

Thursday, January 11, 2007

We woke at 6 AM and went down for our last hotel breakfast. We asked the receptionist if she could send someone for our luggage, and she said yes. We waited for ½ hour and nobody come up so we took our own luggage down. Casy called Ha at 7:15 AM; she just woke up and was getting ready. Ha got to the hotel at 7:45 AM, and the mini-van arrived at 8 AM to take us to the airport. The driver was a friend of Ha's family. We were supposed to leave right then but Phoung and John were not here yet. They finally got to the hotel at 8:15 AM. We all crowded into the mini-van and drove to the airport. We arrived there after an hour drive and checked in our luggage. We were early so we sat at the coffee shop on the airport's second floor and chatted. The driver gave Casy some Vietnamese money that had been blessed by a monk. He said it was for good luck. We thanked him, said our goodbyes to him, Ha, John and Phoung, and walked to the terminal section of the airport.

Figure 1: We approach the airport.



We took China Airlines flight 684 to Taipei, Taiwan. It departed at 11:35 AM and arrived at Taipei after a smooth two-hour flight. At Taipei, we waited about three hours for our next flight, which departed at 4:40 PM. This was China Airlines flight 6, which flew straight to Los Angeles. This leg of the journey took about 12 hours, and we sat near the back in row 54. We arrived at LAX about noon local time, December 11. We picked up our bags from baggage claim, walked from the international terminal to the domestic terminal, checked in our bags and waited for our next flight. Newton had a sore throat and a slight cough so he just sat in the gate while Casy walked around some of the terminal shops. We flew back home to Phoenix, Arizona on America West flight 33. It departed LA at about 7PM and we arrived in Phoenix a little after 9PM local time. We took the airport shuttle back home to our apartment, and finally walked through our front door around 11PM local time. That is the end of our trip.

Figure 2: Inside the Hanoi Airport. Our boarding gate is at left, and a snapshot of duty free shops is at right. Like in many other developing countries, Hanoi's airport has a lot of modern shops with very few customers.



Figure 3: Newton and Casy waiting at the Hanoi Airport



Figure 4: Waiting inside Taiwan's airport, we found this playground for kids right next to the gate. It featured a rolling train (right) and a tree house (left). We were the only ones around.

