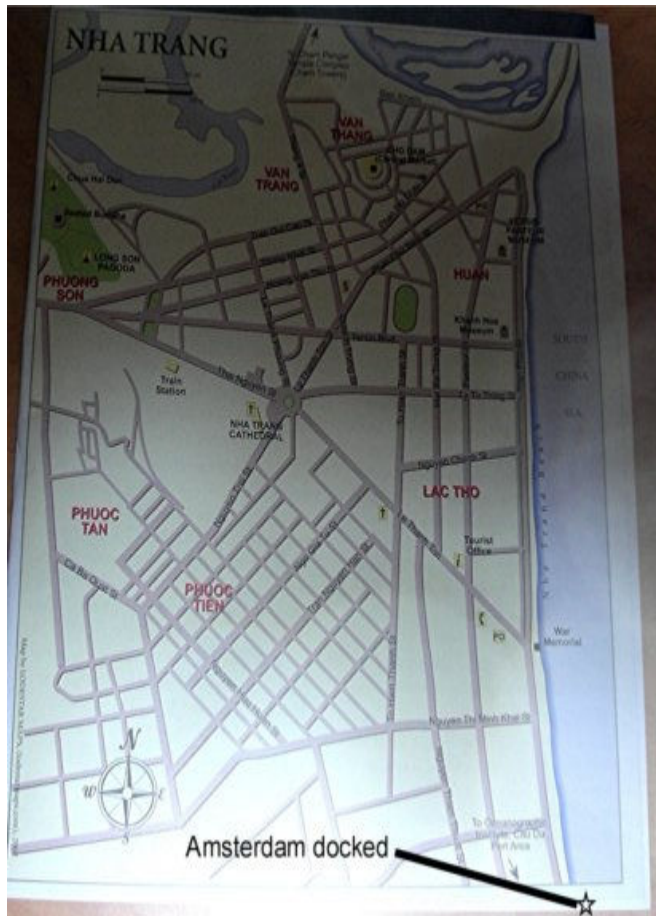


3/8/07 Day 52– Nha Trang – Thur. - 8 March 2007:
The ship docked at Nha Trang about 7am under a
hazy sky and warm temperature.



The port where we docked appeared to
be a busy commercial operation with a
fairly large ship nearby being loaded.





A long cable car structure has been built in the port to carry people and supplies across Nha Trang Bay to the VinPearl Hotel. Our tour guide said the VinPearl Hotel has the largest swimming pool in Vietnam. It is part of Vietnam's push for the tourist market.



The rapid commercial development of the Communist Nation of Vietnam was evident everywhere we went. The Vietnam government is aggressively promoting tourism.

We took a tour of Nha Trang city. The first stop was an embroidery factory where we were greeted by two ladies in traditional garb.

Inside the factory beautiful embroidery was being carried out by women at their work benches. The work was framed as pictures or used as articles of clothing.



The next stop on the tour was at a Buddha Pagoda where there was a giant statue of a brilliant white Buddha on top of a hill. This site was extremely popular with Asian tourists as well as passengers from the cruise ship.

Near the sitting Buddha statue was a sleeping Buddha statue lying on its side. The bottoms of the feet were decorated with the religious symbol that is often mistaken for the swastika used by the Nazi Government in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s.



It was really hot so we welcomed the bottled water and moist towels offered to us by the driver when we returned to the bus.

Note the red label on Orlin's shoulder. That is what all the passengers on tour bus 10 wore. Other buses had other colored patches and numbers. That is how the tour participants are identified and accounted for on these massive tourist activities.



We moved on to a Hindu Temple known as the Cham Pengar Temple Complex. Although Buddhism is the primary religion of Vietnam (about 90%) there was some migration from India in ancient times that brought the Hindu religion. Much of the brick structure of the temple has been repaired from time to time but the main structure is over 1000 years old. Shoes must be removed before entering the temple.

Barbara brought out her Oak Ridge Library card to show that it had arrived in Vietnam. Here is a picture from the top of the hill where the Cham Pengar Temple is located.



Near the temple we got some photos of the small round boats that the fishermen use to move around between ship and shore. The round boats are woven from reed strips and are water tight.

The fishermen's boats are all painted blue. That is the traditional color of fishing boats in Vietnam.



We took the bus out to the beautiful beach area. Vietnam is attempting to build much of their tourist industry around their beach facilities.

Here some ladies are cooking lobsters and fruit is for sale on the sidewalk. Barbara paid the ladies a dollar each for letting her take this photo.



Roy and Gayle (on the right), our dinner tablemates on the ship, were on another tour bus but were at the beach while we were there.

Vendors and their booths are located at all the tourist stops. Here is an example.



We returned to the ship and found vendor stalls set up on the pier where the Amsterdam was docked. This picture was taken from one of the ship's decks.



About 6pm the Amsterdam got underway for the port of Phu My (pronounced Foo May) further south in Vietnam near Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon).

That evening we got together with our friends, Paul and Maria who spend their winters in Florida and summers in the UK. We had a few drinks on the verandah in the welcome coolness of the early evening.



Paul and Maria are also doing the full World Cruise and it was great fun to go over the day's activities and the cruise in-general with them. Later we adjourned to the Lido Restaurant where Paul and Maria showed us the ropes on how to dine in style in what is nominally a buffet restaurant. Through the magic of Paul's cool British wit and charm we had table service and attention from the stewards through the entire meal. It was a wonderful way to finish off our first day's visit to Vietnam.