

## Chapter II

**Breakfast   Missing Bag   Zoo   Insectarium   Lunch   Herpatarium   Great Meal**

I took another shower just for the fun of it. Luckily the bunch didn't suffer from any terrible jet lag (the secret, I think, is to not sleep the entire time you're traveling until night time at your destination, that way you are guaranteed to be exhausted and sleep a long time during the night) so we were all up bright eyed and busy-tailed for breakfast. A grand affair! Eggs, sausages, some cabbage thing with mushrooms, breads, fruits galore, tomato juice, milk, grapefruit juice, and all the other fixings for the traditional watery rice breakfast (horrid stuff if you ask me).

Our missing bag has not arrived. Did I mention our missing bag? When we got to Taipei one of the hard plastic trunks we packed didn't arrive. The other (basically identical) trunk was missing its ID sticker tag thingy but it made it fine. We checked with the people at the airport and they said our missing bag was fine, and sitting in Detroit, it'll be here tomorrow. As a conciliatory prize Matt (to whom the bag was checked) received a spiffing blue bag full of toiletries for his troubles. (There is some discussion as to whether they will deliver, or we will have to retrieve it from the airport ourselves). Anyway, it has not yet arrived.

Today we are scheduled for a trip to the zoo. A cream colored van pulled up driven by Dr. Wong (amazing driver in these rainy, scooter infested streets). Additionally Yaw-Wen, 85 pounds of organizational translational furry, came along. She is the soft yet unbreakable envelope of order and sanity that protects these blundering children from the stinging harsh realities of what is actually simple everyday life. If affect, without her, we are stuck.

Pack them in tight, umbrellas all around. Three in the back, three in the middle, two up front. Off we go. Taipei is a massive city settled into a vast forest. The main city lies in the flats and is dominated by huge skyscrapers surrounded by an undergrowth of 5 story buildings, stores on the bottom, apartments up top. The hillsides are dotted with houses and buildings that spring from the trees as if they had been placed there by some massive helicopter. There is rarely any indication of a road or any means of access



**Our shower. Rain from above, frontal assault in the middle, or self service to the right.**

to these perched hamlets.

We entered the zoo via a side road after filling out some paperwork with the



**Suburbs**

guards (Dr. Wong's job) and were driven to the front door of the zoo's new insectarium.



The steps lead down to viewing windows into the pond that runs between the buildings.



**Dragonfly at the Zoo**

We were met by a wonderful young lady, I-Hsin Wu, who grabbed us, and pulled us along through the many exhibits.



**Giant Stag Beetle**

At the end of one hall we split from the main line and she led us through a side door for a behind the scenes tour of the facility. They have many live insect displays, and rear all their own bugs. So we found row after row of cups with baby water scorpions, cages with walking sticks, tubs with fat happy stag beetle grubs, and netted plants crawling with caterpillars. There are a variety of endangered insects, mostly large beetles and butterflies, that they also raise at the zoo.



**Immature Waterscorpion**



**Exhibits Past**



**Immature of the butterfly to the right**



**Endangered Taiwanese Butterfly**



**Walkingstick**



**Collecting Walkingstick Eggs**

We walked through a large greenhouse full of butterflies and a few dragonflies, but the most interesting thing were the large beetles hanging out on limbs, or eating the pineapple placed about for their enjoyment. Matt stuck his head in a tiger beetle exhibit. I guess being on the other side of the glass isn't close enough, but the other side of the bubble is!



**Stagbeetle and scarab enjoying pineapple**



**The main greenhouse**



**Tiger beetle observation port**



**Butterfly host plant greenhouse**

We spoke with one young man (wonderful English) about rearing whirligigs and stag beetles. Beetles are a big thing in Japan, so you can purchase bags of food for larval beetles. Its basically potting soil, well rotten wood infused with a particular strain of fungus. The adults feed on fruit and can live up to two years.

We got a royal tour.



Larva food for Stagbeetles  
(*Dorcus* is the genus name)



A Taiwanese endangered stag beetle