

Indochina: Vietnam. Cambodia, Laos

Images Left

December 1, 2017

A thunderous explosion of sound attacked the glass windows of the New World Saigon Hotel, creating a pulsating tsunamic sound wave that I thought could only be experience in Ibiza on the Island of Majorca. It's 6:00am and a hundred plus Saigon residents migrated to Ben Thanh Park across from the Hotel for a Zumba Rave Exercise Party. With a 100w Sony Amplifier attached to 3 six 6 foot High Marshall Speakers, and powered by a 12 volt Car Battery, this morning exercise began with a Trans Techno party Club Mix track of Jingle Bell followed by the hard driving Christmas Music rendition of Frosty the Snowman. From the diversity of the assemble audience of office workers, high schoolers and seniors, the traditional Tai Chi routine was abandoned to the heart pumping and joint expression music featuring "Lovely Laura" on Sax.

In the crowd were seasoned Zumba aficionados who knew every tricky dance move to the introverted workout beginners who danced at the crowd's perimeter to the Trans Techno Party Club Mix Christmas program. It was a silent night wakeup call that happens daily; weather permitting.

It's apparent that Saigon residents have embrace exercise as a main ingredient to their healthy life style.

Rolling Down the River Proud Mekong

With breakfast consummated at 10:00, we met our personal escort and driver in the hotel lobby. Long Ho and his driver Jai Nyguen were smartly dressed and spoke English with a tonal accent that added to mystery of our Mekong Delta River cruise. As Long Ho introduced our daily agenda, he was careful to explain our 40 kilometer (24 Miles) destination would take 3 hrs. due to traffic concerns and a trucker strike regarding private bypass roads. He also warned us that the Yellow Dogs (police dressed uniforms) were out in force and that tickets could be paid immediately to the Officer or suffer through a bureaucratic nightmare at the bank and the police station. It's a tradition here to pay the Officer \$30 for a \$50 fine and avoid the Police Station at all cost. Diane was totally on-board with that recommendation.

With all the necessary caveats for this 3 hrs. journey, we started rolling down the river, adding our voices to Long and Jai's tonal melodic rendition of Proud Mary and sometimes pulling a "Milli and Vanilli" to some songs on the karaoke CD tracks. It was

wonderful three hours singing all the river songs they knew or thought they knew. A splendid time was guaranteed for us with Long and Jay as our touring guardian angels.

Tomorrow: Siem Reap, Cambodia – Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom

Photos Below































