

3/21/2010

BANGKOK, FOR THE KING AND I

The Azamara Quest is one of the smaller cruise ships, and therefore is able to cruise the 45 miles up the Chao Phraya River to dock very close to Bangkok. The city now is the home to 10 million people. I believe that every one of them has a motorbike! I traveled by taxi to the downtown area and experienced firsthand the enormous traffic congestion, which slows traffic to slower than walking.

A most impressive observation was that in the midst of the stopped traffic, not a single sound of a horn was heard! Cars leave enough room in front when they are stopped, for the many motorbikes to weave in front of them and lane split to the front of the line at the signals. It is quite noticeable that the people are very laid back and gentle.



My mission to town, was to purchase pirated computer programs, which is a big business here. Most all programs are copied, and then stripped of their installation codes, and sold for \$5 a disc. I estimated that I bought \$2500 worth of programs for \$75. If only one works, it is a bargain!

Back at the ship, it is a fascinating pastime to set and watch the constant amount of boat traffic, that helps supply the residents of this city of 10 million people. I watched a huge cargo ship with a bulk product of some sort, being unloaded at the pier by clamshell. The product was dumped into a hopper and dispensed into bags that were filled and sewed right there on the pier, and by conveyor, constantly moved into trucks where they were manhandled and stacked by these very small Vietnamese people. The whole factory was right there on the pier under two little awnings!

The ship had several interesting shore excursions, but they were listed as too strenuous for this old man! I am glad that I had done them here when I was younger.

Dave

#2