

Well, we're here... and haven't even paid extra luggage charges yet! The whole thing seems a little bazaar, actually. Last week I rechecked the Cathay Pacific website only to learn that since Dec 1st their free baggage had gone down to one 44 pound suitcase and it was \$US150 for your next bag. As we looked at our pile of stuff that included two monitors and an anesthesia machine in a suitcase besides drugs and tubes etc,etc. it was clear we couldn't get down to one case each. So I figured the charges would just go on plastic.

Well, we got to the airport and a delightful agent at the check-in protested very graciously that Jason's satchel was really rather excessive in size to be a carry-on computer bag (we were stretching matters a little, I admit). She then went ahead and cheerfully checked our baggage in according to the old two 50 pound suitcases/traveller rules!! I resisted with ease all temptation to point out that this contradicted their very own website and kept my 'plastic' to myself. What a gift!

Before I left for Toronto Shawna had phoned to let me know she'd heard some accident reports on the 401 and I'd best leave myself extra time. That proved a very valuable warning. I didn't encounter any accident stoppages but I did crawl along with limited visibility most of the way from Cobourg to Ajax because of heavy blowing snow. I was very glad for the extra time.

From then on we just had to show up at the right place at the correct time and eat when fed. The flights went smoothly. Once we checked in to our guest house in downtown Manila three of us did some sightseeing this afternoon once we'd shopped for the requisite duct tape plus umbrellas. Our excursions included my first ride in a horse (?pony?) drawn device that I think is meant for two passengers. Jason was given the driver's seat while the driver sort of perched on the side holding the reins. It was a memorable ride. We learned that a horse apparently simply creates whatever rules of the road are best for him at any given moment.... despite buses, aggressive cabs, and the numerous jeepnies. If a big puddle appears ahead the horse simply goes around it and vehicles adjust as needed. Turns at busy intersections were best not examined too closely. Other than being ripped off for much more than we thought we'd agreed to, the ride definitely rates memorable experience status.

And now to bed when ordinarily I'd be getting up. Off to T'boli in the morning.

Alison