

THE SINGAPOREAN BROTHELS 1973



Memories: This article and others like it *are based on true events. Readers are warned that some of the material may be inappropriate. Material is somewhat unchanged to reflect the behaviour, expectations attitudes prevalent at the time.*

After leaving the Supreme House and all the storekeepers and sales people, the diggers jumped into taxis and made their way to the Kings Hotel. The driver kept looking at Pete nervously, because Pete was looking at him. Pete couldn't be sure that it was a different driver from their previous experience with the maniac taxi driver. Satisfied that it wasn't Pete, relaxed. When they arrived at the Kings Hotel, they found many of the Battalion, celebrating ANZAC Day.

The new Commanding Officer Colonel (C)O John Healy was there with most of the Officers and many Non Commissioned Officers that he knew from the past. The CO and his mates were there during the Happy hour. He did not recognise us as we were mostly new blokes but he recognised some of the older hands.

Pete and his mates drank and drank and became so paralytic they could hardly stand. They had enough good sense to get out of the hotel and grab a taxi home. With Pete went John Shepherd, and Rod back to Kangaw Barracks. The rest of the diggers remained and kept drinking. They exchanged promises that they would meet them later that evening. The drive home was more pleasant as the driver could see that he a cab full of drunks and made sure that they did not vomit all over his clean cab. Pete couldn't care less as he was feeling crook.

This Tiger Ale (beer) was certainly different to what he was use to. He could drink large amounts of it, but after a while it took hold of him and played havoc with his senses. Arriving back at the barracks the diggers split up saying they would meet up again. Two hours later after vomiting his heart out, having a shower and new clothes, Pete was ready to go out again.

Pete, Shep and three others grabbed a taxi and headed for the nearest brothel. The taxi driver was obviously trying to fleece us by going the long way to whatever brothel

he had in mind. So the boys told him to fuck off, what did he think we only come to Singapore yesterday or something? They paid him and gave him the two up sign as he drove his Mercedes off into the traffic.

At this time it was raining heavily and the rain was very similar to the heavy down pours of New Guinea. Shep turned to his mates and "Shit don't worry about, there are thousands of cabs in Singapore, one will come along shortly. Two hours later the diggers were still in the same place waiting for a taxi. It wasn't that bad as the weather was humid. It was just a nuisance waiting for a taxi.

The previous taxi driver was a real smartie Asian quarter. The diggers were out of their depth in such an alien atmosphere. Eventually another taxi came along and the diggers jumped in. Pete turned to Shep, grinning and said, "thousands of taxis eh Shep"? "Fuck off" said Shep, "You're the one who wants to screw a gook." "Yeah, well I just want to know what it's like and look at the birds Pete said. "Bull shit," said Pete's mates and they all laughed.

Pete looked at the taxi driver and instantly took a dislike to him. Maybe it was his sullen look, who knows. Pete soon changed his mind when Shep kept pointing to Pete and kept saying, "**Short time, Jiggi Jig**". The driver laughed and even Pete began to like him. Pete thought to himself, what's this short time bit, but kept his thoughts to himself, Pete didn't want a short time, and he wanted a good time. The driver kept telling us "No you worry, I will take you to high-class brothel, beautiful woman, you like Jiggi Jig" he said looking at Pete and laughing.

This place very very good, clean, good girls, I know the boss, good friend of mine. The driver kept on gibbering shit all the way and making it out that he was doing us a favour by taking us to this high-class brothel. Pete had never heard so much shit coming out anybody's mouth. Three dollars later and a few miles up the road, the driver pulled up to this dilapidated building. It was a two story building in great need of repair. The paint was peeling off, and the smells coming out of it was not a healthy sign.

We paid the driver and for some strange reason he followed us in, I didn't know at the time that the Madam of the house paid kick backs to taxi drivers for bringing business to her establishment. So much for the taxi drivers high-class brothel thought Pete. Still it was a learning experience. The bouncer, an ugly brute, met the diggers in the foyer. He brought out some beer and coke for us and said that he would go and return with beautiful girls.

OHHHHH SHIIIT, said Pete when he saw the seven women paraded in front of him. His heart nearly dropped out of its cavity in his chest and his jaw dropped, He could not believe what he was looking at. **OHHHHH SHIIIT** he said again looking at the brute of a bouncer. Mate is this best you have in the house.

Yes, yes grinned the bouncer, these best girls. Pete had never met such ugly ladies in all his life. The ladies paraded before him were more like dragons that had been dragged from the grave and lipstick stuck on their lips to make them appear alive.

OH FUCK he thought, we have been taken for a ride. Two of the women were passable, while the remaining five crones had good bodies, but still Pete couldn't see himself dead in Bourke Street Melbourne with any of them, even with a bag over their heads.

Well, what could we do, Shep and the other bloke with us selected the two good-looking ones and I was left with the dragons. I chose the least repulsive one of the lot. We haggled over the price and came to an agreement of twenty dollars for a short time, still not knowing what a short time was.

Shep and the other bloke disappeared upstairs while Pete reluctantly followed the crone upstairs as well. Pete kept doing his cross in Greek and thinking aloud to himself, why the fuck did he get himself into such a predicament. When they reached the landing at the top of the stairs the lady ushered him into a room.

Pete was very surprised by the cleanliness and order of the room. The bed was clean with satin sheets, everything was in its place and very tidy. It was obvious that the house Madame kept a tight ship. Pete's ravishing beauty motioned to him to undress. She was very businesslike attitude, no emotion, nothing, do this and do that, the basin is over there, the toilet is in the other room she said in broken English.

Pete went through the ritual of undressing, making sure that all his valuables, his cross (a present from his mother on his 21st birthday) and a ring he had bought some years before. While Pete was secretly placing his personal items away, he kept thinking about all the stories his mates in 1 RAR had told him about the delights of the orient. That women would crawl over you and let you experience all the sexual delights that they could offer.

He distinctly remembered one mate telling him that the women in Asia would show you positions in bed that you only dream about and that the women were different from western women because they knew how to make their men happy in bed. "You ready" said the dragon lady breaking Pete's dreaming and bringing him back to reality. "I give you good time," she said. "Yeah sure, you show me good time" said Pete flexing his muscles to impress her. It didn't even raise an eyebrow and Pete's ego was deflated.

"Geeze Pete you took your bloody time, what was all the bloody commotion about, couldn't you do it quietly" said Shep. Pete grinned and said that he had fallen off the bed and hurt himself. "Yeah, yeah sure Pete" his mates said. "Well what was it like"? they asked. "Yeah it was all right" looking at the dragon lady and reminding himself never to believe all the bullshit stories about good-looking women again.

The three of them then jumped back into the grinning taxi driver that happened to bring them there and asked to be taken to Sembawang. The driver still grinning and said something about, "I tell you that good place good woman and high class joint". "Fuck off" said Pete "And just drive the fuck'n taxi will ya." They were deposited at a bar in Sembawang and became thoroughly intoxicated again.

After a few hours of continuously drinking, the three of them again went to another brothel that was close by. Taxi drivers were plenty in the Sembawang area as it was a favourite drinking hole of the Aussies and a few Kiwis would also frequent the same bars. The diggers always felt comfortable with the Kiwis and treated them as brothers. The next brothel they came to, Pete tried his hand at haggling over the price with the Madame and asked for a short time. (Now that he knew what it meant)

Coming to an agreement, Pete and his mates went to their separate cubicles with the woman they selected. Pete had a much better looking woman this time, but due to all the alcohol he had consumed his sexual prowess failed him on this occasion and although his heart and mind was in it, his body wasn't. Moral of the story don't drink and try and be a bloody hero.

After a while they both got dressed and made their way to the foyer and waited for the others to come out. Shep came out followed by our other mate. "How did it go?" asked Pete still groggy from drinking. Yeah it was ok said Shep. The three of them looked at each other and laughed, as we all knew neither of us could crack it. A taxi waiting outside soon drove three paralytic diggers back to the barracks and depositing them at the guardhouse at 4.00 AM. They had two hours to sleep before they would wake up for another day.

Postscript. Ron Shepherd went on to serve in the Battalion in Singapore and then in Brisbane Australia. Ron was tragically killed in a vehicle accident in Melbourne Victoria



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