

## Chapter 2 Taiwan and Korea 1991



### WEEK 1

#### Monday, January 28, 1991, Detroit

I have an unexpected opportunity to use my laptop here before the flight. I was told to get here to the airport three hours beforehand, and I did. But even with a very lengthy process of reissuing my ticket for the stop in Seoul, I still got checked in and through security 2 1/2

hours before the flight. And to my surprise, my first-class ticket entitles me to use the Northwest lounge, where I have now been for the last hour or more. I made a couple of phone calls that I needed to do, from the comfort of an easy chair. And then I found a comfortable table next to a wall outlet, and I plugged this in and started working. So far – which admittedly is not very far, I am very impressed with the perks of first class.

### **Someday, January ?**

It is hard to say what day or time it is. My watch says midnight, but the sun has not set. Then again it is not going to set. I've been flying west for over ten hours, and I would guess it is probably still about the middle of the day. But what day? I have no idea whether we have crossed the date line yet.

As for when I feel that it is, I feel that it is early morning. I've just slept for about four hours and in a little while they will give us breakfast. I figure that if I can convince myself it is morning, then I may be almost ready to sleep when I reach my hotel in another ten or twelve hours, when it will be late at night.

This first-class travel really is wonderful. I am sitting in a large seat that can tilt quite far back and has a large footrest that folds out, just like a recliner chair. There is a wide armrest between me and the fellow to my right, so we don't bump into each other, and there is more space than really necessary between us and the seats in front, so that he can get out into the aisle if he wants to without disturbing me. There is a set of headphones with good rubber-padded earpieces that are very comfortable and that connect me to all sorts of music, including two classical tracks. I kept the music on as I slept.

The tray folds out of the armrest, and it is larger than I'm used to. The flight attendants – who are very attentive at all times – served us dinner on this tray and it was very elegant. They put out a white tablecloth, china, silver, and crystal. They served us on the china, not in plastic trays. There were several courses including appetizer, salad, entree, fruit and cheese, dessert, and liqueur. And all of it was delicious.

We are at the very front of the plane, where the cabin narrows to a rounded point. The pilots are up above us. The front wall has a closet for hanging coats, and a movie screen pulls down in front of that. They have already shown two movies: "Presumed Innocent," and another whose name I forget, with Mickey Rourke. I tuned in for bits of the first, mostly when I saw either Bonnie Bedelia or the detective on the screen, because I find that I like them a lot. [I had met Bonnie Bedelia when Ryan and I were extras on the set of Die Hard 2.] Incidentally, I'm pretty sure I got a glimpse of the black actor from Rosie at one point. I would have watched the Mickey Rourke movie if it hadn't been while I was sleeping.

When I first got settled in and we took off, one of my first thoughts was that I wished I had packed my slippers. They would have been nice for the long flight. I dosed off briefly, and when I woke up, I found they had left me a black leather-like case with a bunch of goodies,

including slippers. Of course everybody gets one of these, but it felt like they had read my mind. The case also includes a sleep mask, a toothbrush, a mirror, a sewing kit, and I don't know what else. Amazing!

When I first got on, as usual I didn't talk to anyone, but burrowed into my reading. However, when the attendant started coming around with the food, I got to talking with my seat mate. He is a young guy, an engineer from Milwaukee. He travels a lot to this part of the world and others, and he has told me some interesting and useful things. Two that I recall are that by taking a different flight home I can earn a free first-class flight to Hawaii (that's useful) and that they eat dog and cat in Taiwan (that's interesting).

I also talked to him about his work, which involves international trade in ways that I found intriguing. His company sells equipment for purifying various liquids in mass quantities, including most notably desalination plants. They have sold some of the plants that are in the news right now in Saudi Arabia. I asked him if they would be hurt by the oil slick, and he said they wouldn't, not appreciably, though there is another type – the "reverse osmosis" ones – which he doesn't sell but that would be made useless by the oil. The Saudi's have both kinds.

I learned more about him as well. His wife works for a financial company of some sort, and she also travels a good deal. He got to ride along once on a whirlwind trip with her through Asia. They have a six-week-old daughter, their first, and he is sorry to be away from her right now. He went to Purdue, not Wisconsin even though he grew up there, because his parents didn't approve of Wisconsin as a party school.

So, what is a young guy like him doing in first class? His business, of course, is paying for him, but even they don't pay for first class, they pay for business class. It turns out that American Express and Northwest are running some sort of deal right now where they give free first-class upgrades to business class passengers who pay by American Express. As a result, this little first-class cabin is pretty much full, and the business-class cabin is almost empty. Fortunately, being full in first class isn't a problem at all since there is so much room.

I guess I had better get back to work. I read the papers for my first seminar, and I began to have some idea of how I will do that. But I need to start putting it together. Or maybe I'll just read something for fun. I don't know.

### **Wednesday, January 30, AM**

Now I know when and where I am. It is 11:00 on Wednesday morning in Taipei, where I am, and thus 10:00 on Tuesday evening in Ann Arbor, where I am not. I have spent the night in a fantastic hotel here and am now waiting to be picked up for lunch and a trip to the museum.

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I did manage to finish writing up my presentation for the seminar tomorrow, so I feel I can relax now and enjoy the day. I called home when I got in and talked to Pat, then she called me this morning and I talked to the kids too. Between talking to them on the phone and having CNN broadcasting in the airports and here in my room, I don't necessarily feel very far from home. But then I look out the window at all the Chinese signs, and it feels very foreign indeed.

The hotel has perks that I've never seen in a hotel before. The room provides, in addition to the usual assortments of soap and shampoo, an umbrella, a scale, a lint brush, a flashlight, a hair drier, a shoehorn, and a safe! Then a few minutes ago they stopped by with a basket of fruit.

I had looked forward to breakfast this morning, knowing that they would have a breakfast buffet and recalling such a buffet in Hong Kong when I was there years ago. I was frankly a little disappointed. The buffet was mostly the usual stuff one would find at home, including bacon, sausage, French toast, and eggs, and of course these weren't really as good as at home. They did have a few Chinese delicacies tucked away in corners of the buffet, but they were really downplayed. I did try a sort of noodle soup that was interesting, and I'll probably have it again. They put what seems to be cooked spaghetti into a wicker spoon affair and immerse it in hot water for a few seconds to warm it up. This is then put in a bowl with some sort of dark brown sauce already smearing the bottom. A meat sauce is spooned on top, a brown hard-boiled egg (spicy chicken egg, they said) and a couple of pale meatballs are laid there too, and finally a ladle of broth is poured over it all. The result is sort of a noodle soup that was good, but that I didn't know how to eat. They didn't give me either a soup spoon or chopsticks, so I used my fork to eat the noodles and my tiny coffee spoon to eat the broth. The brown egg was actually good, though it took some getting used to.

They gave me an envelope full of books and brochures last night, and I've now skimmed most of them. I know a bit more about Taiwan than I did before, which isn't saying much. I also read just a little about the museum and about Chinese art, so I hope I will comprehend what I am seeing this afternoon.

### **Wednesday, January 30, PM**

I'm not happy. I spent the day eating food I didn't like and listening to a guide I couldn't understand. That isn't quite fair – I did enjoy the last part of my visit to the museum, if not the first, and I enjoyed talking with the fellow from the Bureau of Foreign Trade, named Jack, who showed me around.

He asked me when we met for lunch what kind of food I'd like to eat. I said Chinese would be fine, and he took me to the Cantonese restaurant here in the hotel. He ordered, asking me only if I preferred rice or noodles, and I said noodles. As it turned out, the noodle and beef dish he ordered was the worst we had, and I didn't much care for anything. Then this evening after he dropped me off to be on my own for dinner, I wandered the hotel looking at menus

trying to find something that looked good and not outrageously expensive. I ended up back in the same restaurant where we'd had lunch, and--believe it or not--ordered the same noodles and beef dish. I didn't realize it was the same. It said, "fried rice noodles with beef" and I expected something crispy. Oh well.

At the museum, they had arranged for one of the official guides to take us around, and I often couldn't understand what she said. Mostly she was showing me artifacts from ancient China, rather than art, and I didn't know, until after she left us alone, how much more I would enjoy the art. Jack and I had tea, then went looking at the art and the calligraphy, and I did find it beautiful and fascinating. The degree of detail in these drawings is astonishing, so detailed that you can appreciate it only when they blow up portions of the pictures, as they often do. Also, I was interested in the story behind the calligraphy that appears on each painting, both a short text in black and a red "stamp," or "chop," that indicates someone's identity. What is most intriguing is that every owner of one of these drawings adds their own chop, and sometimes additional text, so that some of them become quite cluttered. We ran out of time, and I am determined to go back and see more of the museum now, perhaps on Friday morning or perhaps on the Saturday before I go to Korea.

### **Wednesday, January 30, PM later**

Jack picked me up, together with his friend Jessica, and we went out for the evening. The point was partly to shop, though I didn't find anything. I think I will mostly rely on the museum, which did have several things that looked good.

Before I talk about the evening, let me fill in with some information about Jack that I got earlier. He is 25 and hopes to get into the Michigan Law School to study international law. Perhaps I'll see him in Ann Arbor. He is a very nice fellow, whose father came to Taiwan with Chiang Kai-shek in 1948, leaving his parents behind.

I asked Jack about the war and didn't get much of an answer. [The first Gulf War was Jan 17 to Feb 28, 1991, so this is two weeks into it.] The same with Jessica later. My impression was that they didn't think the war concerned them particularly, and therefore they hadn't given it much thought. They did seem to think the U.S. had done the right thing, though that may have been because they were talking to me. On the other hand, as I now think about it, I wouldn't expect nationalist Chinese to be against us on this.

My battery is beeping at me, so I better stop and see if I can recharge this thing. I sure hope so! I'll continue with my evening tomorrow.

Thursday, January 31, AM



Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, from trip

I woke up on time but out of sorts, with a low-grade headache and the feeling that I don't quite fit together. Breakfast and coffee helped a bit, but I suspect that the problem is mainly the talk I have to give this afternoon. I got ready for it, but I'm still not convinced that what I am planning is what they want. There is not much else I can do, but I hardly feel that what I have to provide is worth the tremendous cost they incurred in bringing me over here. Also, I gathered from talking to Jack that these people are all quite expert on the Uruguay Round and the GATT, so that the more elementary stuff I was going to present won't be needed. How am I going to fill three hours?

Jack and Jessica took me last night first to a temple. It looked just like you would think a Chinese temple would look, if you place it in the heart of the city. It was crowded with people, almost all worshipping. There were statues of gods arranged in several places, and the people stand in front of them and pray for the specific things that they want. They buy bundles of sticks of incense and light them and hold them while they pray. Often, they hold the bundles pointing out from their foreheads, sort of like a horn. Then they drop these bundles into big pots where fires are burning. The result is that the temple smells very strongly, and pleasantly, of incense.

The worshippers also buy red candles which they light and put on a stand to burn, these intended to assure them a long life. And they do a little ritual with a pair of curved wooden pieces, rounded on one side and flat on the other, which they drop on the floor after wishing

for something they want. How the pieces land tells them whether the answer is yes or no. If the pieces land one up, one down, this is the sun and the moon coming out together and it is good. If this happens three times in a row, then the answer is yes.

I can't describe what was most strange about this place. I think it was that all these people did these strange things so matter-of-factly. Like they just come in after a day of work and do these things routinely, then move on.

As we were about to leave, we looked down and saw a tan-colored dog wandering among the crowd. Jessica commented that it "better watch out," and when I asked why, she explained that people often pick up stray dogs and eat them. She said this was especially common in the winter, which it now is. However, she also remarked that people prefer to eat black dogs, so this one might be safe. Jacksie will have to stay home on our next trip here.

Next, we went to a long street, set aside from traffic, and filled with shops, called the Night Market. I gather that it is only open in the evening, though I'm not sure. Most of the shops sell food of one sort or another, though a few sell merchandise. The most interesting and apparently famous feature of the market is the snakes. At several of the shops a man was doing a spiel out in front and a crowd was gathered to watch. He chatters away for quite some time, and ultimately takes a large snake, slits its body lengthwise with a knife, and



Night Market in Taipei, from Web 2023

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drains the blood into a flask. Then he sells drinks of the blood to people. It is apparently very popular, as the blood is believed to increase virility. I didn't try it.

I did try a bowl of noodles, very much like what I had had for breakfast, though without the egg. It was sold out of a shop that was small and grungy like the others, but one went inside to eat and there it was very elegant, with white tablecloths and crystal chandeliers. We walked the length of the market street and back again (our car and driver were waiting for us), and I looked at a few possible things to buy but didn't buy anything.

All afternoon Jack had been telling me about a couple of new fads in Taiwan, MTV and KTV. MTV is a place where young people go on dates to watch video cassettes. You go in and pick out a movie, then go to a private room to watch it on a large screen TV. The places sell drinks and are comfortably appointed with couch and easy chairs and good TVs and sound systems. These MTV places are all over the city and are very popular.

KTV is a newer idea, and the K stands for Karaoke, which I later learned is Japanese for fake (kara) orchestra (oke). Karaoke is a machine from Japan that plays popular music without the words, and you use a microphone to sing along with it. I gather that these are becoming popular in restaurants throughout Asia and in California. KTV combines the two ideas. You rent a private room with a Karaoke machine and a TV screen. You pick songs from a catalogue, and they play the music and a video on the TV. The TV also shows the words for the song, to make it easy to sing along.

After we were done at the Night Market, we went to such a KTV place and spent an hour singing songs. Jack and Jessica insisted that I pick the songs, mostly, and commented on the fact that I picked rather old ones – Beatles and the like. But when Jack picked a song, it was "Tennessee Waltz," and then Jessica picked three from the Carpenters.

It was more fun than I would have thought. Part of the secret, I think, is that the sound system adds some sort of dimension to your voice when you sing into the microphone, an echo or something, I guess. You hear this as you sing, and it makes you sound better than you normally would to yourself. It is the same principle as singing in the shower.

We did this for an hour, then walked back to the hotel. It was a fairly long walk, through dimly lighted streets in a big city. I would have been very nervous about that if Jack and Jessica hadn't seemed to find it perfectly safe. And even so I was a little uneasy.

I shouldn't say *perfectly* safe. One thing that Taiwan is known for is the recklessness of its drivers and their disregard for pedestrians. The streets are swarming with motor scooters that zip around everywhere, and cars that yield only to the motor bikes, not to pedestrians. So, you have to be very careful crossing the street. On our walk back from KTV, therefore, we avoided crossing streets at all. Instead, there are many places where they have built walkways either over or under the street, and we used these a lot.



Enough for now. I want to go out and try to do a bit of shopping, then come back and do some work before they pick me up for the seminar. It looks like recharging my battery here did work, since I haven't had any trouble. That's a relief.

### **Friday, February 1, PM**

It is just after noon and I'm waiting for Jack to pick me up and take me to the Institute where I will give my paper. From the message he left, I have an hour, but I think he may have been mistaken. My seminar is scheduled to start before that. I will just write until I am interrupted.

I did go shopping yesterday morning. I got a map from the desk and directions to the Chinese Handicraft Mart, which is one of the places that Jennie Lin (my student from Taiwan in Michigan) had suggested I shop. It turns out that a map isn't much good when you can't read the street signs. The streets on the map were labelled in English, but most of the signs on the street were not. I tried matching some Chinese characters, but I wasn't successful. So I just counted streets and worked my way to where the Mart should have been, or so I thought. It wasn't there. I paced back and forth looking at buildings, but nothing looked promising. Suddenly a woman appeared out of nowhere and asked me, in English, if I was looking for the Handicraft Mart. Amazed, I said yes, and she directed me to walk one block further. She then turned and went into the building we were standing next to. I called after her to thank her, and I walked on in the direction she had shown me. Apparently, mine was a familiar problem, for tourists, but I was still amazed that anyone would go so far out of their way to help.

The Handicraft Mart was where she said it would be, and it did have a lot of stuff in it to buy. I bought one thing, but on the whole it didn't do as much for me as I had hoped. So I walked off in a different direction toward what appeared to be the thick of the city. It was, though this was only one of many such areas in the city, I later found out, and this was one of the older ones. I spent the next hour or two walking through these crowded streets, looking into store fronts and often wondering what they were selling. There were quite a few shops with no merchandise on display, just counters where customers could sit, and women sitting behind the counters. Of course I couldn't read the signs, of which there were usually a great many.

It was late morning and many of the shops were preparing food. They all seemed to have a sort of steam table, set up right next to the sidewalk, with many bowls and other containers on top filled with unidentifiable delicacies. Nobody seemed to be buying anything, and at first I wondered how long these foods had sat there. But later I realized they were just getting ready for the lunch hour and had probably prepared everything fresh just that morning. Still, I didn't find much that I saw to be very appetizing.

I was struck, too, by the smells. Taiwanese food seems to have a distinctive smell, different from Chinese at least as we are used to it in the States, and the smell was almost everywhere. In the few places where I didn't get that smell, I got even worse ones: whiffs of garbage or

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sewage that hit me every now and then. These smells weren't as pervasive or as strong always as this may sound, but they were definitely a presence.

I went into several of the shops briefly, but I didn't find anything I wanted. So after a while I made my way back to the hotel. I had worried a bit that I would get lost, since the map didn't seem to be much help. But I never seemed to lose my sense of direction, as it turned out, and I found the hotel just where I had left it. That was reassuring.

Jack picked me up as planned and took me to the Board of Foreign Trade for my seminar. I first met the Director General and we chatted for a few minutes. As I met him, and then others, each one gave me his business card and I in return gave them mine, which I had prepared before going over. It is clear now that I didn't bring nearly enough of these with me, though, if everybody I meet, even for a minute, is going to want to exchange cards. Oh well, I tried.

The seminar went well, I think, though nobody actually said that it did. But I felt that I was connecting with at least some of the people, and I felt good about most of what I said. The hardest part was restraining my usual impulse to minimize my own importance and competence. These people paid a fortune for me to come here, and it wouldn't do for me to convince them that I don't know anything. Of course, try as I might, I don't think I could come across as the weighty authority that some of my colleagues manage to pose as, but I believe that I avoided looking like a buffoon.

The seminar room wasn't large, and the group was of manageable size. However, they were placed along both sides of a long narrow table, and I was placed in the middle of one side, rather than at the end. This was a more congenial place to be, I suppose, than the end, but it meant that I couldn't see, or be seen by, most of the people on my side of the table. When one of them would ask a question, they and I would both lean forward to try to see each other along the table, and sometimes the people in between would choose that moment to lean forward also, frustrating our attempt. Unfortunately, one of the most active participants in the seminar was a lawyer who sat in such a position. We strained to see each other all afternoon.

The other most active participant was apparently the head of the group, and he sat right next to me. That actually made it *too* easy for us to talk, since he could talk to me quietly and others could hear. There were little electronic boxes in front of each person at the table, and these boxes had microphones and speakers so that everyone could be heard. In principle, then, his quiet conversation with me should have been heard by everyone anyway. But I had the feeling that it wasn't, because he seemed to go out of his way to turn away from the microphone. And my impression was enhanced when I heard other conversations breaking out around the room as we talked. I was trying to keep close enough to the microphone to be heard, while I responded to him, and this meant that I was leaning sideways in an awkward position. This was certainly the most strained part of the experience. I was glad when somebody else suggested that we take a ten-minute intermission, and after that I managed to avoid getting into private conversation with this guy.

I still wonder about how much interest all these people may have had in what we were talking about. Taiwan has decided that it wants to get into the GATT, and that was the reason for the seminar. I gather that they have had a lot of these seminars, on various related topics, over the last year, and that they may have required all these people from different trade-related agencies of the government to attend. I had the impression that many of them had come because they were told to, not because they wanted to, though a few also did seem very interested. I guess that is the most one can hope for.

I felt a little bad that I didn't get through all the material I had prepared. There were six Tokyo Round Codes that I was to discuss, and I had a lot more to say about some than about others. So I didn't get to a couple of them. The reason I feel bad about this is that I gather that a few of the seminar participants were there only because of those codes that I didn't get to. For example, there were people from the customs office, and I didn't get to the customs valuation code. They would have good reason to feel cheated. I only feel a little bad about this, however, because my greater fear was that I wouldn't have enough to say to fill the three hours they had scheduled. There is nothing worse than running out of things to say before the time is up, and then having to say so.

Anyhow, the seminar ended, a bit late even, and I returned to the hotel. Jack showed me the room where the dinner would be, here in the hotel, and I went there without his help at the appointed time. There I found six almost identical Chinese men, all in dark blue suits, waiting for me. We exchanged more cards and sat down around a round table for dinner. There was a lazy Susan in the middle of the table, where they could have placed all of the dishes that we would eat for people to share. I gather that is the Chinese way. However, this dinner was to be served in the "Western style", which meant that the dishes would come one at a time and be served onto our separate plates as courses. They still used the lazy Susan, however. As each dish was brought to the table, it would be placed there and rotated for us all to admire. Then it was taken off and served to our separate plates. I don't know how many courses we had, but there were lot.

The first, and best perhaps, was actually Japanese sashimi – slices of raw fish served with an incredibly hot mustard sauce. It was wonderful, even if the sauce did take my breath away. There were also bits of squid, cooked fortunately, that tasted better than I had feared. Other courses included a soup with a lobster claw floating in it, another soup with shark fin, a vegetable dish, and I don't know what else. There wasn't much meat in the lobster claw, which fortunately had previously been cracked open, but it took forever for me to pick it out with my chopsticks. The shark fin, by the way, isn't at all what I had pictured. It is a kind of stringy light-colored meat that must come from inside the fin. I asked what they do with the rest of the shark, but nobody knew.

## Saturday, February 2, PM

Jack did arrive before I finished. Now it is Saturday evening and I've flown to Hualien, by the Toroko Gorge, and I'm "resting" until dinner. If I really rest, I'll fall asleep, so instead I'll continue with this.

I was describing Thursday dinner, which was a bit of a trial. Making conversation wasn't always easy, and the food was not my favorite. I can't say that I minded when we finished, and I made my escape back up to my room. I had to shake hands with everyone at the dinner first, though.

Back in my room I waited for Pat to call, which for some reason I had set in my mind at 10:00. Ten arrived without her calling, and I then realized she had said eleven. So I waited a while longer. She called while I was in the bathroom, but fortunately this hotel had a phone conveniently located there, so I answered right away. We talked for a while, and she made the mistake of telling me she likes my stories (I had been telling her about my Wednesday evening outing). So now I feel, in this journal at least, that I can go on and on, as you may have noticed. Anyhow, I finally shut up and we hung up, and I guess I must have gone to sleep right after that.

Friday morning I got up early, even though I wasn't needed for my seminar until two in the afternoon, because I wanted to get back to the museum. First, I had breakfast, which I am now comfortable with, since I've found that I really like that dish of noodles with the "spicy" brown egg. I then started to head off for the museum, only to realize that I hadn't sent my laundry out to be done as I had planned. Since I won't have another chance to do laundry until Monday, this was crucial. I went back to my room to do that. It was simple enough to load my laundry into the bag they provided and to fill out the order form. I called the laundry to tell them, and they said they'd be by to pick it up. Now I didn't know whether I needed to stay there until they picked it up, or not. Just in case, I took that opportunity to make several phone calls that I had been needing to do anyway, such as to the airline and to Bill and Marsi's friend, Mr. Chen. I reached him at home, and after only a little confusion (his English wasn't very good) we agreed that he would call me later that night.

I headed off again for the museum, and this time got sidetracked by the shops in the hotel, where I decided to have a quick look at their coral jewelry. From the Handicraft Mart I had decided that coral would be too expensive for me, but here I found some small earrings that I could afford. I had been told that one should bargain in Taiwan, but I always find that hard. Instead, I simply waffled about whether to buy them or not, and the salesgirl reduced the price on them twice, "just for me," before I made up my mind. Perhaps indecision is just as good as bargaining savvy.

Once in this conversation, the salesgirl told me that I am "very handsome." Now I knew perfectly well that this was just part of her sales pitch. Still, I couldn't help feeling flattered. She was very effective, but if she had told me I looked rich, it might have worked even better. If I'd believed that, I might have spent more.

I finally made it to the museum, and I went through the galleries that I had not seen before. What most impressed me this time was the carvings, in wood, ivory, and even peach pits, that were so incredibly small and detailed. I also bought several things that I needn't go into here. I had a bit of an argument, too, with the cab driver who took me back to the hotel. The cab to the museum had cost \$180, and he wanted to charge me \$250 to take me back. When I objected, he told me some story about the museum and the hotel being in different cities. Since I figured that had also been true two hours earlier, I was determined to hold my ground.

I paid the \$250.

After writing in my journal, I was picked up by Jack and taken to the Institute for my seminar. He dropped me there, and I guess I won't see him again, unless he turns up in Ann Arbor for law school in the fall as he hopes. I had enjoyed his company.

I sat with the president of the institute for a few awkward minutes talking about this and that. Then he took me in to meet S. C. Tsiang, from whom I had taken a course at Cornell. It turns out that S. C. is the economic superstar of Taiwan, and this institute was created more or less for him. He is quite old and retired now, but he is apparently still active. We talked about various people at Cornell, which has had a surprising number of people from Taiwan.

My seminar on lumpy countries [don't ask] went fine, I think, though again I didn't get as much direct comment on the paper as I am used to getting. I had feared that the audience might not be trade theorists, and that nobody would have the slightest idea what I was talking about. Fortunately, there were a few faces around the table, one in particular, that were responsive to what I was saying, so it became clear that I needn't have worried. The one face turned out to belong, as I learned after the seminar, to one Christina Liu, on leave from CUNY, and sister-in-law of Bernie Yeung at our business school. I'll have to tell Bernie I met her. I'll also have to tell him I went to Taiwan, which he may not like since I didn't tell him before I went. It hadn't occurred to me to think about whether he was from here.

There was another fellow at the seminar who came up to see me afterwards. He had been a student of Jerry and Marie Thursby at Ohio State and was surprised to learn that they had left there. He was here on leave from San Francisco State. (Why is everybody here on leave?) For some reason he joined the president and me for tea after the seminar and the three of us sat there for an unbearably long time making difficult conversation. Finally, however, we went to dinner.

The drive to dinner was interesting in one respect, because it took us through a part of the city I had not seen before. It turns out that I have been staying in the "old city" and that another part of Taipei is brand spanking new. This looked like the downtown of any thriving city in the U.S., and I had to reconsider some of my impressions of Taiwan. These fellows who were with me also spent much of the time telling me about all the changes in Taiwan in the last few

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years, and it is clear that Taiwan has been transformed into a modern country in a very short time. I tried, in fact, to ask about what sorts of cultural and psychological shocks this transformation may have caused, but they didn't seem to understand what I was talking about. One of them did mention that crime has increased terribly, and I thought I understood that, until he said that the crime he was talking about was kidnapping. Rich people apparently get kidnapped a lot for their money. Otherwise there doesn't seem to be much crime. It is safe to walk the streets, for example.

It is not safe to be a doctor, though. One thing that was mentioned was that doctors have to pay protection. People walk in off the street and threaten them if they won't pay them some money. I asked if this was gangs operating, and they said no, just individuals who do this.

We finally made it to the hotel where we were having dinner, and I found yet another room full of men and another round table. The men were introduced to me, with lots of handshaking and exchanging of cards – "name cards," I find they are called – except that I had run out and couldn't give them mine. These men were all academics of one sort or another, some of them economists. And many of them seemed to know people at Michigan, and even more at Cornell, so much of the conversation concerned them.

The dinner this time was better than the night before, to my taste, though still not as good, some of it, as what I'm used to at home. There were many courses, again served painstakingly onto each of our plates by a woman who did nothing else all evening.

One of the courses was Peking Duck, and it was good. It was served in pancakes with Moo Shu sauce, just like Moo Shu Pork. Another course was a ham sandwich. Yes, really. Some white bread that had the crusts removed, and each slice was sliced most of the way down the middle, so that it could open to accommodate a slice of ham plus some sort of vegetable. It was actually fairly tasty.

Another course was a soup, which I was enjoying until I got a piece of something that was gristly and too hard to chew. I discretely removed it from my mouth and went on eating the soup, until my neighbor commented on the soup containing fish lips. That was what I'd had a hard time with. I didn't eat any more of that soup.

One ritual that I didn't mention from the night before involved the rice wine....

### **Sunday, February 3, AM**

...each of us had a tiny glass of rice wine, which tastes similar to dry sherry. The server kept the glass full. Before each course – and there were many – it is the custom to drink a toast with the rice wine. We would pick up the glass and hold it out toward one person after another, making a little bow with our head and saying "Cheers." OK, so the Chinese probably said something else, but they said Cheers to me. After going all around the table like this, then we would drink. Usually I would just sip, but at some point, one of them happily told me

the Chinese for "bottoms up," and I did that as well. It was such a small glass, fortunately, that bottoms up didn't make much difference. When the Chinese drank the toast, they would always hold this tiny glass with two hands, both of which would have to move in order to drink. I tried to get the knack of that, but I don't think I ever quite looked right.

On Friday night the same thing happened, but with one difference. Here for some reason, we always toasted each person individually. That is, we'd go around the table toasting, as before, but after each person we would drink. With eight or nine people around the table, this took some time.

After the meal I noticed that most of them would use a toothpick to clean their teeth. Toothpicks were provided, individually wrapped, and they are of much finer quality than what we are used to at home. They are harder wood, come to a sharper point, and the other end is carved. I didn't realize that this is what people were doing at first, because the custom is to use two hands, one hand essentially to hide the process.

Dessert on Friday included a "sweet soup." It was indeed a hot soup that was very sweet. Christina Liu, who was at the dinner, told of an American who would eat anything Chinese except sweet soup, so we were all a bit surprised when I didn't seem to mind it. I did get tired of it quickly, but it certainly wasn't objectionable, especially compared to some of the other dishes.

Another surprise, both nights, was that when the fruit arrived, after the rest of the meal, the table was first cleared, and the fruit was served with a fork. I thought forks were never used in China. I asked why the sudden switch to a fork, after chopsticks all through the meal, and I was told, obviously, "to pick up the fruit." OK.

Several people here have mentioned to me that the Chinese give unusual importance to eating and the preparation of food. That is not at all obvious, looking at their waistlines, unless they spend so much time preparing that they can't eat. In any case, I hope this observation justifies the otherwise excessive amount of space I have given here to food. It is their preoccupation, not mine.

After dinner Friday, they sent me back, alone with the driver, to my hotel where I immediately crashed. I was surprised at how tired I was, and if I had been expecting a phone call, I don't know whether I could have stayed awake for it. But I wasn't, so I didn't.

Saturday after breakfast I was picked up by Matt Lin, one of the two who had met me at the airport Tuesday, but whom I hadn't seen since. He is with me for the weekend, bringing me to the east side of the island to visit the Taroko Gorge. He had left instructions to pack lightly, leaving most of my stuff with the bell captain to be picked up when I return on Sunday (today). I of course had trouble with this, since I didn't know what I would need, or have time to use, over the weekend. I ended up leaving my suitcase and computer bag and

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coat, but bringing my briefcase and saddlebags, including material to prepare for my Monday lecture and also including this computer. I am traveling much less lightly than Matt is.

Matt was in the army a couple of years ago, doing his national service, and he served the whole time at the airport. He therefore knows his way around there and was eager to introduce me to some bigwig there and to get us into the VIP lounge to wait. That didn't work, however, apparently because the bigwig was embarrassed about his English and didn't therefore want to meet me. I don't know what happened to the VIP lounge, but we waited in the general waiting room. The bigwig did play a role, however, because he allowed us to bypass security.

I had thought the flight would be on a very small plane, since it is only a 25-minute puddle jump. However, it was a Boeing 737, holding over 100 people, and it was packed. Apparently because of the mountains that run down the middle of the island, there really isn't any other convenient way to get here, and it is a popular place. There are busloads of tourists, especially Japanese, that one sees everywhere.

We were met at the airport here by yet another car and driver. After a remarkable amount of discussion that I didn't understand, we set out for the national park. There we met a man, Mr. Yu, who Matt said would be our "tourist guide." Mr. Yu, a pleasant young man, corrected him forcefully saying that he is an "interpreter," not a tourist guide. As we talked about this later, it turned out that an interpreter is one who shows a tourist all the natural wonders of the park and interprets them for him, while a tourist guide is the person who rides on the bus with a bunch of tourists and keeps them in line.

There was still more discussion, partly over coffee. Then I was shown a slide presentation about the park, in a special and luxurious little theater. After it, which I did enjoy, especially the music, Mr. Yu asked if I liked it and would I like to see more. I said that I did, and would, but perhaps not right away. I'd like to see the real thing. This must have been the wrong answer. There was a great deal more discussion, which Matt told me had to do with how busy Mr. Yu was. Finally, a young lady was brought out who introduced herself as Daisy, and I was told that she would be my interpreter since Mr. Yu was very busy. Daisy proceeded to show me various indoor displays, and we spent a good deal of time looking at them and discussing them. I couldn't figure out why we didn't just go ahead and see the gorge. Eventually, in fact, Mr. Yu rejoined us, and we went into town for lunch.

Lunch couldn't have been more different from my dinners of the last two nights. We ate in a tiny restaurant, similar to the many I had seen in the old part of Taipei but had been afraid to enter. The kitchen was at the front, by the street, and you walked through it into the dining room behind. This dining room contained only four or five tables, each large and round with a lazy Susan in the middle. When we entered, we were the only customers, but within minutes the other tables were also full, and the place was hopping.

Matt had asked if I wanted rice or noodles, and, remembering my disappointment with noodles earlier, I asked for rice. He and Mr. Yu agreed on several dishes, which soon began

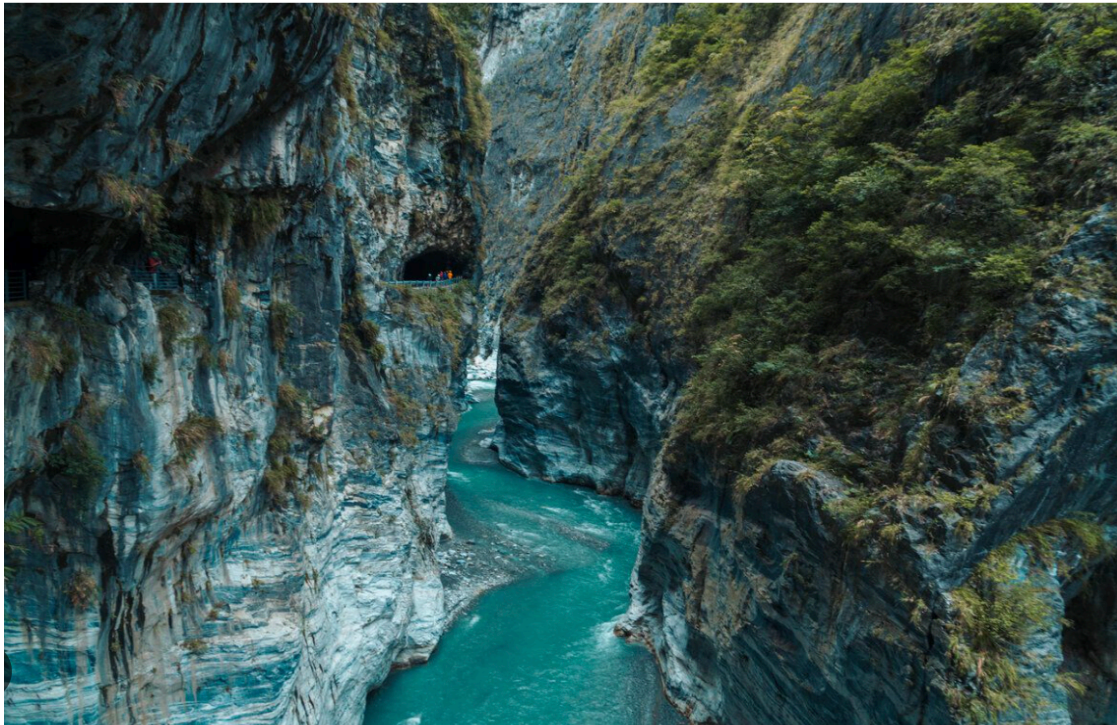


to arrive. The first was indeed fried rice, and it was delicious. Now this was what I had hoped to be eating in China. I began to think that my problems earlier were with too expensive restaurants. I may prefer peasant food.

Several more dishes arrived, and I enjoyed them all. One was a dreadful looking concoction of slimy-looking objects that I was told were pig intestines. I tried one anyway, and it really was good. The flavor was very special, and the texture wasn't nearly as bad as I had feared. I went back for more of it again and again.

Finally, we left the restaurant, drove back to the park headquarters where we dropped off Mr. Yu, and set out for the gorge with Daisy. This was something.

The gorge is as fantastic a natural formation as I have seen anywhere, and it goes on for miles. The sides of the gorge are marble, with bits of vegetation growing here and there, and they extend almost vertically upward from the stream, several thousand feet below. The road through all of this was built in the late 1950s by Chiang Kai-shek, at a considerable cost in terms of lost lives. It is a narrow road in most places, barely large enough to accommodate the huge tour buses that run along it, and often not large enough for them to pass. Many times we had to stop and wait as vehicles would back up for another to pass. The road was cut out of the marble face of the gorge, and some of it is in tunnels through the rock with just windows cut out of the walls to let one see the gorge.



Taroko Gorge. from Web 2023

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This would have been rough going at any time, I suppose, but it was made worse this year by a storm. Typhoon Ophelia came through in September, I think, and did a job on this place. Many bridges were washed out, and parts of the road and buildings were destroyed. Daisy told me that every toilet in the park was destroyed by the typhoon, so I was relieved, later, when we found one that had since been repaired. In addition to storms, this part of Taiwan is also prone to earthquakes and therefore rockslides, and these had also destroyed things in several places.



We

Taroko Gorge, from Web 2023

drove slowly through the gorge, stopping occasionally to get out and walk. It was extraordinarily beautiful, and I loved it, but I did have a little trouble with my fear of heights. The road was built well above the riverbed, so there was a precipitous drop below us. To see the gorge, we needed to stand on the edge of the road, of course, looking down. Behind us the traffic continued to flow, including these large tour busses that didn't really fit and would go charging past. I don't know whether I was more afraid of falling into the gorge, or of being hit by a bus.

At one point I asked Daisy if they ever had any accidents here, cars going off the road and falling into the gorge. I expected a reassuring response, but she smiled and said yes, actually, there had been an accident just the day before. I didn't ask for details until we were leaving the gorge later in the day. Apparently, a truck had slipped off the road with one or more of its wheels suspended over the river. It didn't fall in, however, and the driver survived. I never did ask how often they had had accidents before that.

One of our walks was the most exciting, according to Daisy. She took us along a trail away from the road. Being away from the road and the gorge was fine with me, and this was very enjoyable. It turned out that the exciting part was near the end, however, where we entered a tunnel. It was pitch black inside, and we had to keep our hands on the side wall to stay oriented. Daisy didn't tell us how long it would be, but just as we lost sight of the light at the entrance, we also caught sight of the light at the end, so we were never completely in the dark. Still, it was a memorable experience.

Daisy, by the way, was a delight. She was young, short, and a little wide, sort of like Mary Lou Retton. She walked with a spring in her step that looked like she would rather be moving than standing still. And she walked with her feet further apart than normal, too, as though to keep her balance. She had a wonderful, infectious vitality.

### **Sunday, February 3, PM**

I have arrived now at Hsinchu, have settled in, had dinner, and heard from home. I've prepared my lecture for tomorrow, and I'm ready to get this journal caught up. I have nothing more to report about the visit to the gorge, except that I found it impossible to stay awake during the drive back. Matt and Daisy were talking nonstop in Chinese, and I found the language very soothing, so I nodded off. I woke up as we were dropping Daisy off at her dorm.

At the hotel, Matt and I went for dinner to the hotel restaurant. Matt ordered and I ate, as best I could. Most of the dishes were very good, but I couldn't make myself eat the sea cucumber in the soup. I still don't know what it was, but Matt made it clear that it was animal, not vegetable. It was about two inches long and shaped like a fat slice of apple, but it was squishy and slimy and semi-transparent. It is the one thing so far that I haven't been able even to try.

There was also a dish of fried noodles that was wonderful. It was listed as fried vermicelli – I'll have to remember that. Like fried rice, this had all sorts of oddities mixed into it, including bits of shrimp, beef, and fish liver. Yes, fish liver. It tastes just like chicken liver, fortunately.

We drank much tea, and Matt explained to me that when tea is poured, you can thank the pourer by tapping your fingers, all of them, curved like a claw, on the table. The motion is almost the same as taking a hit in blackjack, though he didn't know that.

After dinner I think Matt might have liked to go out together and check out the town. But I thought I was tired, and I guess I was right. Back in my room I wasn't up to doing anything, and I went to bed and to sleep immediately, even though it was only a little after nine. And I slept through to seven this morning. I hope Matt found something to do to amuse himself. At

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least he could understand the TV if he wanted to. They didn't have CNN there, and they don't have it here, so I am out of touch except for what I hear from home.

Today I got up and ordered breakfast in my room. I ordered the continental breakfast because I didn't feel like eating much. Instead of rolls, it came with two slices of white toast, slightly warm, with a container each of butter and jam. This was better than it sounds, however. The toast was somehow thicker and more fulfilling than American white toast, even though it looked the same.

For the day, our driver took us south of Hualien along the coast road. This reminded me a lot of the California coastal highway, as it wove in and out above the sea. However here there were fewer rocks, and the steep hills were covered with a vegetation that made them look fuzzy. The whole landscape looked like the scenery one might make for a model train setup.

We stopped several times to look at bridges and to visit Buddhist temples. At one of the temples, I got into a conversation with one of the nuns. The temples, it turns out, are divided into those with male gods and those with female gods, and the latter are attended by resident nuns. We'd seen some of these nuns the day before at a temple, all wearing knitted stocking caps. I found out today the reason for the caps: they are bald. That is, their heads are shaved, and they all look like Sinead O'Connor. It's funny how you don't notice a person's Asian facial features once their head is shaved.

The nun talked to us for a few minutes. She then told Matt that we should go up to another part of the temple, and she motioned us off to the right. Matt and I walked in that direction and began to climb the stairs we found there. A chorus of objections rose up behind us as our nun and many others called to us not to do this. Apparently we had misunderstood and were on our way up into the nun's living quarters. We corrected our mistake and made our way around the building to the upper temple.

The temple itself was like all the others – chaotic and in slightly bad taste, with all its brightly painted idols and such. But in front of this one was a bed of flowers, and we stood there for quite a while talking, and looking out over the flowers toward the ocean. The flower bed was filled with butterflies of many shapes, sizes, and colors, and I found myself watching them more than anything else. I gather that this was nothing compared to the profusion of butterflies further south on the island, where the climate is more tropical, but it was good enough for me.

Matt was usually very quick to answer my questions. His English was very good, and he was eager to use it. However, at one point we passed a monument of some sort, just a sleek vertical cement spire that was slit up the middle. I asked him what this was, and he was quiet for so long I thought he wasn't going to give an answer. Finally, he started talking about how the island is divided into a part that is tropical and a part that is subtropical. It finally came across that this monument marked the Tropic of Cancer, which we had just crossed. Matt didn't know the name of it, and he had found it very difficult to explain, not surprisingly.

Our destination was yet another temple, this one at a place that mythology says had been visited by eight gods. It was a dark grey cliff that over the years has had several caves eaten out of it by the ocean. The land of the island rises a little bit each year out of the sea, so that all these caves were well above sea level, and some were quite high up. Each had a temple built into it, and we climbed wooden stairs to visit them all. As Matt observed, these temples are rather garish, and it is a shame that nature wasn't left to itself in these places to be enjoyed.

Matt also observed that the largest of the caves bends to a point at the top that makes it look very much like a vagina. But he wasn't sure this was an appropriate thing to say in such a place.

In case you are wondering, Matt himself says he is not religious and doesn't have much patience with many of the effects of religion. He asked me at one point about my own religion, and I think he was relieved that I don't take it seriously. He had the impression from movies that American's are very religious, I suppose because movies always show us going to church.

We ate lunch there at a restaurant by the temple, ordering rice with fried pork. This came as white rice with some vegetables, a whole fried egg, and a whole breaded pork cutlet on top of it. These you pick up whole with your chopsticks, take a bite out of them, and put them back down on the rice. This is typical of the way the Chinese eat other things too, such as noodles. They do not hesitate to take a bite of what they have picked up with the chopsticks and let the rest fall back onto their plates. Without knives and forks there isn't really an alternative. It does, incidentally, mean keeping your head fairly close to your plate, and ducking your head down, when necessary, so that the food doesn't have too far to drop.

The soup, by the way, had oysters in it. Like so many things, these were better than they looked.

Before driving back, we stopped at a restroom. Here I couldn't spot any of the usual signs telling me which door was which. They usually mark the men's room with a silhouette of what looks like Dick Tracy with a hat and pipe, but this time there was no sign that I could see. Matt showed me the way, however, which should have been obvious since the row of urinals against the side wall was open to the street. I don't think I've ever used a urinal before with women passing by in full view a few feet to my right.

Driving back, there were no more stops to be made until we were back in Hualien, and the driver suggested that we could take a nap if we wished. (He may have only meant me, recalling how I had dozed off the day before.) I wasn't tired, though, and I watched the scenery as we drove and talked more with Matt.

One thing I noticed was a great many dogs. Everywhere we went there were dogs milling about, and frequently there were dogs beside the road that our driver had to honk at to get

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them out of the way. They always moved, and we didn't even have to slow down. I wondered, if they didn't move, whether we would hit them. I had my answer further on, when a puppy standing in the middle of the road had no idea that he needed to move. We came to a complete stop, honking uselessly, and waited until his random motion took him out of the way. I noticed his mother, apparently, up on a porch nearby oblivious to all of this, licking her hindquarters. Useless bitch.

Matt and I talked about a lot of things, mostly not worth reporting. As you know, I've had a hard time getting people to say much about the war, which I would like to know their views of. Without my saying anything, however, Matt at one point expressed his opinion: "I would very like to have Saddam Hussein learn a serious lesson." I agreed.

We ended our journey at a marble factory – the largest one in Hualien, which is known for its marble. An interpreter – a tiny woman of middle age – met us and began by ushering us through the factory itself, where giant blocks of marble were being cut with huge saws, and the cut pieces were being shaped, smoothed, polished, and waxed. She took us right up to the working machines on the factory floor and then tried to tell us what was happening, in broken English over the din. I don't think I've ever said "I understand" so many times when I didn't. I am amazed, by the way, that neither the government nor the insurance companies have stopped them from taking tourists onto the shop floor like that. They must be protected from lawsuits better than we are.

The tour of the factory was extremely brief, and it led quickly into a series of large showrooms where the real reason for the visit became apparent. I could buy anything from the tiniest marble trinkets to a marble couch, all at factory prices. I restrained myself from buying the birdbath that Pat has been wanting. Matt and my other guides have been only too willing to carry everything for me, but that might have been going too far.

From the factory we went straight to the plane and flew back to Taipei. There we were to be met by my next guide, a Miss Cho. Jack and Matt had been such friendly and attractive sorts<sup>2</sup> that I was looking forward to meeting Miss Cho. She turns out to be a buck-toothed little bug-eyed woman in her twenties. She is the only person I have ever met who managed to stutter, with her eyes. Friendly though, as I expected. She will be a student in my course and has evidently also been in charge of the arrangements. She mentioned her embarrassment at having mis-spelled my name in some communication, and I assured her that I was not offended.

That reminds me, at the hotel in Hualien they had spelled Deardorff, "OSARoorFI," which is one for Pat's collection. Unfortunately, all they had done to get this spelling was to copy the name from the form I had filled out, so I guess I should take some of the credit for their creativity.

And that also reminds me, one of the things Matt and I talked about during the drive was names. He is concerned about selecting his English name, and wasn't sure that Matt, or Matthew, was a good choice. He was also thinking of Joshua. I said either would be fine,

though I thought Matthew would be better than Matt since his last name, Lee, is so short. Anyway, he decided to come up with a Chinese name for me. The name he came up with, as best I can write it in English, is Dee Lun Whey. This is the closest he could come to Deardorff, Alan V. He gave me the Chinese characters for these names, but I don't know if I'll be able to reproduce them. When I tried, he seemed much more concerned that I make the strokes in the right order than in the right places.

Incidentally, I also learned, earlier, something about how the Chinese arrange names in the phone book: by the number of strokes in the characters.

Oy, it's getting late. But I want to get caught up.

I'll just mention a few things quickly: The hour-and-a-half drive down to Hsinchu was uneventful, except for my fear that the driver was having a stroke. The hotel is in a large building, but I was told twice that it is nice but small. That's true: the rooms start on the ninth floor. I was on my own for dinner, and I ordered wonton soup and fried noodles. The waitress asked in surprise, "Is that it?", and the manager came over a few minutes later to "confirm" my order. Apparently one doesn't order these two things together, since both are considered noodles. The wonton soup had five wontons, Allison, in a very big bowl.

Good night!

## **WEEK 2**

### **Monday, February 4, PM, Hsinchu**

I made it through my first day of lecturing to this course. I think it went well. My biggest problem will probably be the different backgrounds of the members of the class. I started on the economic analysis this afternoon, and afterwards got a question from one in the class that indicates that he has never seen anything remotely like this before. I am going to have to back up and go over this from scratch, extremely carefully, at the risk of boring the few students who have had some economics. I don't see any choice, though, since this is the kind of thing that they brought me here to teach.

I woke up before the alarm this morning, even though I had stayed up until after 1:00 getting caught up with this journal. This hotel is the same chain as the one in Hualien, and they have the same idea of a continental breakfast, even in the restaurant: white toast. I miss the Lai Lai Sheraton in Taipei. Fortunately, I get to go back there for a couple of nights (and mornings) before I leave.

This hotel, incidentally, is in the heart of downtown Hsinchu and is the tallest building in the area. The bottom five floors are a department store, the next two something else again, and

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the hotel and its restaurants start on level eight. I have now learned my way around it, including the need to take two separate elevators to get from my room on 12 to the Cantonese restaurant on 14. It's an odd arrangement.

The room is much smaller than at the Sheraton, but I'd think it quite nice if I hadn't been there first. There is a double bed, a nice desk, a TV, and a refrigerator, neither of which I really use, and there is a dark wood closet that seems to take good care of my clothes. What more could I want? Amazingly it even has US-style electrical outlets, so I can plug in my computer next to the desk. I don't understand how a country can have three different styles of outlets, as this one seems to.

Miss Cho collected me as planned at 9:30 this morning and introduced me to my driver for the week, Mr. Hwang. He does not speak English and will be picking me up alone, tomorrow morning at least, since Miss Cho will be in Taipei. I suppose that can't be a problem now that we both know each other. I shouldn't have to make conversation during the ride to work.

The course is being held in a Training Center that is owned here by the Ministry of Economic Affairs. It is a large mostly new complex of dorms and classroom buildings where they hold all sorts of classes for their staff. The Ministry is evidently very big. They even give me a room in a dorm there to use for a nap, if I want one after lunch.

I met my class of some 24 students and started by introducing myself, since Miss Cho felt her English wasn't good enough to do it. I sang my praises as best I could, then went through a stack of resumes of the students that she had given me, saying a few words to each of them. Once or twice, I thought I had gotten in over my head, or that I might be offending someone with my familiarity. But I'm pretty sure that this went well and that I put most of the students at ease. Someone commented later that the class was off to a good start and that the students were unusually open to speaking up in class. I feel good about that.

They had mentioned that I would have the opportunity to eat with the students, but when one of them took me into the dining room there was great confusion about where to put me, and I ended up being taken through into a VIP dining room where various directors and such were eating. I ate with them making a certain amount of small talk, though I don't think most of them had much idea of what I was doing there, and I didn't know anything about them either. We did talk about the war, though, and I finally got a very straight answer from the one to whom everyone seemed to be deferring – I think he was a dean. He stated the usual line about the need to stop Hussein now since he will do worse later, and he said that he thought this was the view of most people in Asia.

After lunch I got back with the students briefly, and they apologized for the confusion. Their plan now is that I will sit at a different table each of the next three days with them, so that they all will have a chance to talk with me. Apparently, they sit at the same three tables every day.



I finished my lecturing and was brought back here to the hotel by Mr. Hwang. I found that my back ached a bit, and that I was surprisingly tired from teaching. I don't know if that is the effects of my unfamiliar environment coming through, or if this teaching is more of a strain than most. It does take something extra, but I'm not sure what it is.

Part of the difficulty of course is language. At one point a student asked a question, as I had encouraged them all to do. Unfortunately, I couldn't understand one of the words he was saying. It sounded like he was asking me to compare a trade agreement with an "El agreement", but that doesn't make any sense. I asked him to repeat it, more than once, but it continued to sound the same. In ordinary conversation I could have just nodded politely and said something noncommittal, but he wanted an answer to his question, so that wouldn't do. Pretty soon the whole class was saying, in chorus, "El Agreement," but I still didn't understand it. Finally, I had to ask him to write it down, and he wrote "Air." He was from the Civil Aviation Agency, and he was asking about an Air Agreement. Unfortunately, now that I knew the question, I had no idea what the answer was, so we had continued confusion as I tried to come up with something sensible to say about this. And the poor student will probably never ask another question in his life.

After class Mr. Hwang brought me back to the hotel with nothing scheduled for me to do for the rest of the day. After being so pressed for time yesterday, trying to prepare my class, write in the journal, and so forth, I suddenly found I had time on my hands. I did a little reading, then went out and walked around the neighborhood for an hour or so. It was similar to the area I walked in last week, but it was newer, and it smelled better. Still, I am amazed at how the shops are packed together, every square inch being used to sell something. Here though there are many shops carrying quality merchandise and there was lots to look at.

Afterwards I came back and had dinner, then tried to work for a while. I got one paper read and made some notes, then tried to read one of Bob Staiger's papers, but it just about put me to sleep. I caught myself, got up, and got ready for bed, then settled down to write in the journal.

While I was writing I got a call from Christina Liu, whom I met on Friday and who had said that she and her husband might take me out to a KTV while I'm in Hsinchu. I had wondered whether I would hear from her. I was surprised, when she called, to hear what her voice sounds like. She sounds like a duck on the phone, and it was impossible to match the voice with what I remember of her looks. Is it possible that she sounded like that in person, and I just didn't notice because she was in a room full of other Chinese and they all sounded like that?

Pat called tonight and we were able to talk more closely than we could on Sunday, when the whole family was there. It felt good to get back in touch with her. I miss her a lot.

**Wednesday, February 6, PM**

I've done two more days of lecturing now, and you would think that I would be getting used to it. I am, in a way, but I still don't entirely feel that I know what I am doing, and that makes me a little nervous. I have now worked through hours and hours of partial equilibrium trade theory, and I have reached the end of what I have to do on that. The next step is to talk about a variety of issues for which I don't have analytical tools readily available. That means I will just talk, instead of working through models. I would feel much more comfortable if I had prepared a detailed outline, like the class notes that I use at home. But I am very aware of how much time this is taking and how little else I am getting done. So I am reluctant to spend much more time on preparation here. It seems in fact that I do all right if I just stand on my hind legs and start talking, so I guess that's what I'll do, even though that doesn't make me feel very secure.

I have been trying to get some other work done, with some small success. I have now read three of the four Staiger papers that I need to go through, and I am pleased and relieved that I liked them a lot. Also, I have read a few other things that are on my list. I will still be much further behind when I get home than I was when I left, but I hope it won't seem like a disaster.

I woke up even earlier Tuesday morning than Monday, shortly after 4:00 AM. I couldn't get back to sleep, so I got up and read. That is probably the main reason that I have gotten a little bit done, because I still find it hard to stay awake at night. I tried the American breakfast Tuesday morning, which turned out to be a perfectly ordinary and acceptable pair of fried eggs and bacon, with toast. It is skimpy, though, and I miss the breakfasts at the Lai Lai Sheraton in Taipei, where they had good crisp hard rolls and I had gotten to like the Chinese dish with noodles and a brown spicy egg. Oh well, I'll be back there this weekend and can have it again before I leave for Seoul.

While I think of it, let me mention a few of the things that are different here than I've seen before: Telephone poles are made of cement, not wood. Buildings are built almost universally of cement also, then covered with tile of various colors and shapes. A few look from a distance like brick, but up close they are just covered with red brick-shaped tiles. Hondas are not uncommon here, but they are called Sanyangs, not Hondas, as in Sanyang Civic. In hotels you store your key in a holder just inside the door, and only with the key there can the lights be turned on. That way, when you leave and take your key, you automatically turn off all the lights. There is no tipping – or at least that is what I was told, and I hope it's right. Electric and electronic gadgets of all sorts are very popular here, including electric canisters to keep water hot for tea, a small table-top electric dish drier in the office where I teach, for teacups and such, and cordless and apparently cellular telephones at every possible opportunity. Restaurants universally give you the check on a little plastic clipboard. They use small fluorescent light bulbs here in places that we would only have incandescent bulbs, such as a desk lamp. I gather that they are much more economical, and these seem to give light that is just as good. The only difference that I notice is that they take a moment to turn on.

As planned, I have eaten lunch for the last two days with my students, each day at a different table of eight. When I sat down to eat yesterday, they all looked at me expectantly, and I looked back, wondering what they were waiting for. Finally, one of them asked me, "Don't you pray?" They thought all Americans pray before a meal, because that is what they have seen in the movies. It had never occurred to me before this trip that the movies make us out to be so religious.

Yesterday at lunch the fellow next to me was so solicitous of my welfare that he kept putting food onto my plate for me. You see, the normal procedure is to take things as you want them from half a dozen plates of food on the lazy Susan in the middle of the round table. But he apparently didn't think I could do that. Unfortunately, he kept giving me things I didn't really want. Today I was glad that the students let me serve myself, and I was able to choose what I wanted. There was a dish of fried tofu and bacon that I especially liked.

After class yesterday, two of the students had arranged to take me to the industrial park near the training center. There we were given a "briefing" about the park which included a short film and a look at some of the products. Then we were driven around it. It is an impressive place. It seems that ten years ago the government set aside this chunk of land to lure "science-based industry" – in other words, high tech – to Taiwan. This was supposed to form the Silicon Valley of Taiwan, and it has worked. The park is crowded with factories, and I learned today that Taiwan is now the world's leading exporter of IBM-compatible computers, for example. They are also the world's leading exporter of umbrellas, but that's another story.

They are obviously very proud of this achievement, and they have a right to be. In addition, though, what surprised me about the industrial park is that it doesn't really look or feel very new, and it is architecturally about as boring as it could be. I could imagine this being done in the U.S. and companies would have competed to erect striking and original structures. But here, even though inside I guess they are high tech, outside they just look like boring factories. I'm sure that is more practical, but I still found it disappointing. I get the feeling that the Chinese here do not have much of a sense of taste or style, and this seems to apply throughout the country, not just in this industrial park. I am seldom impressed with the appearance of their buildings, their clothes, or even their monuments.

Later in the afternoon, I once again spent a couple of hours wandering the streets looking at the shops. I am a little leery of getting lost, since I can't read the signs. I got a map from the hotel, but it isn't very helpful. We are a block away from a central square, from which some six or eight streets radiate outward, so I have been exploring the streets systematically as they lead off from that square, figuring that I can always use it to orient myself. I try not to get too far away from it.

In this neighborhood at least, which is apparently the heart of Hsinchu, every street seems very much the same: simply packed with little shops. From the streets run alleys, and these too are packed with even smaller shops. The crowds are thicker now than they would be at

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other times of the year, because the Chinese New Year starts in a week, and that is like their Christmas season. Still, it is not the number of buyers that surprises me, but the number of sellers. It is hard for me to imagine how there can be enough business to keep all these little shops alive. Many do not seem to have any customers when I look into them.

Just as I began to think I was getting a feel for the layout of these shops and how closely packed they were, I came to an archway that opened into a parking lot full of motorbikes. Next to it, filling the inside of the large block I was on, was what looked at first like a flea market of still more shops. They were as tiny as flea market stalls, and the aisles between them were so narrow that I sometimes had to turn sideways to let someone past. But they were all selling new and quality merchandise, just like the shops on the streets. And the stalls were permanent structures with metal roofs that extended out to meet each other over the aisles. As I first walked along the edge of this mass and looked down the aisles, I couldn't see through to the other end, they were so long and narrow. I eventually walked the length of several of them, carefully keeping track of my direction so that I could get back out.

And of course, I was more aware than ever, in these close quarters, of my size and appearance as an American. These people are almost universally shy but friendly, very mild and polite, and I'm glad of that because if they weren't I would be very vulnerable in a place like that. I occasionally ran across some teenage boys in slightly outrageous clothes, whose attitudes in America would make me try to keep my distance. Here though they seem mostly interested in saying "Hallo" and giggling.

Well, my goodness. There is a balcony outside my window here, with a cement (what else?) railing. A few minutes ago, two pigeons landed there, and just now one climbed on the other's back and they copulated. I've never seen that before. It's hard to believe it works, though the number of pigeons here suggests that they must have the hang of it. They left as soon as they were done. Didn't even stop for a cigarette.

### **Thursday, February 7, AM**

Just to take advantage of the service that they give me here, I am now writing this in the car as my driver takes me from my hotel to the training center where I teach. It is a beautiful sunny day right now, hardly typical of the weather since I've been here, which has been mostly cloudy and often rainy.

Mr. Hwang, my driver, doesn't speak very much English, but he does speak some and he has been trying to tell me something about his younger sister. It seems that she has an American father and an American mother, both of whom are here at the science industrial park. I can't quite figure it out. His younger sister, he says, is also an engineer who works there.

Ah, I see the training center up ahead, so I will continue this later.

### Thursday, February 7, PM

I brought the laptop with me to work today in hopes that I might be able to transfer the files, such as this one, to a floppy disk by hooking it up to a regular computer here. I'll try that this afternoon after class. Meanwhile, I have it with me now, during the break that I always have after lunch before I begin the afternoon session. So I will use the opportunity to describe last evening.

Christina Liu called me from the lobby a little after 9:00 and asked if I was still game to go out. I was; I had been looking forward to it. I went down, and she introduced me to her husband, John. We went out into the city, and for some time we walked the streets, much as I had done by myself for the last couple of days. However, this time I had them with me to explain what I was seeing, and that helped a lot.

I learned, for example, a little about their "barber shops." I guess they have barber shops without the quote marks too, but the interesting ones are marked by multicolored barber poles, done in spiraling, colored lights, and these are somehow not respectable. I never did figure out exactly what goes on in these places. John and Christina seemed to have difficulty talking about it because John was apparently not supposed to know too much about them. It is not clear whether he knew or not. At one point it sounded like they were sex-oriented massage parlors, but then we saw one that appeared to be just a hotel that rented rooms by the hour.

Everywhere you go there are stands selling food of all sorts. They told me that one dish, something with noodles and meatballs, is supposed to be very good here, but they said they wouldn't try it because they didn't trust it to be sanitary. They said that the local people (Christina and John are from Taipei, not Hsinchu) have acquired immunity to whatever one can catch by eating it, because of eating it all their lives, but they haven't been doing that. I will never know, and neither will they, what we are missing. One of my students today said that this food really isn't very good anyway, not nearly as good as in Taipei.

We visited a very famous Taoist temple that is right in the middle of all these shops. It is hundreds of years old and filled with extraordinary forbidding-looking statues of Taoist gods. Some sort of celebration was going on for the birthday of one of the gods, I was told, and so there were men dressed in bright colored costumes singing, chanting, and playing various instruments including a drum, a gong, and a trumpet. Unfortunately, the sounds they made sounded to my ears like what you'd get if a bunch of kids picked up instruments that they had never seen before.

Just outside the temple, across a small courtyard filled with food stands and a crowd of people, was a stage. A Taiwanese opera was going on, involving three women in costume speaking and occasionally singing. It was hard to hear them because of the noises from the group inside the temple (which is wide open, by the way), but they sounded like they had a bit more talent than the others. We listened to all of this for a while and then moved on.

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Delongdong Baoan Temple, Taipei, from Web 2023

Eventually Christina asked if I wanted to go to a KTV, and of course I said yes. So we found one nearby that they hadn't visited before but had heard good things about, and soon we were settled into a tiny room with two microphones and a TV. We picked songs and sang for an hour. They also ordered drinks and some dishes of nuts and fruits. This was good because, unlike the other night, they were primarily interested in singing Chinese songs, and I had nothing else to do during those except to listen and eat and drink. I ate a fistful of pistachios and candied cashews. I gather that Christina fancies herself quite a singer, and that she practices particular songs in these places. They also sing duets that they have worked on together. These are quite pretty, though John really wasn't much of a singer.

Now, as to Christina's voice, you'll recall that I discovered on the phone earlier that she sounds like a duck. That isn't nearly so obvious when she sings, for her voice is high and clear, and she sings very well. I enjoyed listening to her. However, as I thought about this and looked at her, I suddenly saw a very definite resemblance to Huey, Dewey, and Louie. She has a very wide flat face, like many Chinese of course, that somehow contributes to that impression. I still think she is very pretty, but this impression did undermine that a bit.

Speaking of faces, that reminds me of a conversation with one of my students a few days ago. She said that she was a very good friend, from when they were in school together, with a

Harry Ho who had done a Ph.D. at Michigan, and she wanted to know if I knew him. Now I remembered my student Mr. Ho from many years ago, but I never knew of him as Harry, not at all. After some confusion trying to match what I knew of him to what she knew, I finally recalled his Chinese name, Chih Chin, and it was the same person. But before that, she tried to describe him to me, and her description was primarily that he had a "baby face." My immediate thought was that all Chinese have baby faces, but I didn't say it.

Back to the KTV, I didn't enjoy this one as much as the other one, last week. It was partly the establishment, which didn't have as many English selections and was slow to put them on, so that we spent a good deal of time waiting. But more so it was the people I was with. They seemed to take it all too seriously, and they hardly ever sang along with me on the English songs, so it wasn't as much of a group activity. Also, the two of them seem to have very much of a Yuppy attitude toward life, and that made me uncomfortable.

OK, I'd better stop now and take a few minutes to decide what I am going to say this afternoon. I am making better progress than I did earlier in the week through the outline, but unfortunately that means that I have to prepare more.

Later...

Crap! I've now tried using two different computers to copy my files to a disk, and neither one of them worked. I got the file transfer program to run on both with no problem, and I was able to connect my cable to them as well. But somehow the two couldn't communicate, and I don't know why. It's not important, I hope, but I would have felt reassured if I had backup copies of these files somewhere before I start traveling again. I particularly don't want to lose all that I've written in this journal. Oh, well.

I'm also in a foul mood because what I thought was going to be a simple dinner with several of my students has turned into something more formal and therefore uncomfortable. At noon today I finally was introduced to Director Mao, who is the head of this training center, and who apparently had been too busy to meet me earlier. He asked to have coffee with me after class, which I did, and he also is going to host "a nice dinner party" for me this evening. Some students will still be there, thank goodness, but I know it is not going to be nearly as much fun. It will be more like the two dinners I went to last week. Again, oh well.

The class, at least, is going well. I'm just about exactly a day behind my schedule, so that tomorrow, Friday, I'll have enough to say with just what I have prepared so far. That means that I won't really touch on the issue of trade liberalization that I had scheduled for that day, but I hadn't figured out what I would say about that anyway. Hopefully if I have a few minutes left I will be able to make up something on the fly.

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The students have asked that we move the class to earlier in the day tomorrow, and that's fine with me. We'll do three hours in the morning and only one in the afternoon, and therefore be done earlier for driving back to Taipei.

### **Saturday, February 9, PM Taipei**

Ah, I've fallen behind again. Here is it, Saturday night, late, and it is my last night in Taipei. I finished my teaching and have been kept busier than ever by my hosts, who seem to be very concerned that I will not have anything to do. I of course would have liked some time to work, especially so that I can prepare my two talks for Monday in Korea, but I have trouble explaining this to them. This is especially true with Matt Lee, who has an infectious enthusiasm for taking me around Taipei. I do enjoy what he shows me and what he tells me, and I find it all very interesting. It would be a shame to visit a country and only work.

Thursday night I did go to a dinner party hosted by Director Mao. It was in the best restaurant in the industrial park, and it was indeed nice. It was another big round table, half filled with distinguished gentlemen such as Director Mao, and half filled, thank goodness, with my students. I had them to talk to and didn't have to constantly make conversation with the gentlemen.

What I did have to do constantly, it seemed, was drink. Director Mao started the evening by asking me if I would like some wine. By declining I hoped I would avoid the rice wine that had been a feature of the previous two big dinners. They seemed disappointed and talked me into having Taiwan beer instead. And then they also served me the rice wine anyway and started the routine of toasting again. They seemed to expect so much of me in this ritual that I finally asked the man next to me – the same Dean I'd met at lunch on Monday – to explain the ritual to me. I'm sorry I did. He explained it all right, including the fact that when they say "bottoms up" it is a great honor, and it is rude not to drain your glass. Somehow it seemed to be OK for him not to do it, but because I was younger, he seemed to say, I would have to drink. I tried briefly responding to a toast from Director Mao by returning the toast with beer, but he quickly complained that it wasn't "equal," so I had to drink the wine.

There was a man next to Director Mao who didn't say much. It was explained to me, however, that his nickname was "Happy Guy" or something like that. Several times he toasted me, and I only took a sip of my wine. He looked like he was almost in tears, and that was what made me ask the Dean about the ritual. But by the time I had learned that I must drink it down, Happy Guy seemed too distraught to toast me anymore. Director Mao however kept it up all evening, and I soon was matching him glass for glass. He looked extraordinarily pleased every time I showed him the bottom of my empty glass after a toast, so it was clear I was doing the right thing. Fortunately, the glasses weren't much larger than thimbles.

The dinners, like the ones the week before, included many dishes that didn't much appeal to me. One of them tasted very good, though, until the Dean explained that I was eating eel. It had been shredded, so that it didn't look like eel, and it tasted a bit like beef. However, once I



knew what it was it wasn't the same. Another time a platter arrived that looked extremely good, until I learned that it was sea cucumber again. Sure enough, up close I could still see through the wobbly jelly-like beasts. I did take a taste of the end of one, but no more.

The evening wasn't as bad as this makes it sound. I did have some pleasant conversations, and of course by the end I was slightly plowed. I know that because I walked a very crooked path to the waiting car. Fortunately, the driver had not been invited to join us for dinner and was sober. I've wondered throughout this trip what the drivers do while my hosts and I are eating. The only clue I've had was once in Hualein when we returned to the car to find it had just been washed.

I was taken back to my hotel, where I spent some time packing for the trip back to Taipei on Friday. Since class had been moved earlier, I wasn't sure I'd have much time when I got up Friday morning.

Friday for breakfast I decided to yield to the temptations of their western menu by ordering a cheese omelet. By noon I was noticing that my intestines were upset. I briefly thought that the dangers of foreign water had finally caught up to me, after feeling remarkably well throughout the trip. Then I realized that it was the cheese. I had not seen a piece of cheese, until the omelet, since arriving in Taiwan. If ever I've had it confirmed that I am allergic to cheese, this is it. Damn! (I later asked someone if indeed, as I'd noticed, the Chinese do not ever eat cheese. Not at all, I was told, they eat it almost every morning for breakfast.)

I finished my teaching without mishap, put together a package of papers that I didn't need any more for Miss Cho to mail to me at home, and set out for Taipei. Miss Cho and another student, a Mr. Chiang, accompanied me in the same Cadillac that had brought me to Hsinchu on Friday. We sailed along comfortably until we reached the outskirts of Taipei, then were in stop-and-go, bumper-to-bumper traffic until we reached the hotel. The driver said that if we had set out an hour later from Hsinchu we wouldn't have reached Taipei until 8:30. As it was, the 75 minute trip only took two hours. This was my first real taste of the famous Taiwan traffic.

Miss Cho dropped me at the hotel here with a promise to pick me up Sunday at 8:30 to take me to the airport. Two hours later, Matt Lee arrived to take me to dinner, and started by promising to pick me up himself Sunday morning at 7:00. It seems he had talked to the travel bureau, which Miss Cho hadn't, and had learned that (as in Detroit) they were asking passengers to check in two and a half hours before flight time because of the extra security precautions that are in place. Indeed, he'll be here tomorrow at seven.

He and I went out to dinner Friday night to a Japanese-style steak house, similar to the ones in the States. It is called Tepanyaki here, and the cooks don't quite have all the flourishes we're used to, but the food is similar. Afterwards we had coffee in a piano bar that adjoined the restaurant. Piano bars are common here, apparently. This one had a piano player of

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indeterminant race who looked like Gary Shandling, plus a succession of male and female singers singing American standards. As far as I could tell, their main accomplishment was to make it hard for Matt and me to hear each other talk, but I guess if you are going to entertain a guest, you've got to go to someplace like that. We talked at length and then eventually returned to the hotel.

Back here I found a phone message to call one of my students, Cheryl Tseng. I called her and found that she was very concerned, like everyone else, that I be sufficiently entertained over the weekend. I assured her that Matt had taken me well in hand, though she seemed disappointed and made me promise that I'd let her show me some of Taipei's parks the next time I'm here.

This morning I got up early but spent a peaceful few hours doing a bit of work and not much else. Pei Chen had told me last week, or so I thought, that he would call me about having lunch together, so I had told Matt that I wouldn't be free until two. I wondered if Pei Chen and I had really understood each other, and figured I would wait until about ten thirty to call him if he hadn't called first. On the dot of ten thirty he did call, and he said he would be here at eleven thirty. Perfect.

I did indeed meet him and have lunch with him. I insisted on charging it to my room, so that I hope it will be paid by the government. That is what Matt had told me to do, though later today he seemed to be less sure that had been appropriate. We did it anyway and had a lunch that I think may have cost over \$100. Some of it was extremely good, including, to my surprise, a large piece of shark fin. Shark fin is like no other meat I've ever eaten; it is so fibrous and tender that it is more like eating very fine noodles than meat.

Pei Chen seemed delighted to meet me and to talk about Marsi and other things. As a geologist he was able to tell me a great deal about the Taroko Gorge that I had visited last weekend. And we talked about his experiences in various cities in the United States. It was a pleasant lunch, slightly like talking to Wolf Stolper on a good day.

After that, Matt took me shopping. We first went to a mass of tiny shops that were underneath an elevated highway. Most of them seemed to specialize in electronics of one sort or another, and there was one selling computer chips in bulk, like I've never seen before. We didn't find anything useful, though.

Then we went to the biggest department store in Taipei. It is a Japanese-owned store called Sogo. It was mobbed with people, as were the streets, because this is the last good shopping day before their New Year. The Chinese New Year is like our Christmas, in that many presents are given (though only from the old to the young, he said, which I found hard to understand). Our trip to this department store was more successful than I had hoped, so I really didn't have any more shopping that I wanted to do after that.

We went to a little cafe for coffee, then walked the streets for a while longer before dinner. I took a careful look at some of the American fast-food joints that are here – McDonalds, Wendy's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, Dunkin' Donuts, Hardees, just to name a few.

Parts of Taipei are torn up right now because they are starting construction of a rapid transit system. For a city this size it is amazing that they don't have a subway, and even now what they are building is an elevated train, not a subway. It will go right down the middle of the main boulevard that we were walking along, the middle of which is filled with grass and many trees. Matt pointed out that these trees have all been numbered with metal tags. He explained that these trees will all be transplanted elsewhere in the city while construction takes place, then moved back to this street in their same locations afterwards. These were pretty big trees, but they weren't anything special, and I find this an amazing procedure. Why not just plant some new trees? Surely most of these old ones won't survive being transplanted twice. And in any case, why worry about getting them back in their same places?

We ate at the new and very modern Regent Hotel, where we went because of a buffet that Matt had heard about but never tried. He still hasn't tried it, because we couldn't get in without a reservation. So, we went upstairs to an American-style steakhouse that had hardly any customers. I must admit that I really enjoyed the American food, including a salad bar with Caesar dressing (they didn't have Ranch), a baked potato with butter and sour cream, and a rib eye steak which I asked for rare so that it arrived on the rare side of medium.

The salad bar deserves some mention, since the Chinese don't seem to have learned that the purpose of a salad bar is to save work for the cooks. There were five or six kinds of lettuce, each in a separate bowl with the individual leaves arranged like a bouquet. There were bowls of sliced tomatoes, mushrooms, and other fixings, with every single slice neatly arranged in some sort of design. Despite the beauty of it, I wasn't sure that I could make a salad that I would like the taste of, but as it turned out it was delicious.

Again we sat and talked at length, about everything from the history of the Republic of China to the girl who dumped Matt two years ago and is marrying an engineer later this month. He is full of questions, too, about American ways, including American etiquette, which I think he hopes to master in case his government ever posts him there. I told most of what I could, and I hope I was right. On some things I realize that I've never paid enough attention to know. One thing I do know, however, that I couldn't bring myself to tell him, was that you don't talk with your mouth full. He does it, and I don't know whether it is something other Chinese do or not. I was afraid that, if it is not polite for Chinese either, then he would be very embarrassed if I pointed it out.

After dinner we walked briskly the several blocks back to my hotel. Taipei traffic is so bad that you'd think an attempt at a brisk walk would be interrupted repeatedly by waiting to cross at the corners. Wrong! They have built pedestrian walkways, either underground or overground, at most intersections. So we were able to keep our pace most of the way. Matt

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complemented me on both my good health and my lifestyle, the latter because I had once mentioned walking for exercise. He put it to the test then, along the way mentioning that he is a cross-country runner. I asked if he had run in a marathon. He said only a few. I was grateful that he didn't walk any faster than Pat does, and I only had to run slowly to keep up.

One of the underground passageways was astonishing. At the entrance there was a pipe, either water or electrical conduit, hanging down from the ceiling so that we had to duck under it. Matt said that this one was ready for repairs, and sure enough, through the whole passageway the floor and walls were crumbling, and we had to step over puddles and running water. Yet this didn't deter the Chinese, crowds of whom were passing through while we were. In spite of how modern and clean much of the city is, they seem to put up with a degree of dinginess that we would find appalling.

Well, that catches me up. Tomorrow I fly to Seoul, and I'll start another file there. I do hope I get a chance on the plane to plan something to say in my two seminars on Monday.

### **WEEK 3**

#### **Sunday, February 10, PM, Seoul**

Another day, another country. Ho, hum. I'd say I was getting blasé about traveling, if I hadn't felt a good deal of anxiety about traveling today. It wasn't the flight that I worried about. It was getting to Korea and finding that nobody was expecting me. Since it had been two weeks since I had heard from my students in Korea, I imagined that somehow my visit might have fallen through, and I didn't know it. I would get off the plane, find nobody waiting, and waste a thousand dollars on a stopover that would serve no purpose and wouldn't be reimbursed. Besides, I wasn't sure I wanted to see Korea anyway.

Well, of course, it didn't work out that way. There was indeed nobody meeting me at the plane, but then my students don't have the clout of the Taiwan government to get through security. As soon as I had cleared immigration and customs, though, and was looking for a familiar face in the crowd waiting beyond the barrier, an unfamiliar face became unmistakably excited about seeing me and practically ran to get over to where I was. This was Honggue Lee, whose face, even after spending the rest of the day with him, I am still having difficulty placing. Wook Chae also appeared a few minutes later, and I had no trouble recognizing him. I must have been sleeping throughout Honggue's years at Michigan.

I perked right up with this greeting from the two of them, and I've had a fine day ever since. I'll tell about it in due course. First, though, I've got a couple of other matters to deal with.

Matt Lin picked me up at the hotel and helped me to check out. Unfortunately, since yesterday he had learned that the government's accounting department would not accept the charge for my lunch yesterday with Pei Chen, which Matt had originally told me I should charge. That was why I hadn't let Pei pay. In Taipei. That has a nice sound to it. I'm getting silly.

So now Matt wanted me to pay the charge myself which, incredibly I know, was over \$100. Naturally I wasn't anxious to do that, but I understood and didn't want to get Matt in trouble. On the other hand, I couldn't see any reason why I should pay for my own lunch, only Pei's, since the arrangement throughout my visit had been that the government paid my own way. But we didn't know how to handle this. So, I convinced Matt that he should put the charge through the accounting department anyway, and if they bounce it I'll pay it. Of course, I'll argue about it first. In fact, when I send Miss Cho my other expenses I'll explain the situation. And I'll also mention, now that it occurs to me, that I skipped lunch completely on both Thursday and Friday of the preceding week. That was more out of nervousness about my seminars those days than anything else, but it evidently saved the government a bundle, given the apparent cost of eating in the hotel. I hope Matt is at ease about this. I couldn't tell whether he was more concerned about the money or about the need to make me pay it, but he was certainly concerned.

Matt was determined to assure me special treatment at the airport, and he was also looking forward himself to seeing the VIP lounge, where I would wait. To get the special treatment he had a form all filled out in Chinese that was supposed to accomplish that. But at the airport he was told that, with my first-class ticket, I would get special treatment anyway. He also was told that he couldn't wait in the VIP lounge. He did however usher me into it, so he did get to see it, but then he had to leave. I thanked him profusely for all his help, he told me that it had been an honor, I told him it had been a pleasure, etc. Then he left. Then he came back, because he had forgotten to pass along some meaningless pleasantries from his Director. Then he left again, and that was the last I saw of him. I'll have to write him; he was a wonderful guy.

The VIP lounge was just the Northwest World Club, and it wasn't nearly as nice as the one in Detroit. I guess that is not surprising, in an airport where they only have one flight a day. But it was a lot better than the big waiting room in the terminal.

I got to talking with a man from Grand Rapids. He seemed younger than me, but I learned that he has two kids in their twenties. Of course, he could still be younger than me. He was on his way back to Grand Rapids after living for two years in Taiwan. He worked for a shoe company selling Hushpuppies, and the company has now dropped the line and he has lost his job. He was heading back to Grand Rapids to try to make it on his own. At one point he mentioned that he wished he had paid more attention to things other than shoes, since he was sure there were many other opportunities in Taiwan if he had paid attention. It was sad.

He also mentioned that his wife had continued to live in Grand Rapids, where she is a teacher, and had only visited him in Taiwan during summers and vacations. Sadder.

His son is doing well, but his daughter is the sort who can't do anything right. She keeps dropping out of school without telling anyone. She and her mother are always at each other's

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throats (though having him gone, he thought, had helped). Her mother was fed up with her, but he really wanted her to get an education and was always willing to give her another chance. Saddest.

It was time to go to the gate, and he and I walked together towards it, but he stopped to reorganize his bags and I didn't talk to him again.

Whoever told Matt that I would get special treatment was mistaken. I waited in line like everybody else, had to open all my bags, empty all my pockets, and be felt up from crotch to armpit. (For this purpose, they had separate lines for men and women. There was no indication of the sexual preferences of the people who checked us.) It's a good thing Matt wasn't there. He would have been mortified at the indignity visited upon his charge.

I had the same seat on this flight as on the flight out. This time the seat next to me was occupied by an older Asian gentleman, who I figured wouldn't say much. I was right about that, but he was quiet because he was reading the latest book by Andy Rooney. He spoke enough to tell me, in unaccented American, that he watches Rooney every Sunday night so he figured he might as well read his book.

In Seoul, before leaving the customs area, I found a bank and tried to change my Taiwan dollars [Taiwan's currency is the Taiwan dollar, worth today about US\$0.03] for Korean won. No luck. They won't change Taiwan dollars anywhere in Korea, I was told. I knew that Taiwan is sort of an international outcast country, but this was my first sign of it, except for hearing once, earlier, that they identify with South Africa.

From the airport, Wook and Honggue drove me to my hotel. Wook has a very large Hyundai, which he says he bought in Chicago because it is cheaper there than in Korea where it was built. He drove us through a city that felt much bigger, more modern, and cleaner than Taipei. The traffic and pollution were almost as bad, however, and this was only a Sunday. The hotel



Hotel Shilla, Seoul, from Web 2023

they brought me to, Hotel Shilla, is one of the biggest and, according to them, the nicest in Seoul. It is certainly nice. The room isn't as big or as new as at the Lai Lai Sheraton where I stayed in Taipei, but it has almost all the amenities. There is no lint brush, however.

I think I mentioned before that Taipei seemed confused as to what sort of electrical outlets it had, in that I found three different types in different parts of the country. Here all the outlets I've seen are just like in America, so that is much simpler, right? Not quite. The room provides an electric hair dryer with a European style plug that won't plug in anywhere that I can find. Fortunately, the hair dryer I brought with me works fine. I found that so fascinating that I wanted to mention it to Honggue and Wook, but they seemed so proud of the hotel that I didn't want to disillusion them.

They gave me my revised schedule, which now has me giving two seminars on Wednesday instead of tomorrow. It also has me being interviewed by a newspaper, the Choong-Ang Economic Daily, tomorrow. I guess if you are going to have a daily newspaper about economics, it makes sense to interview visiting economists, though I can't imagine what I will be asked, or what I will say.

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This evening they took me to dinner at the Sheraton Walker Hill, another hotel that was quite a distance from this one. As we went, I wondered why we would go so far out of our way just to eat at another hotel. It turned out that this dinner was combined with a stage show. The room was almost identical to the one where we saw Jay Leno at Caesar's Palace, filled mostly with long tables running perpendicular to the stage. However, halfway back there were some well-padded booths, and this is where we sat, just the three of us. It was very comfortable and must have cost quite a bit extra.

The stage show ran for close to two hours and was mostly "production numbers." The first part of the show was traditional Korean dance and music, some of which was very beautiful, but most of which seemed awkward and amateurish, though it clearly wasn't. The production values were incredible, with at one point a line of female costumed drummers the width of the theater descending out of the ceiling overhead.



The second part of the show was western and was mostly patterned after the stage shows in Paris, I guess. This meant that there were a great many woman dancers wearing nothing but G-strings and occasional other pieces of costume that didn't cover anything anyone would want to see. There were also men, also occasionally topless, though I don't think they attracted as much attention.

I got pretty tired of the production numbers, bare breasts or not. But in the middle of the show, they had two different bits that made up for it. One was a magician and his assistant, doing some bits that I've seen before but that never fail to amaze me. He levitated his assistant very effectively. And he did a dance by himself with a stick that appeared to have a life of its own, and I loved that.

The other bit was a man and woman in the center of an empty stage on a slowly rotating turntable. Both were made up entirely in gold paint with bits of glitter, so that they looked almost like naked gold statues. They moved slowly to music, forming various poses, many with him holding her up in the air. He must have been remarkably strong. At one point he stood on his hands with his own body arching upward, her holding onto his back and arching



out the other way. Another time they somehow managed to have both of their bodies extending horizontally outward in opposite directions, supported only by his arms in the middle. It was all amazing and beautiful at the same time.

I should perhaps mention that none of these people looked the least bit Korean, except during the opening part with the Korean dancers and singers. This was evidently a western show. And incidentally, they told me that more than half of the audience was Japanese. The Japanese are big (make that frequent) tourists here.

At the end of the show, Honggue and Wook paid the check. I tried to get them to let me pay my share, but they wouldn't hear of it. Honggue explained to me that in the Confucian teachings, the same respect is to be accorded to one's father, one's teacher, and one's king. They would feel terrible, he said, if they were not allowed to honor me this way.

## **Tuesday, February 12, PM**

It is just after midnight, but I'll pretend it is still Tuesday.

Monday morning, I checked out the menus at the three restaurants in this hotel that serve breakfast, then decided to eat up here on my floor. It is an "executive floor," which means that there is a special lounge near the elevators where we can get all sorts of service, apparently for free. This includes breakfast, and that's where I've eaten the last two days. It is very comfortable, with tables overlooking the scenery, soft couches, and easy chairs. I eat some juice and rolls at a table, then move with my coffee to an easy chair and read for a while. It is very nice.

Honggue was supposed to come at 10:30, call me from the lobby, and then introduce me to the journalist who was going to interview me. At 10:40 the phone rang, but it was the journalist, a Mr. Sung, not Honggue. I went down and met the fellow, and we talked for a while, but he did not seem eager to start the interview without Honggue. When Honggue arrived, a little later, I found out why: the journalist didn't think his English was good enough and wanted to conduct the interview in Korean with Honggue translating. That worked fine, although it was slow. By the way, before Honggue arrived a photographer who was with Mr. Sung took a bunch of pictures of me, then left.

The interview was actually pretty easy. He asked mostly about topics from trade policy about which I had either information or opinions, so I was able to answer most of them at some length. He also threw in a couple of questions that I didn't have much to say about, but there had been enough of the other kind that I felt comfortable admitting my ignorance. Near the end he asked what I thought was wrong with the Korean economy, and I'm afraid I didn't decline to answer, as I probably should have. I first explained that I knew very little about the Korean economy and certainly hadn't been here enough to have informed opinions, but then I

## 2. Taiwan-Korea 1991

went right ahead and suggested that their markets need to be more competitive. I hope that doesn't get played up too big, since I really didn't have much basis for saying it, though fortunately everything I have learned since has continued to suggest that I was right. In any case, the interview appeared in today's paper, in Korean of course, so at some point, after I get it translated, I'll find out how it came across. Honggue thought the reporter did a good job. It remains to be seen how good a job Honggue did.

After the interview we had lunch, Honggue and I, in a Korean restaurant in the hotel. As a main course we had a popular dish that I really liked. I haven't managed to learn the name, but it was very thinly sliced pieces of beef rib meat, grilled at the table. They cut it as it grills with scissors into pieces maybe an inch square. Then to eat it you take a leaf of romaine lettuce, put a small dab of a dark sauce on it, similar to the sauce for Moo Shu Pork, place the piece of meat on top of that, and fold the lettuce around it like a little package. You eat it then with your hands, and it is messy but delicious. I'd love to try something like that at home.

The custom here seems to be that after the main course of a meal you are offered your choice of either rice or noodles. At Honggue's suggestion we had noodles, and these came, to my surprise, cold in a huge bowl of cold broth. They weren't bad, but they sure weren't what I expected.

Next Honggue drove me to KIEP, Wook's institute, not Honggue's, and dropped me off. I chatted with the institute's president, Dr. Kim, and then gave my seminar on dumping. I had been led to expect that the group might be small, but it seemed large to me, and the room wouldn't have held many more. We were in a long narrow room with modern dark wooden tables, desks really, arranged in a long open rectangle with the audience on both sides. Dr. Kim and I sat at the end, side by side, and each person had a little microphone/speaker device in front of him, the same as I had seen at my first seminar in Taipei.

I gave my talk, stopping briefly in the middle and at the end for questions and comments, and at those points got quite a bit of discussion. It was all very friendly and some of it informative. The audience included a "dumping investigator" from their Department of Finance and a staff member from the Korean Trade Commission, which investigates injury in dumping cases. They were experts, but I felt I held my own. In fact, I was amazed with the amount of knowledge that I discovered I had on this topic.

After the seminar I drank tea and chatted again for a few minutes with Dr. Kim, while Wook apparently went off to a bank to get some money for me. I knew that was what he was doing, since he had to get me to sign something and lend him my passport before he did it. But I was still astonished when he returned and handed me an envelope with 20 \$100 bills (U.S.). This included \$1000 for my air fare and \$1000 for my honorarium. This was much larger than I had expected or even hoped for, and he told me that this was just for that seminar. The other institute, KDI, will be paying me separately. Wow, I can hardly wait. Of course, there is no reason to think that KDI will pay as much, since apparently the two institutes are competitors and probably therefore don't tell each other what they are doing. But one can hope.

Before long, Dr. Kim took me in a large car with a driver to the restaurant where we would be having dinner. I pictured yet another of those big round tables with distinguished gentlemen drinking toasts at me. Wrong! First, before we ever got to the table, we had to take off our shoes. You step out of them before entering the main part of the restaurant, and a girl is there to take charge of them. I don't know how she keeps track of which are which, but my shoes did appear magically after dinner when we were ready to leave, without me saying anything.

Next, we went into the room where we would be eating, and I found not a round table, but a rectangular one, and it was only about six inches off the floor. There were thin pillows at each place, and we all sat down cross-legged. Actually, we didn't all sit down because we weren't all there yet. For the next few minutes, the rest of the guests dribbled in, and I generally felt compelled for each of them to rise to my feet to be introduced, which wasn't easy, starting from the floor. In one case I tried making it through the introduction while still seated, since the others had seemed to indicate that standing wasn't expected. But shaking hands while sitting on my ass with a man standing over me, even a short one, was even more awkward.

There were no toasts, except for one general "cheers" as we all hoisted our beers for the first time. I hope that wasn't because I had already happened to mention the excessive toasting in Taiwan, perhaps in disparaging tones. They offered me beer or wine, and seemed surprised when I took beer. Then to my surprise all but one of them had beer too, and I wondered if they only ordered it to make me feel more comfortable. But when I noted that Dr. Kim had gotten some sort of highball, perhaps a gin and tonic, I decided that they might just prefer beer.

Finally, most of these were not "gentlemen" like I'd seen in Taiwan. They were young and very new Ph.D.'s in economics from America, and I found them very comfortable to talk to. In fact, the whole evening was comfortable, if a little long, except for the state of my knees when I tried to stand after it all.

On the way out after dinner, I started to pass the men's room and then decided I should probably stop in before the drive back to the hotel. I noticed some pairs of slippers on the floor outside the door before I went in, and I even asked someone if I was expected to put them on before going in. I was told "not necessarily," and since I find that kind of slippers awkward to wear, I didn't. I should have. I hadn't anticipated the uneasiness I would feel using a public urinal in my stocking feet, especially the kind that extends down to the floor.

I was to be brought back here by Wook. The restaurant had valet parking, and I walked outside to find Wook digging through his pockets trying to find the ticket to retrieve his car. He spent some time looking for it and looking also rather distraught, finally gave up and persuaded the valet to get his car without it. That worked, fortunately.

## 2. Taiwan-Korea 1991

Back at the hotel, I lay down on the bed vaguely thinking that I would either do a little work or read my novel. I woke up a couple of hours later just long enough to get ready for bed, and slept through, more or less, until morning. I can't believe how sleepy I find myself some of these nights.

I dreamed a lot, incidentally. In one of the dreams, I paid somebody a thousand dollars by sending it in cash through the mail, from the money KIEP had paid me. Then I realized how stupid that had been and was preparing to explain to Pat how I had earned all this money and then lost it. I was relieved when I woke up and found it was a dream. I put the money in a safe deposit box later this morning. Always heed your dreams, right?

Honggue had said that he would come for me, once again, at 10:30. At dinner last night Wook had mentioned, more to the group than to me, that he and Honggue had each tried to persuade the other to take me sightseeing today. That threw me for a minute, until he explained further that both are so recently moved to Seoul, since graduate school, that neither feels he knows the area well enough to show it to me. Dr. Kim suggested that I should just take a public tour, and I thought that made sense. So, this morning I got information from the hotel about such a tour that I could take this afternoon.

Honggue called, somewhat after 10:30, to tell me that he would be late. I tried to talk him into not coming at all and just letting me take the tour, but he wouldn't hear of it. He said he had plans to take me to a place that he also wanted to see. So I agreed. He showed up, close to 11:30, and said that, since the place we were going was outside of Seoul, the food wouldn't be as good, so we should eat here in the hotel first.

At his suggestion we went this time to a Chinese restaurant here. For the most part I enjoyed it more than the Chinese food I'd had in Taiwan. Perhaps Korean Chinese food is a step closer to American Chinese food. I even was able to eat a whole sea cucumber this time, and even liked it, sort of. It was in the same dish with, among other things, a pale-yellow egg-shaped vegetable about half an inch long. I'd had it before in Taiwan, and asked what it was. Lo and behold it was a Ginkgo nut! Now I've had them as they are supposed to taste, and they aren't bad. They aren't good either, in my opinion, kind of pasty in texture and not much flavor, but they aren't actually bad. And Honggue said they are essential to this kind of dish – something called Eight Treasures – which wouldn't taste the same without them. I told him our story of collecting Ginkgoes from the trees in our neighborhood.

After lunch we set out for the attraction that Honggue wanted to show me. In English it is called Independence Hall, but that is misleading. The approach to it reminded me of Cedar Point, with a large parking lot and a long walkway leading up to the entrance, and it included several buildings arranged in a kind of park, with concession stands and the like dotted around it. However, there were very few people.



Independence Hall, from Wikipedia 2023

We parked near the entrance, but then had to walk a great distance to get to anything to see. There were some sculptures, statues, and such, and then we entered the first of nine exhibit halls. These were quite large and included exhibits detailing the complete history of Korea. We only made it through three or four of them before the place closed, at five, so I only learned the history through about 1919. Surprisingly, I found it fascinating. I hadn't known, of course, about the succession of kingdoms and dynasties, with Korea alternately taking over other countries and then being taken over itself, that lasted for thousands of years. More surprisingly, I also hadn't known about the "annexation" of Korea by Japan in 1910, which only ended in 1945, and during which the Japanese apparently treated the Koreans like dirt. Honggue was embarrassed by the exhibits for this period, which were blatantly propaganda and presumably quite exaggerated. But from what I've heard about the atrocities committed by other countries in similar circumstances, I don't find it too hard to believe that the Japanese did much of what was described. They spoke of horrible torturing that was done, and also attempts at more subtle brainwashing by controlling the education system and rewriting history. What is amazing to me is that, after 35 years of this, the Japanese couldn't bring at least the new generation of Koreans around to their point of view. But they clearly didn't.

## 2. Taiwan-Korea 1991

The other thing I learned in one of the earlier exhibits was about the Korean alphabet and system of writing. I had been aware, since I arrived, that the Koreans use a different set of characters than the Chinese. They look simpler and blunter, very much like the Koreans themselves. I thought it rather typical that the Koreans had asserted their independence of the Chinese by creating their own characters but keeping the awkwardness of having a character system at all instead of a phonetic alphabet. Boy, was I wrong.

The Koreans do have a phonetic alphabet, including just 14 consonants and 10 vowels, and unlike English each corresponds to a single sound. Then they use these symbols, in groups for each syllable, to form the characters that appear as their writing. A typical character includes three symbols, one each for the beginning, middle and end of the syllable, but more or fewer symbols can be combined in a character as the sound of the syllable requires. Using this system, they can represent pretty much any sound, including words in English. Yet since each word requires only as many characters as there are syllables, the writing is more compact. Finally, it has the potential of combining the logic of a phonetic alphabet with the beauty of the Chinese characters, though I don't think the Koreans do nearly as nice a job of drawing these as the Chinese do.

We left the park at 5:30 and drove back to Seoul to meet Wook for dinner at 7:00. We got into a traffic jam, though, and didn't make it back until 8:30. I didn't have to drive, of course, so I didn't have to deal with the traffic directly. However, the highway was filled with buses spewing exhaust, and I got to feeling pretty sick a few times. I was awfully glad when we did finally get back.

Wook was still waiting, looking very concerned, though relieved when he learned it was just the traffic. He had with him a Ph.D. alum of IPPS, who knew me but whom I didn't know, named Choi. He was quite a talker for a Korean, and he put me off at first, but I soon got to liking him a lot. The four of us ate in the Italian restaurant in the hotel, and we reminisced about Ann Arbor. Choi noted that he's met many Ph.D.'s from America here, and none miss the towns where they got their Ph.D. except those from Ann Arbor. Judging also from the things that Honggue and Wook were saying, that is surely right. I was ready at one point to lead a chorus of "Hail to the Victors."

OK, it's late and I have to do my last two seminars tomorrow. Good night.

### **Wednesday, February 13, PM**

I just got back and Pat called. I was glad she did. I'm getting anxious to get home.

The day, with its two seminars, went well I think, though it didn't feel hugely successful. Honggue seemed concerned that I might feel that my audience this morning hadn't been appreciative, since they didn't communicate that, and he explained that Koreans are not expressive. I've gathered that.

This being the last day before the holiday here, everyone I met was a bit frazzled, trying to finish things up before then. In fact, the holiday starts for most people at noon, so the audience for my afternoon seminar was doing me a special favor. I appreciated that.

Honggue was especially frazzled, not because of the holiday but because of me. He got to work this morning to find that a newspaper wanted a story about my seminar, and they wanted it within the hour. The request came, not directly from the newspaper where I think he might have ignored it, but from his superiors at KDI. And what was wanted was a layman's explanation of what I would be talking about. Unfortunately, the paper I was presenting may well be impossible to describe in that way. I'll be very interested to see, if I ever do, what he wrote about it.

After the seminar we drove through a good deal of Seoul to get to a restaurant, where we met Won Tack Hong for lunch. He is apparently a most distinguished professor of international trade at Seoul National University. I had heard of him because he is the editor of a journal, and I had asked to meet him. At lunch I didn't like him much. He seemed too self-important and quite sexist. Later I warmed toward him a little, but he still is not my favorite person I have met on this trip.

The afternoon seminar was marked by a surprising number of questions and probing by two or three in the audience, quite unlike the usual Koreans. Of course, they were professors here, not students. It was therefore more stimulating for me than some of the other seminars, though also sometimes frustrating since some of the questions were rather stupid.

In the evening Wook and Honggue took me out to dinner to a galbi (pronounced more like "Call Be") restaurant. I'd had this on Monday and may already have described it here. But this was in a much better restaurant, one that specializes in this dish. The layout of the restaurant itself was worth seeing. There were several separate buildings in an old Asian style, each with galbi tables. These tables were each made of a slab of marble with a hole in the center, into which was placed a bucket of hot coals on which the galbi was cooked. Galbi itself is the grilled strips of beef rib that are eaten wrapped in lettuce, and this was indeed even better than on Monday.

Finally, we returned to the hotel and had a drink in the lounge. Honggue and Wook seem genuinely to have been thrilled by my visit. Wook mentioned too that he had never gotten to know me in Ann Arbor and hadn't had any sense of what I was like as a person. He didn't say so, but I got the impression that he decided I am all right. I too have gotten to know both of them as I never had before, and I like them both.

Tomorrow, we shop, and I fly home. I don't know whether I'll get another chance to write here before I get home, but I think most of what I have to say has been said.

## Thursday, February 14, PM

Well here I sit, with plenty of chance to write if my battery holds out. I am in Seattle, on the plane for Detroit, but they are holding us on the ground for another 45 minutes while they wait for the weather in Detroit to clear. That seems like a bad bet, but we'll see. We'll be leaving two hours late if they do go as they now plan, which will put me into Detroit late.

It promises to be a long day. I've already had breakfast (in the hotel), lunch (at Wendy's in Seoul), dinner, and another breakfast (both on the flight from Seoul to Seattle). Other passengers here are getting off to buy some lunch, but I don't feel hungry, and I know we'll get something to eat on this flight if it ever takes off. I've also slept about five hours, and I am thinking of this more as a second day, even though it is another Thursday.

Honggue and Wook picked me up around ten this morning and we went to the shopping street, Itaewon (E Tay Wan). It is a long street filled with shops that cater mostly to tourists, so I wasn't sure it would be that great. In fact, it was far better for me than the shopping districts of Taiwan. I guess I'm a tourist.

For some reason both Wook and Honggue drove their own cars, and I rode with Wook, whose car is bigger. We parked first on a side street, but we were concerned that we were parked illegally. I mentioned the possibility of being towed, which would have been especially troublesome since I had all my things in his trunk. He may have been worried about that anyway, without my saying anything, but in any case we walked a short distance to a drug store where he knew somebody he could ask for advice.

He introduced the manager of the store to me, though he wasn't sure whether he was his brother or his cousin. Wook's English is very good, I thought, but I guess these relationships don't arise in economics and that may be why he hadn't learned them. Or perhaps he really didn't know whether the guy was his brother or his cousin. Whichever he was, the manager suggested that indeed we shouldn't park there, and he pointed out a hotel with a public lot to which we then moved both cars. Before we left the drug store, I thought to ask if I could buy some dental floss, since I'd run out. To my surprise he had it, the same brand and type that I am used to. However, neither he nor anyone in the store could figure out the price on it, so he gave it to me as a gift.



Itaewon, Seoul, from Wikipedia 2023



After we parked successfully, we set out to shop. Neither Honggue nor Wook had ever been here to shop before, so they were as fascinated as I was. Almost the first thing we found was a store selling luggage, and I found that I could buy a very useful expandable bag for \$20. Since the things I had bought in Taipei were already filling a small extra carry-on, and since Wook had started the day by giving me a largish present that I was also going to have to carry separately, I eagerly bought this bag. It turned out that I had filled it pretty full with the things I bought after that, but as I say it was expandable. All the other things fit into it too. I think it was a good choice.

I can't remember what the next thing we looked at was, since I didn't buy it. But I do remember the price: 40,000 won (about \$60). When I turned away at hearing the price, the storekeeper lowered the price to 20,000 won, making it very clear that prices are extremely flexible here in Itaewon. We talked a bit about the need to haggle here, and that was one of the reasons why Honggue and Wook hadn't shopped here before. They hated haggling, and preferred to shop in department stores where prices are fixed.

I thought I had learned this lesson, so at a later shop where I found something I wanted, I made very negative noises when the shop keeper, this time a woman, quoted a price of 16,000 won. She didn't respond. I looked at some other things, then came back to the first and asked the price and she said 17,000 won. Oops, I pointed out what she'd said before, and she brought it back down, but only to 16,000 won. Well, I didn't buy, said I might be back, and in the end did come back because I wanted it. She was still saying 16,000 won and said she wouldn't take less. There was another item that she carried that I sort of wanted – but could have gotten elsewhere too – so I tried to strike a deal on a package. I got her prices for both items, offered her slightly less than the sum of the two for both, and was turned down flat. I don't get it. How do you haggle? I didn't really try after that.

We shopped for a while, and I found quite a few things to buy. Then we went to Wendy's for lunch. It was similar to those in the U.S., though the menu was a bit different. They didn't have double and triple hamburgers, for example, only singles. And they didn't have Ranch dressing at the salad bar. Otherwise it was quite comparable, though expensive.

After that we headed for the airport, and we got there well ahead of when we needed to. Today for once there was little traffic, apparently because everyone had already left the city for the holiday. I couldn't take two people in with me to the World Club lounge, so we had a coke together in the coffee shop and then said goodbye. Once again, they were both so enthusiastic and grateful about my visit that I was amazed. This honor for one's teacher is an amazing thing.

After they left, I waited for short periods in several places as I gradually worked my way toward the gate and through various security checks. At one point, as expected, they had me open every compartment of my briefcase and saddlebags. Then when I finished, they smiled and offered me a chocolate. I thought that was a nice touch.

## 2. Taiwan-Korea 1991

The flight from Seoul to Seattle was uneventful. I got a little work done, ate a good deal, and slept. They showed two movies, *The Two Jakes* and *Ghost*, but I pretty much slept through them.

Aha, we're moving out from the gate. It looks like we are going after all, and that I may be able to keep typing as we take off. That will be different. I thought they would ask me to put this away for takeoff, but they haven't.

We had been in the lounge here for a couple of hours, and I got a chance to do some work here too. But mainly it was too noisy to think. There was a TV on, and it was hard to ignore. Also, a man who reminded me of Bill [my brother-in-law] was sitting next to me and talking on the phone a good deal. I learned about the details of his business, which wasn't interesting. But I also heard him talk to his wife and his daughter, and heard his daughter hang up on him in the middle of an argument. Later they called his name and said he had a call, and I'll bet it was his daughter calling back. He is sitting right in front of me on the plane right now. I could lean forward and chew on his hair if I wanted to.

Well, I've run out of things to say, and we are still on the ground. I guess I won't type as we take off.

### **Thursday, February 14, PM**

Amazingly, I have another chance to write. We are sitting on the ground in Detroit, but because of the congestion of other planes, we can't make it to the terminal. They are estimating it will be another half hour before we get there. The flight is already almost two hours late.

I don't have much to say, though. I slept most of the flight. It is not a very large plane compared to the others I have flown on this trip, and there wasn't, for example, a movie to watch, even though there would have been time.

They did serve us dinner. I'm sitting in the last row of first class – there are only three – and I watched as the attendant offered a choice of linguine with meat sauce or chicken teriyaki to the people in front of me. By the time he got to me, though, the teriyaki was gone. Also I had been admiring the hard rolls that the others were getting, and those were gone too. He had to go to the back and get a couple of smaller rolls of a different kind.

As I ate, the guy in front of me (remember him?) was already finished, apparently, because he tilted his seat back in my face. I had his hair inches from my face and from my dinner the whole time I ate. I was peeved, but there was nothing I could do about it. It wasn't his fault that the seats are so close together, though I did feel repeatedly like spreading butter on his head. I had a glass of red wine, and every time he put the seat back, I had to be careful or it would have knocked over my glass.

Travels of a Trade Economist

I don't know if first class is ever worth it, given the price, but it is certainly not worth it on flights like these. That's a lesson that isn't going to do me much good, probably, since I doubt that I will have the money for first class any time soon.

We seem to be moving, finally. God, it will be good to get home.