

Busan (Pusan), South Korea – Day 14 Oct. 11:

After leaving Vladivostok and sailing for two nights and one day, today we arrived at Busan, South Korea. The location of Busan, relative to Vladivostok and other major cities of South Korea is shown on this map.



About 8am the Amsterdam tied up to the Cruise Ship pier in Busan, South Korea. The name “Busan” has taken the place of the name “Pusan” that was more familiar to us folks who were around when the Korean War was raging. The city is still referred to as “Pusan” in some literature but within the region the name is uniformly shown as “Busan” and that is the name we will use now.

The city of Busan knows how to greet a cruise ship and its passengers. There was an expansive stage set up where the ship tied up and ladies in Korean costumes were dancing to the sound of traditional Korean music. The backdrop to the stage held a large lighted sign welcoming the Amsterdam to Busan, shown on the right.



Captain Fred Eversen was quickly onto the pier as soon as the gangway was in place. He and his large camera, as shown in the photo on the left, are frequently seen documenting conditions on the pier soon after landings. Our friend, Jean, back in Tennessee will be happy to know that Captain Eversen is still making his rounds.

Tour busses were lined up and ready to take passengers on tours and down to the central part of Busan where the famous International Market and Jagalchi Fish Market could be found. We left the ship about 9am and our first order of business was to take a picture of Barbara's library card arriving in Busan, as shown in the photo below.



We then boarded one of the complimentary shuttle busses that had been arranged to take Amsterdam passengers to and from Busan city center.

The 30 minute ride first took us to Yongdusan Park where we got a picture of a shrine with a huge bell and ringing log, as shown below.

We were then taken to the central part of town at a location known as Biff Square. Along the way we observed that construction projects were underway. The pylons of a huge bridge across the bay were briefly visible as the bus passed by.



So far there appears to be a boom in infrastructure construction in all three ports we have visited.

We immediately headed into the International Market in the vicinity of Biff Square. The initial part of the market had graceful arches that make the arcade a nice landmark.

We were looking for a souvenir shop that might carry decorative Korean drums that we had heard and read about. Our grandson is a percussion musician and might enjoy such an item. We didn't find drums to our liking and none of the souvenir vendors would haggle over the price. However, along the way we were treated to an exciting festival of sights and aromas that kept us happily moving through the maze of narrow streets and alleys. The following are some photos of what we were able to see along the way.





These folks on the right are enjoying a late breakfast in this shaded mid-street banquet table.

In our wanderings we became thoroughly lost and began to worry that we wouldn't be able to find the location of the shuttle bus pickup spot for return to the Amsterdam. Similar to our Russian experience, the Koreans we met didn't speak English. They get no recriminations from us because we are the ones who have stumbled into their lives without the slightest knowledge of their language. An angel of

mercy came to us in the form of a multi-lingual American living in Busan. He quickly pointed us in the right direction and we were able to find our bus stop.

Taking note of a few landmarks identifying the bus stop for future reference we



continued to wander in the International Market. There were a lot of passengers from the Amsterdam in the area. We happened to meet up with Tony, Dorothy and Rose whom we have gotten to know through the Cruise Specialists Chat Time sessions on the Amsterdam. Tony took part in the grand reunion but opted out of the photo shown here, on the left, of Barbara, Dorothy and Rose.

We decided to check out the famous Jagalchi Fish Market, a couple blocks away on the harbor front. Along the way it was convenient to go down into the Nampo Underground Shopping Center. We had heard about this market and wanted to check it out. We were shocked to find the modern looking glass fronted stores closed and dark. It appeared that none of the stores along several blocks of underground tunnels were open for business. People were apparently just using the underground corridors to avoid the crowded pedestrian sidewalks and street intersections above. It would be interesting to know some of the economic arguments and experience that contributed to this obvious financial disaster.

We took an operational escalator up out of the closed underground shopping center and proceeded to the Jagalchi Fish Market. There was no lack of interesting things to see in this market. Plastic containers held all manner of fish, crabs, and shellfish and Korean shoppers were there to buy the goods. Some of the fish were alive and the vendors had aerators running to oxygenate the water in the containers. Here are some examples of what we saw. These fish on the right were eel-like specimens.





There was a confluence of several tour groups from the Amsterdam in the middle of the Jagalchi Fish Market. The people in Tour number 4 are shown below.

In addition to the outside market, much of the Jagalchi Fish Market is in a covered space, reminiscent of Pike Street Market in Seattle. Here is a view of that facility, shown below.



This market was very clean and although it had an obvious fishy odor, it was a fresh smell and not offensive.

There was one product for sale in several stalls that we didn't recognize. It was about the size of a lemon but orange in color and covered with pointed, fleshy lumps as shown in the photo on the right. We'll have to look that one up later.



On our way out of the Fish Market we passed under the farewell sign for the fish market shown below.



We were ready to return to the Amsterdam so we found the shuttle bus assembly point where a few other passengers were patiently waiting, as shown below.



The Busan tourist organization had provided a crew of people who greeted us at the ship and here at the bus stop to help us cope with the language and other tourist challenges. They wore a bright red vest that proclaimed they were a “Cruise Buddy” from the Pusan University of Foreign Studies as shown in this photo below. Here we see the conflict in



the naming of the city where the vest identifies Pusan University of Foreign Studies and also suggests the wearer is connected with “Dynamic Busan”.

Anyway, we appreciated the help these young folks gave us doddering cruise people. Their English may have been a bit thin but it was a whole lot better than our Korean.

We had a 30 minute bus ride back to the ship which was preparing to get underway.

The Busan Tourist Information Center gave us a nice “Sail-Away” ceremony. Teams of dancers and musicians alternately performed with traditional Korean music on the pier as shown below.



The Amsterdam passengers lined the rails and cheered for our Korean hosts as the ship backed away from the pier.



About 5pm the Amsterdam headed southwest through calm seas to our next port of Jeju (Cheju), South Korea where we will be visiting tomorrow.