3. SHANGHAI ("Above the Sea")

Pronounced: Shang hi

   Shanghai is located near the east coast of China at a point where the Yangtze River meets the Yellow and East China Seas. It is a flourishing industrial and commercial centre, a great port, and the most densely populated town in China. Today Shanghai and its suburbs form a separate administrative unit, independent of the neighbouring provinces. It covers an area of 3,600 square miles and has a population of approximately 10 million.

Brief History:

   The origins of the town date from the Sung era, when the lower Yangtze region benefitted from the withdrawal which followed the invasions from the north. Several organizations responsible for controlling over-seas trade had already been based there. In 1554, ramparts were built around the town to protect it from attacks from Japanese pirates. In the 17th and 18th centuries trade flourished and Shanghai cotton was well known. The real period of great change dates from the 19th century, however. In June 1842 Shanghai surrendered to the English fleet during the Opium War and it was the subsequent signing of the Treaty of Nanking which opened Shanghai to foreign trade and the taking of special territorial concessions by the British, French, Americans and Japanese.

   After numerous skirmishes with Tai ping troops in the mid-1850's the Europeans regained control of Shanghai and the surrounding area. From this point on the foreigners became more numerous and soon controlled Chinese customs and founded banks, factories and business houses.