

## Thursday seemed like an especially-long travel day

I'm used to really long travel days; my trips to France with my son (for cycling during the Tour de France) can sometimes be legendary; multiple flights, followed by trains, sometimes multiple trains, because the great areas for riding generally aren't close to major airports.

But getting to Hong Kong... just one (long, 15+ hour) flight, in business class this time (upgrades came through!)... that shouldn't have been so bad. Except that the day started a bit earlier than planned; I had a front tooth come loose again (it broke off and was repaired probely 20+ years ago but it's not longer for the world; it's going to need to be replaced by an implant ASAP), and it wouldn't be a good idea for it come loose while eating at a nice restaurant on our trip. So we call my dentist, the most wonderful dentist in the world (Dr. Pelzar in San Carlos) and he says come on in at 7:30am and we'll get it reinstalled for a while. I mean, doesn't everyone have significant dental work done, literally on the way to the airport? So instead of being able to get up at 7:30, I had to get up at 6:30am. And of course I'd been up very late (or early into the morning) packing.

So that's how the day started. And then, after landing in Hong Kong, this was that one time our bags seemed close to last off the belt. "Priority" tags and all. On the good side, because Karen's not getting around that great these days, someone spotted her as we neared the (very lengthy) immigration lines and pulled us to the side and sent us through a special line that had just a few people ahead of us!

And then there was the trip to the hotel. I just *\*knew\** we should have taken the train! Hong Kong has a very speedy, almost direct train to Hong Kong's main island (where our hotel is). We could take the train to where it ends, about 8 miles from our hotel, and then transferred to the subway system. Or we could have taken a cab to the hotel those last 8 miles. But no, we thought it would be "easier" to just take a cab all the way from the airport to the hotel. Well, maybe it would have, *\*if\** there hadn't been a mile-long queue for cabs, and *\*if\** the cab driver knew how to keep the speed of the cab relatively-constant instead of an on-off-on-off-on pulsing, even on smooth road when the traffic wasn't terrible. And *\*if\** they weren't in the process of completely tearing up the airport access road too. And *\*if\** we didn't have to be concerned about our luggage, which didn't all fit in the cab's trunk so the guy had our luggage in lengthwise, hanging out the back, with a bungee cord holding down the hood. Sort of.

We finally made it, not too late (maybe 9:30pm I think?), but thoroughly trashed. Didn't get to sleep for awhile (because 9:30pm Hong Kong time is 5:30am back home, so you're almost ready to wake up just when you're trying to sleep), and got up way too early.

But today (Saturday) Karen and I did get out to explore (a small part of) Hong Kong. The plan was to spend the earlier part of the day taking the Tram up to Victoria Peak, where you get spectacular views of the bay and surrounding (tall) buildings. There required a lot more walking than expected; the local tram system not only doesn't connect closely to the tram that goes up the mountain, but it's also an uphill slog (on foot). This was Karen's first real outing in two months and for a while, it was looking like this just wasn't going to work out. She was slow and having to stop about every 50 feet once the route tilted uphill. She did make it though. But I really had doubts about how anything even slightly physically demanding was going to work... the excursions... yikes.

We found a way back that didn't involve as much walking (taking a bus instead of trams), Karen got a couple hours to rest/sleep, and then prepared for the next (final) outing of the day. While she was sleeping I was "out on the town" looking for a replacement walking stick (she'd left hers on the plane).

For the next outing, Karen was an entirely different person. Much less out of breath, much faster on her feet. There was hope! In theory it was supposed to be an easier outing... a boat trip out in the harbor, to watch the light show on the buildings. Getting there wasn't too bad, but getting back, afterward, was complicated by discovering that the start and end of the boat trip were in two different places! And getting from the ferry (first leg back) to the subway... was a really long haul. But Karen hung in there really, really well.

Presently Karen's asleep; I've got to get there pretty soon too, since tomorrow we take a cab in the morning to the cruise ship! 12 days where we don't have to think about logistics (OK, *\*I\** don't have to think about logistics; she doesn't like getting involved in

any of the planning). More soon, and some photos