



Americans and the Chinese keep their pets in. There were a million birds in tiny cages so they were all on top of each other, the fish were so tightly packed they didn't swim but just sat, and the cats and dogs barely seemed to be breathing they were so skinny.

Other things I witnessed in these Chinese pet markets were live cock fights and dog fights, which is highly illegal in most states. On a lighter note though, I can say proudly that I was in the actual warehouse that produces those chew sticks for dogs. That's right.....the ones that come in pink, green, and yellow.....well it was a bit smelly, and my green tea wasn't too appetizing at that moment, but cool nonetheless!

Anyone who wouldn't be crapping their pants should tell me their secret.

As this was a trade mission, we had to attend many formal receptions as well as banquets to promote the new friendships we were making, but that didn't mean they were serious. It's hard to be completely business-minded when 'all you can drink' wine and beer is being served, so as a result of maybe one too many glasses of wine I somehow convinced the Dean of the South China Agricultural University to get up on a stage and sing Happy Birthday with me to my JTC co-ordinator. I highlight this as my most memorable experience because we evidently began a huge birthday bash in the China Hotel in Guangzhou with the singing of Happy Birthday in every possible language!

Ah...good times in mainland China, now moving onto Hong Kong. If any of you have ever seen pictures of Hong Kong then multiply that by a thousand plus one and that is how awesome it really is. This is a city that never sleeps, and utterly amazing. The

instant the train doors opened we could feel the intensity that the city held. As a person who craves intensity I was ravished at the fact that we couldn't just throw our luggage in the streets and start exploring!

We had many visits to universities in Hong Kong including the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong University, and the Richard Ivy School Of Business which had views of Hong Kong Island's port that was breathtaking. As a soccer player I was immediately attracted to the Premier League-sized field that was nestled between the mountains and the water, and framed by palm trees located at the Science and Technology University. I just told them to add me to their international student list and I'd be there in September!

One of the biggest shockers to me was how green China was; Initially it was what struck me. I guess I was focussed on sushi, tai chi, and Buddha....not to mention the fact that I was anxious to see people's impression of my height of 5'11 and size five feet... I was ready for, "Hey, who's that huge girl with the huge feet?" Needless to say I didn't get that comment, but didn't necessarily come home empty handed. On two separate occasions I had my nose made fun of, hearing that is was quite fat, and I had shop owners whack me in the hiney and say "No fitta, no fitta. Too big, too big," when I was checking out the latest Chinese fashions. I guess they thought I wouldn't fit....man, I was just looking!

Now, how's about the Philippines. I was shocked at what a tropical paradise it was. Fresh coconut, mango, and bananas every morning, palm trees miles high, and Jacuzzis on every roof top... I completely forgot that I was trying to sell PEI potatoes to Asian importers. With temperatures

reaching over 40 degrees and the humidity percentage in my hotel room being 60%, it was hard to attend a meeting anything but naked!! It was in Laguna, Philippines that I got to fulfill my interest in seeing culture at it's core. Laguna is a town located 2 hours from the capital, Manila, where I was staying. For my last meeting I had the unique opportunity to visit the National Rice Institute and Genetic Research Centre, which by far out-did any of the scientific institution that I've ever visited.

Though Shanghai is one of the world's largest cities, with well over 14 million people, there was a tremendous lack of any sort of night life.

Santos Rodriguez (not the porn star), was my Filipino van driver. He rented five of us a traditional jeepney

which we took around botanical gardens in the mountains. Half way up we stopped at a village with about 12 families. Each family had a thatched roof hut with hammocks for sleeping and outhouse-type bathrooms. The children wore little clothes, and there were no signs of shoes. The floors were made of the organic clay floor of the gardens and the surrounding area was inhabited by wild chicken, dogs, snakes and iguanas. Here's where it gets hard-core though.....I gave a little (naked) boy some candy and Canada gifts and then he peed on my leg! That's right, full out urination on my leg! It was funny.

Trust me when I say that this is just a glimpse of my experience in China and the Philippines. If you see me around campus I would love to tell you more stories if you're interested in either the JTC program or China and Philippines themselves.

Cats' Facts on CHINA/PHILIPPINES

- The streets are so crowded even Dave Matthews couldn't write a song about it.
- Filipino beer costs \$0.50
- Don't eat the coconut topped jelly looking spheres for breakfast: IT'S JELLYFISH!!
- Practise chopsticks before heading to China. The waiters love to oogle over people who can "chopsticka."
- Entrance signs to malls in the Philippines state, "No Firearms Allowed." So much for pets huh?
- Philippine Airlines socks make your best friend extremely happy.

