, of course, snapping a photo of the whole scene we left behind...



Car accident



The Praxis offices are inside this building

We arrive at Praxis, and are greeted by Jenny Zhu, who, for many Chinesepod listeners like me, is a familiar "friend in my head" after having heard her voice on countless podcasts.

After brief introductions and pleasantries, Chun autographs a copy of the book for the offices, and Jenny takes us to the studio, mikes us up, and conducts the Chicken Feathers and Garlic Skin author interview to be aired in a week or two as part of www.ChinesePod.com's News and Features podcast.



Chun Yu Wang



Jenny Zhu



Sarah Edson (Praxis Marketing Assistant), Chun Yu and Jenny Zhu at Praxis Language Center (home of ChinesePod, SpanishPod, FrenchPod and ItalianPod; www.chinesepod.com)



Sarah, me, Chun Yu and Jenny Zhu



It was great meeting them.

Back out on the streets of Shanghai, it seems the accident we left behind has been resolved!

The Shanghai taxi scene delays us again, and we head back to the metro station, and go through much the same stairway, turnstile, through drama again, this time in the middle of rush hour on a holiday weekend....and, by the time we get to the railway station, all the trains out of town are sold out until 1:00am the next morning, so we head back out into Shanghai



at night in search of a hotel....

...long story short, we end up staying at the Days Hotel (480RMB) for one night, and resolve to head back to Suzhou to do some shopping on the last few days before returning to Saipan...Whew!

NEXT: Suzhou Reprise

Days 12-14: Suzhou Reprise

Friday, May 1 to Sunday, May 3, 2009

With Chun's interview out of the way, it's time to relax a bit so, we head back to Suzhou to do some shopping.

We stay at the Scholar's Inn, and change rooms once during the two-night stay. For the record, that makes 13 rooms I've stayed in 14 days, but that's a recap for another interlude! (We'll call it the Walt's Traveler's Guide to China Hotels)



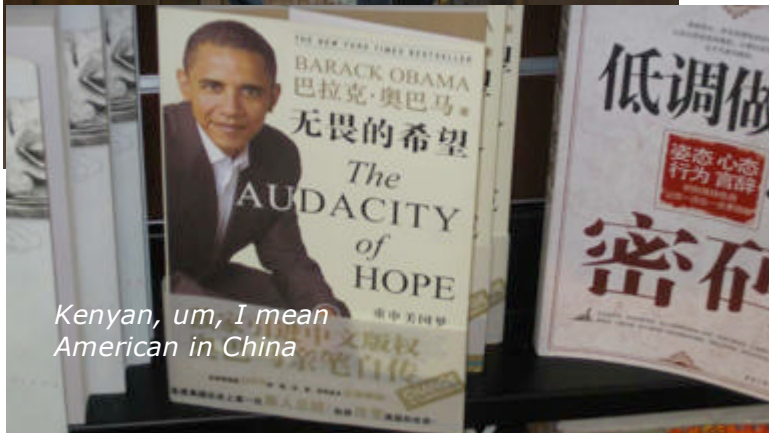
Outside the Scholars Inn

We visit bookstores...(as a writer, I'm obligated to do this!)



Suzhou bookstore

...Eat in more restaurants, confounding the owners and wait staff with my alien culinary requests...(Four dishes plus fried rice for 65RMB, or \$9.60; The owner was so nice that I gave a 15RMB tip for the volume of food and the pleasant attitude. This was a restaurant I normally wouldn't have eaten at, but Chun, being



Kenyan, um, I mean American in China

Chinese, insisted and was proven right that the smaller, seemingly "low-rent" places give more food and better taste! Lesson learned.



...Mail packages to the states... I wanted to see how long it would take to mail a package from here in Suzhou to the states and to Saipan should I want to run my mail order business from here in China



"You send where?"



Like this, please!

The China Post clerk who messed up the paperwork 3 times attempting to get my package to New York....awww, pobrecita!

Chun gets her hair "did...."

...while I walk around town the mall and I snap photos of the people who



have followed me around, and who stop right outside the stores I visit simply to stare....

"It LOOKS real, Fred, but I can't be sure."



This lady got pretty flustered after I took that one, but hey, she was just standing there staring (it's the men's shoes section, after all) ...I figured she was posing for me!



...and we head back to Pudong a day early so we won't be late for the return flight.

Waiting to check out



Heading back to Pudong a day early

NEXT: JAMAICAN IN CHINA PREQUEL! THE FINALE

Day 15: Escape from China!

Monday, May 4, 2009

A 7:00am drive to the airport. As we get ticketed to board the first leg of the journey from Shanghai's Pudong International Airport to Narita, all goes smoothly, bags are checked, passports are reviewed, bags are checked, boarding passes are printed, and we're good to go...until....um, waitaminit. You didn't think it was going to be THAT easy did you? All my "escapes" are fraught with delays and drama, and this one shall be no different.

"Please wait one minute, sir."

And that one minute turns into about 30.

"Excuse me sir, when did you receive this green card?"

"I have no idea. Maybe 1995. I'm not sure."

"Please wait a moment, sir."

Supervisors are called. Men with walkie-talkies walk back and forth. All the while I'm wondering what my vegetarian meal is going to be.

Calls are made, questions are asked. More calls are made. Same questions are asked again.

Eventually, they get their act together and return with a "Thank you very much for your patience, sir."

I tell them, "No problem," and proceed to explore the airport, on this my last day in China.



Not sure who they were calling to verify the green card, but eventually, they figured out whatever it was they needed to know! Maybe my

files are stored in a special folder marked "Keep an eye on this one."





Final
photo in
Pudong, China



Lamotrek girl;
photo by Eric
Guidez

Now, this

isn't a China photo. It's a shot of a little girl on the island of Lamotrek, sent to me



by a friend while I was awaiting my connecting flight in Japan, so I made it my screensaver right then and there, to help turn my thoughts toward Pacific island climes...

*Awaiting
connecting flight
in Japan*

The Flight Back

Now, check this out. As we endure the six-hour layover in Narita, Japan, awaiting the final flight back to Saipan, we are informed that our flight has only three passengers. That's right, this 757 jet airliner, which holds 20 first class and 163 coach passengers, with 6 flight attendants, has only me, Chun and another fellow onboard for the entire flight! What a switch after buses and trains in China stuffed to capacity! There were more flight attendants than paying customers!

So, I got to indulge a few of my "what if I had an entire plane-to-myself" fantasies. Nothing outrageous, mind you. First thing I did was ask the flight attendant to turn the &(\$(\$\$) temperature up as it's always too darn cold on airplanes for me. Next, I asked a bunch of questions about flight procedure, meal preparation, scheduling norms, and so on--the sort of questions they'd never have time to entertain with 182 other paying customers onboard.

You really get a sense of the missed profit-potential when you realize that there's fuel, salaries, insurance, gate fees to be paid for just three customers. (at least they save money on meals as they were only 3 required).

You REALLY get a sense of the missed profit when you realize also that at least TWO of those tickets--both my and Chun's tickets— were "paid" for with miles from my frequent flights and escapes to New York, and not actual cash. Ouch! I may be single-handedly responsible for the demise of the airline industry.



Us.



The other guy



50% of the flight crew and 66% of the passengers aboard NW Flight 88 from Narita to Saipan; photo taken by the other 33% of the passengers. Thanks, other guy!

Back on Saipan!



Well, I can now say, "I've been to China!" This was an introduction; the first of what will hopefully be many trips. Future trips will include looking at China from a business perspective, family life, and much more! I was going to rant about China-US-Saipan-Jamaica contrasts and comparisons, but, I've got a lot of stuff to catch up on now that I'm back on Saipan! You'll have to read all about it when the other chapters get lived and written, and made available on....

...Jamaican in China! (<http://www.JamaicaninChina.com>)

About Walt

Walt F.J. Goodridge was born in Jamaica and grew up in Old Harbour and Kingston. He attended Old Harbour Primary and Pembroke Hall Primary before his family moved to New York City.

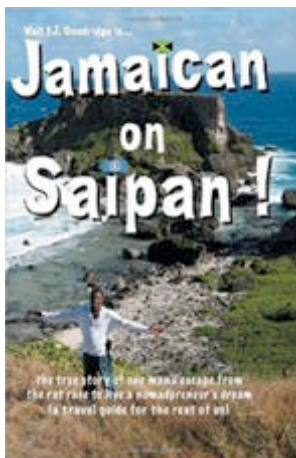
A graduate of Springfield Gardens High School, and Columbia University in the US, Walt is a former civil engineer who walked away from his career to follow his passion for music, writing, and helping others. He has been an artist manager, record label owner, inventor, poet, network marketer and consultant, and even radio dj (as "Sir Walt" host of the "Reggae Riddims" Radio Show for five years on WKCR-FM, New York.)

He is author of 20 books including *Turn Your Passion Into Profit: A Step-By-Step Guide For Turning ANY Hobby, Talent, Interest Or Idea Into A Money-Making Venture*, and *Living True to Your Self*.

He is also creator of over 468 unique "life rhymes," motivational poems of the thoughts that create success. He has written for Entrepreneur Magazine and Black Enterprise, and has been featured in Time Magazine, Wall Street Journal Online, the Dallas Morning News, The Kip Business Report and numerous publications and websites. Walt offers personalized coaching and conducts the occasional workshop (wherever in the world he may find himself) to help others make money doing what they love!

- Learn more about Walt at www.waltgoodridge.com
- Follow the ongoing Jamaican in China adventures and become Facebook friends with Walt at www.jamaicaninchina.com

Another Walt adventure you might enjoy!



If you enjoyed his Jamaican in China adventure, you might enjoy Walt's Jamaican on SAIPAN adventure to see how it all started with his Escape from America!

Available in paperback at www.JamaicanonSaipan.com or from your favorite online retailer



Something New...and different!

"If you want to be my girlfriend..."

a man's guide to setting standards, living & loving true to your self, getting & satisfying the women you want, all without EVER compromising your masculinity!

"I wrote this book because my girlfriend said I should teach a course on how to satisfy a woman!

"Well," she said. "You have some very common sense ideas about men and women—how they interact, and how to maximize that interaction for intimacy and enjoyment of each other sexually and in other ways—

that seem to have been overlooked/lost/not emphasized, even almost purposely squashed in our society today. "Those ideas set off a physical chain reaction in me that made me feel more feminine, inspired me to express my femininity, awakened feminine desires, and as you experienced for yourself, put me in touch with what I wanted you to do to me to satisfy those desires. "Plus, in listening to your outlook on male/female dynamics, I was left with a palpable sense of your masculinity and my femininity, and how much of a turn-on our differences in this arena are, and I just think other men and women could really stand to finally handle the truth!"

Is "Dexter Style" Walt's traveling alter ego? He's not saying, but some of Dexter's adventures included in this anonymously authored book may sound very familiar!



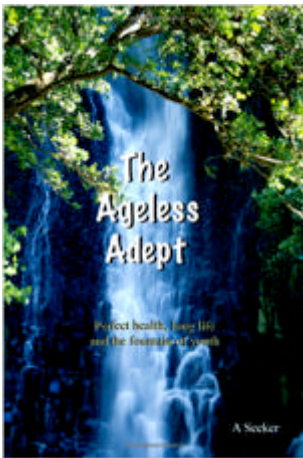
Chicken Feathers and Garlic Skin: Diary of a Chinese Garment Factory Girl on Saipan by Chun Yu Wang, as told to Walt Goodridge

It took a lot of courage for a 25-year-old girl from Wu Xi City in Jiang Shu province, China, who had never flown on a plane, and who had never left home before, to travel 2,000 miles to a foreign country in search of work. It took even more courage to stay once she discovered what life was really like for a factory girl on the island of Saipan

in the US Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). □

Did she make the greatest mistake of her life? Like many girls, she came with dreams of a better future. Yes, the pay was better than in China, but at what price? Would the high pressure of 15- hour quota-driven days of tedious, mind and finger-numbing work get to her? Or would the greedy floor monitors, and scam-artists preying on lonely, naive women rob her not just of her income, but of her innocence as well? (www.saipanfactorygirl.com)

Walt on Health and Diet

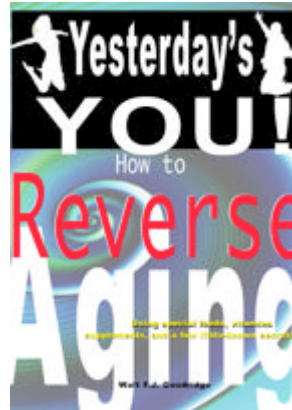


*The Ageless Adept
Perfect Health, Long Life and the
Fountain of Youth*

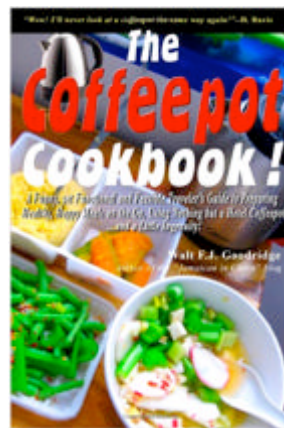
age'less- *adj.* youthful; never aging;
immune to the effects of age
a'dept — *n.* a highly skilled person; an
expert; a guru



*Fit to Breed
What causes impotence. What it means,
and some unusual cures and treatments
to help improve and maintain your
erection. (Men Only supplement to
How to Reverse Aging)*
By Walt F.J. Goodridge



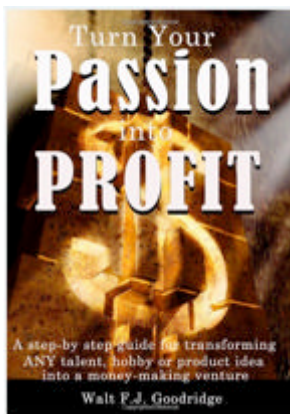
*Yesterday's You!
How to Reverse Aging Using Special
Foods, Vitamins, Supplements and Few
Secret Practices*
by Walt F.J. Goodridge



*The Coffeepot Cookbook!
A Fun, yet Functional and Feasible
Traveler's Guide to Preparing Healthy,
Happy Meals on the Go Using Nothing
but a Hotel Coffeepot....
and a Little Ingenuity*

Walt on Passion and Purpose

Walt's signature accomplishments before he became Jamaican in China!



Turn Your Passion Into Profit: A Step-by-Step Guide for Turning ANY Hobby, Talent, Interest or Product idea into a money-making venture!

by Walt F.J. Goodridge

Discover the profit within your passion. Make money doing what you love!



Living True to Your Self!

By Walt F.J. Goodridge

Living true to your self requires that you adopt a new belief system about what's true for yourself, about others, and about the world you live in. It requires that you identify your purpose, develop an effective survival strategy, overcome inertia, motivate your self consistently



The Tao of Wow!

Art of Wow—\$14.95

Discover your "wow factor." Become a "wow master," make the world go "wow!" and create your dream life!

Discover more at www.passionprofit.com

Email me at walt@jamaicaninchina.com to let me know how and where (what country) you discovered this book! Please! It would mean a lot to me!