

## Singapore – First Trip

howdy howdy!

so tis time for the sea tales!

i will start this off by saying that i did not do anything dishonorable while in singapore, for those of you that may wonder about that. i did indeed go to places of questionable-at-best repute, but did not partake in the activities that occur at said places. i'm still a good boy 😊

so it all started a few days ago when we pulled into Klang, Malaysia. not a whole lot happened for me there because by the time we were released to go ashore i was so dog tired that i decided i'd be better off buying a phone card and staying in and making some calls. so there wasn't a whole lot to note about Malaysia.

the morning that we left malaysia, we started the trek to singapore, which is about 200 miles by water, which takes around 12 hours by ship. the ship was a pretty rough place to be because of how tired everyone was from the late-night work that took place in Klang. we arrived in singapore about four hours after schedule and i was released from work at about 11:30 PM local

time. i found the deck cadet, garret, and we decided to go scope out the local area. we hailed a cab and headed out to the famed Orchard Street in downtown Singapore. we walked around and looked at all the little shops, which were mostly closed. then we walked into the Orchard Towers. we've heard many stories of this establishment, and had our worries eased over the last few months as



people told us there were many restaurants and dance clubs and so on and so forth located within the Orchard Towers. however, it's nickname of "the four floors of whores" still remained.

either way, we walk into the building and find this nice little thai restaurant on the second level and we sit down to eat. we are the only non-asian people in sight, which i took as a good sign. the food was delicious but towards the end of the meal, things started to get sketchy.

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two exceptionally tall “women” walk in and sit at the table next to us. upon further inspection, we came to the conclusion that 1) asian women are not that tall and 2) they didn’t particularly look feminine. when you combine reasons (1) and (2) you come to the ultimate conclusion... they weren’t women at all. twas an eye opener to say the least. then it got weirder. as we’re still eating our meal, more transvestites came in and filled that table up. then two more came in, and since there was not more room at their original table, they came and sat at our table without asking or whatever.

let’s just say that at this point, me and garret ate as quickly as possible and got out of there before it went any further.

anyways, from there, we went upstairs and went and sat in a pool hall for a bit. this was a dingy, slummed out place, but whatever, wasn’t crowded, the music wasn’t unbearably loud and whatnot, so we hung out there for a while.

yes, for those wondering minds, there were prostitutes hanging out in the pool hall, and it seemed as though they made it a contest to see who could get my attention. they all failed. ha! i would simply look at them and say “i appreciate the offer, but i’m going to have to pass, have a good night”

and then i turned around and took a swig of my good-ol’ trusty Coca-Cola.

after some time there we decided to go elsewhere, as there were many bars and pool halls and dance clubs in the towers. the next place we went was the Ipanima World Music Hall. it was actually a pretty cool place inside. a live band playing some really good music, classy looking setting, but literally hundreds of girls everywhere. this place made me feel a bit uneasy because i knew exactly why all the girls were there, but i liked the music and so on so i was ok with sitting in there and listening to the band while my friend had a drink and danced with this one girl.

as i’m sitting there listening to the band and just enjoying their music this tiny girl comes up to me and starts trying to get me to go with her. i, again, refused and went about my way. next thing i know another girl is there trying the same thing. i, again, refuse. this apparently really insulted the girl, and she hauled off and punched me rather hard, right in the crotch. after a few seconds of pain and disbelief, i pushed her away from me and had nothing to do with her. at this point i’m both in pain and exceptionally angry, so i grab garret and we leave. he was definitely ready to go though as he had a tranny that was hassling him and wouldn’t leave him alone, so i provided his out.

after that point we decided no more and left for the ship. please understand that the reason we went there in the first place is because the Orchard Towers is a place of Kings Point Lore. every KPer that has ever been to Singapore has at least walked through the Orchard Towers, so we felt it necessary to continue the tradition and see why it was always spoken of.

never again.

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now onto the cool parts of Singapore.

the following day i had to work from 8:00 AM until 3:00PM, at which point they knocked me off for the day. garret and the Chief Cook, Big John, went into town earlier, as garret had been given more time off. i went into the area of town they told me to go to, known as People's Park, and called Garret... no answer. i tried several more times with no response. at this point i'm by myself in the middle of People's Park and cannot find my friends. so i decided, "well, screw it, i'm going to enjoy myself no matter what, let's see what's up." as i'm walking through the area and looking at all the little shops in the area i notice a very large, ornate Buddhist Temple. so i did what anyone would, and went inside to look around. they were in the middle of a service, saying their chants and prayers, so i stood quietly in the back and observed. in the middle of the platform was a HUGE golden Buddha. very beautiful artwork hung everywhere and there were several monks in the front lying prostrate on the ground leading the chants. once the service was over i went upstairs and looked through their museum and cultural exploration center and read about their beliefs and the different Buddhas that had passed into Nirvana. at this point i met two locals that were very nice and both spoke fluent english. they were probably in their mid to late 60s and we start talking and they started to explain some of the Buddhist philosophy to me and whatnot, which was rather interesting. they then told me if i were ever to come back through singapore that their doors would be open to me and gave me some information for contacting them. after spending some time with them we parted ways and i continued exploring the temple. i went up to the next level, which was their highest level and immediately after stepping off the elevator was asked by a younger monk to remove my shoes, for i was about to enter a sacred area. i agreed to do so and found myself in the "Temple of 10,000 Buddhas" which was probably the most beautiful room i'd been in to that point. golden artwork was everywhere and there were little placards with translations of what the artwork said so i could read what was being shown in the pictures. they had detailed out, in drawings, the lives of the 35 Buddhas, as well as many "unknown" Buddhas.

from there i had to be blessed by a monk prior to entering the next chamber, which blew the Temple of the 10,000 buddhas out of the water. it was the "Buddha Tooth Relic Chamber". you step into the room and are almost blinded by the gold. the floor tiles were 24 karot gold, as were the wall panels and so on. in the center of the room was a "stupa" that was about the size of an average bedroom, made also of 24 karot gold that stood about 8 feet tall and had four pillars on the corners with lions on the tops of them. in the center of the stupa, right about at eye level was a table top with a diamond pedestal in the middle with a tooth sitting in the center of it. apparently they believe this was a tooth from the last Buddha to reach Nirvana some 1800 years ago.

i so wish that i could have taken pictures of this room but they strictly forbid any form of photography. let's just say it was rather impressive.

from there i was able to find Garret and Big John and we then went to a Hindu temple not far away. once again, we were not allowed to wear our shoes, so you will see pictures of us in socks from that endeavor. this temple was all outdoors and was almost totally

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Tyler & Garret in Singapore

empty. we walked around and took some pictures and talked to a Guru for a few minutes then carried on down the street. the hindu temple was not nearly as impressive of a place, but was still an interesting cultural experience.

at that point we did a little local shopping and bought some trinkets, but that was pretty much the end of singapore.

for the last two days we have been working literally around the clock though. yesterday afternoon we were supposed to be let off work a little early to have a pool party (yes, my ship has a pool, be jealous) to thank us for the hard work through Klang and Singapore. but about 20 minutes before we were allowed to leave we get a call on the radio that there's a bad leak on the Lube Oil Cooler. this is one of the most vital pieces of engine equipment that we have, so we all rush down to see what is going on. sure enough, oil is spraying everywhere. we call the bridge and have the engine shut down. so much for the pool party.

this cooler took from 3:30 PM to about 11:45 PM to take apart, remove the damaged plates and put back together. we put it back online and start the engine again. not even five minutes later, the thing is leaking worse than it was before! at this point our hearts sank. taking those things apart, and even more so, putting them back together is exceptionally brutal manual labor. we had to stop again and go back to the beginning. this time it was decided to take our time and go through and clean each plate and inspect them fully before putting it back on. that took all night and we started putting it back together about 5:00 AM. we worked on putting it back together until about lunch time when we finally had it back together.

pressure tested it... failed again, more leaks. at this point we'd all been working for far more hours than we could at hard manual labor and were too exhausted to continue. this is when the Chief called the Mate and had a few of the strong deck hands come down and do it for us while we took turns monitoring their progress. it finally held the third time, but we are all exhausted and ready to go to bed.

there are more details, but those will be in the next report. i need some sleep. the bed is now my friend... goodnight to all!

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ok, sorry there are no drunken rages, or prostitute purchases in this voyage's tale, but las, tis a good tale, filled with adventure, suspense, laughter, and tears. and off we go! the night before last (I have no idea what day it is today... I think it's Thursday... which would have made this story start on Tuesday night), I was expecting to be called down for the 4 1/2 hour maneuver into Shanghai. I told the 1st engineer that I wouldn't come down unless they called me, and lo! they did not call, so I slept all night! when morning came we were pulled into the dock at shanghai- which as I have said before would put the fear of God into any one that doesn't believe that china is an economic powerhouse. and I opened the door to look outside and was immediately hit with a wall of smoke and dust... much like standing behind a bus that's accelerating. ah, shanghai. it was virtually impossible to see the sun at all through the soot and the smoke, but that's how it is there. after breakfast I went down to the engine room to see if I had to work at all. there was a note on the white board that said "Karl (the 2nd engineer), you are 'the man,' everyone else is going ashore. don't f\*\*\* anything up! - the 1st" so I took that to mean I was free for the day. I ran upstairs and changed into suitable clothes and headed out. I left with Ryan and the 2nd Mate, Dave for this GIANT underground mall type place that is hidden underneath the Chinese Museum of Modern Technology. this market has more stores than ever could be visited in a few days time. and I was only in town for 12 hours. so we get to the market and start doing some shopping, we stopped at one store (I will not say what we got there because someone on this e-mail list's Christmas present was purchased here) where we met with Ryan's "girlfriend" from the last trip. we joked about it, and of course, picked on Ryan. after there things started to get a bit screwy. it started approaching noon, and the 2nd Mate had to be back to the ship by noon, so he left us, and took our all day cab driver/ chaperone/ translator (which only costs \$10 for the day) with him and he didn't return. so me and Ryan were left to our own devices in a country where our phones didn't work, we didn't know the language, and we didn't have any connections. well we decided to grab some food, and of course when you're in China, the only restaurant you can find is a KFC. so we went there. I was amazed... I couldn't even order at KFC... I wanted a chicken sandwich and got fish instead. it was decent enough I guess... Ryan ordered something wrong too, so he went back and got more food. a full meal at KFC for both of us cost around \$4. not bad eh? from there we wandered around some more. in the dark back corner of this marketplace was a tiny tea shop with a single old Chinese woman sitting in there at a small

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table. we walked in and gave the appropriate Chinese greeting (pronounced Ni-How) and sat with her. she tried to say something to us, which of course, neither of us understood.

so she yelled out and a beautiful 18 year old Chinese girl came in (Ryan is in love with her... he hasn't stopped talking about her since) and started translating. I asked which type of tea is the very best and she motioned to a small tin on the wall. I asked if we could try some prior to buying it.

the old woman smiled kindly and nodded her head. we all went back to her little table and sat down. she went through a big long process of making the tea the traditional Chinese way and served each of us with a tiny cup which we all drank slowly in unison. immediately she refilled our cups and we continued to talk and laugh and sip our tea. we then decided to make a toast to the Junior Engineer Neil (who is ordained as a minister in the Church of Poseidon's... yeah, I speak the truth) and all his great wisdom. at this, Ryan foolishly decided to down his tea in one shot... not realizing that it was scalding hot. so now everything tastes like rubber to him. hehehe. so after we finished off a whole pot of tea, we said our goodbyes and left the tea shop to continue shopping. at this point I was forcefully grabbed by my arm and was dragged into a toy shop. I had walked by this shop earlier looking for a toy car for my sister Cassidy. I found a really nice remote controlled formula one racecar and I asked the man how much he wanted. when he said \$35 I laughed at him. he asked me "what you bess price?" to which I replied "\$10" that got a sad look and a "no, that impossible!" and so I said "ok, bye" and walked out. well when he grabbed me this time he said "my friend I make special deal for you. \$20" and I said, "no, I will pay \$10."

he argued and argued and I didn't budge at all. yeah, I got the car for \$10.

[I trust that dad and Joan will allow Cassidy to play with it more than they will... 😊] I think Cassidy will enjoy it because it is what she asked for and it says right on the box "FOR TO FEEL EXTREMITY SPEED!" so you know it must be intense. after this point I had to find Natalie a good Christmas present as well. hers is not one so much to play with as a toy as to appreciate it for its artistic qualities. I got her a very nice chess set with handcrafted individualized pieces. I feel that as a 9 year old she is capable of learning the game and maybe even playing with her sister. I hope she enjoys it... if not a purchased a back up (Joan use your best judgment to decide if the second present is more suitable, and if the so the girls can share the chess set).

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the chess set came at a great bargain as well. the guy wanted \$65, I paid \$12. oh yeah!

after all the shopping was done we started looking for other guys from the ship who we had seen wandering around... they were all gone. we went to one shop where everyone from the ship goes and of course the lady inside said everyone had gone back to the ship. we had no working phone, no translator, and no idea how to get back to the ship. we were totally alone. we both dug through our pockets and wallets and luckily Ryan had a business card from the all day cab driver that left with the 2nd mate and didn't come back. he gave it to the lady and asked her to call the number and find out how we could get back to the ship. she did and wrote something down on a sheet of paper and told us to show this to a cab driver outside and he would take us there. so we thanked her for her help and did what she said. the cabbie spoke no English. we showed him the paper, he stared at it for about 5 seconds and then nodded and took us to the ship. this guy drove like an absolute maniac. what should have been a 45 minute drive took less than 20.

we almost hit at least 5 pedestrians, 3 motorcycles, and at least 25 cars.

I'm talking less than an inch misses here. I don't think I've ever fervently called on the name of Jesus so many times in 20 minutes. horrifying.

regardless of the fact that it was more than a 40 mile cab ride, the fare was just around \$10.

he brought us to the gate of the container yard where we met up with our old cab driver that said he couldn't find us at the mall. at this point we went to buy some "DVD movies" for \$1 a piece. it's pretty much awesome. I bought like 12 or so, Ryan bought about that many as well and all is good! from there we went to get some "yum yum" at a local restaurant. I knew it would be classy because all the meat was on a rack outside hanging out in the sun.

mmmmm.

we went inside and had a great 4 course meal , for which they attempted to make us pay 400 Yuan. we didn't even have that much money on us at all. so we gave them \$30 and bolted. the meal consisted of fried duck eggs with cabbage sprouts, small sautéed fish, shrimp, and a mushroom-spinach dish, of course accompanied with great sticky rice. it was nice. oh and did I mention that our driver, who sat and ate with us downed a 40 oz. beer with his meal and then drove us back to the ship? gotta love china. we made it back to the ship with plenty of time to spare and had a nice night of maneuvering out where I was allowed to work on my sea projects the whole time.

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now we are rounding the northern end of Japan heading for open water. the entire sea is speckled with flashes of light from the swarms of Japanese Squid boats that patrol these waters. these boats use intense light to attract squid to the surface, so as a result we can see them from far away.

the waters are calm, but that is promised to change very soon. I will update more and I apologize that I have not been responding as frequently to e-mails. I do read every one of them, but as time has been short lately, I have not had the chance to reply.

please know I love you all and will write again soon!

love love,

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