

Travel for Southeastern Asia in 2006

Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia

Waseda University, School of Commerce
Commerce, Trade & Finance Course

Aiichiro Kohno

July 31st, 2006

Contents

1. PROLOGUE	2
2. INTRODUCTION OF SINGAPORE	2
3. DEPARTURE	3
4. SINGAPORE	3
5. MALAYSIA	7
6. INDONESIA	10
7. RETURN	11
8. EPILOGUE	12

1.PROLOGUE

I traveled abroad from 20 July 2006 to 25. My destination of this travel is Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. I had decided this travel only a few days before I went abroad. Then, why did I want to go abroad? There are two backgrounds on me. First, I had six vacant days, which I had not ever had. Generally speaking, university students in Japan must take examinations on the latter half of July. However, I had no examination for the six days by chance. Besides, I had no work which I usually did five times a week as a teacher. For me who had wanted to go abroad, I had no way to use these holidays. Second, I wanted to speak English above all. I do not know this reason clearly, but I think my university classes made me realize the importance of English skills. Those are why I went abroad. Next, I want to state my destination. I wanted to speak English, so I needed to go to the countries where people spoke English in the vernacular. I mentioned Singapore, Hong Kong, and Los Angeles as the site proposed for such countries near Japan. First of all, I found it cost me the most to go to Los Angeles. Moreover, Hong Kong was comparative near from Japan, so I thought I would often have a chance to go there. Then, I decided to go to Singapore and so on.

2.INTRODUCTION OF SINGAPORE

Now, I introduce Singapore. Singapore is on the south of Malay Peninsula in Southeast Asia. This country is small City-state that the United Kingdom built in the imperialism age, but the most developed country in economy of this area. Please look at the right chart. This is about GDP per capita. For example, while the value of Japan is 30615, that of Singapore is 29900. That is why Singaporeans are as rich as Japanese. In addition, In Singapore, there are three peoples. The most people are Chinese. This number is about 76.7 percent of the whole population. The second most people are Malays and its number is about 14 percent, and the third most are Tamils whose ancestors came from the south part of India. Therefore, English is the official language as a way to communication among peoples.

	GDP per capita (US\$)
Singapore	29900
Malaysia	12106
Indonesia	4458
Cambodia	2000
East Timor	400
Brunei	24826
Laos	1900
Myanmar	1800
Philippines	4923
Thailand	8300
Vietnam	3000
Japan	30615

This data is from IMF 2005

3.DEPARTURE

My first event was happened a day before the departure. I confirmed my plane ticket which I had ordered a travel agency by telephone, and the ticket was written “20 August 2006” as a departure day. The true day was 20 July, so I called the agency in haste. However, departure day was the next day, and I had a lot of difficulty in changing reservation. Therefore, I decided to cancel it once, and I got new ticket. This was very dangerous accident.

On that day of departure, I went to Narita Airport by train for one and half hours in the afternoon. Once Narita Airport was named New Tokyo Airport, but it was surrounded by large fields. That is to say, Narita was the country. My plane is by North West Airline. I went to its counter and asked the clerk to check in, but she looked at my ticket and took me other place. She asked me some question about my identity persistently. I do not know why she did, but I was checked in and I pass the examination of leaving the country. However, the clerk who had asked me went to me and asked the same question again just before I took my plane. She regarded me as a stranger for some reason. Finally, I managed to leave Japan.

4.SINGAPORE

One of the purposes of this travel was to use English and I expected that I would use English after arrival in Singapore. However, my battle with English started over Pacific Ocean. Suddenly, my next-seat person spoke to me in English. She looked old Indian. I was not able to hear her English and I felt ashamed. In addition, North West Airline is American company, so the cabin crews also spoke in English. I had some difficult and I was worried about this travel.



I always had no credit card even in Japan, because I often forgot belongings. For this reason, I could not make any reservation for hotels in Singapore, so I had not

yet decided where I would stay in Singapore. Then, when I was asked the location of stay in the examination of entering of Changi Airport in Singapore, I could not answer it. Nevertheless, the time when I arrived in Singapore is at midnight, so the judge looked very sleepy and investigated me more. After that, I had to make a reservation for first hotel, so I went to the information center in the airport. There was a sleepy Malay woman. I asked her to make a reservation at the lowest price. I barely succeeded in the reservation with my incomprehensible English.

My hotel was in Geylang near the east coast of Singapore. There were many hotels at too low price that surprised tourists. Geylang looked the old downtown. At midnight, for example, three o'clock, there were very many local people, particularly Chinese, but there was no tourist except me. First, after I left my baggage in my room at the hotel, I went around and had a dinner at local street stall. Many local people gazed at me, because tourist really came there. I ordered very cheap dinner. Soon my dinner came to me and I began having. Then, Chinese clerk came to me and asked, "Where are



you from?" I answered, "I came from Japan." And she said, "You look Chinese. I think you are from Hong Kong." Besides, she asked to me about my purpose of the trip, my occupation and so on. We enjoyed the conversation very much.

The next day, I left my first hotel for the central town of Singapore. I took train that was very nice. There were many Chinese, Malays, and Tamils. I could distinguish them easily. Chinese resembled Japanese very much. Malays were blacker than Chinese

and Japanese. Particularly, Malay ladies pulled over scarf. Tamils were blackest of those three peoples. In my train, there were some couples. They went about with person of the same people. Singapore was binational state, so I thought each people was friendly with other people. But, surprisingly, there was a little communication among different peoples.

I arrived at City Hall station after a while. City Hall was the most central town of Singapore and there were many government agencies. I walked around there. However, my baggage was so heavy, so I was tired. I went back to City Hall station and said to a desk clerk, “Where are any lockers in Singapore?” Then, he answered, “There is no locker except in the airport.” That surprised me very much, because I believed Singapore was a modern state. So I gave up lockers, and I decided I would leave my baggage in second hotel. Therefore, I had to make a reservation for it, and I decided to go to Singapore Visitor Centre, which supplied a lot of information for foreign tourists. I went to Orchard Street by train. Orchard was the richest downtown of Singapore. It was like so-called Ginza in Tokyo. I reached the center, and I asked a treasurer, “I want to make a reservation for hotel at lowest price.” Then, she asked to me, “How much?” I said, “Not more than 100 Singapore dollars” However, she answered that the lowest introduced hotel was at about 115 Singapore dollars. I was worried about this price, but I decided to make a reservation for this hotel and I went there.

This hotel was “Grand Central.” On this name, this was very grand. At first, I had to pay the charge at the counter of this hotel. However, I was required to pay 250 Singapore dollars. I did not understand this sum, so I asked the cashier why I had to pay 250 dollars. Then, she told that the half of 250 dollars was deposit. I thought this deposit was very expensive, but I was satisfied.

After that, I left my baggage in my room, and I became cozy and went to many sightseeing spots. First, I went to Raffles Place along the main bay in Singapore. Raffles is British colonist who built Singapore city, so Singaporeans have respected him until nowadays. There was Merlion Park, which was very famous symbol of Singapore. Merlion was mixed lion and fish into. Many tourists visited there and took photos and so on. I bought a few Merlion dolls as souvenirs, and went to other



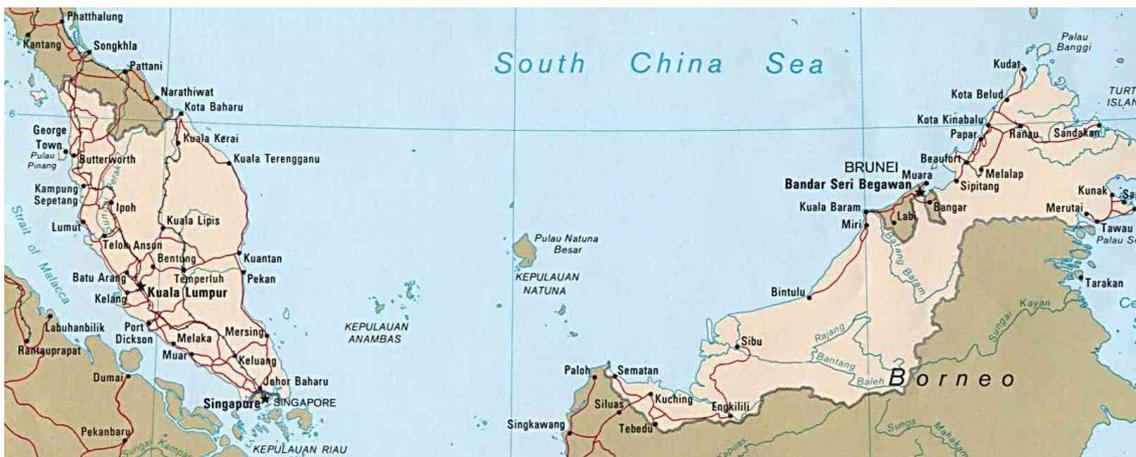
spots of this downtown. I felt the central city of Singapore was very clear. I thought that was because the government made the layout of the city positively. Speaking of the interesting, I walked around there, and stopped at used bookstore. There were many English books at low price. In Japan, English books are very expensive, so I sought interesting books. Then, I found a clear economics book that had been more than 10000 yen in Japan and too expensive for me to buy, but it was only 7 Singapore dollars (about 500 yen) and I bought two and other books. These books were very heavy, but I thought I did very useful shopping. At that night, I dropped at Singapore Management University. I belong to school of commerce, so this university interested me. This university was national and it had very large campus in the central city of Singapore. Its buildings were very new and clear. Finally, I had a dinner in Singaporean family restaurant.

Two days after I left Japan, I went to Changi Airport in order to leave my suitcase. That was because my suitcase added big English books had become heavier and I could not go to any places comfortably. After I left my baggage except my necessities, I went to Singapore Station in order to get a railroad ticket for Kuala Lumpur, which is the capital of Malaysia. I expected that Singapore Station was the largest station in Singapore, but it was very deserted. I got the timetable of train to Kuala Lumpur, and decided to take sleeping car at that night. I talked with a cashier and got my two-way ticket, so I was relieved from my biggest issue. I had many hours before my departure, and I decided to go to Sentosa Island and China Town. I went to Sentosa Island by cable car and enjoyed bicycle along the seaside. Two hours after, I went to China Town by train. I thought china towns in Japan were not interesting, but the china town was very exciting. Precisely, there were many Chinese in Singapore, so it was very natural that this town had the strong Chinese characteristics. Besides, this China town was very large. I walled around, bought many goods and I was given Chinese massage. Then, it grew dark before I knew it. I had very delicious fried rice that I had ever had in Japan immediately before I went back to Singapore Station.

After I arrived at Singapore Station, I took the examination of leaving Singapore next to a beautiful Malay girl. I had no problem, but the examiner spoke to me, "That girl is very beautiful." I laughed and felt Singaporean humanity. Then, I took the train to Kuala Lumpur and left Singapore. This train jolted very much, but I was sleepy enough to fall asleep.

5.MALAYSIA

I reached Central Kuala Lumpur Station at 7 AM. I had not passed the examination of immigration, and I sought the place to pass. However, I could find, so I asked a station attendant where it was. He told me that I would pass in return train. I thought it was strange not to have to pass the examination of immigration and Malaysia was very remiss. I went to Singapore Station by commuter train. This train cost me no less than 1 Malaysia ringgit. 1 ringgit was about 30 yen, so this price was unbelievable in Japan. I arrived at the station and start walking to downtown of Kuala Lumpur. But, there were a few people around the station, because that day was Sunday. Only in a park, many children played football. Because I walked for a long time in Singapore, my legs were so tired and I felt I could not walk any more. So I called a taxi that I thought was much cheaper than in Japan. I rode in the taxi and order to go to Petronas Twin Towers. It was very famous building and the second tallest building in the world. (In this



connection, the tallest building in the world is Taipei 101 in Taiwan.) I thought it was strange for Malaysia, which was developing country, to build it. 10 minutes after, I got at the towers. I wanted to go up and went to the entrance.

However, there were very many people waiting. All almost of them were tourists. Before I reached there, I could find a few people, and I thought that was out of assumption. I could not put up with waiting, so I went to other place. I had not eaten breakfast yet and I was very hungry. I found McDonald's and entered. I thought the hamburger of Malay McDonald's was cheaper than that of Japanese. Only 6 ringgit meal satisfied my stomach. Next, I rode a taxi and ordered to go to an information center for foreign tourists, for I had little information about Kuala Lumpur and I wanted to go to where many local people often went shopping and enjoyed. I asked the

attendant where and decided where to go. There were some personal computers for tourists to use free in the center, and I accessed internet before departure.



I was content with it, and went to the local downtown. After I got there, I walked around. I found many shops selling beautiful local clothes at very low price. I thought price of Malaysia was lower than that of Singapore so it was better to buy souvenirs for my friends in Japan. At first, I began looking at the price of goods in all shops. It is exciting just to look at Malay goods. One hour after I began, I wanted to buy the local dresses that were famous in Japan. They were very beautiful and I thought they would satisfy my girl friend. I went back to the shop selling them and told a clerk to give me. Then, she asked me with wonder if I would wear them. I said to her, “No! No! I want my girl friend to get on.” She told that she could make the clothes and sell them unless my girl friend was here. So I gave up getting the dress, and I bought other local clothes for souvenirs. After I finished, I have local lunch at a restaurant. This was very cheap but it was very delicious.

At that moment, I noticed that I had forgotten my PDF in the information center. This price was about 50 thousand yen and this was much more expensive than that Malay clothes. In case it was stolen, I hurried back to the center by taxi. I gave the taxi driver 10 ringgit that was very high price for taxi fare in Malaysia, and I ordered him to arrive there as fast as possible. I reached there and barely got back my PDF.

With relief, I went to the local downtown again. I walked to the central of Kuala Lumpur from there. After a while, I was caught in a shower. This was the first rain after I reached Southeast Asia. Because I did not have umbrella, so I had to stop walk more. There was McDonald’s near there. I entered it and ordered a cheap meal. I felt the meal of Malaysia was as delicious as that of Japan. Nevertheless, the price of Malaysia was not more than half as low as that of Japan. The phenomenon was affected by the foreign exchange. This is very strange but the foreign exchange calculates GDP that is indicator of countries in the world. Is there reality under the notion of GDP? That made me consider for a while.

Without notice, it stopped raining. I left the McDonald’s and continued walking with a map. However, I failed to see the map and I could not get the destination forever. I felt a lot of pain in my legs again. I could not bear to walk so I entered a hotel

and ask a Chinese attendant if I could take a rest. English was official language in Malaysia and he could not understand English, but I spoke Chinese a little and we could communicate with each other. He told me that in Kuala Lumpur there was no hotel where I could take a rest. I gave up taking a rest in a hotel and continued walking again. After a while, I found a large department store. I needed a rest without delay. I entered Starbucks in this store. There were a few sofas. I bought a drink and dove into the sofa at once. I drank a little and started sleeping.

One and half hours after, I woke up and left the café. There were many fashionable department store and many young Malay people around there. However, my baggage was heavy for long walking and I expected it would tire my legs again. As it was, I could go anywhere, so I went back to Central Kuala Lumpur Station and left my all baggage in a locker. I became very comfortable and I determined to enjoy Kuala Lumpur night until I took the return train.

I left the station for KL Tower, which was the fifth tallest tower in the world. Moreover, this tower was located on top of a mountain, so I could view all area of Kuala Lumpur. I paid 20 ringgit that was higher than usual price in Malaysia and went up. In the top of tower, it was cloudy and I could not view the city clearly, but I was satisfied.

Next, I tried to go to China Town in Kuala Lumpur by taxi, but taxi driver by the tower regarded me as a rich foreigner and showed very high price. I got angry about this treatment so walk down from the top of the mountain. I reached a street, took a taxi, and went to China Town as my final sightseeing of Kuala Lumpur. This china town in Kuala Lumpur was smaller than that in Singapore, but I could enjoy the different phenomenon. I walked around there. As I was beating down goods, I talked with clerk in English. And, I have very delicious fried rice and Malay local dinner at very reasonable price.

Finally, I went back to Central Kuala Lumpur Station. I found small McDonald's in the station. At the store, only ice creams sold. McDonald's selling no hamburgers was very rare. I was interested in it and bought one ice cream. It was surprisingly delicious. I put my baggage out of the locker and left Kuala Lumpur. Though I was in Kuala Lumpur for only one day, I enjoyed. In the return train, there were many Malay children. They were very noisy at midnight, but I felt it was a slight entertainment of travel.

6.INDONESIA

The day before I return to Japan, I decided to go to Bintan Island in Indonesia as my final trip. After I got back to Singapore Station, I hurried to a ferry terminal in the east part of Singapore by train and taxi. I reached the terminal at 10 AM right after a ferry to Bintan left. So I had a lot of time, I had a local breakfast, and studied Chinese for examination after return to Japan.



At 1 PM, I rode on the ferry. This ferry ran at very high speed. It took me only a hour from Singapore to Indonesia. After I reached Bintan, I passed the examination of immigration to Indonesia. Bintan was the country, so there was no communication except taxi. Moreover, Where I reached was Bintan Resort and its price was very high for foreign tourists. I was not bourgeois, so I had an opposition to expensive taxis. However, I had no way to go around cheaply, so I decided to use taxi. I wanted to go where there were many local people. But, they were not able to speak English. I was not able to speak Indonesian, so I needed a driver who was able to speak English and Indonesian. I had a clerk of a taxi company find such a driver.

After a while, a taxi driver came to me. First, we went to Pasar Oleh Oleh. There were many restaurants and I had a lunch. I had no Rupiah that was the currency of Indonesia, so I had a clerk exchange my Singapore dollars into Rupiah. Moreover, I asked a question where there were many local people and enjoyed talking about many things with her. She said that local people often went shopping in Tanjung Uban. It was located in the west part of Bintan Island. I decided to go there and drove along seaside. I saw a wonderful sight of Bintan, and my taxi driver talked to me very much and took my photos.

About an hour after, we reached Tanjung Uban and drew up our car in a parking. We walked around. There were many rare goods and asked many questions to my driver. I thought the price of Indonesia was lower than that of Malaysia. I bought many goods as souvenir. For example, Indonesia rice, Indonesia local clothes, durians, Indonesia noodle, Bintan beer and so.

I had to take the final return ferry at 8 PM, because I left Singapore for Japan in that next day's morning. That was why we went back to the ferry terminal. On the return way, I enjoyed the scene of Bintan as I hearing music. This was the best as the end of my trip.

7.RETURN

I reached the terminal an hour before departure. I left my baggage and huge amount of souvenirs at the ferry office, and walked around the terminal. Then, I encountered a cat. I liked cats very much. I sported with her, and three child cats came to us. They were as old as my cat that I had in Japan. I watched them for a while and began to remember her.

At 8 PM, I carried my 10-kilogram rice on my shoulder and rode on the ferry. Many European and American tourists gazed at me and seemed to think I was stranger. About one hour after, I arrived at Singapore and passed the examination of immigration. I went to Changi Airport by taxi.

When I got to the airport, it was about 10 o'clock. My plane would Take off at 6 AM, so I had many hours. Nevertheless, it was already at midnight, and I decided to kill time at the airport. First, I went to a restaurant and had a dinner as my final meal in Singapore. Next, I walked around all parts of Changi Airport. Then, I was tired, so I found a comfortable sofa and fell asleep.

When I woke up, it was 4:40 o'clock. I went to the counter of North West Airline. The attendant checked in and gave me the ticket to Tokyo. I asked to have my very heavy suitcase carried, but it was about 35-kilogram and she told me to pay 140 Singapore dollars. I had only 70 dollars and, anyway, I thought it was very expensive. Therefore, I told her that I left another bag and brought this suitcase into my seat. Then, she looked very shocked to hear my proposal and told me that this suitcase was too heavy to bring into seat and I was allowed to do. I became puzzled, but I moved some goods in the suitcase to the bag and finished cutting down my suitcase. Then, I was allowed to have the suitcase carried free. However, there was one more trouble. She asked me if I had any durians. Because I did not know the pronunciation of durian, I said to her, "What's durian?" And, some examiners came to me and examined my baggage. After a while, they found my durians and cried "Durian! Durian!" One of

them told me that I was forbade to carry durians into plane. I asked him if it was forbade in trunk of plane, and he said, “Yes. Throw it away or eat here.” So I gave it up. This was the final incident of my travel.

8.EPILOGUE

My travel was very useful for me. There are three reasons. First, I enjoyed communication with many local people. I felt the difference of their culture with my body. Second, I bought many goods and had many meals at very low price. The different price made me consider the exchange and the international money and banking. Third, I spoke only English. At first of the travel, I could speak little, but, finally, I could speak actively. I got English thinking. For example, I dreamed in English. Now, I know the way to make progress in English and have a confidence that my English skill will improve easily. I want to travel abroad again and improve myself.