

## Day 23 (Sunday 10/12/08) Hong Kong-Kowloon-Jade Market

We hit the streets of Kowloon about 9am this morning. From the Ocean Terminal we went north on Canton Street turned right on Peking Street and walked over to the main drag of Nathan Road. We walked north (away from the harbor) on Nathan Road which had bustling pedestrians and noisy vehicle traffic like any big city. Our objective was the Jade Market which was about 2 or 3 miles north and near the intersection of Public Square Street and Nathan Road.

As we walked we saw plentiful public telephones being used. They have become a thing of the past in our town with the advent of the cell phone. Another thing was that the immense apartment houses appeared to be in fairly good condition with individual air conditioners for each apartment hanging on the side of the building. When we were in Shanghai there was laundry hanging out to dry from every apartment building but here in Kowloon and Hong Kong that practice was either prohibited or the people just don't like to do it. We saw no laundry hanging out. Here are a couple photos to illustrate these observations.

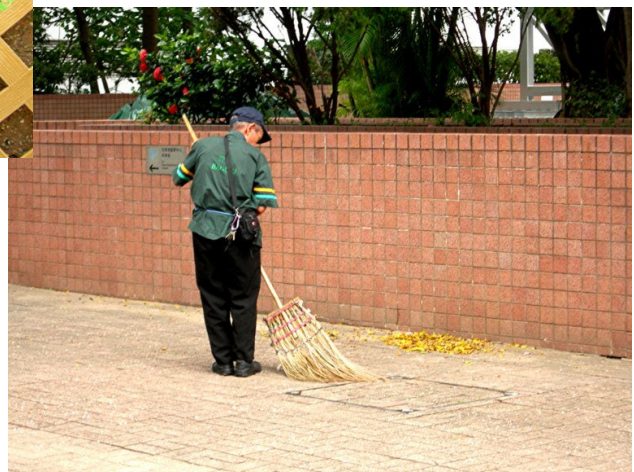




In our quick scanning of the map of Kowloon we were so focused on seeing the commercial side of the city that we had completely overlooked the parks that were shown as green areas on the map. Walking down Nathan Road we soon came across Kowloon Park and it was hard to ignore. We climbed a flight of granite stairs and found a beautiful city park with lots of trees, flower beds and a recreation area in the midst of this high rise city.



Another thing we noticed and appreciated about the Hong Kong and Kowloon area was the cleanliness. The street gutters were clear of trash and workers were evident keeping stuff picked up.





Signs making the policies for public areas clear were posted prominently. A No Smoking sign was pretty obvious but we never did figure out what was being banned by the first and third symbols on the sign below.



The sign above was for a "Rest Garden". Speaking of "Rest" and much to our relief, Kowloon had well-kept public rest rooms available on the street. This makes compliance with the fifth "banned" action in the sign above much easier.





We found Public Square Street and a little park shaded by a huge Chinese Banyan Tree.



On the corner of Public Square Street and Battery Street we found this helpful sign pointing us to the Jade Market.



Like a bee to honey, Barbara homed in on the display tables in the Jade Market.



We are definitely not experts in jade but Barbara browsed around the different stalls and thought the "chemistry" was

right with a brother-sister team of Gloria Lam and Larry Wu. We ended up buying a polished green jade elephant and bracelet made of "China Jade" and a non-collection grade "Dragon Ball" made of a brown jade called nephrite. The instructions we got for the jade elephant were to put money under the feet or a little water under the uplifted trunk to bring good fortune. The dragon ball hopefully has similar power but didn't come with instructions. The dragon ball was carved out of a solid block of jade and had multiple hollow spheres nested inside each other. The individual spheres can be rotated independently and the holes can be lined up as shown in the photo above. In a collector's grade item the inner spheres would have elaborate designs carved on them by skilled craftsmen but ours had no design on the inner spheres. We were out of Hong Kong money but were able to buy this collection of jade for \$57 in US money.





After sealing the business deal we got this picture of Gloria and Larry. We're not quite sure what the "V" sign means but Barbara joined in for good measure. Hopefully, it doesn't mean "We just unloaded some junk on these tourists."



From the Jade Market we walked a short distance back towards the ship and came across Temple Street which was filled with farm produce and busy shoppers.



Here is Barbara trying to blend in with the local scene.



We saw many kinds of vegetables that we couldn't identify. This melon like fruit caught our attention because of the serious looking spikes that stuck out all over. Later we asked our room steward, Acep, if he recognized them in our picture. He said they are called "Durian".

Apparently they have a wonderful sweet flavor but a most atrocious stench when cut open. He said some of the Indonesian crew loves the fruit but they aren't allowed to bring them on board the ship because of the awful odor. Acep put it delicately by saying they smelled like "gas".



A little further on we came across the fresh meat part of the market. In this market when we say "fresh" we mean it. Here you can see live chickens awaiting their fate while former colleagues are on display for sale.



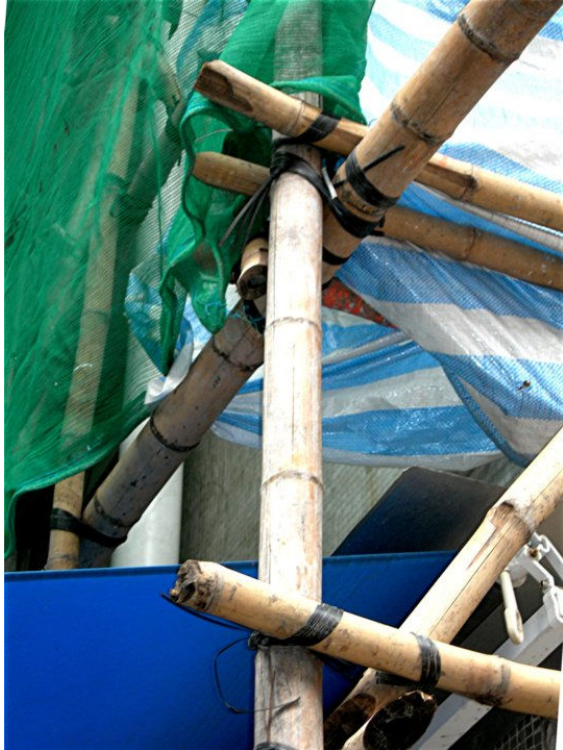
Here is another meat display.



Orlin spent some time in Hong Kong in 1959 while serving as an Ensign in the US Navy. Just as now, there was vigorous high-rise construction going on. Scaffolding consisting of bamboo poles would encase even the tallest buildings during the



construction phase. The use of a natural and readily available material made a lot of sense to the Chinese but to a conventional thinking American engineer used to steel scaffolding; this practice looked like a risky business. It turns out that bamboo shares a lot of properties with high strength flexible composite material so maybe the Chinese knew what they were doing back then. Apparently they remained convinced of their wisdom and they continue to use bamboo scaffolding on their building sites today. Here are some photos taken during our Kowloon walk that show how bamboo is used in scaffolding.



The bamboo poles are bound together with a high strength polymer twine. This seems like a positive move from the hemp or other natural fiber they probably used for this purpose in 1959 and before.





On the major high-rise buildings the bamboo poles near the bottom have to be large to support the weight. Here is an example of how the bottom poles look in one of those applications.

Lightweight, flexible and strong; bamboo looks like the material of the future!



Continuing our walk back towards the ship we got back on Nathan Road. This main



thoroughfare is lined with ancient Chinese Banyan trees along part of the way and these beautiful trees made a stark contrast with the tall buildings crowding in on all sides. The citizens of this city must have a soul because each tree is identified with its own metal tag and ID number, presumably as part

of some preservation program for "Old and Valuable Trees".





We found some other evidence of the value placed in these old trees. Here are a couple photographs showing the extraordinary effort that is made to preserve trees that are barely missed by the architects' pencil when drawing the foundations of a new building.



We walked back to the ship and after lunch we took a walk along the Tsim Sha Tsui Waterfront Promenade. This walkway on the southern shore of Kowloon is about three quarters of a mile long and provides a wonderful view of Hong Kong city directly

across the harbor. It apparently is a favorite of the locals and the tourists because it was crowded and in addition to Chinese we heard many European languages being spoken by the people enjoying the afternoon. The film industry of Hong Kong has embedded metal stars into the concrete walkway with the name of movie stars etched into the metal. Alongside the star are handprints of the celebrity pressed in to the wet concrete which then preserves the imprint. Many of the younger people were pressing their hands into the imprints.





Also prominent in this display along the promenade is a statue of the celebrity Bruce Lee. He had large groups gather from time to time and we caught some in this photo.



At 8pm the Hong Kong side of the harbor is lit up every night as each of the tall buildings puts on their own light show. The Amsterdam was in an ideal position at Ocean Terminal for us to observe the show from the ship's deck. Green lasers and white spot lights are used along with special lighting on the surface of the buildings. Here are some photos we took of the show.





This exceptional show is Hong Kong's gift to visitors and citizens alike. It would be hard to imagine another of the world's cities providing such a sight. However, Las Vegas does come to mind.



At 10:00 pm the Hong Kong Visitor's Bureau provided traditional Chinese drum music along with a 75 foot multi-person illuminated Night Pearl Dragon and Lion to send us off with good wishes. With apologies for the poor quality of the photos here they are.



At 11pm the Amsterdam cast off from the Ocean Terminal with passengers lining the rails and cheering the dragon parading on the pier. We were on our way to Da Nang, Vietnam.