Taiwan August 15 to 30, 2016

We were in Taiwan for a conference; Steve was a speaker and I was a tourist, and we really enjoyed our time there. It is extremely clean, the people are very friendly, and there are lots of interesting things to do.

Taipei is at 25° latitude, and the southern end of the island is in the tropics, so it was very hot and humid. We ended up taking several showers each day, and wished we had packed a lot more tee shirts. Steve and Jon Hall both said that this was the first time they had ever worn shorts to talks at a conference. We were so busy that we never turned on the TV in our room.

<u>August 15.</u> The first leg of the trip, Chicago to Dallas. An uneventful flight. We were actually able to get a good night's sleep in an airport hotel.

<u>August 16 to 17th</u>. A very long day. First a 13 hour flight from Dallas to Tokyo, a layover, and then a 3+ hour flight on to Taipei. We arrived about 9pm, totally exhausted. Fortunately, customs didn't take too long, and the conference had arranged for a driver to pick us up and take us to the hotel. We did little but take showers and fall into bed.

Our hotel was a conference hotel, which was pretty good. It was somewhat spacious, with a couch, a table for Steve's laptop, and a tiny refrigerator. What it didn't have was a bathtub or shelves for our clothes. It was well air conditioned. In fact, every other day or so the cleaners would turn the AC down to 19° C, which was freezing for us, so we had to keep turning it back up to 25° C.

It turned out that breakfast was included with our room, and the breakfast turned out to be a huge buffet, with many interesting choices. There were lots of noodles, bean curds, and other choices. Always salad makings (lettuce, carrots, peas, corn) and fruit (sliced watermelon every day, and other choices that varied), two kinds of Chinese buns, and an egg dish. There were several hard-boiled egg offerings. Twice, I think, it was just a standard hard-boiled egg. One day the egg was hard cooked in soy sauce (it turned out that the "iron eggs" were small eggs that had been cooked in soy sauce for a long time, taking the eggs out to let them dry then putting them back again over and over.) Another was a tea egg, first hard boiled, then cracked (not peeled), then hard boiled again in tea. Coincidentally, I had seen a recipe for tea eggs not long before the trip. We stopped in a couple of 7-elevens, that had vats of tea eggs simmering for sale. Apparently the 7-elevens sell about 40 million tea eggs a year in Taiwan. The best egg prep was called steamed eggs, which was almost a custard. Really delicious. And several days they gave us fried eggs. There was always a big bowl of really good peanuts. You could make your own toast and there was a strange orange jelly and a kind of strawberry jelly, plus peanut butter. There were interesting mushroom dishes some days, and cooked greens most days. We vastly overate at breakfast. There was also really good "American coffee" and several tea choices.

August 18th. After breakfast we went over to the math department and met Jill, who did all of the organizing kind of work for the conference. Steve loaded his talk into the computer so it would be ready (he was the first speaker at the conference, so didn't want to take any chances). He was given his reimbursement for his plane fare in cash, which meant we did not have to use an ATM or credit card while we were in Taiwan. Jill also gave us a subway card with money already loaded, which was very handy. We bought a second card and used up most of the money we put on it, and sent the cards back to the math department when we left Taiwan. We're not used to having cash around, and it felt a bit odd to go to the safe and pull out a couple of NT\$1000 (about US\$30) for spending money. I had bought international roaming for our phones, so we didn't have to buy Taiwanese phones, which saved a lot of time and energy.

After the math department we walked around the neighborhood of the university, checking out restaurants. We were not adjusted to the heat and humidity, so didn't really feel like eating, and ended up going back to the hotel and having a sandwich for lunch in a café in the basement.

After lunch we went to the subway (which turned out to be a longer walk than we had hoped...it wasn't really very far, but felt like a mile in the heat). The trains and stations are incredibly clean! And people are really nice. Several times when people saw us looking at our map and at the street signs, they've stopped and asked us in perfect English if we needed help.

We took the train two stations to the Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial station, where we got out and walked to the Taipei National Historical Museum. We spent most of our time on the 3rd floor, where "The Highlights of the NHM Collection" is on display. This included ancient bronzes, scrolls and paintings, jade, ancient coins, and ceramics. The other 3 floors had more modern art, including Oil Paintings and Ceramics by Chiang Long-fang, some modern jade work and some craft figures. We were still not very hungry, because of jetlag and the heat, so we stayed in the hotel for dinner and had Chinese food at the café, then fell asleep quickly.

<u>August 19th.</u> After breakfast, we took a taxi to the National Palace Museum (the subway doesn't serve that area very well) and spent most of the day there. The biggest frustration was that no photography was allowed (they changed the rule for Sept. 1st to Dec. 1st, which of course was no help for us.)

The collection is vast, and we spent two hours in the section with ancient bronzes, many with inscriptions. We started on the 3rd floor, which had the exhibits that we were most interested in. The first room contained the Zong Zhou Zhong (Bell of Zhou), commissioned by King Li of West Zhou, which is considered to be the most important musical instrument cast under his royal decree, and the Mao Gong Ding (Cauldron of Duke of Mao), commissioned by a high official, the Duke of Mao, who was also an uncle of King Xuan, and carries the longest bronze text so far extant. There are more than 620 characters on the two objects, and prints of the texts are on the wall behind the objects. One thing that had not occurred to me is that the vessels would have "shone like gold" when first cast, since they are darkened by age now and too delicate to polish. Because of this, the inscriptions are called "Golden Script."

The next two rooms were "Chinese Bronzes Through the Ages," starting in the early 17th century B. C. E. and covering about 1500 years. We are especially interested

in the Shang Bronzes, which have the earliest inscriptions, but found the entire exhibit intense and wonderful. There was an exhibit of Mirrors from the Qing Court and two rooms of Chinese Jades through the Ages

On the 2nd floor the exhibits were Painting and Calligraphy, including Hanging Scrolls and "The Ancient Art of Writing.", and ceramics, which included beautiful Tang work and Celadons from the Qing Court.

On the 1st floor was an interesting exhibit of Tibetan Buddhist Art, one of Masterpieces of Precious Crafts, Ch'ing Furniture, and an orientation area that gave a timeline of Chinese Dynasties.

We went back to the hotel for a very late lunch (there was a cafeteria in the museum, but we were hot and tired so didn't feel like a lot of food). We then walked in Daan Park, which is only 3 or 4 blocks from the hotel. When we got there we strolled along the wide path with small groups of trees along the path. Some paths were lined with old ficus trees with lots of roots. We headed for a pond with trees growing in the middle, and there were lots of birds. As we walked around the pond it started to rain so we went into a shelter that was already pretty full of Taiwanese. One moved over so we could sit. Another asked if we were from the US and then talked to us. Best was some birds that came close to the shelter. After, we showered and had dinner in the hotel different Chinese dishes in the café.

August 20th After breakfast we spent 2 hours in the Botanical Garden. Many of the plants were planted by the Japanese during their occupation of Taiwan. There is a very large lotus pond and a good area of heliconia, including a lot of lobster claws. It's a large garden, with lots of trees. There are two interesting buildings in the park; one a very old green house, and the other a large, Ming-style building that houses an art exhibit. We then walked to the Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial and climbed the 90 steps (which felt like hundreds in the heat and humidity!). When you get to the top, there is a statue of Chiang Kai-Shek, so very like the Lincoln Memorial. There are two performance buildings on the ground and a very long wall around the compound. We got back to the room for a shower before lunch to find the cleaner in the room, so we waited a few minutes while she finished. Then lunch at the hotel in the café.

Our next stop was the Museum of Drinking Water. In the late 1880's the Japanese built a water filtration plant here, taking water from a river to supply clean drinking water. The plant itself is the museum, and a very interesting building with columns on the outside, and is curved slightly. Inside are the pipes and tools. At some point this was turned into a museum, and then more recently, a water park was built around it. To get into the museum, you have to buy admission to the water park (about US\$2.50). It was a very hot walk down to the park, about a mile (felt like 10) through some somewhat busy small streets. When we got there, it turned out that over 65 got in free! So we showed our ID and the ticket seller looked very confused. Then she said, Oh, go on in. Then a woman chased after us asking for our ticket. I said we were over 65 and the ticket seller told us to go on in. She started apologizing repeatedly.

The water park part is pretty basic, with a couple of small wading pools for tiny kids, and then a quite large pool for larger kids to play in. I don't think you could swim in it since the people in the pool were about a foot apart.

There was a stage set up and some costumed dudes were doing a dance (I did as much filming as I could), and then as we approached the museum, a photo shoot was going on, so I took photos of that. In the museum another shoot was going on, with just one woman (they were in costumes with lots of red). On our way out, the dudes were off the stage and some women were dancing, so I filmed that, too.

On the way back we stopped at a 7-11 and bought some milk. I've been looking in little stores for seed cakes, but hadn't seen any like I expected.

Back in the room we realized that we had taken "tea to China". We were obviously really jetlagged, because we thought this was hysterically funny. (It was two sealed tea bags we had picked up at the Dallas Doubletree, as is my habit.) Another shower, then dinner in the hotel again, yet different Chinese dishes in the café.

<u>August 21</u> There were now several of the conference people in the hotel, so at breakfast they slowly gathered at a large table. The rest of the time we would sit with other members of the group at breakfast, until the last day. Kit and Dan Frohardt arrived the day after us, so we had seen them in passing a few times. Richard and Lisa Lyons arrived on the 20th. Bob and Min Griess and Leonard and Mary Scott had arrived in the evening of the 20th. Everyone but Kit and Dan wanted to go to the Fine Arts Museum, so after breakfast, The Scotts and Lyons set off in a taxi and the Griesses and we set out by subway. Because we were walking through the Expo Park from the subway to the museum, we were able to walk through a farmers' market at the Yuanshan Marketplace that had lots of exotic stuff. We found the other 4 already at the museum.

We enjoyed the Fine Arts Museum which was more modern art. In particular, one room was set up with large boxes at eye height; you looked into a viewfinder to watch a photo resolve layer by layer. Each box had a different layer. A single work that we liked was lots of objects (from childhood?) all painted blue.

From there, the Scotts and we went to the Indigenous People Museum, which had some interesting musical instruments. As the 4 of us walked back toward the subway, we met the other 4, and all went to lunch at a Japanese restaurant. It took a long time to be served, but we were seated and in air conditioning.

After lunch, Steve and I headed to the Contemporary Art Museum, which turned out to be closed for renovation. There was some nice street art and it was an interesting area, so the time wasn't wasted. Back to the room for showers before dinner in the hotel, yet different Chinese dishes at the café.

<u>August 22</u> The first day of the conference, in honor of Bob Griess' 71st birthday. At breakfast, most of the conference participants sat at a long table together, and some of us spilled over onto a second table. I walked over to the department with Steve, Jon Hall, and a couple of other people, and chatted with people before the talks began. Steve's talk was the first one. Min filmed the opening and Steve's talk, and I took some photos during the talk. It was a really good talk and well received. Every day the conference participants were fed lunch by the conference, which meant they didn't have to wonder out looking for food in the neighborhood. This was especially helpful with the heat.

After the talk, Min, Mary, Lisa, Kit, Peter and I headed out on the subway to the estuary at Tamsui, the last stop on that particular line. We walked from the subway

station along the small booths that lined the sidewalk along the river to a boat, which took us around to a small harbor. The idea had been to have lunch, but by the time we got to the harbor, all of the lunch places were closed for the afternoon siesta. Fortunately, Min found a hotel that was having high tea, so that's what we had. There was a band area set up (not with instruments, but the microphones were there) so the waitress took a group photo of us.

By the time I got back to the hotel, Steve was showered and ready for dinner. When I had showered, we met Jon and went to a Vietnamese restaurant close to the hotel.

August 23. After breakfast, Steve went off to the conference, and I met Mary, Lisa, and Kit to go to the Baoan Temple. It is a large temple with very interesting carvings. Mary and Lisa had already been to the Confucius Temple across the street, so Kit and I left them and explored the Confucius Temple. Even though it was early, Kit and I felt peckish so went to a bakery across from the temple and bought small savory loaves for lunch (I got a "pizza" slice, that was a little sweet but had cheese and a bit of tomato in it.) and took them to a garden across from the Confucius Temple. We then headed for a craft store that we had read about. It had 4 stories (I managed to get to 3 of them, but somehow never got to the basement) of various crafts...dragons, scrolls, and so forth. Mary and Lisa came in while we were there. They had found another area of the Baoan Temple that Kit and I had missed, so just stayed there for a while longer. We took a taxi together back to the hotel. I was able to shower and get ready for the conference banquet with plenty of time.

The banquet took over a student-level restaurant, and there was a buffet and speeches and congratulations to Bob Griess. The reminiscences were really fun, as people talked about when they had first met him and high points of his career. We were able to sit with Jon Hall.

<u>August 24.</u> This was a half day at the conference, with a bus out to the National Palace Museum for the afternoon. The conference had arranged for Min, Lisa, Kit, Mary, Peter and me to have lunch with the conference participants. This was an especially nice gesture.

After I realized that the cleaner was about to come to our room, so I walked down the long block next to our hotel to check out a grocery store that Lisa had told me about, and then walked over to Daan Park to look at the birds. I got back to the room just as the cleaner was finishing up, and had a fairly brief time in the room catching up on email and organizing a few photos before I met the rest of our group and we walked over to the math department together. After lunch, a really fun comfortable bus (the tour buses all seem to have lace on the backs of the seats and in the windows) took us to the museum. We spent most of our time in the bronzes, jades, and ceramics, and walked out on the plaza in front of the museum, which we hadn't done on our first visit.

One especially nice thing happened. In anticipation of the 3-month period when photos were going to be allowed in the museum, a man was taking down one of the no-photography signs near a descriptive poster that I really wanted a photo of. The museum had people walking around with signs that said no-photography so when one came up, I said to him, "I know the policy doesn't change until September 1, but could I

take a photo of that poster?" He said no, he was really sorry but no, not until September 1. So I said "Please? I have to go back to Chicago on Tuesday so I can't come back." I think I threw a few more pleases in for good measure. He started backing away from me, so I thought, "Oh, well, I tried." He looked around the room then leaned toward me and said, "OK". I thanked him several times, quickly took the photo then thanked him again. He beamed.

We took a taxi back to the hotel and showered, then met Jon for dinner. Yoav Segev was in the lobby so came along. After some discussion, we went back to the Vietnamese restaurant. Kit and Dan came in shortly after us, and so we all joined up at one table.

August 25. After breakfast, Min, Mary, Lisa, Kit and I were picked up by a driver and taken to the north coast. This had been arranged, for a very reasonable price, by Jill in the math dept. We first were driven to the Juming Museum, which had vast grounds (110,000 square meters) with sculptures and two main buildings with modern paintings. There was a small collection of other artists, but the main collection was more than 2000 pieces by Ju Ming. The space includes a Chidren Art Center, a Stone Conservation Lab, a Performance Area, and so forth. After spending 2 hours at the museum, we were driven further up the hill to a cemetery for very rich people. From both the museum and the cemetery there was a view down the hill to the ocean, though it was a bit hazy.

We were then driven to a little seaside village, Demao Village, first for lunch, then to walk in the Yehliu Geopark. This is a park on the shore with lots of hoodoos carved by wind and sea erosion, and it was very interesting to walk around amongst them. It was also extremely hot, and most of us had a mango smoothie at the end of the trail. On the walk back to the restaurant, where we were to meet the car, we walked through a covered market with interesting fruit...and it gave us some relief from the sun.

We were driven back to the hotel and arrived in time for me to shower, then we met Jon and walked a bit of a distance to La Maree for dinner. We had been told that it was a very good Hong Kong specialty restaurant, in a department store, that was hard to find and had no name in English. It turned out to be easy to find, in a department store across from the Museum of Drinking Water. You walked through the department store, that had clothes stacked on tables, to the middle. Suddenly you were at an escalator with a very glitzy lighting system. At the top was a woman in a suit who greeted us in Taiwanese. We held up 3 fingers and she led us into the restaurant. We later discovered that at the bottom of the escalator was a stand with a menu, and on the menu in small letters was the name, La Maree. The food was really good.

August 26. The last day of the conference. Peter had discovered "The #1 Pineapple Cake Bakery" in Taipei, so Min was going to take us there. Mary, Kit and I wanted to go to the Longshan Temple, and decided that it would be better to do that first, rather than carry all the stuff we were going to buy at the bakery through the Temple. So the 3 of us took a taxi to the Temple, with the idea that we would take the subway to the bakery afterwards. The temple had very delicate paintings of birds that were especially interesting, and set it apart from the others we had visited.

When we were ready to leave, we walked across the street to the subway and found the entrance chained off. We asked a policeman, and he said it didn't open until 11 am. (I now think that it was actually the underground mall that didn't open until 11 and that we would have found the subway if we could have found an open entrance.) So we found a taxi, and Mary wrote out in Chinese the address of the bakery that I had written in English, and gave it to the driver. It turned out that I had left out the district, so he took us to the address in district one, but the bakery was actually in district 5. Mary then used a map feature on her phone that told her there was a free shuttle bus a few yards from where we were, so we took that and it took us very close to the bakery.

The bakery was lots of fun. Since it was small and popular, you lined up outside, and when people left, more people were allowed inside. They even gave us a tiny sample of a red bean egg cake as we came in. You picked up empty boxes of the size you wanted and filled them from shelves that were clearly marked (including how long each cake would stay fresh), then lined up and paid. Min was buying a suitcase full, so she just went to the counter and told them what she wanted and they packaged them up for her.

Min had checked out the area and found an interesting Japanese restaurant next door. The food was good, and the system was to place your order on a touch screen that was mounted on the table. The food was brought to the table as soon as it was ready, so even though the restaurant was pretty full, we didn't have to wait long. There was a button to call a staff member, and they came over almost as soon as you pushed it. Very fun. I had green tea ice cream for dessert. Yum.

After lunch, Kit went back to the craft store, and Min, Mary and I took a taxi back to the hotel. (Lisa was working on a lecture she was giving the next day in the Psychology department, so didn't have time to go with us.) I was back in time to shower, and then Min and I went to the math department for the last talk of the conference, which was Bob's. This gave me a chance to say goodbye to people who were leaving that evening or early the next morning.

Steve and I walked back to the hotel with Jon and a few other people, then after Steve showered, Steve, Jon and I went to dinner at a Peking-style place we had heard about, near our subway entrance.

August 27. This was the greatest day. After breakfast, Steve and I took a taxi to Nankang to the Academia Sinica campus to the Museum of the Institute of History and Philology (it was only open on Wednesday and Saturday, so this was our only chance to see it). The taxi let us out at the Museum of the Institute of Ethnology, and it took us a few minutes to find History and Philology. It is a wonderful museum, based on the digs of the archeologists of the Academia Sinica. The building is modern, with glass walkways, lights in the bottoms of the cases, and really good descriptions of the digs and of the artifacts. Photography was allowed, but the lighting made it difficult to get decent photos.

Perhaps the best exhibit was about the excavation of Tomb M1001 in Xibeigang. They found more artifacts than in all other royal tombs in Zibeigang. The artifacts from the Shang Dynasty included incredible marble sculptures including a kneeling anthropomorphic figure with tiger head and claws, a standing owl figure with decorative patterns covering its body (this was my absolute favorite...an incredibly beautiful piece),

and a remarkable sculpture in the shape of two crouching tigers. They had one of the best descriptions I've seen of the Shang kingships. Definitely an era I need to read more about. Another outstanding exhibit was Oracle Bones, with the early Chinese writing carefully highlighted. Translated only into modern Chinese of course.

The permanent exhibitions include artifacts from the Lung-shan Culture (2600 – 2000 BC), The Ruins of Yin (Late 14th Century to Mid 11th Century BCE), Western Zhou (mid 11th C to 771 BCE), Eastern Zhou (771 – 221 BCS), Rare Texts, and Archives of the Grand Secretariat. We spent at least 2 hours in the Museum, and decided to have lunch, but it was pouring rain. Since the Ethnology Museum was next door, we decided to do that first before walking over to the student center. The museum had several exhibits about the different cultures, including Folk Religion in Taiwan and Taiwan's Aboriginal Cultures. The displays included costumes and musical instruments. When we finished with this museum it wasn't raining, so we walked through campus to the student center for lunch. The campus is very pretty, and to our surprise, outside the student center building were two sculptures by Ju Ming.

In the center, there was a sit down Chinese restaurant, a cafeteria (where there was a set meal of way too much not very good looking food), a sit down "European" style restaurant, and a sandwich shop with a really nice sitting area. We weren't very hungry, so opted for the sandwich area, even though there was no English. We got a sandwich on rice buns and iced tea. The rice buns were great. They were actually sticky rice patties that had been toasted so it was all warm and delicious.

Since we were in Nankang and really loved the History and Philology Museum, we decided to go through it again before going back to Taipei. We enjoyed out second visit, and when we were finished, it was again pouring rain. The clerk, who was very nice, called a taxi for us, and went outside and waved it in under a porte-cochère so we could get in without getting wet.

Almost everyone else from the conference had left, and we were tired from our busy day, but had more of an appetite than we had during much of the trip. We had been curious about the buffet in the main restaurant at the hotel, which apparently had a somewhat famous chef, so we decided to try it. It was very good and of course had huge quantities of food. The best was the ice creams. I had mint chocolate chip, a dark cherry and a vanilla. They were so good that I went back for seconds and had peanut butter ice cream, as well, which was really great. I had also gotten a selection of what looked like pastries, but they turned out to be some kind of stiff jello stuff that I didn't really like, so I didn't eat those. They were pretty, though.

August 28 Our last full day in the hotel. Steve had not seen many things outside Taipei, so we started the day with a subway ride out to Tamsui. It was very quiet, with the stalls closed. We walked along the river side park, then took the subway back to Beitou, with the idea of going to some of the museums and other tourist sites, and maybe looking into the national park. When we arrived at the station, there was a bus route marked on the local map at the subway station for Yangmingshan National Park, so we walked over to that and managed to catch a small bus right away. To our surprise, instead of just taking us to the edge of the park, it took us quite a bit into the park. It started to rain on our way up the mountain, but we decided to walk the .7 km to the Visitors' Center. It was a nice, uphill walk in the woods, but it kept raining harder and harder, so we gave

up after .4 km and walked back down to the bus station. Fortunately some people in one lines waiting for buses knew English, and told us where that particular bus terminated, so we took that back to a different subway stop. So we missed the museums and tourist sites, but we got a nice wet climb in the woods.

When we got to the subway stop that was closest to the two big temples it wasn't raining, and it wasn't a very long walk, so we got off and walked to the Confucius Temple. There was almost no one there, which was really nice. We then stopped in the garden next door, and then found a restaurant recommended by a person at the Confucius Temple. We had onion rings and a baked pasta dish. We then went to the Baoan Temple, which also wasn't crowded. After that, we went to the garden again, then took the subway to the Longshan Temple, which was very crowded. It was interesting to see the three temples so close together.

We rested in the room a bit, paid our hotel bill (in cash! Weird! They have a great machine that counts bills in seconds. We had each counted out the bills twice, which was probably unnecessary), and I started packing. We met the Scotts at 6pm and went out to dinner with them. At the Peking-style place.

August 29. We had intended to go back to the Historical Museum, but it turned out that all of the museums are closed on Mondays. So after breakfast we went back to the Botanical Garden, then went over to the North Gate. The subway station closest to the North Gate, Beimen Station, turned out to be very interesting. There were sections of old waterways that had been excavated and moved to the station, and are now in the floor, under glass. We went back to the hotel, showered and checked out, then went to a coffee shop near the hotel for lunch. A driver, arranged by the conference, picked us up at 3:15 and took us to the Novotel Taipei Taoyuan at the International Airport. We had an early flight, so decided to stay near the airport the last night so we didn't have to get up at 4am.

The Novotel also had the advantage of having a bathtub, so we took turns soaking in the tub. We made a reservation for the buffet at the hotel, and again I ate enough ice cream to make the extravagance worthwhile. Also, to my surprise, the little pastries really were lovely little pastries. I guess you just have to stay in a French hotel to get the real thing. We again paid the bill in cash.

August 30 We discovered that was free coffee and "cookies" in the morning from 4 am till 5:30 am. Our wakeup call was at 6 am, but we woke up at 4:45, so went down and got coffee and small pastries. We spent the whole day getting home. A 3 hour flight to Japan, a layover there, then a 10 hour flight to LA. We thought we would have time there, as well, but with customs, we moved through the process directly onto our plane. We were very happy to get home!







Lotus Pond at the Botanical Garden, Historical Museum

Water Park







Chiang Kai Shek Memorial

Museum of Drinking Water







Fine Arts Museum

Contemporary Arts Neighborhood







Steve's lecture

"The Band" at Tamsui

Iron Eggs







Baoan Temple

Confucius Temple







Juming

Yehliu Geopark







History and Philology







Longshan

North Gate

Daan Park