

Do Panda's Hibernate or Move to HI for the Winter?

A deep freeze has settled upon sunny Guangzhou. It's still always sunny in Guangzhou, but the floor seems to have fallen out of the thermostat.

Last weekend, to conclude my Shanghai businesses tour, I went to the tourist town of Hangzhou. We left Friday afternoon; the first day it was really cold. The thinking was, "Because I am so far north and it is mid-November, this must be normal; but in a couple of days I would be back in sunny Guangzhou and the temperature would be comfortably warm again." The weather for the past month has been beautiful, like an autumn in Hawaii.

Returning to Guangzhou, it was no warmer! And for the next couple of days, the temperature continued to slowly fall to about 5 C. At this temperature, things are simply less fun. Getting out of bed is less fun. Walking to class is less fun. Sitting in a seat for 3 hours for class is less fun.

So, how cold has it been this past week?

- We judge the previous nights coolness based on how thick the shampoo is in the morning. Some mornings it was work to get it to squeeze out.
- I had to purchase a jacket for the first time in a decade. Back in high school I lived in Washington, and we got some snow and very cool nights a few times a winter, so a jacket was necessary. That jacket kept me warm through BYU. Then I lived in Thailand where I only saw the temperature drop below 70 one time in my two years. Next was a year in south Florida, and like Thailand, it never really gets cold. Then I lived in Oregon, but a friend bailed me out with a wonderful fleece sweatshirt for Christmas. Then it was back to Florida. And finally, the last year was in Hawaii, where winter coats are even less necessary than Florida. Point is, by Wednesday, I had been through enough cold days to feel the purchase of a coat was a requirement. At the sporting clothes store on the first level of my apartment building, I found a couple of nice options. One is a sport coat, and the other is a dress coat. After a little negotiating, I got them for a total of RMB 288, or about \$42.
- Jeremie was motivated enough to re-engineer the bathroom window so that it would close. We had an unpleasant draft building at night.
- Drinking hot water, as gross as it sounds from a Western perspective, feels great!

Observations:

- For some reason, the Cantonese still leave windows open. On even the coldest mornings, we discovered classroom windows were opened. And taxi drivers still drove with their windows down.
- Clothing vendors can get cold weather products into their stands by the next morning. Not even Wal-mart supplies product this fast!
- I obtained a hockey stick at the Canton Fair about three weeks ago, and something about practicing my stick-handling (with a baseball and Jeremie's gel container) seemed more authentic in the cold apartment!
- Brick & Mortar construction makes for lousy installation in cold weather. Once the wall of the apartment chilled, the apartment became a literal refrigerator. Although the temperature has risen a little in the past day, the chilled walls keep the apartment very cold.