

Arrival is a sweet scoop of chocolate ice cream, or you're favorite flavorful dumpling before authentic sweet and sour pork; or something like that according to the lost Chronicles of Cletonious the Wise.

**Dallas:** Last opportunity for real American food, and no better place to do it than in Dallas! Went true American style with a 2/3 lb bacon cheddar burger at Fudruckers. The founding fathers would be proud.

**LAX:** Not going to lie, most airports aren't overly exciting during the 11 pm to 2 am time frame. Even the old international terminal at LAX is pretty chill.

PS: The initials "CA" are not for China Airlines, located in terminal 3. "CA" stands for Air China, located in terminal 2. Just wanted to clear up any confusion... yes I killed time waiting in the wrong line, at the wrong airline, in the wrong international terminal. On the positive, standing in terminal 3 brought back great memories of departing for Thailand for my mission.

**Flight over the Pacific:** Almost get stuck with the seat between a "plus size" couple. As I'm not exactly a twig myself, sheer terror was about to set in. When the airplanes doors closed, the row two ahead of me had a couple of empty seats and I bolted... just to be across the isle from a screaming toddler for 10 hours. Sleep is over-rate anyways. I mean, I'm writing this account at 5:30 am anyways.

The plane left LAX at about 2 am and flew up the coast of the US, across the Aleutians, and back down Russia, across Korea, and into China. Because were flying against the spin of the earth, it stayed middle of the night the whole time. But the further north we got, like up in Alaska, the horizon lighten a bit, and then got dark again as we turned south.

Service on Asian based carriers is amazing! They fed us two hot meals 😊

**Arrival in China:** Couldn't see any lights coming into Beijing, which disappointed me. On the runway, it appeared to be a very foggy morning.

Note to future travelers, the airlines may not give you an "arrival" card to fill out on the plane; leaving you looking dumb when you get to customs.

Beijing's Airport is HUGE! To me, it kind of had a Home Depot feel with

lots of bright orange structure to it. It's quite modern and flows well so getting lost is hard to do.

China has everyone flying into China go through Beijing so visas and bags can be check at a central location. You get your luggage here and have to move it yourself to the domestic terminal. Only problem with landing at 4:30 am is the domestic terminal doesn't really open until 6. I was first in line though!!!

Flight to Guangzhou was out of gate C55. To get there, one walks about a half mile to gate 24, and then goes down two stories to the C55 waiting area. When the plan is ready for boarding, a bus picks everyone up, and drives us out onto the far reaches of the tar-mac, where we walk up a staircase to board the Boeing 757. Its not that the airport is old or over crowded; its just the way the system was developed for the airport. It does a good job of keeping people organized.

Flying out, I'm not sure if it was fog or smog. Either way, visibility was less than a quarter mile. Took off down a runway we couldn't see the end of. How is that for an object lesson on faith? ☺

...still haven't seen Beijing though...

### **Flying to Guangzhou:**

China is a beautiful country when one can see though the clouds. Lots of mountains and rivers, and establishments ranging from little towns to huge cities dotting the landscape all over.

**Arrival in Guangzhou:** Sorry to keep the suspense building, but yes, I arrived in Guangzhou safe and sound.

Coming into Guangzhou, the plane made a loop around the city. It is huge. It covers a lot of ground. Lots of newer construction high-rises for both businesses and housing from what I can tell. At least from a birds-eye view, it seems like a very modern city. I'm getting excited!

The airport is both brand new, humongous, and a work of art. It is very nice. Again, the plane stopped in some outer corner of the tarmac and a bus drove us straight to baggage claim. My bags were the first ones off the plane, any my buddies from the university were waiting for me on the

other side. I was literally off the plane and in a taxi within 10 minutes. It was amazing.

My buddies, Ben and Davie, are amazing! Any my roommate Jeremie had already taken care of all the housing shenanigans!

From the airport we headed straight to the apartment building, which is a short walk from the schools north gate. The traffic on the road from the airport to the apartment, in this central part of the city, flowed very well for being in the middle of the day. Would have been pure deadlock in Bangkok.

My part of Guangzhou is near the part of the city that surrounds some hills. Yay for beautiful topography. No offence to FL, but that flatness is just depressing. Yay for mountains!