

Singapore again, heading back to LA and closing thoughts

After Kota Kinabalu, we spent 3 more nights in Singapore (SG) before heading back to Los Angeles (LA). We were able to catch up with more friends, eat more good food, snacks, local pastries and grab some more red money packets all the while interspersed with drinking some really good tea. We were able to photograph some amazing wall art aka graffiti behind the hotel at a building called *SCAPE (a non-profit youth hub) and then headed over to the mall across the street (our hotel was also attached to a mall), got a local snack for lunch and checked out Kinokuniya - a Japanese bookstore. I wanted to see how different the Kinokuniya close to where I lived and in Little Tokyo is from the one in SG.

Turns out I saw them advertising cozy mysteries called Auntie Lee's Deadly Delights, by Ovidia Yu (don't you just love that name?). It had to do with food and it was a cozy mystery - how could I resist? BTW - SG encourages exploring the arts by giving everyone who wants one an SG Culture Pass - you receive SGD100 credits to offset costs to partake in local arts, culture, and heritage experiences and that includes books. I bought all 3 books and had to break out my Hawaiian cooler bag to accommodate all these last few day's purchases in SG. I have a series of cozy mysteries from a local Hawaiian author, Kate Lindmann (guests at her B&B or friends are dying for some reason or other), a series about a female contractor who lives in Lighthouse Cove (modeled after the Mendocino area in CA and her finding dead bodies in places she is renovating) by Kate Carlisle (met her at a bookbinding workshop at Vroman's, Pasadena, a long, long time ago), and a female bookbinder with a cat (can't remember if I started this one or not) also with Kate, and now these. I also brought back a book I borrowed from a Little Free Library at the mall attached to our airbnb building in Kuala Lumpur - was supposed to return it but I hadn't finished reading it so I guess it's mine now ;)

I managed to find a store at one of the hawker food centers that dealt specifically with all things Chinese wedding and in reading the reviews saw that they sold red money envelopes! Of course I had to go there and found red money envelopes that were 4x the size of the regular ones. Weirdly enough I also found red money packets at the Kinokuniya bookstore. Something I don't think I will be able to find at the Kinokuniya here.

Observation: Singaporeans favorite pastimes are eating and shopping, hence the startling number of malls and hawker food centers. Wonderfully confirmed by our friends who took us to an Indian restaurant in Little India where our plates were freshly washed banana leaves and rice and at least 3 curries were ladled out in a mound! And extra other savory items ordered by our friends. Wonderful to catch up with our friends and their kids. The oldest boy is about to head into National Service or NS - a compulsory 22- to 24-month, full-time military or civil defense conscription for all male Singapore citizens and second-generation permanent residents upon

turning 18. The 2nd child is about to take her A levels and may have started dating. I raised an eyebrow and asked her what her parents thought that and she answered that, "Dad is ok with it but it's Mom with the conditions. The biggest one is that the boy not have any issues with food". Like I said top favorite pastime for Singaporeans - eating!

Made a new friend on the flight from Haneda to LA. I thought she was in my seat as I thought the physical location of the seat corresponded to the seat number. I was so wrong! Note to self: always look for your seat number on the overhead bins. Can I be blamed? I was obviously already jet lagged due to the hour difference between SG and Tokyo - hee, hee! Fantastically my e-sim continued to work at Haneda airport as we enjoyed a particularly delicious vanilla soft serve cone made from Hokkaido milk. Note to self: always get anything made with milk from Hokkaido as it will be ultra delicious. I lamented that I would not be able to get such luscious ice cream for my affogatos! BTW - our flights back to LA took 2.5 hours less than the ones going to SG thanks maybe to our friendly jet stream? My new friend and I will be meeting for tea/coffee the next time she is in the LA South Bay. She was all agog at the length of our trip. Truth be told, so am I - still not sure what I was thinking but the next time we do such a trip I would prefer to stay longer at one place to get to know it better.

So where do we go next?

Closing thoughts ...

What are our next adventures? Any adventures since we returned? Funny you should ask! As of Saturday, April 11th, I was still staying up until past 3:00 AM even though I hadn't taken a nap in that afternoon. Thought I would be nice and tired as I had a box crafting workshop with a creative whom Paula had introduced in her Realm of Solids workshop in January. Her Instagram (IG) handle is @hakoyamaho and her creations are not only a treat for the eyes but also for the mind and hands as you put them together. Yes, this generous maker provides her nets (a two-dimensional figure that can be folded into a three-dimensional object) on IG for you to recreate her amazing boxes or you could get them from her website. Her name is Maho Motoyama and she started creating these amazing nets in university 15 years ago to make these absolutely amazing boxes. She has also worked with the architect Sou Fujimoto to bring his collective housing project - Tokyo Apartment - to papercraft model life. I bought extra nets that were offered as selections in class and also bought some of her newer works along with a poster light from the Hightide DTLA popup at the workshop. I am planning a visit to that store when I start the Los Angeles Public Library 72-branch crawl to collect the unique stamps from each branch on the catalog index cards distributed from the Central Library - another series of adventures that I can be on until the end of the year. I was asked if I was an architect when I finished putting together my first piece and I just said that, "I just love paper!" I knew Hightide

from JetPens who carried their very cool, small and tiny tool boxes and other things. Who knew that all these people I admired were located in LA? I think maybe a staycation in the area may be in the works to walk around and discover new creatives. BTW - part of her IG handle, hakoya, means boxmaker in Japanese. Thought it was kinda cool when I looked it up.

Update: I started the Los Angeles Public Library crawl (see the Bits and Bobs section of the newsletter) - I have collected 3 stamps so far and have 2 envelopes of the catalog cards. Handy when you mis-stamp the back of the card. Catalog cards from the Central library have been distributed to all 72 branches and each branch has a unique stamp to use on the front or back of the card. Love those cards - their typewritten information, the one hole at the bottom and their brown edges. Brought me back to researching my senior thesis back in college. Hope to collect most of the stamps and see parts of LA I have not been to. It would also be great to return to parts I have been to but *completely* missed seeing the libraries (stamps 2 and 3 in the area where I live!) despite going by them at least once every 2 weeks as we drove towards breakfast or bakeries. Ahh! To be a tourist in LA - staycations and day trips ahead - adventures in food, unusual sights (I see a chandelier tree in my future, giant chair in a parking lot anyone?), paper and stamping on old school catalog cards!!!

I was looking to plan a visit to an abalone farm in the Santa Barbara area for our anniversary trip in May and also a place where we could dine on these amazingly delicious mollusks when I was surprised and delighted to hear the owl outside our bedroom window. The calls did not sound as deep as last year so maybe it is a different owl, maybe younger? Are owls territorial or seasonal, I wonder?

See you in May!