

Sunday, January 4, 2009

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Long before the sun revealed its face above the horizon, the roosters sang their morning calls. Throughout my sleep at night, I was crushed with continuous cry from the rooster to wake up. As a got out of the bed, I could not help but curse the rooster and imagining cooking it. I don't even like to eat rooster, but I think I will make an exception for this ever so howling rooster.

After the quick breakfast with cereal and milk, we packed the vans and drove to the Archeological Park of Copan Ruins. The ruins were built by the ancient Mayans. Despite their lack of technology, they still managed to build large temples for each ruler. Ruler seems to live a relaxing life with watching the Mayan sport and visiting his people.

As the tour of the ruin came to an end, the AguaClara group split into two groups. One group went to go to do zipline and the other group went to go horseback riding for about 3 hours. Both groups got to go to the Macaw Mountain Bird Park (651-4245). Since height is not a friend of mine, I went with the horseback riding group. Before riding the horses, we went to see the birds and took pictures with the birds resting on my back, shoulders, arms, and hands. Surprisingly, the large macaws are very light. In this bird park, there are:

--Scarlet Macaw (Honduras national bird)

--Pygmy owl

--Blue-and-Yellow Macaw

--Collared Aracari Toucan

--Great Green Macaw

--Toucan

Before the bird tour, we went to lunch with the Mayan ruins tour guide named Mario. Mario seems to be a powerful man in Copan. Many residents in Copan know him and seem to respect and listen to him.

The horsebacking ride was a nice surprise. I never expected to ride a horse for such a long period of time in Honduras. My horse seems to be under nourished because her bones are so visible. As I sat on her back, my thoughts revolved around how she must feel. It is painful for her that I am sitting on her back. I consider myself on the heavy side of the scale and nowhere close to being slight. I continued to wonder whether or not I was too heavy for her to carry. Despite my incessant thoughts and worries, my horse seems to enjoy the ride/walk up the mountain. She really likes to be first in the group and lead the group. During the ride, Haley and I noticed that our horses were buddies. Additionally, I also concluded that my horse hates Henry's horse. At one point, my horse tried to bit and attack Henry's horse. As I tried to pull my horse's head away from Henry's horse, my horse's teeth rubbed against Henry's leg.

At the end of the ridge, my horse seemed to endure no pain but I did. I injured my lower body. I couldn't even sit down without whispering in pain. That proves that I lack horseback riding experience. When my horse wanted to gallop, I had to restrain my horse for my own welfare. When we finally reached the end of the trip, I was craving for a nice cold drink. It is probably due to my fright on the edge of the high cliff. I was so scared that the horses had to walk across the strip of land at the rough cliff. Luckily my horse enjoyed a nice meal of flowering shrub rather than the high view over a cliff.

At the end of the ride, we arrived at a drink stand. At the drink stand, Mario seems to have some relationship with the lady owner. Despite my wonders, we rested for a period of time. Then we started to walk back to the center of Copan. As we began our walk, we were stopped by a taxi driver for a 15 lempira ride. This was my second taxi ride.

In my first taxi ride, I ride with Kellie, Reiko, and Chris. I sat in the middle between Kellie and Reiko in the back row and Chris sat in the front with the driver. As we rode in the taxi, I noticed a hand about to grab Reiko's backpack. My fear quickly withered away as the face of Lao appeared with the hand from another approaching taxi. Lao and the others were in another taxi. As the two taxi continued to drive on the road, they began to race each other. At the end, my taxi won. That was my first and adventurous ride in Honduras.

For my second ride, the taxi took me from the ruins to the center of Copan. Afterwards, we went around Copan and bumped into Haley, Kellie, Reiko, and Wenqi. After spending some time in the shops of Copan, I went back to the hotel at 5 pm. At 5pm, there was an AguaClara meeting. John and Tamar presented their work in Honduras along with Antonio's speech. To my surprise, Tamar and John did not really work on a project of their own. Instead, John and Tamar served as a supervisor/interpreter/ engineer to the Honduran engineers and communities. Basically, they work along with Antonio to promote the importance of clean water. They go to speak with high powerful people in communities to spread their ideas.

In order to promote the necessity for clean water, they need to convince to Mayors or other officials first. Then they will help promote clean water in their communities. Essentially, they need to convince the people on top of the power pyramid and then the message for clean water will travel down the pyramid the community members/ residents.

Furthermore, Antonio spoke about his concerns. Instead of being joyful when the high power people utterly agree with his speech for clean water without questions, Antonio worried that the people are only entertaining him and not carrying out their words. Antonio is hesitant on whether or not the people are absolutely sincere with their words for clean water especially conversing with the political individuals. Antonio explained that when people said okay to everything, they do not carry out their words. This is not only found in Honduras. It happens everywhere. Saying something is easier than carrying out the actions/promises. The meeting continued for a long period of time, however, it was very insightful. At the end of the speech, the AguaClara group separated and went their different ways for the rest of the night.

For my free time, I hanged around Nadia and Henry and went back to Llama del Bosque to enjoy dinner. I ordered a salad and a fruit drink. After the meal, we wonder from one bar to another to find the other members of AguaClara. Despite our efforts, we could not found anyone. We even went to the outside of Copan, Henry and Nadia got a drink and danced awkwardly in the empty bar. That did not last long time. We left the bar and went back to the hotel. At the hotel, we bumped into other members of AguaClara. Leopoldo (translator/driver) showed us a photo of his extended family and we talk for a little time about his highly motivated children (studied dentistry, law). Then Henry, Nadia, Anastasia, and I went out again in search for the others. We ended up at the same empty bar. The bar is a part of a hotel. In this hotel/bar, there is a swimming pool.

After a short debate, Nadia and Anastasia jumped into the pool. Nadia wore black shirt and black pant. While the combination of Nadia's clothes looked like a one piece black swimsuit, Anastasia looked as she was wearing colorful two pieces swimsuit. After getting out of the pool, we were greeted with a spanish speaking security guard with a silver rifle. He approached us and demanded that each individual who jumped into the pool is required to pay a fee of 50 lempira. Nadia answered okay and security guard walked away. Then Anastasia and Nadia jumped into the pool again. After a short pool fun, Anastasia and Nadia pay the bar lady 25 lempira each instead of the 50.

As we walked back to Copan, we met up with Sarah, Lalo, Heather, Reiko, John, Jeff, and Tamar. As a group, we entered the Red Frog bar. In this bar, we ran into Mario again. Mario and his relatives seemed to be scattered throughout the city of Copan. During my time at the bar, I signed my name on a lempira that Nadia taped onto the wall of the bar. Throughout the night, I basically watched people dance and drink. As it got late, part of the group headed back to the hotel. As usually, people walked too slow for me and I ended up running back to the hotel alone. The hill back to the hotel was steep, but very fun to run up it. At the end of the day I ask myself: Is the water cleaner in tourist area?