

Journals from Sri Lanka

Rebecca Thompson, '07
January 4, 2006

Walking to an ATM in Colombo is a little like dodging a parade of elephants, and I should know because I have now done both. Fortunately, our trusty guide Upali seems to navigate even the busiest streets to find us a working ATM so we can buy wonderful artifacts for everyone at home. Colombo is a busy city that reflects the juxtaposition of traditional Sri Lankan culture and Western influences. Traditional Buddhist and Hindu temples are scattered throughout the city,

After lunch we enjoyed a wonderful afternoon with the children from the orphanage. The young boys were extremely well behaved and didn't seem at all apprehensive about spending an entire afternoon with intelligent women. The rain didn't stop everyone from enjoying a rollercoaster ride or two. I did have a breakdown in communication when I tried to order two scoops of chocolate ice cream, but got two ice cream cones instead. After saying goodbye to the boys we enjoyed a chilly ride back to the hotel, but keep warm by singing old camp

Lauren Stanfield, '07
January 4, 2006

Today was our last full day in Sri Lanka. Wow! The time has gone by really fast, and I can't believe that we are leaving to go home tomorrow.

We started off the day with

detailed engravements and art on the ceilings. I could ponder at it for a long time because there was something new around each column.

We were treated to lunch at the house of the Seneviratnes, who are friends of Dr. Webb and John Rose. They so graciously welcomed us

way they want." She was a lovely woman. Seeing their home was a nice treat, but we had to rush off to see the boys of the orphanage.

We spent the rest of the day playing at mini amusement park with about 15 boys from the orphanage. It is an amazing story about how one man

felt it is his purpose in life to tend to these boys, after he had encountered much success in life, he didn't feel fulfilled. He was a very kind man. Rebecca and I were able to give him lots of Meredith Soccer gear (courtesy of Coach Paul Smith) and we chipped in some of our own personal gifts as well. I can't wait to see the pictures of them wearing and supporting Meredith

College. Although it rained most of the time, that didn't stop us from riding the merry-go-round, as well as riding bumper cars. That was so much fun. Those kids can make any situation fun. It was a great feeling to see them smiling and having a good time. They are the most kind-hearted children I have ever met.

Tonight was bittersweet. I got to see Darshe and Nadee all dressed up and was able to spend dinner with them one last time. I don't want to leave Sri Lanka. I feel there is so much more to discover. However, I am very blessed to have come on this trip. Not only have I learned about a beautiful country, that in a time of disaster has proved to so many that they can overcome catastrophe, but I have also made many new friends. There are not enough words or time to say what I have discovered from this trip. It was truly an enlightening experience, one I hope to share and keeping sharing with people around me.



Caption: From left to right, Erica Oakley, Mary Covington Walker, and Jessie Caudle enjoy a taste from home while briefly escaping the heat.

a short tour of the city of Colombo. That's where most of our Sri Lankan friends are from, Upali (the tour guide) and Darshe and Nadee who have helped us understand and love Sri Lankan culture all throughout this trip. It was nice to see Colombo and all the surroundings. We stopped at the independence hall, which Sri Lanka got

into their wonderful home, feeding about 24 of us travelers. We were able to talk intimately with both Nihal and Shrima from everything to the Tamil/Tiger ethnic issues, to the role of the woman in a Sri Lankan household. They are both intelligent people, but they were very kind and down to earth, often kidding about how Shrima rules the



Juniors Rebecca Thompson and Lauren Stanfield take a quick nap on the bus before their next stop

but Western architecture can be seen in the Colombo Town Hall which resembles the White House.

Today we also got to see the mixture of the two cultures in the home of Nihal and Shrima Senviratne. They treated us to a wonderful Mongolian stir fry lunch that ended with a delicious orange mousse with chocolate syrup. We spent most of our time in the indoor/outdoor sitting room talking to the couple. The room was part of the house but continued out into a semi-covered patio that was home to some plants, fish, and one very friendly turtle. There was no need for air conditioning because the open patio allowed a cool breeze to enter the home.

songs and anything else we could remember. Unfortunately we couldn't get our guide and bus drivers to return the favor by singing us a Sri Lankan tune, but maybe that will be our goodbye present tomorrow.



on February 4, 1948. It was a nice monument with very

house saying, "men play the tune, but women dance they