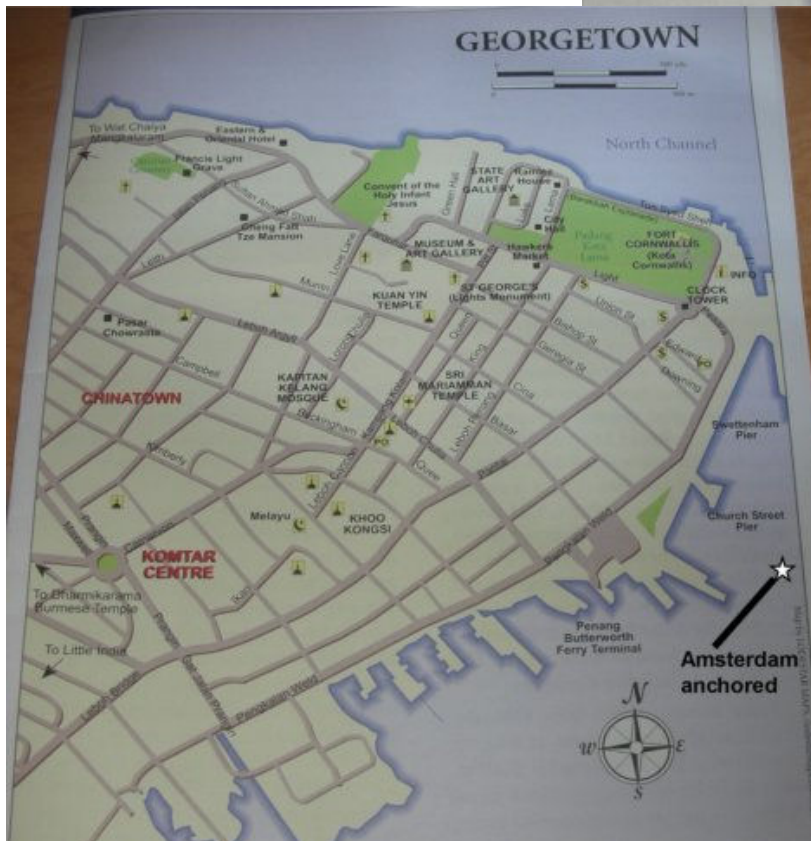
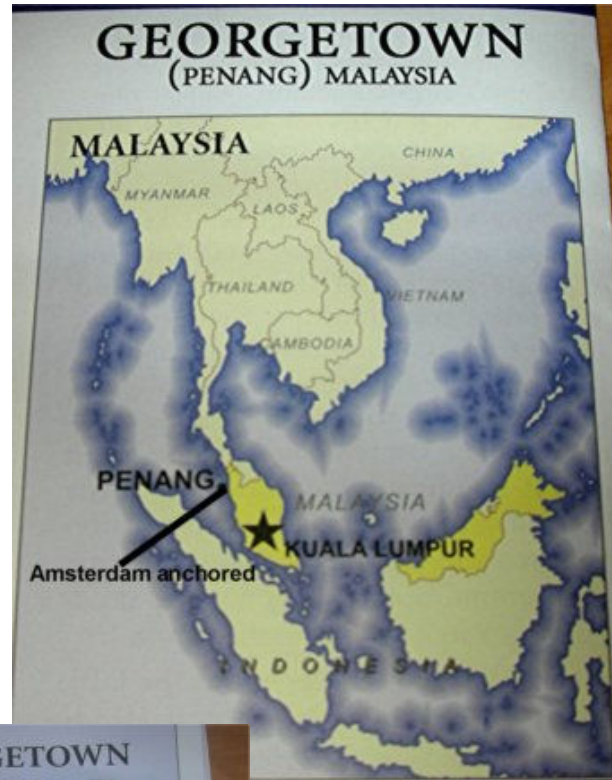


3/13/07 Day 57 – Georgetown, Penang State, Malaysia – Tuesday, 13 March 2007:
We anchored in the harbor at Georgetown about daybreak. Georgetown is the capital of the state of Penang. Penang is a fairly small island which you can drive completely around over narrow curvy roads in 5 hours, as reported later by our table mates, Roy and Gayle.



As with the other ports we have visited this one was busy with commercial traffic and the port facilities for handling cargo were extensive.



Since we were anchored in the harbor rather than tied to the dock it was necessary for

the ship to put the bright orange and white tender boats in the water to carry us to the landing in Georgetown. In the picture below is one of our tenders and barely visible in the background is the bridge that connects Penang Island to the mainland of Malaysia. Later, our tour guide proudly described the difficulty of building the long bridge which was completed a few years ago in just three and one half years.



We took one of the tender boats in to the Georgetown Church Street Pier about 9am and met our tour guide, Ricky. Our first stop was the nearby Chew Jetty. The Chew Jetty is one of six Chinese family living quarters that have been built entirely over the water of the bay supported on pilings sunk in the harbor shore. The only people who can live on the Chew Jetty are those who are members of the Chew family.



There were several religious alters or shrines located on the jetty for the residents.



The city government would like to get rid of the jetty structures but the Chinese families have enough political clout to keep their current arrangement. These structures were obviously a great site for showing the tourists so that may be the main reason they remain perched over the harbor shoreline.

The next place we visited was a Pagoda (Wat Chaiya Mangkararam) where a large reclining Buddha was located. The next few pictures are from the Pagoda. It was necessary to remove your shoes before entering. Let's start with this sign that suggests keeping your shoes with you while you visit the site.



The reclining Buddha is shown in the picture to right.



the



Another part of the Pagoda housed a standing Buddha. Note the people with their shoes off.

We returned to the bus which took us to the Khoo Kongsi. This was a shrine dedicated to the Chinese family clan named Khoo. It is maintained by the family association or clan which provides a place for remembering past family members and recognizing family members who have been particularly successful or made significant contributions to the family.



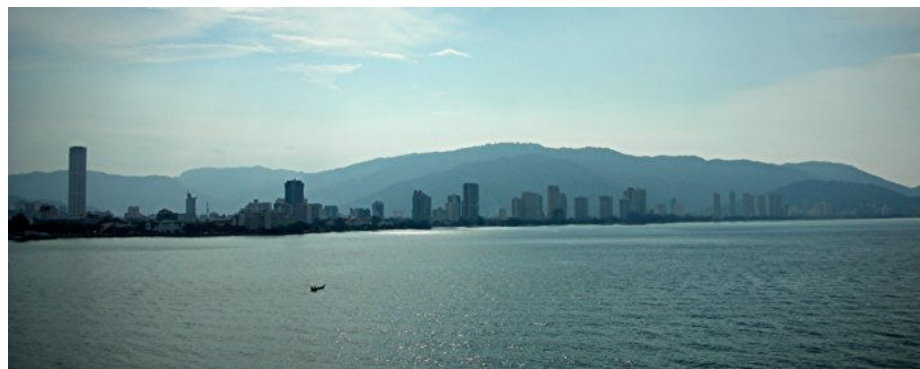
Inside the shrine are rooms with alters and places for successful people to be recognized with plaques.

The guide, who was Chinese, emphasized that one purpose of the family clans was to provide financial help for the children to get an education. These plaques seem to recognize people who achieved a professional education.



There were some stone carvings on the walls of the structure that the guide explained to us. One showed a woman letting her ancient and sick mother suck her breast milk while her hungry baby cried for some food. He said that this illustrated a lesson from Confucius that it is better to take care of a sick old mother rather than your child because you only have one mother but you can always have another child. Another set of figures the guide claimed illustrated a son letting himself be stung by many mosquitoes so that the mosquitoes wouldn't bother his aged father and he could sleep in peace. These stories drove home the respect that the Chinese people show for their elders.

A consistent observation in all the Asian ports we have visited is the intense amount of construction and commercial activity that is going on. The many high rise buildings for apartments and businesses is one of the visual clues. The skyline of Georgetown carried through the theme of high rise construction.



Our guide indicated that a penthouse apartment might sell for \$420,000USD while a more typical two bedroom apartment might sell for \$70,000USD. These prices seem to be on the low end of what you might pay in the typical big city in the US.

We noticed that the scaffolding used in building construction was made from steel tubing rather than the bamboo poles used in Hong Kong. This looked more like what we would see in the US.



We visited the History Museum and Art Gallery as part of the tour. Barbara had an opportunity to check out the toilet facilities for ladies. They were the same as she had found elsewhere in Malaysia. In her words, "When you say you made a pit-stop here you really mean it!" She had a camera handy and put it to use.

The rubber hose was connected to a faucet and used to wash off the surfaces with water after finishing your business. In one of the pit stops the attendant was hosing down the appliance while she was on it. In contrast, Orlin observed that the men's room facilities were pretty standard and could pass for a low-end rest stop along the US highway system.

Before going back to the ship we visited a couple shopping malls in Georgetown. We were very impressed with the design and pleasing way the stores were arranged. Here are a couple shots of one of the malls.



We couldn't tell what religion was served by the temple-like structure in the lobby as shown in the picture to the left.



In the picture to the right you can see that good old McDonald's is represented in Georgetown, Penang, Malaysia.

We returned to the ship by way of a tender boat. Luckily, the weather has been so good and seas so calm in all the ports that getting on and off the tender boats has not been difficult. Even in calm conditions the Amsterdam crews give plenty of assistance to assure that the passengers get safely on and off the boats.

About 5pm the Amsterdam hoisted her tender boats back on to the davits so that we could get underway.



The Amsterdam then set a course into the setting sun as we left the Malacca Strait and headed for Cochin, India.

