

Updated January 9

This last one is all merged since we both got sick to some extent and did not do all we had planned on. Almost everyone on the ship came down with something. Luckily, not too serious, but a lot of coughing. It was actually funny in a meeting room one morning as we were all waiting to depart for our scheduled tours. It sounded like a well-choreographed performance. A cough here, a 2-second pause, another one the other side of the auditorium, then a 3-second pause and one in the middle three rows back. Everyone had their part and all followed perfectly. A car-cough-phany of cruisers.

Today, we have five questions. See how many you know before I explain them.

- (1) Why are elephants like firecrackers (thought I'd start with an easy one)?
- (2) Where was the movie "Anna and the King of Siam" filmed? Hint: Siam is the old name for Thailand.
- (3) How can you tell when you are in the doldrums (answer is not allowed to use the word "wind" or anything similar)?
- (4) Was Brunei ever part of Malaysia? It is the only other country on an island that otherwise belongs to Malaysia.
- (5) Was Singapore ever part of Malaysia?

Elephants and Firecrackers

The tour for the one day in Thailand was spent at Buddhist temples and a native Thai dance performance. The outside of the first temple had a gathering of elephants.



Seems people would frequently come to the temple and ask Buddha to do something for them. And sometimes they would find out they had received what they had asked for. Naturally, it was assumed the wish was granted by Buddha. Buddhist tradition says when a gift is received, something must be given in return. Buddha is very close to elephants. Each seen here was placed by some wish receiver. It was hard to count the number, but I am sure it exceeded 1,000.

So much for elephants. The next temple had only a few elephants that are common at all Buddhist sites. But no large number placed there as gifts.



But the tradition remains. People come to pray to Buddha for favors and some of what is asked for actually happens. Buddha must be thanked. How? Fireworks. There is a big thick ceramic urn on the temple grounds, and the temple happens to sell fireworks. To thank Buddha, buy a string and set them off in the urn. The guide explained in advance what might happen, so we would not think they were gunshots. And it did, about 5 times in the 40 minutes we were there.

The answer to the question “How are elephants like fireworks” is that they are both ways to thank Buddha.

Bonus picture of Thai dance recital.



Where was “Anna and the King of Siam” filmed?

This should be obvious because I would never give you a hint with the answer. On a tour in Malaysia, we saw a room in a large house where part of the movie was filmed. Thailand refused to allow the movie to be filmed in their country. Vicki suggested it was because the film is mostly untrue. Our guide backed that up by saying “Anna” was a real person, but most of the rest was fake.

I do not have a picture of that room, but here are two signs you don’t see very often.

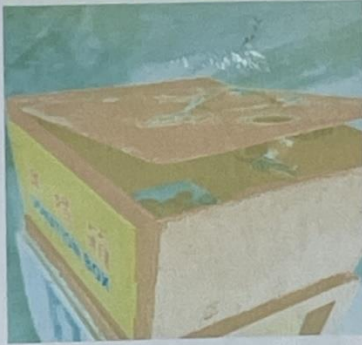


Unethical Behaviour

3rd September 2023



Stealing money
by breaking the
Donation Box.



How can you identify the Doldrums

Not too much to say here, but we did find it interesting. Most of the time when looking at the ocean from a ship, the water appears what I call crinkly. Crinkle a piece of paper and then try to flatten it as well as you can. Look at it. It is never as smooth as it started. There are always places of sharp peaks. Not very high, but they do have points. The same points that are produced by wind at sea.

We sailed through the doldrums one day. The water looked like the top sheet on a bed, just out of the washer, as it's fluffed over the bed and settles. All smooth. Maybe a hill or a valley, but all smooth.

Was Brunei Ever Part of Malaysia

The answer is almost. Malaysia was formed as a federation of many sultanates, aka states. Each one, as the name implies, ruled by a sultan. The new federal government is ruled by a king, who has power over the sultans. The king is elected for a five-year period from among the sultans from one of the states. Five years later, he returns and a new one takes over. Wikipedia calls it the world's only democratic monarchy.

Brunei was one such place asked to join the Malaysian federation when it was formed. The sultan of Brunei did not like the power-sharing arrangement. He wanted to be sultan for life, so Brunei never joined and is an independent country today.

Was Singapore Ever Part of Malaysia

Yes. It was one of the original states formed at the start and was part of Malaysia from 1963 to 1965. It separated after political differences. Officially, it was asked to leave. Our guide implied (strongly) that there is some disagreement if this “ask” was instigated by Singapore or the other Malaysian states.

Pictures

Pictures are limited since we are no longer going off-ship in the ports. Recovering from whatever we had. But here's a last one of someone we consulted about getting better.



If it works, I plan my reply gift will be to offer to give him bridge lessons.