

Trip to Sri Lanka
Friday March 11, 2016
Day One

My journey toward Sri Lanka began by me going to Toronto. On Tuesday morning after I drove the girls to school, Bob Kardynal came and picked me up from the house and dropped me at the airport. We had a short prayer, seeking for God's protection and blessing on me as I traveled and on Northview as I am away from my charge.

At the check in for my flight the woman at the counter let me know that the flight was oversold and that I might be delayed. I had no choice but to wait it out, so I sat to see what would happen. Then Dennis Camplin came; he was on his way to Mississauga for some training. It was nice to connect with him and hear how things are going for him in Wawota and his plans for what's next. I ended up getting onto the flight with no problem and soon found myself in Toronto.

My Mom, Mary, after getting lost, picked me up from the airport and we headed to her house. She and her husband Bill gave me a light lunch and we spent some time chatting until my Uncle Rob, Aunt Sharon, my brother Ed and his wife Merna arrived. We spent a lovely evening catching up. I was able to tell them about the new house Sarah and I have bought, as well as talk about my trip to Sri Lanka.

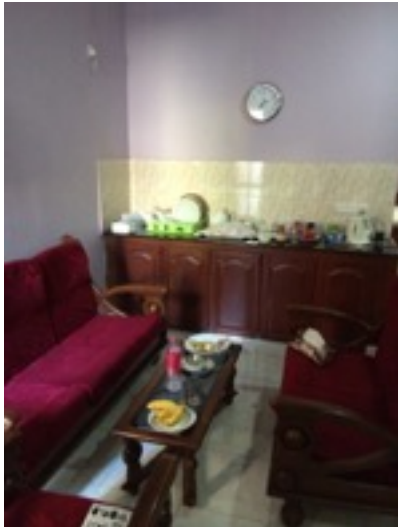
In the morning I took my Mom out for breakfast. She does a walk everyday so we walked up to the restaurant and enjoyed the meal together in a local restaurant. After we got home we decided to work on a puzzle together. This was a good way to have something to do as we talked. Then at 3 pm my mom drove me back to the airport where I would meet Dan and begin the leg to Sri Lanka.

It turned out our first leg of the journey was an Air Canada flight to London Heathrow. The flight was just over 6 hours with a dinner provided. Headsets were included in the flight and the movies were free, so we were able to pass the time with a combination of catching some sleep and watching some films. Once we got to London we did a walk through the airport, checking out the shops and looking for Doctor Who stuff for a photo for Maeve. Then we went and had a coffee and pastry.

Our next leg took us on a Jet Airways flight from London to Mumbai. This flight was just over 8 hours. It also included movies and a headset so again we divided our time between some conversation, watching films and sleeping. To our surprise and delight it turned out that the young lady sitting next to Dan and her sister were also going to Colombo and they were from Hamilton. We are still hoping they made the connection okay. When we got off the flight they were ahead of us and seemed to go the wrong way. We looked out for them but didn't see them on the plane or in Sri Lanka.

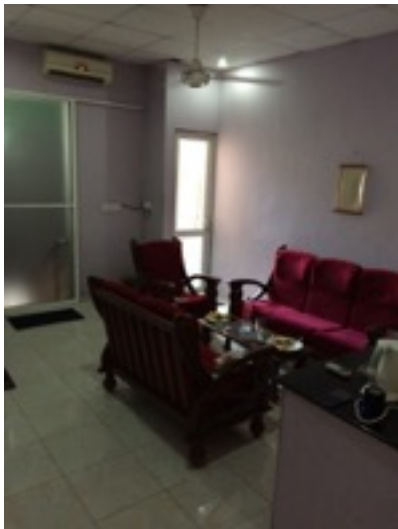
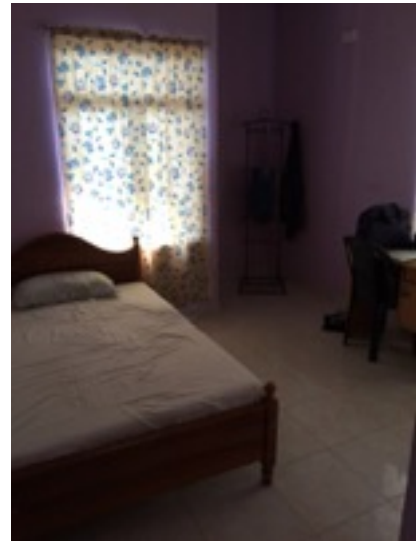
On the flight to Mumbai and in the airport there I began to feel the change in culture. First, was the food served on the flight. It smelled, looked and tasted different from what I have experienced. Then, in the airport, things operated much different. We still went through security, but it was far more chaotic. People would just step in front of you, put their stuff down and walk right through the metal detector. Both the food and the lack of order, or rather an order I understood, caused me to feel insecure. I realized that I am a foreigner in a place foreign to me.

In Mumbai our stop over was much shorter. We had time to use the washrooms, sit for a coffee and pastry, and then get on a bus to the other terminal. We loaded onto the plane and had our shortest flight of just under 2 hours. Once in Colombo we found the entry cards, filled them out and then entered the country. We picked up our bags with no problem and headed out to look for our ride.



George and David got to the airport at 5:30 am to pick us up. We had been enjoying the 27°C temperature. It was warm and certainly humid, but it wasn't bad. By no means were we in an uncontrollable sweat or anything. Once we were in the van the AC was blasting away and if anything I was too cold! After a 20 minute drive we arrived at the house we are staying in. I was introduced to Sister Hilda and shown where I would be sleeping. After a few minutes of pleasantries and thanking them again for driving us, especially so early we were left alone.

Sleep seemed to be our biggest priority, so after Dan and I went over the features of the rooms and bathroom, it was bedtime. I crashed. At lunch around 1 pm Dan woke me (apparently after some failed attempts) and we had lunch together. For lunch there was a large portion of rice with some different 'stuff'. I recognized ground chickpeas and some onion, but I didn't recognize the rest. It was all very tasty and Dan had told me the truth — it was spicy. All in all it was very nice.



After lunch we chatted a bit more and tried to get the mobil wifi working on my computer. It came up with an error and I can't figure out how to get it to work, but it works on Dan's and he doesn't seem to mind if I share a bit. Then it was back to bed for a nap. Again, I was out! Dan woke me at 7 pm for dinner. Dinner was sweet and savoury crepes. The savoury had egg in them and you add in a (spicy) rice and corn mixture. As well there was a hot sauce you could dip in. The sweet was kind of like a bowl and we added apricot jam.

After dinner we did some Facebook updating, read and then Dan headed to bed. He seems to only sleep for about an hour and a half at a time. I am certainly enjoying Dan as a travel companion and look forward to our excursions tomorrow.