

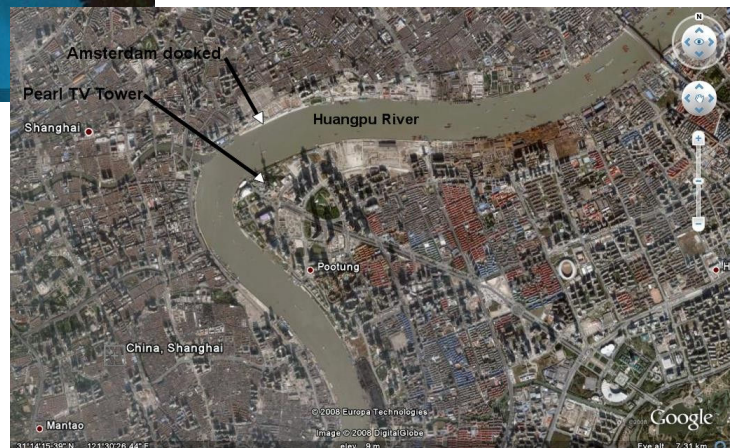
Day 18 (Tuesday 10/07/08) Shanghai

When we woke up today the Amsterdam had already turned off the Yangtze River and was gliding up the smaller Huangpu River towards Shanghai. The temperature was in the mid 70s and a weak sun could be seen through the thick haze. There was a smell of coal smoke in the air. As the day wore on the coal smoke odor became less noticeable as we adjusted to the air pollution. However, the haze never went away. All the photographs we took during our visit to Shanghai showed a bright background of the sun shining through the pollution.

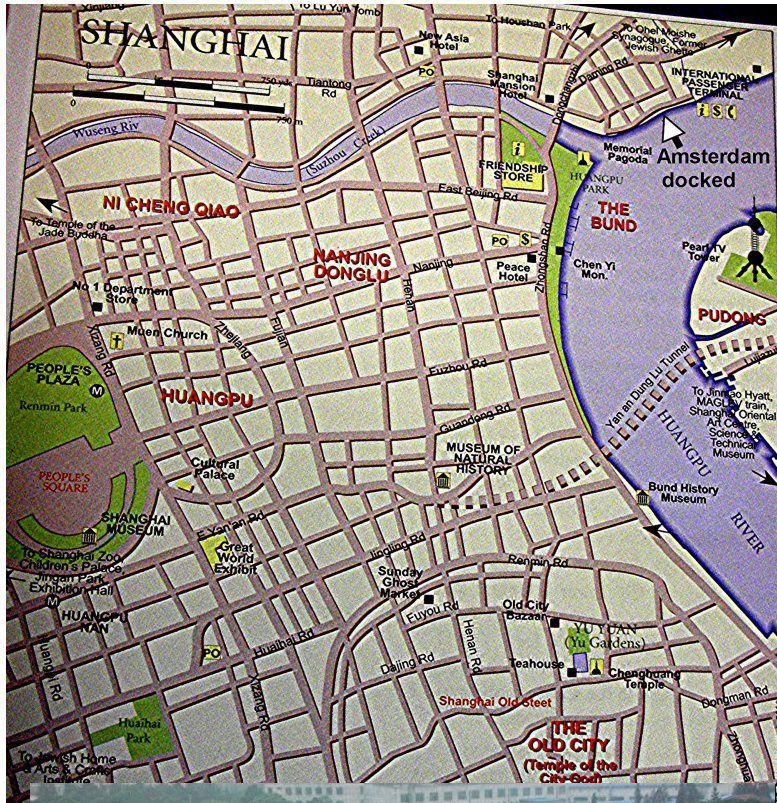
We had never been to Shanghai before. Until now we had thought of Shanghai as located directly on the coastline of China between Beijing and Hong Kong. A closer examination in preparation for our visit revealed that Shanghai can receive sea-going ships but it is well inland on the Huangpu River. The Huangpu River is a tributary of the Yangtze River but the whole area in the vicinity of the Yangtze River mouth is called the Yangtze River Delta. Therefore, Shanghai is sometimes reported as being located in the Yangtze River Delta. These maps show where we are located.



The photograph on the right shows in detail that the Amsterdam was located on the northern shore of the Huangpu River in Shanghai and just across the river from the Shanghai icon known as the Pearl TV Tower. The TV tower is constructed with two large spheres on a central shaft, suggesting two pearls on a string. In fact, close examination of the photograph on the right reveals the shadow of the Pearl TV



Tower extending northward toward where the Amsterdam was docked. The photograph captures the color of the river water about right, muddy.



The map of Shanghai on the left shows some of the sites that we visited. Many of the marvelous sky scraper buildings were located in the Nanjing Donglu and Pudong areas of the city. The Shanghai Museum and Yuyuan Garden that we visited were located near the People's Square area. The Maglev Train station and the Jin Mao Tower were in the Pudong section of town shown on the map as including the Pearl TV Tower.



The Amsterdam proceeded slowly up the Huangpu River in the early morning light. We took a few pictures of the passing ships and facilities on the shore.

We passed this barge, shown above, laden with mud. Then we passed some Chinese navy ships moored along the river.



Some industrial plants along the shore were participating in air pollution production along with their economic contribution.



we were eager to get going into this unexplored city. Our guide's nickname was Ray and she spoke very good English. Ray was a very experienced guide and smoothly dealt with the crowded streets of Shanghai as she led us through the itinerary of the day. She learned English in the state university and had been working for the tourist and visitors bureau of the government since the early 1980s.

We arrived at our docking location about 8am and the tour busses were waiting for us on the pier.

We had bought tickets for an all-day tour called "The Best of Shanghai" and



Shanghai is the largest city of the People's Republic of China (21 million population) and seventh largest in the world. It became the busiest cargo port in the world in 2005. Shanghai was a small fishing village in the 1500s but in the 1800s started its rise to current economic importance as interaction with the Western world and trade increased rapidly. Shanghai has taken a position as the third largest financial center in the world, after New York City and

London, and is the largest commercial city in the Far East. In an attempt to outshine Hong Kong, which was developed primarily by the British, the Chinese government has bestowed financial, commercial and technical favors on Shanghai to build an "all-Chinese" example of metropolitan success. The many modern tall buildings with daring shapes and all glass facades shape the skyline.

The Pearl TV Tower, like the Opera House in Sydney, Australia, is the icon for the Chinese city of Shanghai. It was located directly across the river from where the Amsterdam was docked. From the ship it was somewhat obscured by the haze. Here is a picture we got of the Pearl TV Tower from downtown Shanghai.



This marvelous architecture leave no doubt that Shanghai has taken its place among the leading commercial cities of the world.

Unfortunately, these advances have come with the pervasive plague of air pollution which never lifts.

The building shown on the right with a hole through the top is the World Financial Center. There is a Hyatt Hotel on the top floors.



The first thing we noticed as the tour bus started to roll was that China is a right side traffic country like the US. Our 20 minute



ride to the Huangpu section of town took us through alternate narrow surface streets lined with apartments and elevated freeways. The apartment buildings were usually decorated with laundry hung out to dry on metal rods protruding from the building.

Our guide said a typical upscale apartment might have a living area of about 2000 square feet and cost the equivalent of about \$500,000 US. We were surprised by the relatively large apartment size and high cost. However, as we got more acquainted with the city we recognized that we're not talking countryside here. Our exposure was pretty superficial but the sights and sounds of Shanghai and appearance of the citizens was about the same as in any large US city so our guide's approximation may be in the right ballpark.

Our first stop was a Silk Museum where we saw displays of how silk was obtained from the cocoons of silk worms. There were lots of fabric and items made from silk that were for sale.

Barbara was particularly attracted to the display of Laurel Burch design silk scarves.



There was also window shopping to do in a nearby Jade Store.

The merchants in the stores all took credit cards but we thought we should have Chinese money for incidental items and souvenirs bought from street vendors.

Our guide found an ATM machine for us so that we could get some Chinese money. We pulled a 100 Yuan Chinese note out of the machine. At the exchange rate of 7 Yuan to 1 US dollar plus some fees that transaction took about 16 US dollars out of our checking account back in Oak Ridge. We bought some unusual toys made out of a substance like a real fast acting "Silly Putty".

It was then time to visit the Yuyuan Gardens. These gardens were started in the year 1559 and cover an area of 4 acres in downtown Shanghai. A prominent Chinese family lived in homes built in the garden over the years and the landscaping was developed by the family to reflect their sense of beauty and cultural heritage. The gardens have been turned over to the city which now charges admission fees and operates them as a tourist site. Here are some views we saw during the tour.

This view on the right shows the Jade rock standing between other less famous rocks. The Jade rock is not jade but only limestone that has been weathered into an interesting shape that the original owner liked. He thought it was so beautiful that he called it the Jade Rock and the name has stuck ever since.



Dragons hold an important place in oriental culture and the Yuyuan Gardens feature several dragon sculptures. The one below is very impressive and carries the traditional black pearl in his mouth for good luck and long life.



There were several buildings dating back to the late 1500s. They were the residences of the original family and furniture for the different dynasties were usually displayed to they could be viewed from the open front doorway.



Golden carp were abundant in the ponds that wove through the gardens. The scene was very tranquil and beautiful even though there were large crowds of people touring through the place.

The free form layout of the Yuyuan Gardens with much use of limestone and granite rocks was a vivid contrast with scenes like this just outside the walls.



It was time for lunch so we boarded the bus and went to the Jin Jiang Hotel for a first class Chinese lunch. We had about 10 people at our table and a huge Lazy-Susan in the center loaded down with all kinds of Chinese food. The staff was smartly uniformed and the place was spotless. We are not very adventuresome when sampling food in foreign ports but now seemed to be the perfect time to dive in.

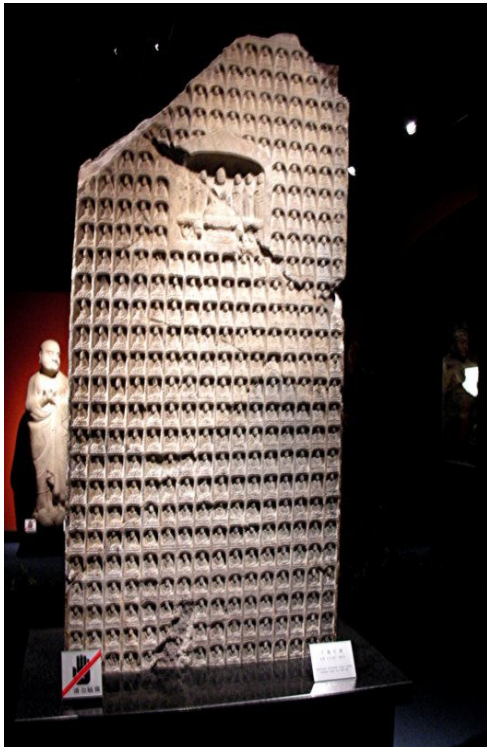


After lunch Ray, our guide, had some disturbing information for us. Some of our tour group had tried to make purchases with their Chinese money in the hotel gift shop. The people had found that their 50 Yuan (\$7 US) bills were counterfeit. The hotel had an electronic machine that instantly analyzed a bill to determine if it was counterfeit and their bills had failed the test. The guide said that street vendors are notorious for giving change back to tourists in the form of counterfeit 50 Yuan bills. She said that she could not distinguish between good and bad money but most of the storefront shops have one of these counterfeit money checking machines to screen out bad money. The guide gave us the advice to always bargain with the street vendors to arrive at a price that does not require change back from the vendor. Money from the ATM, banks and big hotels could be trusted but not the street vendors.

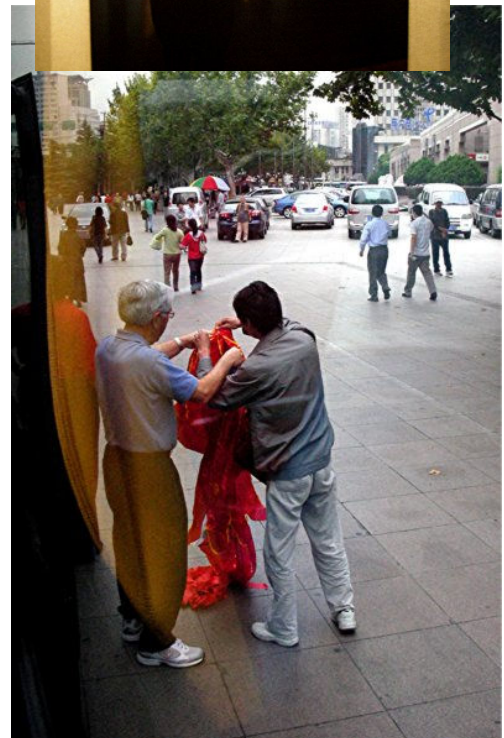
We visited the Shanghai Museum which occupies a very modern building and houses magnificent displays of Chinese artifacts. The building has a square shape on the ground floor because the Chinese early concept of the world surface was square, while the top floor has a circular shape because the sky was thought of as circular.



The lobby of the museum was an open space with escalators leading to the different floors where exhibits like the Thousand Buddha sculpture and ancient Chinese mask were displayed.



As we were leaving the museum the street vendors were active and Orlin finally gave in and bought a bright red kite in the shape of a dragon (\$7US).



The next stop on the itinerary was the Children's Palace which is a school where children are taught how to play musical instruments and to perform in orchestras.

We were treated to several musical pieces by a young man with a flute and another young student with an instrument, called a Jing Wu. The Jing Wu was made of bamboo and sounded like a violin.



The tour came to an end and we returned to the ship. In the evening we were treated to a magnificent light show as the buildings in the Pudong district across the river from the ship turned on their lights. Here are some examples of what we could see.



On the left: The World Financial Center with the hole through the top and the Jin Mao Tower with the pointed "crystal like" top.

On the right: The Pearl TV Tower with a half moon overhead.



On the left: The Pearl Tower with the buildings of the Nanjing Donglu district of Shanghai on the right.

The light show rivaled that of Hong Kong and made for a fitting end to a great first day in Shanghai.