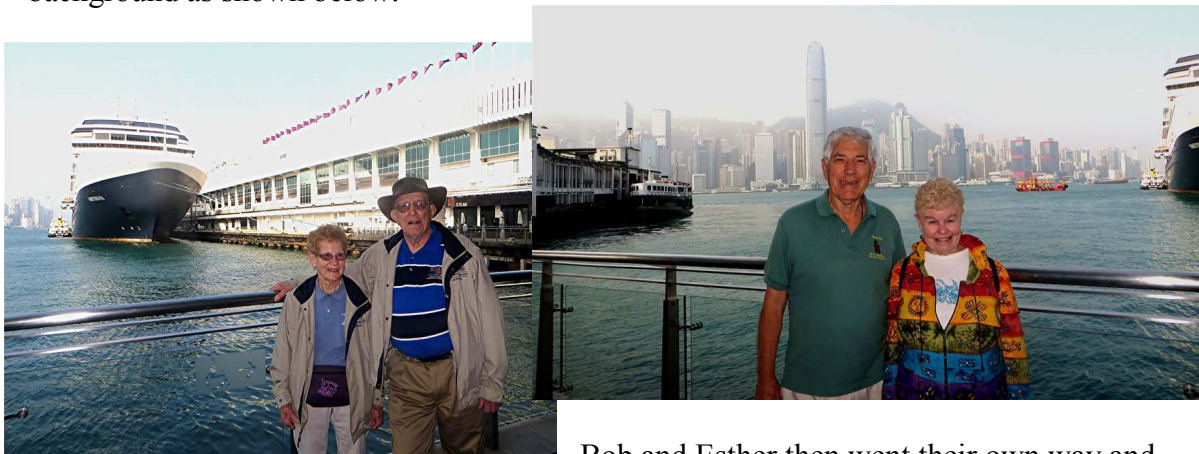


3/12/13 - Day 65–Hong Kong, Stanley Market, Kowloon Traffic Gridlock: This was our second day in Hong Kong. Our morning plan was to buy tickets on the Hop-On Hop-Off (HOHO) bus for a ride out to Stanley Market, Aberdeen and other sites of interest. The afternoon was pretty much unplanned but more sight seeing in Kowloon and a HOHO bus ride out to Ladies Market was a possibility. A map of Hong Kong is shown below with some sites of interest identified.



We walked out of the Ocean Terminal with Bob and Esther. As we passed in front of the Amsterdam we got pictures of Bob and Esther and us with the ship and Hong Kong in the background as shown below.



Bob and Esther then went their own way and we purchased tickets for the HOHO bus from a vendor on the street in front of the Star Ferry. The tickets cost 400 HK dollars (~ \$50 USD each) and were good for as many sight seeing stops as we could work in during the day. We hopped on the Star Ferry and in a matter of 10 minutes or so we were on the other side of the harbor in Hong Kong which sometimes is also called Victoria. Similarly, Hong Kong Island is sometimes called Victoria Island and the harbor can be referred to as Victoria Harbour. However, we try to always use “Hong Kong” to refer to the city, island and harbor.

A friendly HOHO attendant pointed out the appropriate bus for us to take to Stanley Market and we got on board.

We climbed up to the open top deck and were not too surprised to find some of our friends from the Amsterdam on the



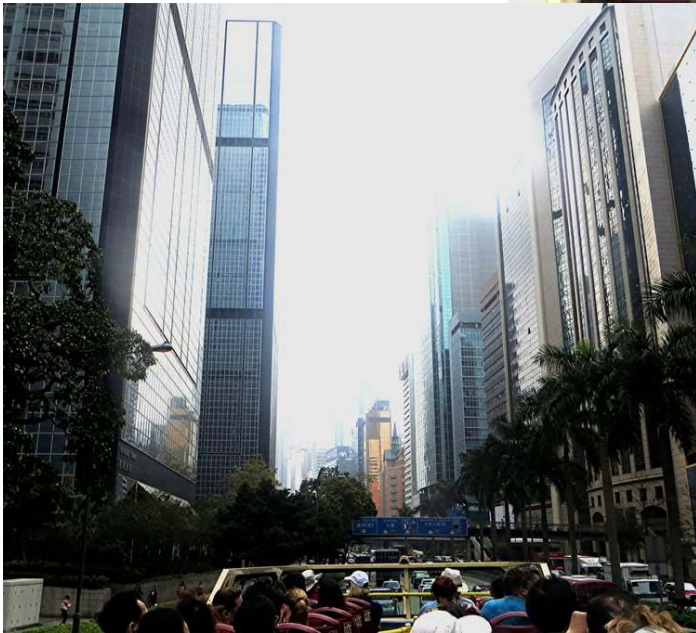
bus. They were headed out to where ever the bus would take them on this fine day. We sat back and enjoyed taking in the sights. The first thing we saw was a gleaming new Apple Store shown on the left. They are almost as common as MacDonald's Restaurants in the far flung foreign ports we have visited. We were busy taking pictures, like the ones below as our bus moved rapidly through the streets of Hong Kong.





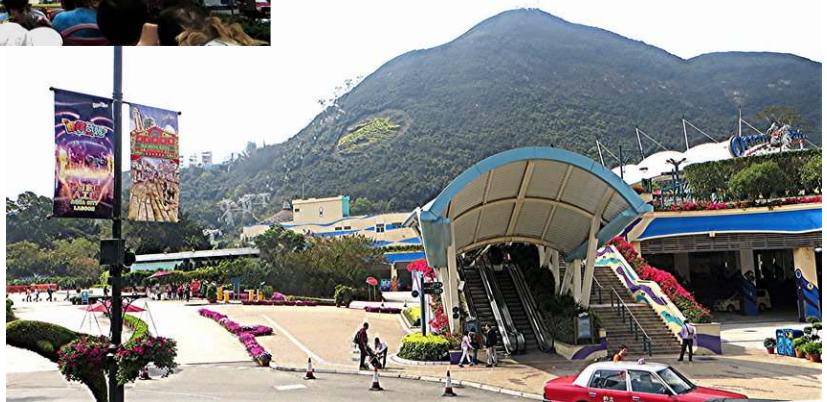
A few buildings that were being worked on had a complete wrapping of green screening material around them as a safety containment and protection for the workers.

Before we knew it we were at the Peak Tram lower terminal. The tram can take you to the top of Victoria Peak for a grand look around the area but today was too hazy for a good view so we passed the opportunity.

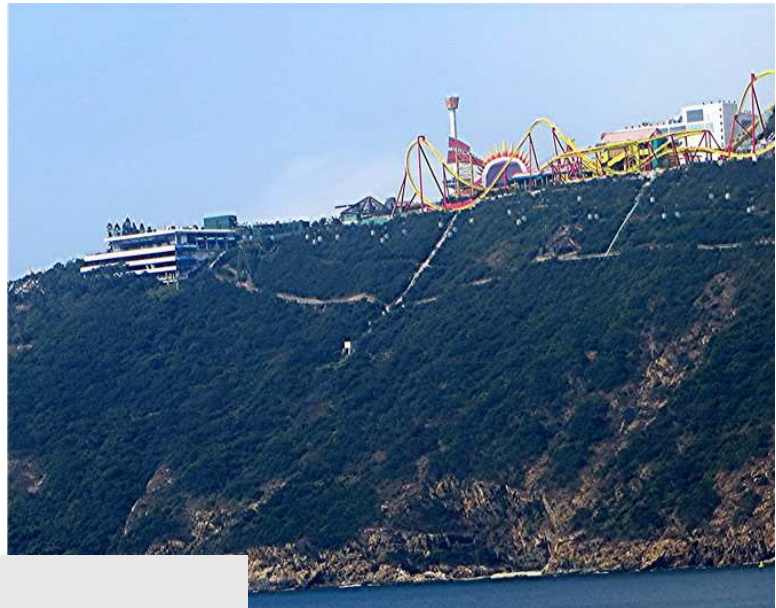


This view of Hong Kong reminded us of pictures we have seen that are taken from river boats at the bottom of the Grand Canyon in Arizona.

We passed the race track and went through a tunnel to the south side of Hong Kong Island. There we found the Ocean Park amusement center, shown below.



The Ocean Park has a cable car system that can carry people over the mountain to a collection of exciting rides shown in the picture on the right.

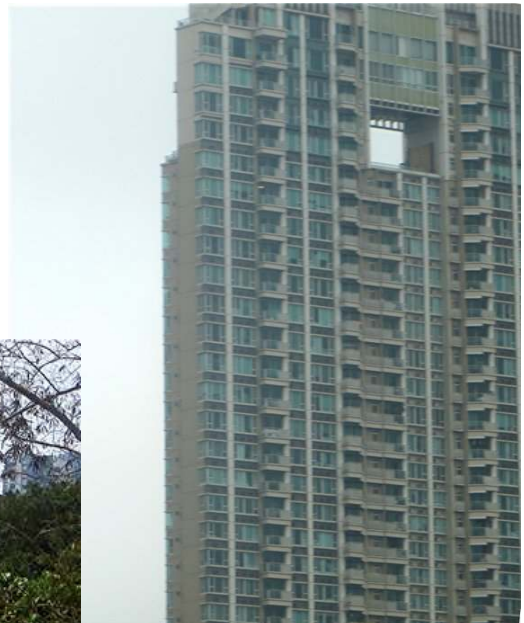


We then passed a large building that featured the famous “Dragon Hole”. The Dragon Hole is sometimes put into a large building because of



the superstition that magical dragons living on the mountain top are blocked from coming down to the ocean by the large buildings. The Dragon Holes let them pass through and keeps them happy and continuing to provide good luck and a good life to the nearby humans.

Some other examples of Dragon Holes are shown here.



These dragon holes on the right are rather small and may reflect a trend toward maximizing building floor space at the expense of the dragon holes.



We got off the HOHO bus at the Stanley Market stop and Barbara celebrated our arrival, as shown on the left. She had been looking forward to shopping at Stanley Market ever since we signed up for the 2013 World Voyage.

We browsed up and down the Main Street of Stanley Market checking out each booth looking for a hidden value.



Barbara finally found the items she was looking for and made her purchases.

On the way out of Stanley Market we stopped briefly at a real estate office where some homes were advertised in the window, as shown below. This office apparently



specialized in high end property, For example, the houses advertised were in the exclusive area near the top of Victoria Peak overlooking Hong Kong. The selling price for one was \$80 million Hong Kong dollars which is equivalent to \$10.3 Million USD. Another one was priced at \$78 million Hong Kong dollars which is equivalent to \$10 million USD



This apartment in Repulse Bay looked like a bargain at \$24.5 million Hong Kong dollars which is equivalent to only \$3.2 million USD.

We weren't quite finished at Stanley Market because we spotted the local public library. This was the perfect place to document the visit of Barbara's library card to Stanley Market, as shown on the right.



We gathered our Stanley Market purchases and boarded a HOHO bus for the return trip to downtown Hong Kong. We soon spotted a gas station but were unable to get a good photograph of the posted price which was \$5.51 Hong Kong dollars per liter. That price is equivalent to \$0.71 USD per liter. At 4 liters per gallon the price is equivalent to \$2.84 USD per gallon which seems quite reasonable in these days of high gasoline prices.

We were riding in the top deck of the HOHO bus and had a good view of passing scenery. We soon saw a beautiful large apartment building on the hillside above Repulse Bay. The building, as shown on the right, was boldly designed with curved sides that, according to our audio guide, was intended to optimize the view of Repulse Bay from every apartment.



Our bus continued on to Aberdeen, the ancient fishing village on the opposite side of Hong Kong Island from the city of Hong Kong. It is famous for the boat people who spend their entire life on the small sampan fishing boats that are moored in the harbor. We stopped briefly to let off people who wanted to take sampan rides or just browse around the old village.

Soon we were cruising along the highway leading into downtown Hong Kong. The freeways snake between the tall apartment and business buildings with what appears to be barely enough room for safe clearance.



We passed the United States Consulate General Office in Hong Kong. It was interesting to note that, unlike in Manila, here there was no ugly cyclone fence or concrete barriers obscuring the consulate building. This is pretty superficial analysis but it would appear that threats against US property are less in Hong Kong than in the Philippines.



As we approached the end of our ride at the Star Ferry Terminal, the tallest building in Hong Kong (ICC building) became visible across the bay in Kowloon, as shown on the left. We arrived at the Star Ferry and took the short ride across the harbor to Kowloon.

After having lunch on the Amsterdam we joined forces with Roy and Gayle for a little walk along the Kowloon waterfront. While passing the Star Ferry Terminal we couldn't help but notice a series of large banners posted by the Hong Kong Youth Care Association warning against activity of the "Evil Cult – Falun Gong".

We were curious about what the Falun Gong had done to stimulate such a negative campaign.

A little clue was offered by one banner, shown below, that identified the Falun Gong as being associated with Taiwan, Communist China's long time rival.



We strolled by the imposing wall of the Hong Kong Museum of Art and Cultural Center and enjoyed the view of Hong Kong across the harbor. It was a pleasant walk with many other tourists enjoying the scene with us.

We passed a small group of school children, as shown on the right. They were with their teachers on an outing to this popular city venue.



We decided to use our HOHO bus passes to take a ride out to the Ladies Market which was several miles inland across Kowloon from the waterfront. We caught the HOHO bus and were on our way down Nathan Road when our progress came to a sudden halt. Our bus and all the vehicles around us were caught in a gridlock situation. We watched the traffic lights cycle through all the colors without any movement of the traffic. We were stuck in that condition for 30 minutes. Eventually the traffic started to move. Our driver, apparently responding to some sort of schedule coordinator stopped driving toward Ladies Market and made turns that put us on the scheduled route headed back toward the waterfront where we first boarded the bus. We never made it to Ladies Market.

The HOHO bus stopped at the Peninsula Hotel and we all got off. Roy and Gayle returned to the Amsterdam. We headed a couple blocks down Nathan Road to the Admand Optical Company where we would pick up the glasses Orlin had ordered yesterday. At the optical store Thomas Cheung was in conversation with Tom, our Cruise Specialist Travel Agency (CSI) ambassador on board the Amsterdam.

Thomas found Orlin's glasses and made final adjustments. The glasses fit perfectly and made fine print crystal clear. There was even a device that produced UV light and he demonstrated that the transition lens would turn dark when in sunlight and become clear when shielded from the sun. We left the shop as satisfied customers with the promise by Thomas that he would fix any problem that might develop in the future. For future reference a copy of his business card is shown on the right.



We returned to the Amsterdam and used the free WiFi in the Ocean Terminal Building to catch up on some email and large files we wanted to download. We then finished up our second day in Hong Kong doing some browsing in the huge sparkling Harbour City and Ocean Centre Malls that are conveniently connected to the Ocean Terminal.