

Hong Kong, China – Day 28 Oct. 25:

This was our second day in Hong Kong and we had no specific agenda. After breakfast we went into the Ocean Terminal building where there was free access to the Internet. We wanted to try making a Skype call to our son Steve back in Tennessee, half way around the world. We found a spot in the Terminal building where other people appeared to be on the Internet with their computers and we settled in. We tried to get our Skype running but were overcome by ignorance and couldn't get logged on to the system.

Fortunately fellow passenger, Louise, stopped by and gave us some help, as shown on the right. She had negotiated the pages of Chinese characters earlier and showed us how to find the English section and which options to ignore or chose. In short order we were on-line and successfully communicating internationally by Skype. The video and audio worked okay but the connection seemed a bit shaky. We shut



down the video and that seemed to help the audio become steadier.

We put the computer away and then set out on a walking tour of the Ocean City, Harbour City and China Hong Kong City shopping malls. With all the wonderful things to see in Hong Kong it may seem a little crass but to us walking these elegant malls was the best experience of the visit to Hong Kong.

We just soaked up the grandeur of the finely polished floors, walls, shop displays and bright lighting. There was shop after shop of high end retailers on all floors of the mall. We were particularly impressed with a grouping of stores on the ground floor that catered to people buying things for children. On the right is a photo of the Burberry and Gucci stores carrying only children's clothes. Further down the way was a Hallmark store catering to people celebrating babies.



The three malls must extend for at least a mile along Canton Road in Kowloon and we did the whole thing. Barbara was really impressed with the presence of a store selling

shoes by Jimmy Choo. Until now she had only seen mention of those shoes in fashion magazines. These two malls in Kowloon are truly world class.



After walking the smooth and shiny white stone floors of the malls we exited into the busy streets of Kowloon. We walked through the Avenue of Stars that is located on a pier over the water of Victoria Harbour. The Avenue of Stars is a celebration of famous Asian movie stars where their names are imprinted on a metal star shape that is cast into the concrete making up the walkway. On most of them there is a provision for the star to put his his/her handprint in the fresh concrete holding the metal star. Some examples are shown below.



This is a very popular attraction for the Asian tourists in Hong Kong and they were out early this morning taking pictures and having fun putting their hands into the imprints of their favorite movie stars.



The bronze statue of Bruce Lee was one of the most popular attractions and whole groups of people wanted their pictures taken with that star.



We left the hustle and frantic picture taking on the Avenue of the Stars and walked down Nathan Street to a serene sanctuary known as Kowloon Park. The park is beautifully landscaped and maintained with wonderful wide walks and large fountains. In this photo on the right some people are practicing Tai Chi similar to what we saw in the Temple of Heaven in Beijing.



We came across an ancient *Ficus Microcarpa* tree with a tortured trunk and bark structure that we had to photograph.



Near the Ficus tree was an aviary with a nice collection of flamingos.



In walking the streets of Kowloon we had to constantly remind ourselves that in this part of the world uses the left hand traffic protocol. Because of the large number of tourists from countries with right hand drive traffic the local street departments have painted handy reminders on the street in front of some curbs. On one side they caution to look left for oncoming traffic and on the other corner they suggest looking left, as shown on the right. Short of



switching to right hand traffic this policy seems like a great idea.

The left hand traffic tradition even extends to escalators in the stores as shown on the left.



We had noted the presence of McDonalds and KFC fast food restaurants in China and our dining room steward had confirmed that in Indonesia as well has China people like those fast foods. He said that fried chicken is the favorite so even McDonalds has an extensive chicken menu. This KFC restaurant in one of the

high end malls with the motto, "It's Finger Lickin' Good" prominently displayed made a good impression on us.



We were surprised by the fact that some Hong Kong merchants had Halloween decorations displayed. Here are a couple of sidewalk decorations that we came across.



In 2007 we found a store in Kowloon that featured high quality Chinese products. The name of the store was Yue Hwa Chinese Products and it was on Peking Street near the Ocean Terminal. We wanted to visit the store again but couldn't find it on Peking Street. It turned out that Yue Hwa Chinese Products had moved to the corner of Nathan Road and Jordan Road in Kowloon. We took a quick look at what they had to offer and decided that it had turned in to more of a big department

store than a specialty store for Chinese Products. We asked about Chinese products and crafts at a couple of the information desks in the Harbour City Mall and they recommended we go to the Chinese

Arts & Crafts store in the Star House building near the Star Ferry landing. We went there and found the kind of silk wall hanging and decorative silk covered notebook we were looking for. This store was just a short distance from where the Amsterdam was docked and we would recommend it to anyone visiting Hong Kong looking for high end Chinese crafts.



We returned to the Amsterdam and the relative luxury of our cabin. Barbara grabbed an ice cold coke and settled back for a little rest from the day of touring Kowloon.



After dinner we returned to our stateroom and found a surprise in the form of two role-on duffle bags from Holland America, as shown on the left. We can really use some extra traveling luggage for the stuff we are buying. Thanks Holland America!

One of the rituals that is near and dear to our hearts is after a busy day of walking around a new port we put out a laundry bag full of clothes to be cleaned. One of the rewards that come with four stars Mariner Class with Holland America is free laundry service on cruises and we really take advantage of that perk, as can be verified by the full laundry bag hanging on our door handle after a day in port.



The Amsterdam got underway about 5:30pm and we headed for Nha Trang, Vietnam, our next port of call.