

Travel

Bargain hunting in Korea

by Jack P. Gabriel

SYNDICATED TRAVEL NEWS — One of all travelers' principal activities while abroad is hunting for shopping bargains. When you're in the Orient, Korea is the best place to indulge in that pastime because prices here are the lowest you'll find in this part of the world.

Bargain hunting is far from the only reason for coming to this really Oriental country but, with the low cost of everything, it's a very good one, although it should not take up all your time. There's antiquity in this country that should be savored for you won't really find it anywhere else until you get to China. The scenery is superb, hotels excellent and the friendliness of the handsome Koreans is heart-warming.

The best thing about looking for bargains, and getting them, when you're here is the high quality of goods available at low cost. Korea is far and away the bargain center of today's Orient, with prices about what they were in Hong Kong ten years ago. You are surrounded by serendipity and you'll feel like Alice in Wonderland; you'll want to buy everything and don't worry about going way over that \$100 duty-free allowance when returning home. Buy what you want and pay the duty when you get back; it actually amounts to very little and you're still ahead of the buying game.

It's actually a fun pastime here, for in the out of the way shops, if you care to try them, you won't find much English spoken, but haggling is understood in pantomime, somehow, with

the help of many gestures and a lot of laughter. There's no such problem in the principal shopping centers such as the leading hotels, but off the beaten track, and here you'll want to get off it, expect some complications that are never unsolvable. It can be fun, all right, even hilarious, but you will eventually emerge triumphantly with your wanted items clutched tightly in your hot little hands.

Apart from hotel arcades, which are never any city's most inexpensive bargain basements, you'll want to head for the East Gate Market, or the somewhat smaller South Gate Market, which is still large enough to keep you happy all day. These two places are the outstanding locations where everything under the Korean sun is for sale, in a bewildering array of tablecloths, raincoats, men's ties, women's sweaters, gorgeous materials, kitchen utensils — everything! Your happiness is at stake and can only be solved by a decision of what you are actually going to buy, and you'll want to buy a great deal.

Haggling is permitted in these markets, but as little English is spoken in them, it must be done in a combination of pidgin English, or pidgin Korean, but you'll always find that someone will be on hand who speaks some of your language and can be helpful, whereas you won't speak any of theirs, so you won't be any help at all. This doesn't happen in the more expensive places where English is always spoken, but if you're de-

termined to find bargains, those two markets are your best bet, and both are centrally located.

You might begin your approach to shopping by browsing through the arcade shops of your hotel, for they will give you at least an idea of what you're going to find in this country. And keep in mind that you're going to find plenty.

In most hotel arcades you'll see red and black lacquerware boxes and chests inlaid with mother-of-pearl. There will also be pottery, woodcarvings, antique furniture, jewelry, silk by the yard, and it is gorgeous, brassware, paintings, even Korean-made Irish fishermen's sweaters made on Cheju Island, Korea's version of Hawaii. All of these, and more, will also be available at the East Gate Market and South Gate Market where, it seems, some visitors enter and spend their entire time in Korea, so great is the variety and so tempting the prices.

If you care to walk through the smaller streets of the downtown section, you come upon tiny side-walk stores, curved alleys of food stalls and vignettes of local life. In such places, very often when you want to cross a street, you'll go via underground shopping arcades for more of the same. These are sparkling

clean underways with more shops carrying Korea's unique celadon vases that are so incredibly beautiful and often fragile.

The large department stores in Seoul are interesting to explore to get an idea of what is available to local residents in the way of clothing, cosmetics, kitchenware, jewelry, luggage, furniture and everything else that such places contain. Many of them will be as appealing to you as to Koreans.

One of the best buys here is Korean silk which sells for about \$9.50 a yard for prints, \$8.50 a yard for solid colors in 50-inch widths in the more expensive shops, and for less in such places as the two markets that have been described. You can also find excellent cashmere at the East Gate Market for \$5 per yard for the 60-inch width, hand-painted velvet, wool and cotton and bonded silk polyester blends. And so it goes. There's seemingly just no end to these bargains, and the fun of finding them is another form of serendipity.

Despite these attractions, it is a great mistake to spend too much time shopping and neglecting the sightseeing that should be done in Korea.



Dining with the Danes

SYNDICATED TRAVEL NEWS — Copenhagen is justifiably famous for its excellence in dining, both regarding local Danish fare as well as continental and more exotic cuisine. This, naturally, ties in with the city's position as the entertainment capital of northern Europe.

The true heart of Copenhagen during the summer months is definitely Tivoli Gardens. Here, amongst fun-filled rides, manicured lawns, lights and flowers, you'll find Danish dining at its best, from elaborate luxury establishments to small snack-bars, totalling 25, in all.

In the luxury category, Belle Terrace and Divan I lead the way with fancy menus and prices to match, while at Smugkroen you can have a beer and sing along with the locals. If you feel like a real Danish, the Konditoriet may be your cup of tea.

Dining underground can prove a worthwhile experience and the selection of rustic and romantic cellar restaurants is wide and varied. The charming Græbrødre Square, just off the

pedestrian-only shopping street, "Strøget" has several exceptionally charming bistros with great appeal to local creative artists and visitors alike. Peeler Oxe and Bøf & Ost are good choices. On pleasant evenings the square is alive with music and laughter as young people congregate under the gaslit street lamps.

Close by is the large and attractively decorated St. Gertruds Kloster. There is no electric light, only candles, and steaks are grilled over a giant birchwood fire. The cellar vaults that house this most original restaurant date back to the 16th century, when a monastery was located here. While the downstairs is medieval down to the baroque dinner music, upstairs has a comfortable library bar with a turn of the century look, where

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