



Log of *S/V High Drama* No.21 Singapore & Malaysia



Mai Won Tee!

That's Mandarin Chinese for "No problem!"

This episode of the Log of *High Drama* takes us to Singapore and Malaysia. Singapore, an island city-state-country about 3 times the size of Washington, D.C., is located at the end of the Malay Peninsula. Malaysia lies immediately north. Both nations enjoy high standards of living and in both countries the lives and activities of the people are rigidly controlled by their governments.

As always we enjoy hearing from you. Spam has prevented us from publishing our email address but if you email the webmaster he will provide it to you.

Thanks for joining us!

Singapore

According to the CIA Factbook, Singapore was "(f)ounded as a British trading colony in 1819, and Singapore joined Malaysia in 1963, but withdrew two years later and became independent. It subsequently became one of the world's most prosperous countries, with strong international trading links (its port is one of the world's busiest) and with per capita GDP equal to that of the leading nations of Western Europe." We found the city to be the cleanest city we have ever visited in the world. Moreover, the streets are safe at night and violent crime is almost nonexistent. There is no graffiti on the Mass Rapid Transport trains nor is there any litter. The small island possesses no natural resources other than her 4.5 million people. That Singapore's economy has prospered is due in part to the former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

But the prosperity and cleanliness come at a price. Fines of \$1,000 are levied for smoking in offices, restaurants, and shopping centers. Fines up to \$1,000 are levied for littering, chewing gum, and for failing to flush a public toilet. There is a mandatory death sentence for possession of 500 grams of cannabis, 30 grams of morphine or cocaine, or 15 grams of heroin. The newspapers are cheering sections for the nation's business and education system, and there is no very little criticism of the government. While we were there the board of censorship was reviewing its 20 year ban on the sale of *Cosmopolitan* magazine.

Where is Singapore? How about Malaysia?



High Drama stands clear of a liquid natural gas (LNG) ship in the Singapore Strait.

Our destination lay 40 miles across one of the busiest shipping channels in the world. Ship traffic is timed by a controller, like an air traffic controller, to preserve spacing of about 6 minutes between ships. Yachts enjoy no privileges or rights of way. We paralleled the 7 traffic lanes for about 13 miles

and then scampered across the highway like the illegal aliens do along Interstate 5 north of San Diego. We were lucky because the ship traffic was light and the weather stayed clear. Our friends who crossed two days earlier got caught in an equatorial thunderstorm and totally lost visibility for an hour and a half in the windy (40 knot) torrential downpour.



Singapore Navy, Coast Guard and police boats were stationed along the port border every few miles and helicopters buzzed above the navy ships. It was very clear that the crackdown on large ship piracy involved a significant show of force in Singapore waters.

Raffles Marina

Raffles Marina reflects the shine, class, and cost of Singapore. Wealthy Singapore, Indonesia and Malay people keep boats here. Because of the Iraq War and SARs epidemic last year they lost the transient yacht business. This year they slashed their rates and yachties concluded that the resort style marina made sense. In addition to amenities such as a theater, gym, pool, spa, bowling alley, restaurants and bars, free newspapers were delivered to the boat every morning. Hog heaven!



Raffles Marina



“Heart,” the songsters in Raffles Marina Bar

Social life was lively at Raffles Marina. Alison on *Revision II* received a proposal of marriage for her 40th birthday.



Alison from *Revision II* turned 40 so we had a birthday party on a Sunday morning.

Singapore has a huge bustling metropolis with every Western brand name represented. Tourist publications proclaim that the two main diversions in Singapore are shopping and dining out.



Orchard Road



Border's, Starbuck's, and The Coffee Bean

Raffles, the Brit credited with founding Singapore, also lent his name to a wonderful old hotel, supposedly the favorite haunt of writers such as Somerset Maugham, Joseph Conrad, Noel Coward, and entertainers like Charlie Chaplin and Michael Jackson.



Raffles Hotel...



...where they invented the Singapore Sling

The Battle Box, an underground bunker that served as General Percival's headquarters in WW II lies at the heart of Fort Canning Park. Wax models figures and multimedia tell the story of the tragic surrender of Singapore to Japanese Forces in 1942.



General Percival being advised by his staff that the situation was hopeless. No ammunition, no more food, and the city water supply was threatened. The Japanese commander whose forces gathered at the edge of the city, was also nearly out of ammunition, food, and water, and was actually outnumbered 3:1 when the British surrendered.



Politically incorrect WW II poster in Battle Box

Malaysia

High Drama left Raffles Marina in Singapore and headed up the Malacca Straits between Sumatra, Indonesia and Malaysia. This narrow stretch of ocean has been sailed by traders and warships from Arabia, India, China, Portugal, The Netherlands, Britain and Japan for the last 1500 years as it connects the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. Our route followed the Malaysia side of the Straits to avoid the rebellious folks in Aceh Province in Sumatra. More than 300 ships per day

ply the Straits. To avoid hundreds of lightless fishing boats and nets set at just 6 feet deep we sailed just inside the shipping lanes. Enormous oil tankers and freighters accompanied us as we motored and sailed. The sterns of all of the ships carried lights totally illuminating the rear area as a pirate prevention measure.

October marks the shift between the SW and NE monsoons. Weather is characterized by lightning and thunderstorms with blinding torrential rain and an occasional "Sumatra", an hour or more or 30-50 knot winds and rain. Our 142 mile trip produced only a couple hours of rain and 20 knot winds.



Admiral Marina



High Drama at Admiral Marina, Port Dickson, Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



The Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur Skyline



The Petronas Towers which house the national oil company, from below.



We decided to treat ourselves to a fancy dinner in Kuala Lumpur at the Mandarin Oriental hotel at the base of the Petronas Towers. It turned out that the heads of state of all 57 nations in the Organization of the Islamic Conference Summit were in the ballroom, so security was pretty darned tight. Mostly friendly guys with machine guns all over. A big risk of accidental firearm discharge in my opinion. Ann said that she came to enjoy being frisked for weapons, however. At dinner Ann heard an American accent (not Texas) at the next table and, as she sometimes does after her second glass of wine, Ann introduced herself. The woman turned out to be Marie Huhtala, a Californian who is the US Ambassador to Malaysia. After a brief chat her soup came and we decided not to impose on her dinner any more. Small world.

The National Museum



Architecture at National Museum



The museum displays vestiges of British Colonial rule. Shown here is a serrated blade pitchfork called an “amok catcher” used by the British to capture Malays who ran amok.



A young art student



Young women posed in front of old fire engine



Garuda, the bird that carries the Hindu God Vishnu



National Geographic lecturer



Tending the grounds



Sign at observatory.



Good food.



Fruit vendors...



...and designer watches in Chinatown, Kuala Lumpur.



Very chic and modern shopping centers



Locals who wanted their pictures taken. Malaysian War Memorial with western models designed by the same person who designed the Iwo Jima Monument near Washington, D.C.



Minnie and her daughter.

As always, the most fascinating people were the ones we met in pursuit of something other than tourist trinkets. I wanted to reprint some boat cards, business cards with the name of the boat on them. The print shop I found was owned and managed by Minnie for the last 32 years. The walls bore examples of her work over that entire time and she remembered my name between visits. When she introduced me to her daughter I remarked that she did not look old enough to have a daughter that age. She beamed and then proceeded to show me pictures of her entire extended family for three generations. After half an hour I begged my leave but she continued to engage me. Her spirit and pride wouldn't let me go! A real Malaysian-Chinese sweetheart.

Penang

High Drama arrived in the Free Yacht Club of Penang in time for the Hindu festival of Deepavali. Although Malaysia is predominately and officially Muslim there are large Chinese and Indian minority

groups. Deepavali represents the victory of Rama over Rawana, good over evil, wisdom over ignorance.



A balloon above the festival



Colored rice art.



They rolled out the red carpet for us.



Flowers were in great abundance.



Dancers paused to rest.

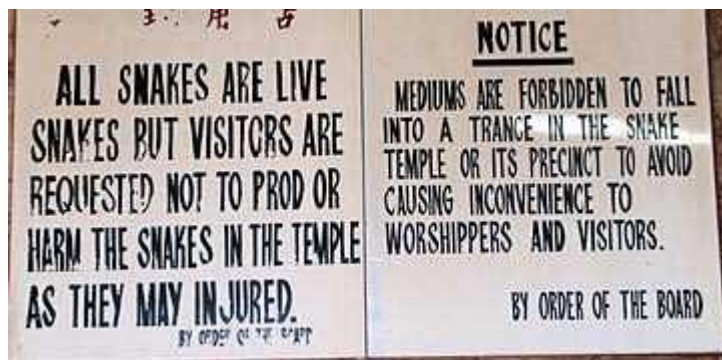


A tiring celebration.

In Penang we also visited a Taoist temple that has been inhabited by snakes since it was first constructed.



Taoist temple Chor Soo Kong, the Temple of the Azure Cloud, is better known as the Snake Temple in Penang.



The Wagler pit vipers are allegedly kept docile by burning incense.



Live Wagler pit viper



Penang hosts Intel, Dell, HP, and other computer industry manufacturers. This modern bridge connects the mainland to the island where the high technology manufacturers operate.

Langkawi

Our last stop in Malaysia was Langkawi, a duty free port. We loaded up on chocolate and beer.



Crusiers discussing duty free purchases



Carol and Jay from **Gandalf** amuse Ann at Langkawi mountaintop.



Looking at Thailand from the Malaysian border.

Conclusion

High Drama sailed from Langkawi to Phuket, Thailand. There we traveled inland to Laos, Cambodia, and Viet Nam. Stay tuned for some eye opening observations from these three wonderful observations. As always, we welcome your comments and emails. Please feel free to contact the Webmaster if you don't have our email address.

Jeff & Ann Brooke
S/V High Drama