

Shanghai, China – Day 22 Oct. 19:

Shanghai is located in the huge Yangtze River delta and is actually on the Huangpu River tributary of the Yangtze. The map on the right shows where Shanghai is located on the coast of China. When we woke up today the Amsterdam had already turned off the Yangtze River and was sailing up the smaller Huangpu River towards Shanghai. The temperature was in the mid 70s with a thick haze covering the sun. All along the Huangpu River there was intensive industrial development and docking facilities.



Shown below is a picture showing some of the Chinese navy ships tied up.



At another location on the shore was a ship that was under repair in a floating dry-dock as shown on the right. The

existence of a floating drydock is evidence of the advanced state of industrialization in the area. The floating dry-dock is a massive piece of equipment in the shape of a huge



trough with a gate on at least one end. The whole thing can be filled with water and sunk in a controlled way. The end gate is then opened so a ship needing repair can be towed into the enclosure. The end gate is then closed and the water pumped out of the dry dock. The whole thing rises up and as the water drains out the ship needing underwater repair sits high and dry so it can be easily worked on.

The Amsterdam was tied up at the Cruise Terminal by 8am and we took a few pictures of the buildings around the area. We had been here in 2008 and this building near the cruise terminal with the curved glass front seemed new to us. We could see that the tour busses were lined up and ready to go.



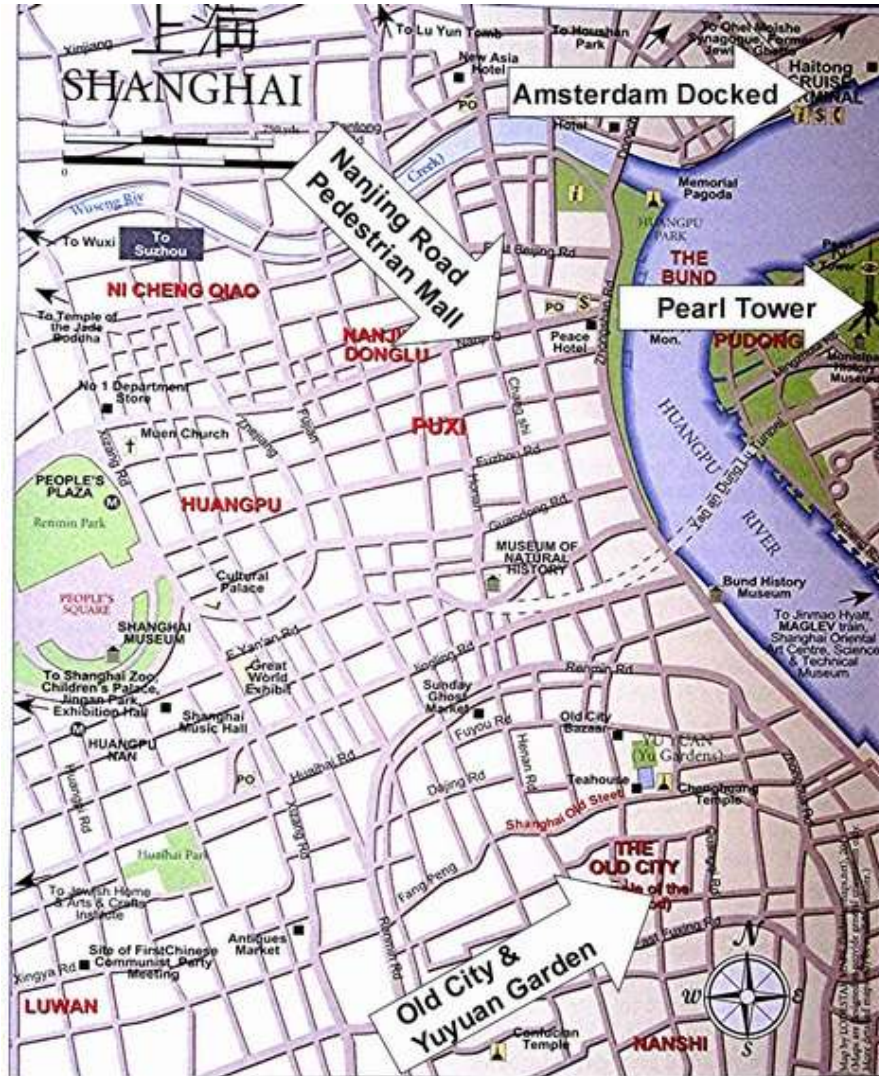
On the other side of the ship, across the river, we could see the iconic Pearl TV Tower and the collection of other skyscrapers in the Pudong section of Shanghai.



The tallest building in the photo on the right houses the International Financial Center and a hotel. It has a hole in the top and is called the bottle opener building by the locals. The apparent hole in the shorter building on the left is really a large glass window panel.



The map on the right shows the layout of Shanghai in the vicinity of the ship and the places we visited during our stay.



We had signed up for a tour by Cruise Specialists (Local Lifestyles of Shanghai – Dinner & Acrobat Show). The tour included a visit to a recreation center for senior citizens, a local food market, a Chinese home for lunch, the Old City, Yuyuan Garden, restaurant dinner and finally an acrobat show as a gala finish for a day of touring. The excursion was pricey at \$164 per person but the guide and site selections were perfect so it was well worth the tariff.

Henk and Lucia, our ambassadors from Cruise Specialists shepherded us through the nearly 12 hour tour and made sure nobody got lost. We boarded our bus and met Scotty, our guide and interpreter for the day. Scotty spoke perfect English even though he said he had never lived outside of China. We first went to a senior recreation center where retired people enjoy crafts, social interaction and contribute to the well being of other Chinese through charitable programs. Scotty led us in through the substantial looking entrance shown on the right.



We assembled in a meeting room and Scotty introduced Mrs. Ping who described how the center worked and later she went with us to the lunch.

Mrs. Ping introduced an active participant of the senior center who was 90 years old. Many of us in the audience were hoping we could be like this lady when we reached her age.



We enjoyed a fashion show by several attractive ladies and then our 90 year old hostess led a singing group from the center, as shown below. First they sang



“The More We Get Together”, in Chinese. We could easily follow the lyrics by the melody even though it was in Chinese. Then she had us join in with an English version of that tune followed by a rousing “You Are My Sunshine”.

They certainly made us feel welcome to their group and to Shanghai.

From the senior center we went to the home of a family that participates in a program to open their home to tourists so that they can see how the average Shanghai apartment dwellers live. We were invited to visit, look around and have a hot Chinese style lunch. From the outside the apartments looked like those shown in the picture on the right. Scotty said the standard of living had improved significantly for most people. When he was young the apartment his family lived in was so small that while lying in bed he could change the TV channels with his toes.



We walked up a flight of stairs and were led into a small apartment that would seem crowded by our standards but looked clean, well maintained and comfortable. The two largest rooms each had a bed in them and two round tables that were set up for lunch. We sat on stools and folding chairs. The hot food was brought in by the hostess in bowls and placed on a lazy Susan that was in the middle of each table. We were given chop sticks but most people opted for a fork that was offered. Here are some pictures of our tour group enjoying lunch, Shanghai style.



In this picture on the left, Mrs. Ping is standing. She sat at our table and explained the delicious food items that our hard working hostess kept bringing to the table.

In the room next to ours was another table of hungry Amsterdam passengers quelling their appetites with wonderfully prepared meat, vegetables, soup, and dumplings. Our shepherds, Lucia (blue/white shirt), Henk (dark blue shirt) and others happily pose for this picture.



Mrs. Ping explained that the apartment was 73 square meters (~780 square feet) in area and had the two bed/living rooms, a kitchen and bathroom. In order to participate in the program the bathroom had to have a western style toilet. Also as they have perfected the program they have adjusted the menu to be authentic Chinese but not include food that, although not remarkable to a typical Chinese person, might be somewhat uncomfortable for a westerner. After lunch we took a few pictures around the apartment.

The refrigerator, although small, was festooned with magnets, just like home.

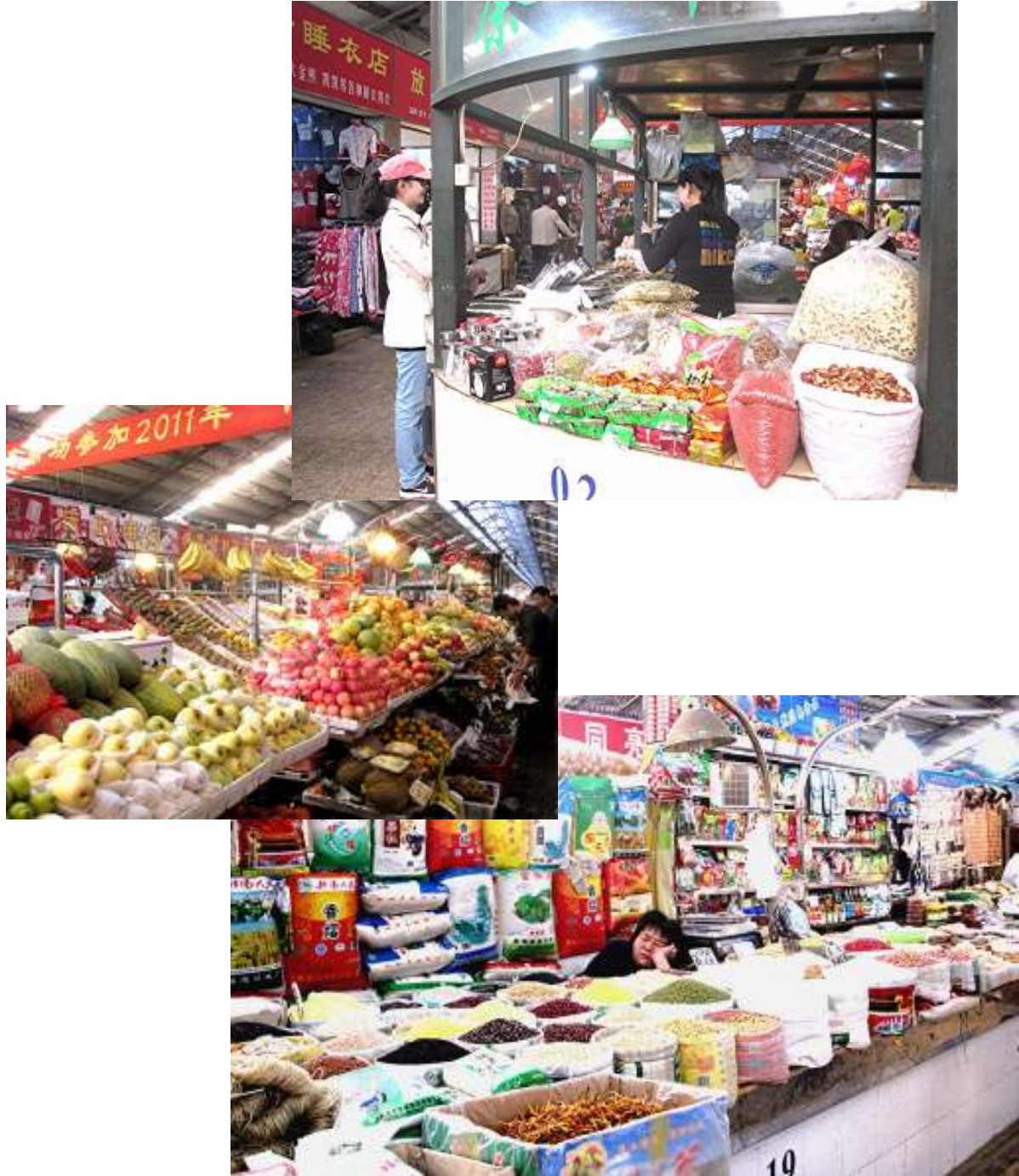


It was amazing that our hostess produced such an elaborate lunch in this small kitchen. Mrs. Ping said she started early in the morning with her preparations.

This was the view of the bedroom from one of the tables.



After lunch our hostess who prepared such a wonderful lunch was bashful and we didn't pursue her to get her picture like we should have. We said our best goodbyes to the hostess and Mrs. Ping and made our way back to the bus. After a short ride we arrived at a food market where we spent about 30 minutes browsing through the stalls and taking pictures like those below.



Some of the proprietors were a bit sleepy after lunch.



To ensure freshness of meat products, poultry like these chickens and ducks are sold live. You can have the proprietor kill and prepare the animal after you have bought it.



From the market we went by bus to the Old City which is shown on the map above. The first order of business in the Old City was a tour of the Yuyuan Garden. The Yuyuan Garden was the home of a very wealthy Yuyuan family in the late 1700s. Now it has been taken over by the government and it is operated as a tourist attraction to show the style of home furnishing and architecture of the time as well as the beautiful landscaping of the period. A few of the photographs we took are shown below.

The limestone rock gardens surrounding the pools of water were most impressive.



Scotty pointed out that this heavy substantial furniture shown on the right was called Ching style and it was favored by wealthy families like the Yuyuan in the late 1700s.



There was also a room furnished in a lighter weight style of furniture that Scotty called IKEA



(department store) style favored by more modern people in China.

The Yuyuan Gardens contain a famous zig-zag bridge and Scotty had a story to go with the bridge. He said the Chinese were very superstitious and

were always thinking of ways to protect themselves from evil spirits. They believed that ghosts and evil spirits in general could not turn corners. In order to protect his home, Mr. Yuyuan built a bridge that was zig-zag in shape so the spirits could not cross over to his home. The picture on the right shows the zig-zag bridge today, loaded down with tourists so that you can hardly see the zig-zag configuration.



The tiles on the roofs of some buildings had a decoration that caught Orlin's eye. At the bottom end of each row was what appeared to be almost a "Happy Face" imprinted in the ceramic. What a nice touch, as shown below.



Before the tour of the Yuyuan Garden was completed, Lucia and Henk organized a photo of our whole tour group. Scotty took each of our cameras and so we got a picture for our journal, as shown below.



We left the Yuyuan Gardens and took a brief tour around the streets of the Old City. Scotty took us in to a silk factory store on one of the streets. We got a demonstration of how silk worm cocoons are harvested to product silk.

The information was basically the same as that we had received when touring a silk factory in Beijing a few days ago. However, the process of stretching a wad of random silk fibers to produce a thin sheet of silk for one of the layers in a comforter is fascinating so we included a picture of the process here, on the right.



It was getting to be almost time for dinner when we left the Old City so Scotty directed us the restaurant that had been arranged for the tour. Scotty said this restaurant was one of the best in Shanghai for its food, ambience, and care of customers. After a 30 minute ride we arrived at the Mei Long Zhen Restaurant (No. 22 Lane 1081, Nanjing Road, Shanghai, China). At the restaurant we filed in and took seats at three large tables that had been set up for us in a private room area on the second floor. Of course, the first thing that had to be checked out was the rest room facilities and they were all found to be satisfactorily western style.

The presentation of the food was similar to what we had experienced at lunch with bowls of meat and cooked vegetables placed on a lazy Susan device in the center of the table. Admittedly the ambience was more sedate and upscale. We all started out with chop sticks but quickly switched to a fork which the waitress handed to each of us.

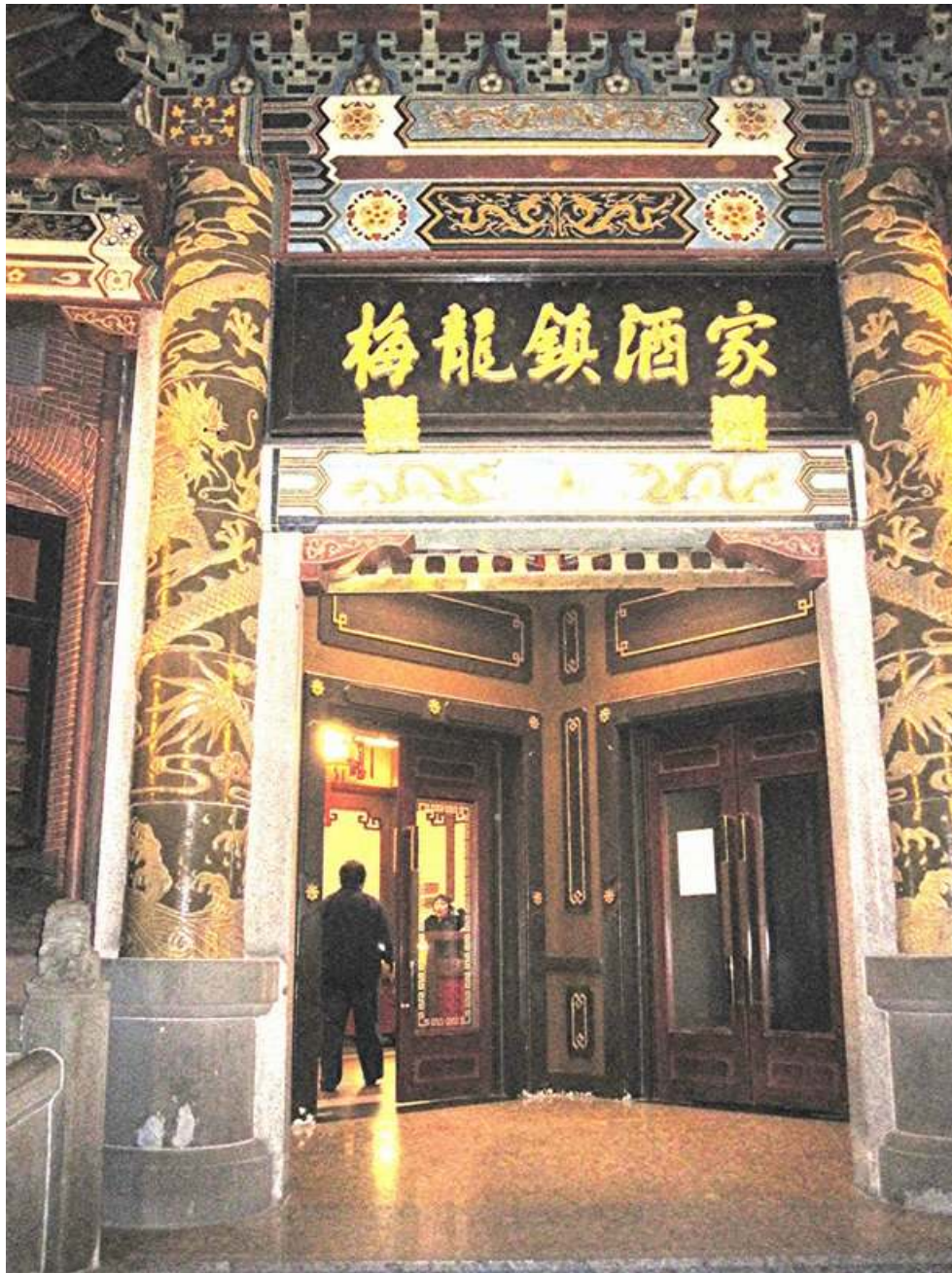
Beer, soft drink or bottles of water were provided with the meal and the waitresses kept bringing on bowls of different food whenever we emptied one of the previous bowls. Shown below are pictures of two of our tables as the meal progressed.



We probably broke every rule in the book of fine Chinese dining as we completely abandoned delicacy and simply picked up the bowl with the food and scraped out what we wanted onto our plate. The etiquette police had the night off and we simply enjoyed a great meal.



After a fine meal it was time to go to the acrobat show. We hustled out to the bus and after about 20 minutes of negotiating city traffic our driver deposited us at the theater for the acrobat show. The entrance to the theater was really quite grand as shown below. The hallways leading to the auditorium were equally impressive with lots of chandeliers and wall hangings.



We were ushered into our seats which were within the first three rows up front in the theater. Normally we don't like the perspective from such close proximity to the stage but for an acrobat show this seemed like a perfect arrangement. Eventually the theater was almost filled. An announcer told us that photography was prohibited but Scotty had said they really mean that flash photography is not allowed. Photography without flash was allowed.

The show started with some amazing acts of balance where chairs were stacked up with a muscular young man at the top of the stack balanced on his hands and adding chairs to the stack. When he got about 15 feet off the floor, much to our relief, he attached a safety line to his belt and kept on adding height. He successfully demonstrated an incredible ability to balance and maneuver the chairs to the applause of the audience. There were several acts of gymnastics and balancing spinning plates. We got some pictures of those that are shown below.





The grand finale for the evening's show was a daredevil act with motorcycles roaring around on the inside of a steel mesh sphere relying on centrifugal force to keep them from falling and incredible skill to keep from crashing into each other. The sphere which eventually held seven speeding motorcycles is shown below.



The show was over and we made our way back to the bus. We were back at the Amsterdam after a 30 minute ride and about 10pm we were back in our cabin. What a day!

The visit to the senior center and the lunch at the home of a Shanghai family had a real classy flare to it and the rest of the tour was great. We're already looking forward to our next visit.

We went up on Deck 9 and took a picture of the fantastic lighted skyline of Shanghai at night, as shown below.



What a great ending of a great day!