

REPORT 2013

Much later than planned...

Dear friends,

Murphy's law prevailed for us during the year of 2013 despite the fact that the year had started well. The weather brought no unpleasant surprises and we could just made the flight from **Vava'u to Tongatapu** with the former national air carrier Chatham Air before they ceased flying here, which, as you can imagine, caused a lot of problems in **TONGA**. From Tonga's main island Tongatapu we flew with Air NZ to **AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND**, where we spent a night and I could purchase a new CANON Camera (PS50HS) with a 50x zoom directly from the factory as replacement for an older broken camera for a good price. The next day we were on our way to Kuala Lumpur with KLM airline.

KUALA LUMPUR is the capital of **MALAYSIA**, it lies 03° 8' North and 101°42' East and has app. 1.5 million inhabitants. The name in Jawi is كوالا لمفور



We had booked a room for five days in the SILKA MAYTOWER Hotel which is situated in the center of the old town.

We immediately liked the town and the people. You could buy everything you needed in a market right behind our hotel, which was busy daily til late at night. We sampled the many different types of food and drinks, - many of them new to us. The ice (used to keep everything fresh) is cut by chainsaw in the street. We marvelled at the many different products, especially the latest electronic gadgets like smart phones and tablet computers, which were everywhere sold cheaply, although probably all counterfeit or fakes. For many months I had been learning to speak the Indonesian language Bahasa Indonesia. Here in Malaysia I could use this for the first time, because many words and numbers are the same in both Indonesian and Malaysian and I could make myself understood.

We explored the town by foot and on the monorail. In Malaysia, Islam is the official religion and in Kuala Lumpur it is possible to visit the NATIONAL MOSQUE, MASIJD NEGARA. Opened 1965 and renovated 10 years ago, it can hold 15.000 Muslims for prayers. Before you can enter the premises, especially as a woman, one is covered from head to toe and as a non-Muslim only allowed to look into the huge prayer hall from outside.



Of course we had to visit the PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS. Erected in 1998 with a height of 452 m (about 1350 feet) they are lower than the Burj Khalifa (828 m - about 2500 feet) in Dubai (see [Bericht 2011](#)). Today they are the highest TWIN towers in the world and with their Sky Bridge very impressive.



The TWIN TOWERS dominate the town day and night.

After booking the tickets we had to wait two days, and then we looked up from the entrance at the glittering outsides before we were herded into an express elevator and catapulted upward. We crossed the Sky Bridge from one tower to the other and then continued upward to an enclosed platform where we had a stunning view at the other tower and also the town below as far as the smog allowed.



To see some nature amidst of all the buildings we visited the BIRD PARK, which was once one of the largest in the world with 84 square kilometers. It still is worth visiting, but it needs an upgrade.



We hiked though town and explored the National Museum, Chinatown with its many shopping streets and the old buildings around the MERDEKA SQUARE - DATARAN MERDEKA.

On our last day we visited the holy BATU CAVES in the northern part of Kuala Lumpur. The metro delivered us right to the entrance, which is guarded by the huge turquoise ape god Hanuman. We passed temples and statues, then climbed up a steep, never-ending staircase, harassed by playful monkeys. When we made it to the top we were rewarded with a great view of the valley below and the silence of the huge shady cave, which houses small temples inside.



We were very lucky that we could witness a traditional Hindu wedding in one of the temples, then we boarded the Monorail/Metro and drove south more than an hour to **Port Klang**, hoping to get to the ocean. After one look at the locked harbour gates along the filthy river - not a glimpse of ocean anywhere - and the very dilapidated town, in which the street lights were the only nice feature, we hurried back to the train station to get back to the city.





On Thursday, February 21st, we flew with KLM in 2 hours from Kuala Lumpur to Jakarta on the island of **JAVA** in **INDONESIA**. The republic of Indonesia consists of 17.508 islands, of which are about 6.000 inhabited. It is the largest island republic and according to its number of inhabitants the fourth largest country of the world. Indonesia was proclaimed a republic on August, 17, 1945 and received independence from the Netherlands on December, 27, 1949. (Info Wikipedia 2010). The main religion in the West is Islam, in the East the majority Protestants and on Flores, Catholics. Only in Bali is the main religion Hinduism.

We wanted to visit the islands **JAVA**, **LOMBOK** and **BALI**, where Werner had made three extended visits more than 30 years ago. First stop was **JAKARTA**, the capital of Indonesia, at 6° 11' South and 106° 50' East in the Bay of Jakarta (Teluk Jakarta) on the Northwest coast of Java. Since the end of the 12. century this area belonged to the Hindu Kingdom Pajajaran. As early as 1522 the Portuguese landed there and 1619 the Netherland East India Company (VOC) established a trading place and founded the town **BATAVIA**. After the Independence in 1949, Jakarta, the former Batavia, became the capital in 1950.

Today, Jakarta is the largest town in Southeast Asia with nearly 10 million inhabitants, 15.000 people per square kilometer, the streets packed with cars and even more motor bikes. The traffic is unbelievable. For a long time we hesitated to cross the streets until we observed the locals who simply stretched out their hands, closed their eyes and started walking...

We stayed in the hotel **IBIS JAKARTA KEMAYORAN**. The hotels in Auckland, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta we had pre-booked online on "hotelclub.com", with which we had had good experiences before. The other hotels on this trip we either booked shortly in advance with HotelClub or booking.com or we just asked at the reception of the hotel and got a good price through negotiating.



On the map it looks like the hotel is very close to the Independence Square and after a long march on foot passing a large mosque as well as an old catholic church finally we made it to the one square kilometer large **MERDEKA**. In the middle of the square rises the 132 meter (400 feet) tall national monument **MONAS**, its flame plated with 35 kg pure gold. We wanted to visit the viewing platform (115 m), but there were so many people, that the waiting time would have been several hours in the glaring sun.





Instead, we visited the Indonesian National Museum and strolled through the small streets, where one can buy good inexpensive Indonesian food at the "driving restaurants".

By taxi we went to the old quarter of **BATAVIA**, but there are only a few of the original buildings left. Near the harbour the slums are growing, and we walked towards the harbour with mixed feelings. Here nearly everything is done in the open street, even the different trades conduct their business there.



In the harbour **Tanjung Priok** the large working boats that still travel between the islands, rest hull on hull. Across thin, unstable wooden boards the workers hurry the heaviest wares onboard. The highly loaded trucks run busily back and forth.





The old BATAVIA Marina Club however gives a very different impression - built und run in classic English style.



In the southeast of the town, „[Taman Mini Indonesia Indah](#)“, a large theme park presents life in Indonesia in different forms.



After three days we had enough of this crowded, loud city and we bought a train ticket to Bandung. From Gambier Station we travelled in second class for three hours through the Indonesian landscape.



Eddie, a friend of Werner's from 30 years ago, lives in **BANDUNG**. They had stayed with each other several times then. Eddie had invited us a long time ago to stay with him. We had written to each other once in a while, but he had not answered our emails we sent before our trip to Indonesia. We went to the hotel Marbella Suites, which is a bit out of town, close to where Eddie's last known address was. We started to look for him but there were new tenants and although the neighbours remembered him, they did not know his new address. When Werner had visited Eddie years ago, he lived with his parents in the middle of town, but when we looked there none of the houses looked familiar. We searched up and down the streets, asking everywhere. With hurting feet we finally returned disappointed to the hotel, where I wrote a last email to Eddie with our telephone number. Already in Jakarta, we had bought an Indonesian SIM-card for the telephone, because that is mostly the cheapest option to make calls in a foreign country. A few minutes after sending my email the telephone rang. It was indeed Eddie, overjoyed, and as fast as he could drive, on his motor bike, he came visiting us in the hotel. Werner and Eddie both had to blink back tears when meeting again after such a long time.



Of course we had to move with Eddie into his new house downtown and he showed us Bandung on foot and with the Bemo (shared taxi). His parent's house was still standing, but the new owners had hidden it behind a new front, which is why Werner didn't recognize it.

In one of the narrow alley ways we discovered a cactus called "queen of the night", the individual flower opens only once for a few hours at night. The orchids and the red passion flowers can be seen also during the day.



Eddie and his youngest son took us up into the hills past some tea plantations to the still active volcano TANGKUBAN PERAHU, where we looked into the boiling depth. Because of the highly toxic fumes, we were only allowed to stay for 10 minutes. After that we could bathe in hot sulfuric water in the Sari Ater Resort, while the rain cooled our heads.



The next day Eddie showed us the bird market, where not only birds, but also a lot of other small animals are sitting in horrible cages. There is also a lot of trading in animal food, cages and equipment. Hopefully the animals will have a better life once they find a new owner.



In the afternoon we visited a dance and puppet show and an Angklung concert (Saung Angklung Udjo). The Angklung instrument is made out of bamboo and can only produce a single sound when it is shaken by hand. Different sizes and forms produce different sounds. The single instruments are hanged up side-by-side, then one or more are shaken simultaneously. That's how a melody can be played.



Most of the visitors were given a single instrument. The sound it produced was written on the angklung. Then the conductor made a special hand gesture for each sound and the people, who had the instrument with that sound, had to shake it. After a short rehearsal the visitors including us played well-known tunes only following the hand gestures of the conductor. Amazing! The conductor has done this with huge crowds and even has a Guinness Book entry for it. Despite that, the sound is really nice. Later in Yogyakarta we encountered street musicians that played lively melodies with a slightly different technique.



Of course, we also met Eddie's extended family and his friends, and were invited to eat with them. At one of these occasions we were offered a durian. The "fruit that stinks", (often you can see signs, that forbid to bring it into a hotel or bus), is highly esteemed by Indonesians and they pay a good price for perfect fruits. The prickly hard green cover is broken open and the segments with a seed surrounded by soft pale flesh are eaten. I cannot say I was much impressed by the taste...





After eight days we had to say Good-bye (THANK YOU, Eddie!), because we wanted to see more of the country. Eddie had recommended visiting Pandangeran at the South coast of Java, where a friend of his with his German wife runs a small but fine hotel called Adams Homestay, where Eddie booked us in by telephone. Seven and a half hours drive by bus along winding roads, through forests and across muddy rivers. Fleeting impressions, rice fields in different stages of development, the mountains in the distance, along the side of the road drying rice and shiny tops of minarets.



Suddenly the screeching of brakes, the traffic stopped, a motor bike driver had lost control in the curve and slid across the road right in front of the oncoming bus. Luckily both bike riders got up quickly and seemingly unharmed, the bike was pulled up, kick started and everybody was under way again.

Slightly tired we arrived at the sun-drenched, dusty bus terminal outside the village of **PANDANGERAN** on the South coast of JAVA (7°43'13" S and 108°29'24"E). Only very few gasoline or diesel driven vehicles are allowed to drive in the village, the only alternative to walking is riding in the Bejak, a bicycle with a seat in front. Werner and I squeezed with all our luggage each into one of the narrow seats and the driver delivered us to Adams Homestay Resort. Adam gave us a beautiful room with a view across the pool and the wonderful tropical garden with small lakes full of lotus flowers and surrounded by flower bushes where fascinating female spiders waited in thin nets, their tiny brown males sitting on their bellies.



Pandangan is a sleepy little town, only getting busy on weekends, when the Indonesians flee from their cities to the beaches. Then the empty beach fills with hundreds of people. The fishermen, whose boats mostly lie on the beach or in the harbour, earn money driving around the tourists. Far from land houses on stilts can be seen in the bay, probably fishermen that live there permanently. In July 2006, an earthquake with 7.7 on the Richter scale produced a giant tsunami, a tidal wave that destroyed everything for half a kilometer inland and killed many people. Even nowadays we found destroyed buildings along the shore.



Adam recommended making a guided tour with a car to see the surrounding sights. After we established the route and a fitting price, the driver first showed us a Kreopoek factory. We had eaten these crunchy kroepoeks before and now observed how they are made. A big pile of yellow dough, which is normally made with grated shrimps and tapioca flower, is put into a machine which makes filigree round pieces and places them on a tablet. These pieces are being baked in hot oil, then dried everywhere, where there is a space and later packed into bags. All this happened here in an incredible filthy environment, all the machines were dirty and the packing was done in the garage beside the trucks. Before I really liked to eat these things, but after.....

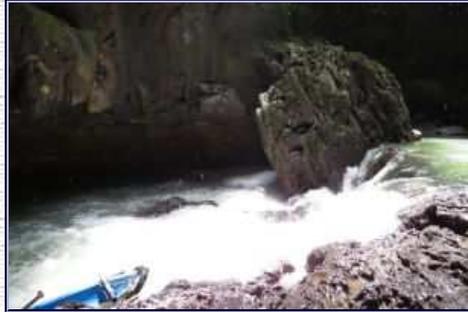


In any case, it was an interesting experience, like the other stops of the tour. Poor villages with a satellite dish in front of every house, where they produced copra and made sweets from the palm flower. A carver of puppets for the puppet plays. A rescue and breeding station for sea turtles.





And finally, after many hours drive over incredible bad roads the highlight of the tour: a boat tour through the **Green Canyon**. In motorized outrigger canoes, we were driven up the river, deeper and deeper into the canyon until we were surrounded by the stonewalls and the ride ended in front of a small waterfall. In earlier times one could dive into the water here and drift slowly back down the river. It was deemed to be too dangerous, we had to climb into the boats again and raced through a lush green jungle back to the car.



On the way back to Pandangeran we left the car and went across a narrow, braided bamboo suspension bridge, while in the middle, to our surprise a motor bike came straight at us. The bridge saves half an hour drive and a lot of people use it, only our car had to go around ;-). So we had time to watch the rice farmers harvesting their crop, before we met up with the car again. The driver also took us to a nice beach at Karu Batas for a swim before he delivered us safely back to Adam.

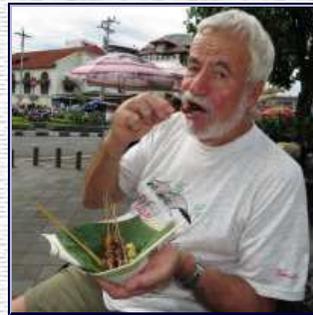


On Sunday we went by minibus to the next rail station and took the train to **YOGYAKARTA**, (7°48'05" S, 110°21'52" E), mostly only called Yoga,



where we stayed at the Fave Hotel Kusumanegra. The Fave Hotel chain offers good value for price, here we paid 29 Euro including breakfast, pool and so on. The car in the foreground was our rental car, which we rented on the second day of our stay from a local company.

Monday morning we hiked to the city center. In Yoga the traffic is by far not as bad as in Jakarta or Bandung, everything goes a bit slower. We strolled along the main road, called the Malioboro and explored the narrow alleyways in the center named Gang 1, 2, 3... with their many losmens, nowadays called homestays. Werner indulged in old memories, especially when he found the restaurant Superman, that, as well as the alleyways, had not changed in the last 30 years. After having walked through numerous streets asking around and with a lot of detours we even found the grandchildren and the sister of an old friend of Werner.



The Sultan still lives in his palace, the Kraton, and one can visit parts of his palace, which we did on Tuesday. There was a ceremony going on in the grand hall, all men in their traditional attire including the kris (Indonesian knife) in their belts. For the Indonesian visitors, like so often, Werner and I were the more interesting photo subjects.





The sultans in the picture gallery with their pointed ears reminded us somehow of Spock. We were really surprised, when we noticed beside many exotic medals a German medal. The framed accompanying document stated, that the large cross with star and shoulder band (das grosse Verdienstkreuz mit Stern und Schulterband) was bestowed on 22.10.1963 on Sri Sultan Hamangku Buwono the IX. by Bundespräsident Lübke.



This palace and also the water palace nearby are well worth a visit.



The next morning we drove our rental car for the first time and made it out of Yogyakarta without harm. The countless motor bikes, going everywhere, cars that seem to drive without any rules of the road, people on foot or bikes with carts, animals, potholes..., diverting in a flash, overtaking, risky maneuvers, nearly no road signs, the driving and co-driving was very stressful. That they drive on the left side of the road did not bother us, we had done so for more than 25.000 kilometer in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa without problems.

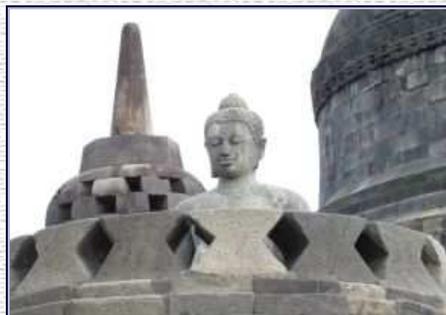
Driving uphill on a village street, which was halfway blocked with parking cars, it finally happened. Werner had to make room for an oncoming motor bike that overtook a car. He diverted to the left and scratched alongside a large SUV parked halfway on the road. We stopped immediately. Our car had a big scratch along the whole left side, the missing mirror we could retrieve from the side of the road. The other car had a scratch on the right rear corner and a piece of the plastic bumper was damaged. We talked to the driver, who fortunately spoke English. First he wanted a high sum, millions in Rupiah, but later was happy with 300.000 Rupiah, about 30 Euro, because he had not parked properly. According to our later experiences with repair prices we had definitely paid enough. We could repair our side mirror and continue our journey. We had heard that it could be dangerous to stop after an accident, especially if people are involved, because they can get angry and attack you. In this case we had seen no danger.



The streets became more narrow leading further up into the mountains and after a detour, because the signs were missing, we finally reached the Kedu Valley and **BOROBUDUR**, one of the largest Buddhist temples in Southeast Asia and since 1991 an UNESCO World heritage site. The temple complex was probably built around 750 and 850 and abandoned around 930. Forgotten for nearly 1000 years, covered by volcanic ashes, dirt and vegetation, it was found 1814 by Sir Thomas Raffles and only 1973 it was dug out and restored for 10 years.

The secret tip for accommodation there is the **Manohara Hotel**, which is situated inside the temple complex and offers free entrance to the temple during normal hours. After checking in, we immediately started out to explore the temple. If you are close to it, you cannot imagine the whole size of the complex, only from aloft (here Google earth) one can see the whole picture. Borobudur lies $7^{\circ} 36' S$ and $110^{\circ} 12' E$ and is 723 meters high. It has a square base where each side is 123 meter in length and nine levels, which get continuously narrower. On each level, numerous Buddha figures are situated and on the walls run stone reliefs, which depict the life of Buddha on a total length of 5 km. The top three terraces are round and hold 72 Stupas, in the center the main Stupa raises 10 meter high. (More Info at Wikipedia Borobudur)





We entered the temple through the front staircase. On every level we went around and looked at the uncountable stories cut in stone. We wandered higher and higher up to the stupas, some of which still hold stone Buddha, whose head you have to touch, to receive happiness.

It was raining the next morning, so we visited the museums first and as the sun came out again around noon, we hiked up again the many step steps to the uppermost stupa and had a beautiful view across the fertile land and over to the menacingly towering volcanoes, the very active Merapi and the Meraba.



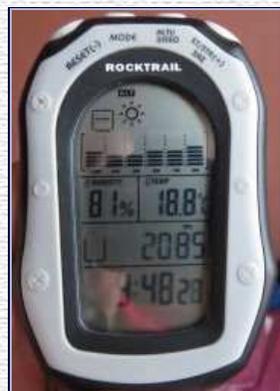
The other visitors had a long way from the entrance to the temple (in the picture you can see the hotel to the right of the road). And always there were visitors that wanted to take a picture with us. The restoration is still going on and many stones have yet to find their place in the constructive puzzle.

In the afternoon we continued our journey up into the mountains, driving on the smallest roads through little settlements with colourful stores and people and also passing tea plantations. The narrow winding mountain road was leading us ever higher through thin trees, sticking out of the fog. Even up here there are terraced fields lining the steepest hills. Late in the afternoon we arrived at our destination, the **DIENG PLATEAU**, the "Abode of the Gods " ($7^{\circ}12'25''$ S, $109^{\circ}51'51''$ E), 2000 m above sea level. We found a cheap room in the village of Dieng Kulon and as we walked along the rural road to find a restaurant for dinner, we got drenched by ice cold rain. Quickly we ate a few sticks of barbequed meat in a roadside open restaurant, a bowl of hot soup in another and raced back to the hotel, oh boy, it was sooo cold.



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The next morning the sun was out for some time, but nevertheless we only had 18.8 degrees Celsius (about 65F) at 2085 m (6500 ft.) above sea level. Warmly clothed we visited the Arjuna temple complex in the middle of town. Built around 750 CE, the eight Hindu temples are the oldest known standing stone structures in Java. The volcanic activity in the area is very high, often there are phreatic eruptions, which formed around 100 craters on the Dieng plateau. These phreatic explosions have killed people, because the emitted gases are very poisonous and cannot be detected by smell. They collect in the bottom of valleys and humans and animals suffocate in them. The thermal heat is also used to produce energy. All around Dieng are active sulfuric areas.





In Kawah Sikidang (Sikidang Crater) you have to be careful, where you walk, the stinking stuff bubbles out everywhere. We hiked around two lakes that lay side by side, the Telaga Warna (Coloured Lake), which is fed by sulfuric springs and is bare of life and the Telaga Pengilon (Mirror Lake), which mirrors the surroundings on clear days and is full of fish and water birds. At that point we wanted to get back to the warmth and started out in the afternoon to drive to Solo. Narrow roads, another mountain crossing, it was slow going and it was getting dark soon. In a small town along a steep hillside we saw several hotels. We stopped at one and asked for a room. We were shown a somehow suspicious looking, not too clean, room directly above the karaoke bar. Then they asked us, how many HOURS we wanted the room... We left that place in a hurry and found a simple, but proper and clean hotel room a short distance away. In the morning we realized, that nearly all of the hotels along this road offered karaoke bars.



The next morning we arrived in **SURAKARTA** (7°34' S, 110°49' E), mostly referred to as SOLO. I made an online booking with Hotel Club in the lobby of the IBIS Solo Hotel, because the normal price they asked at the counter was way higher than the 19 Euro per night for the online booking.

In the afternoon, we walked to the old palace, where one can still see the old Dutch inscriptions (Kavallerie-Artillerie). We strolled through the markets and on the way back to the hotel, we realized, that here too, the town designers are pretty silly. The zebra crossing was blocked right in the middle by high plants.

On Sunday, we wanted to see the new palace of the Sunan (king) of Solo, the Kraton. Maybe the traffic lights had controlled the entrance in earlier times, still it was guarded really nicely. Like in the temples, you also have to wear long pants or (wrap-around) skirts or sarongs here. Werner was wearing only his short pants and they did not want to admit us, but fortunately I had my huge shawl with me and that was accepted as a skirt - for Werner, I was wearing a long skirt anyway. The palace is still in very good condition, has magnificent large halls adorned with candelabras, marble statues and the collection of coaches is also great. The part where the king lives is off-limits for visitors.



We had to give back the car on Monday and therefore moved on to visit the second famous temple district, **PRAMBANAN**, (7°45'07" S, 110°29'29" E), which is close to the road from Solo to Yogyakarta. ([see Wikipedia-Link](#)), satellite picture: Google Earth

Prambanan is the largest Hindu temple complex in Indonesia. It was founded around 850 AD and soon after abandoned again. Since 1918 Prambanan is being restored and 1953 the main building was finished. In 1991 the complex, like Borobudur, became a World Heritage Site. Three main temples, dedicated to Shiva, Brahma and Vishnu, the tallest 47 meter high, form the center, which is surrounded by five more large temples. A ring of 224 small temples, most of them ruins, surrounds the inner complex. In the main temples are small cave like chambers, which hold stone carvings of Hindu gods like Durga. The balustrade areas and the exteriors of the large temples are dense with carvings, especially the Shiva temple is famous for the 62 relief depictions of the Ramayana Ballet, which tells the story of King Rama and his wife Sita. On May, 27, 2006 the complex was badly damaged by an earth quake strength 5.9 Richter scale. Today all the temples are restored and open for the public.



Near dusk we arrived back in Yogyakarta in the Fave Hotel and the next morning we waited nervously for the car rental man, who wanted to pick us up. He looked at the damaged car and said we had to come with him to a repair shop. Oh, ooh, fixing the whole side of the car, calculating with German repair shop prices, it would be certainly several thousand Euros. The repair shop was very small, the shop owner looked at the car, discussed it with the car owner and they asked a sum, which we could not believe at first: 750.000 Rupiah, about 80 Euro. As fast as we could, we paid the money and left. That was lucky.

Now we could concentrate on moving on and we booked a train ride to Surabaya and from there a flight to Lombok on Wednesday, March 20th. On Tuesday we went to renew our 30-day visa for Indonesia, which would expire in a few days. In the immigration office they handed us several papers to fill out, then they said, they needed more papers and it would take three days to extend the visas. No good, flight already booked, give us our papers back, please....

Yogyakarta is well known for its batik fabrics (mbatik means "write with wax") and we visited several shops, which create wax batiks the traditional way. They use metal stamps in numerous pattern and sizes, which are dipped in hot wax and stamped onto the fabric, picture for picture, until the whole cloth is covered with the pattern. Then the cloth is dipped in a tube with fluid colour and thereby the areas without wax are coloured. The wax is washed out later in a hot water bath and re-used. Depending on the final pattern, the stamping and colouring can be done several times over with different colours. Additional patterns are painted onto the fabric with hot wax by hand with small devices called tjanting. After the final colouring and cleaning process, the patterned fabrics are being manufactured into clothes and other useful things on antique sewing machines. Of course we had to buy our share of fabrics and clothing too in the uncountable shops around the Jalan Maliboro, where it is wise to bargain for a good price.



Shortly after seven o'clock on Wednesday morning we boarded the train for a 5 hour ride to **SURABAYA**. From the train station to the airport we shared a taxi ride with a young man. After two and a half hours flight we arrived on the island of **LOMBOK** (8° 25' S, 176° 28' E), east of Java and Bali and also east of the "Wallace Line", which runs through the Lombok Strait between Bali and Lombok and marks the distinct bio geographical division between the Indomalayan and the Australasian fauna. On Lombok more than 3 Million people live on 4.700 square kilometers (1800 square miles), half a million alone in the capital city of Mataram. Rice fields cover the low lands and the North is dominated by the volcano Rinjani.



We moved into a hotel in **MATARAM** and went to the immigration office. We had to fill out all the forms again and also needed copies of the passports, tickets and other papers.



After we had everything together, they had their lunch break. That meant going there again, wait, surrender all our papers and ... "come back Monday". What a bureaucracy!

From Mataram we went North to Senggigi Beach and in the Hotel Jayakarta Beach Resort we received a free upgrade from standard room in the main house to a deluxe suite, where we spent the night comfortably. The better hotels in Indonesia all have bathrooms according to international standards, like the one shown here. Further down the page is the "bathroom" of a simpler homestay. The water bucket is filled by a faucet and serves as reservoir for a shower, as well as rinsing the toilet (and your backside) with a little handheld scooper. Often the toilet is not even a sit-down version.

Near the hotel beach were a lot of fishing boats parked on shore and as we wandered along the huts on the beach, we were invited to taste the freshly caught fish.



Living in Tonga means we have a beach holiday all the time, so we rented a car again and set out to circumnavigate of Mount Rinjani, towering in the North. The roads here are signposted even worse than in Java and because we always look for the smallest roads to travel, once in a while, we did not know where we were. We had no smart phone with GPS and the street maps of the whole world and no car navigation unit. However back in Tonga I had already converted quite a few Google earth maps into charts, that the OpenCPN program, which we normally use for sea charts, could read. The laptop connected to a little GPS mouse showed us exactly where we were and we even could find the very remote and hidden Sasak village **AgarAgar**. An elderly man showed us the settlement, where the families still live in a very traditional way. Of course he wanted to be paid for it and we had to reduce the huge amount he asked for, to a better adjusted payment. The people were not overly friendly there, but about that we had read in the travel guides before.



Thanks to GPS, we also found the ring road around the stratovolcano Rinjani and the village of **SEMBALUNG LAWANG**, where we were the only guests in a hut at Marias Guesthouse with a grand view of the volcano top nearby. Rinjani, with a height of 3726 meters (12.224 ft.), is the second highest volcano in Indonesia, in the year 2010 he had his last eruption. In the dry season one can hike up to the top rim, but now it was too wet and at night it got pretty cold. It cost a bit of an effort to pour the ice cold water from the bucket over our bodies for a shower in the morning in the open cubicle, but after that we enjoyed having breakfast in the sun with a great view twice as much.



We strolled through the little village, past the town hall and over the market, where we marvelled at an Indonesian version of a "truck", then we continued driving through the mountains.



Occasionally we could see a village in a valley, the most prominent feature, the mosque, sticking out.

(Here you can see the 50-zoom of my camera in action! The village in the valley and the mosque in the village I took from the same point of view.)



We continued on to **PRINGGASELA**, a village, where women weave self-made and coloured fibers in traditional patterns on old hand looms into nice fabrics, which are sold at an expensive price.



On the way back to Mataram we passed a lot of rice terraces, which had been replanted just recently.

Monday morning we met with the man from the car rental company in front of the immigration office, to give back the car. Then we finally could pick up our passports with the new 30 day visa after making a hefty payment of 60 Euro.

Because we wanted to have enough time in Bali and were not very interested in Lombok's Southern beaches, we booked a flight with Lion/Wing Air from Lombok to Bali on Tuesday, March 26. At the airport they wanted to charge a substantial overweight fee for our luggage. The Lion Air Website stated 20 kg as allowed free luggage, Wing Air, which flew codeshare for Lion, only wanted to allow 15 kg. After a lot of talking, they let us pass with 20 kg per person for free. This is an issue, which is often encountered around the world, the international flights allow now even 23 kg or more for free and the national airlines make their money with lower weight allowances and then charging for the over-weight. Be aware!

At the airport in **DENPASAR** on the island of **BALI**, we were picked up by a staff member of the car rental firm Andre ([Link](#)), which belongs to a former German. There we had ordered a small jeep for the next few weeks. With that car, we went to the south coast of Bali, where we had found a private accommodation in the village of **SEHSEH** with the help of Adam from Pandangeran. Our hosts Muriel and William were very nice, we got our own little house in the garden with an open roof terrace, could eat with the family and received numerous tips, where to go.



Immediately the next day we followed their advice and went to Tanah Lot, which was very close. On the small roads was a lot of traffic, but slowly we got accustomed to the Indonesian driving habits. We were lucky, that at just this time the Balinese New Year and other feasts were celebrated and all the villages and temples were wonderfully adorned and decorated. Bali is the only island in Indonesia, which has a Hindu majority.



TANAH LOT is a very old temple complex, the main temple perches on a small rock in the ocean and can only be reached by foot at low water. This temple is off-limits for normal visitors, but we could observe, that a lot of Balinese women carried offerings through the water and up to the temple.

Normally all the well-known temples charge an entrance fee and visiting women as well as men have to wear a sarong or a long skirt with a scarf around the waist.

One day later we headed for the mountains to see the temple **Pura Taman Ayun** situated between lakes with wonderful water lilies in **MENGWI** and then on to **UBUD** (8°30'S, 115°16' E), famous for its painters and sculptors. The Puri Lukisam Museum shows an impressive collection of pictures, also from the German painter Walter Spies (1895-1942). But unfortunately, nowadays Ubud is an overcrowded tourist town with plenty of memorabilia shops, totally different from the sleepy little town with sandy streets, which Werner still remembered from 30 years ago.



Driving back to Sehseh on the very narrow, winding road suddenly a big bunch of kids on motor bikes raced towards us like a swarm of angry hornets, nearly blocking the road. In the last moment they veered out of our way, passing us left and right at high speeds. Scary. Many of the motor bike drivers we saw in Indonesia were still very young, or we saw whole families, father, mother and two kids on one bike or single mothers driving one-handed with their baby in the other arm.



The next two days we relaxed, because I had a cold, then Werner wanted to go to **Kuta Beach**, the famous beach in **DENPASAR**. 30 years ago the beach was a long stretch of sand with a dusty track running along, bordered by some huts. Today there is a very busy car lane and on the landward side many large hotels and bars. The beach is hidden behind a stonewall, on the tip of land in the background is the runway of the airport. Werner went swimming, and then we walked along the busy streets, amidst masses of tourists before we fled back to the countryside.



On the way back we saw a bunch of men in a village assembling around an open structure. We stopped, to have a look, and after having forced our way through shouting men waving bundles of money in the air, we saw that they were having cock fights. They fix long, curved and very sharp knives to the feet of their pampered fighting cocks, then two of them are fighting against each other. In a whirlwind of flapping wings, blinking spores and flying feathers the fight is over in a few moments and the inferior cock lies deeply wounded or dead on the ground. Meanwhile the Balinese men push you around, shout out their bets and their support for their favorite cock on top of their lungs. Not our vision of our favorite



recreational activity and forbidden by law in most other islands. The music, that was made in the house on the other side of the street, was more to our liking.



On Easter Tuesday we said Good-bye to Muriel and William (Thank you!) to explore more of the island. In Denpasar we had found a very good road atlas of Bali and we started out going North. First stop was the temple compound **Puru Luhur Batu Karu**.



Always we were searching for the famous terraced rice fields of Bali, as the German painter Walter Spies depicted them. For that we continued to **Jati Luwih**, which was renowned for its terraces. The road became bad and then worse and for the worst part they even charged us a road toll, the road was so bumpy that even the jeep had problems to drive there.

When we finally came around the last bend of the road, a nice valley with rice fields lay in front of us. Unfortunately, rain stopped us from exploring further, we got back into the car and drove on to our next stop **Bedugu at Lake Beratan**, where we rented a small house in the Enjung Beji Hotel. The hotel is situated right at the lake shore and from their garden we had a free entrance to the temple complex **Pura Luhur Beratan**. Some of the temples are standing in the lake and are guarded by friendly dragons.



Close by a large botanical garden, where huge mythical gods overlook the streets, shows an impressive array of cacti, ferns and bamboo. Trees that reminded us of Tolkien's living trees in Lord of the Rings and dense forests, where you "can't see the wood for the trees". We admired wonderful orchids and hundreds of different varieties of begonias.





In the morning we continued our journey along the rim of the crater of **Lake Beratan** to **Lake Buyan** and across a narrow ridge surrounded by low clouds to **Lake Tamblingan** and **Munduk**, which is highly praised in the guide book, but we could not see it in the dense fog. So we proceeded towards the Northwest and downhill to the ocean, which was basking in the sun. After a short detour to **Celukan Bawan Harbour**, a dirty bay where the ferry stops on to **Lovina Beach** and the well-known beaches on the North coast of Bali. The town of **Singaraja** was looking quite poorly and was not offering much. Only the Chinese temple and a "rolling restaurant" brightened up the city. Back at the beach of our hotel Lovina Beach Cottages we had a swim and later a nice dinner which was served on banana leaves. The sunset was spectacular.



Saturday, April 6th was a Balinese holiday, Kuningan, and we were on our way back to the mountains. On top of **Mount Penulisan**, 1746 meter high, we visited the highest situated and probably also the oldest temple in Bali, **Pura Tegeh Kuripan**. At the entrance, we bought small offerings, which we carried up many steep steps to put them down in the temple near the priest and some praying people.



We wanted to go to Toya Bungkah, a small village situated at **Lake Batur**. The only road to get there is leading along the rim of the crater of volcano Batur, through the village of Kintamani, passing the large temple **Pura Batur**. Traffic there was incredible and we were stopped at the entrance to the village by police, who told us, we had to make a detour downhill on an even more narrow road. After a short way down we realized that we never get back to **Kintamani** on this road. So we turned around, and with some difficulties facing the oncoming traffic, made it back up to the police men. After some heated arguments in English and Indonesian, booked hotel room and so on, they let us proceed on the main road. Traffic was stop and go and when we passed the temple, masses of people streamed into the temple entrances with their offerings. Not a space on the side of the road, cars bumper to bumper, but suddenly an opening to the left and in we went. It was a little backyard and the owner was renting out parking spaces. We could leave the car there, and dressed in our temple outfit, go back to the huge temple compound and mingle with the crowd. Everything was decorated very elaborately and the offerings were piling up everywhere. In the most holy yard, the believers were admitted in large groups and while the ceremony, performed by a female priest, was going on, we could watch but were not allowed inside. While the groups of praying people were changing I could slip inside and make a few pictures.



Happy, that fate had brought us to the right place at the right time and we could witness these ceremonies, in late afternoon we proceeded on our way to our hotel at the lake. From the elevated road leading around the rim of the crater, we could see the Batur volcano and his huge black lava fields, then the winding road led through a forest steeply down to the lake. The road conditions got worse and the road more narrow, old trucks overloaded with black lava sand racing along the hills and forcing us to some sudden and scary evading movements. We were relieved, when we finally reached the village of **Toya Bungkah** and the small Hotel Arlinas, where we had booked a room.





The hotel consists of four small houses with two double-rooms rooms each, placed around a little courtyard. At the back lies the reason, why we had chosen this particular hotel, three pools that are fed by hot water that bubbles out of the earth and is supposed to have healing ingredients. In any case it was very soothing to unwind in the smaller hot pools and then swim in the bigger, cooler pool. Relaxed we finished our day on the terrace and I made a back-up of my pictures from my cameras SD-card to the laptop, remembering my own credo: "You never know what happens, back-up, back-up, back-up!"



After an early morning round in the hot pools and a pretty meager hotel breakfast, we set out to explore the village, where there are other hot pools, which were either very expensive and full or rather primitive and full. Along the dusty road we made our way to the next village, where the road suddenly turned into a sand track, but we had a few pretty views of the lake. The road to the volcano also was impassable after a short distance. Kedisan, the village at the end of the lake had not too many sights, so we were back at the hotel shortly after noon. In the meantime, a wedding party had occupied some rooms, bride and groom were posing in magnificent Javanese costumes. They told us, this was only the photo shooting session, the wedding will be in a few weeks. Now we understood, why they were surrounded by make-up artists, light and camera crew and photographers. I was allowed to make some pictures as well, before the whole party vanished for some hours by car. Then the bride showed up in a wonderful long white dress and the groom in a suit. Now background for the photos was the pool area and after a while bride and groom sat fully dressed in one of the pools. At least five cameras filmed and took pictures, including mine. After the show was finished, all of them left and we had the hotel and pools for ourselves again.

The next morning we checked out and followed our usual routine in packing the car. My camera bag always has its place between the seats, where I can grab it fast, but when we got into the car that morning, it was not there. A look around the room, everything was empty. Werner also hadn't seen the bright red camera bag. I unpacked my backpack again, because sometimes, when we had left the room, I had packed the camera into the backpack for

security reasons. No camera in the backpack. Again searched through the room, unpacked all our bags and suitcases and searched them, searched the car, nothing, nothing, nothing, the new camera was gone. I was sure, that I had brought it back into the room after taking the wedding pictures. We tried to remember, in the evening we had a last swim, when I left the room I had locked it and when Werner came back first the door was slightly ajar. We didn't think too much about it then, the lock was not very good anyway, and we thought then, maybe I hadn't properly locked the room. A young couple which did not sleep in the hotel was also swimming and had left the pool before us. Otherwise we hadn't seen anybody, but the whole compound is very open, especially towards the street. All the thinking didn't help, the camera was gone including bag and all my SD-cards, second battery pack and, oh god, one of my credit cards. Now we had to move fast. We informed the young man at the reception desk, he made a phone call to the owner of the hotel, his mother Arlina. She came racing in on her motor bike a while later and got all her staff together. She then stated, that none of them had the camera, but this whole situation was very bad for the reputation of the hotel. I could make a telephone call from her phone to Germany, to report the loss and cancel my credit card. We decided to drive with Arlina to the next police station, more than a half hours drive away. There Arlina told a police friend about the incident, but I noticed, that she was much more concerned about her reputation than my belongings and wanted to avoid further inquiries. After a lot of back and forth, heated discussions in Indonesian and English, which one of the detectives spoke, writing down all vanished objects in English and Indonesian, they told us, that they could not officially state, that the camera was stolen, only that it could not be found. I was urged to say that I had lost it. To my argument, that I needed a theft report to possibly get back money from an insurance, they replied, then they have to conduct a proper examination. If we were willing to stay a few more days, then they would go back with us to the hotel, conduct a search and an examination, take fingerprints and so on. It was very clear, that they wanted us to give up. I was very upset, and told them, yes, let's go, I even got a promise from Arlina, that we could stay these days for free. Then Werner and I started to think about our options. It was pretty clear, that we had no insurance that would pay for the loss. For the credit card it was not really necessary. We only had nine precious days in Bali left and didn't want to lose any further one, (on what Arlina and the police had clearly speculated) and the camera would probably never turn up again. Beaten, we agreed, that a paper, that the things were missing, was enough and possibly we were lucky, that we did not have to pay a high fee for all of that. Arlina promised to inform us, when anything should turn up again, but up to this day she never responded to one of many emails to her various addresses.

Now, there I was, on an unique holiday in beautiful Bali WITHOUT camera, not even a mobile phone, that could take pictures. End of the world! After the many hours in the police department, it was already late afternoon. We visited the small interesting museum of Mount Batur and then drove down hill in the direction of Denpasar. Somewhere on the road, we had enough and took a room in the Bangli Inn, a quite dingy hotel in **Bangli**, where there was not a lot of choices. The double bed was so badly sagging, that we turned the frame upside along the wall and put the mattress on the not so clean floor. We walked around town and found a few shops that even sold cameras, three year old simple cameras for more than a hundred Euros - better than nothing, but the hotel had a Wi-Fi connection and thanks to Google I found some shops in Denpasar, which sold "my" camera model and better so, cheaper than in Germany. Hurray, early the next morning we raced to Denpasar, which was only a few hours drive down the hill. The closer we came, the more traffic we encountered, and we had to go into the inner city, where all hell was loose around midday. Luckily, we had that good street map and thus we crawled through packed one-way streets, where of course the motor bikes came from the other direction, until we reached the center, where we found two shops that sold the camera. Half an hour later, after hard bargaining, I was again the happy owner of a camera plus bag and SD-card for a very good price.

As fast as we could we left the crowded city of Denpasar towards the Southeast coast where we stopped at **Semarapura**, better known as **Klungkung**, to visit the former palace, the Pura Kherta Gosa and the floating pavilion Bale Kambang with its magnificent pictures on the ceiling. On the road we encountered traditional horse drawn carriages and the roundabout nearby was very nice to look at, but the paintings on the ceiling of the two open pavilions, which are still in very good condition, left us speechless. Depicted are mostly stories out of the epic Mahabharata or Ramayana stories, but also of daily life. Klungkung was once the center of the most important kingdom in Bali and here a Puputan took place on April 28, 1908. All Balinese, that had lost in the battle against the colonial Dutch, men, women and children, killed themselves, to avoid to be ruled by the hated Dutch.





After a side trip to the dirty ferry harbour Padangbai we stayed the night in a comfortable villa in the noble Nirwana Resort right at the beach of the rough Southeast coast, where Lombok can be seen in the distance.

Thursday, we went inland again, visiting **Amlapura** and its nice palaces, then the former swimming pools of **Taman Tirta Gangga**, where goblin animals spew water and on to **Sidemen**, where we overnighted between stunning rice terraces.



On Friday we drove up the street of 3142 meter high **Gunung Agung**, where at 1000 m the most holy temple compound of Bali, **Pura Besakih**, stretches up the mountain. Pura Besakih consists of 23 temples, the most important **Pura Penataran Agung**, spreads upwards on 6 levels. The steps up into the innermost temple were adorned very colorful, because again we had picked the right day when there was a temple feast especially at Besakih, which was only celebrated every 10 years. We were not allowed into the inner parts of the temples, but the steps on the outside leading upward to the highest point provided many interesting views into the complex, its visitors, priests and offerings. Unfortunately the weather was overcast and rainy and the view from top was not the best. One has to be aware of the many guides that hassle the visitors and tell them, they could not visit the temple without them. Even with a guide, visitors are not permitted inside the holy districts, but these guides try to walk with you and if you do not tell them off immediately, they later demand very rudely a hefty fee for their "services".



Passing Bangli and Gianyar we made our way to **Ubud**, which we had visited a few weeks back for only the afternoon. There we over-nighted in the **Siti Snel Bungalows**, situated directly at a deep gorge in the middle of town. Thus, we could explore the town on foot and visit one of the numerous dancing shows. Tales from the Ramayana where Keccak dancer form the background, where good and evil fight with each other and the white ape god Hanuman plays a vital part.



Saturday we left Ubud in a southerly direction, passing hundreds of shops with paintings, wooden sculptures, knick-knacks, when suddenly below a long stretch of souvenir shops a glorious valley came in view. It was hard to find a parking spot, but after we had made our way through to the edge we literally did not see red but GREEN.





A short distance ahead we came to the very old temple district of **Gunung Kawi** at **Tampaksiring**. We had to wait for a rain shower to stop, then made our way down to a valley near the river, where ten large figures cut out of the stone overlook the river in the midst of colourful flowers. While exploring the ancient temples, the rain set in again. First we waited und the roof of a temple, but then we had to climb up again the many slippery steps that had turned into a waterfall up to the parking lot. Barefeet was by far the best way to do this, of course we were soaking wet arriving at the top and we made a beeline back to the hotel in Ubud.



Also the next day we stayed in the vicinity of Ubud, visited the **Goa Gajah**, the elephant cave, another ancient holy place and in **Pejeng** in **Pura Penataran Sasih** we gaped at the largest drum of the world cast in a single piece, 186 centimeter in diameter and about 1000 to 2000 years old. According to an old Balinese's legend, it is called the "Fallen Moon of Pejeng".



We ended the day in a museum full of paintings and sculptures. By chance, we stumbled into the making of a Balinese movie and could witness two Baris dancers in action and also take some pictures of two very young female dancers.



On our last days in Indonesia we moved from Ubud into the Fave Hotel in **Denpasar** and visited the southern peninsula of Bali, where perched on the cliffs in the southwest is another large and widely known temple **Pura Luhur Uluwatu**.

Our luck was still with us, here also they celebrated a feast that day, everything was finely decorated and the masses of people moved densely crowded around us. The view out to the shimmering blue ocean let us forget the many steep steps of the ascent.



On the eastern side of the promontory Bena Marina is located in a large bay. There is a buildings that houses showers and toilets and a restaurant, the boats are moored or berthed at simple docks. Mostly local tourist boats, but we also found a sailing yacht with American flag, the owners hailing from Belgrade. They invited us for drinks and as often, when we talk to sailors, we did know the same people. We also strolled through the nearby fishing harbour, before venturing back into the thick traffic of the city of Denpasar. Halfway we stopped at a Chinese temple which forms a stark contrast with its overloaded colourful rooms and paintings to the Balinese grey temples.



On our last day in Bali we wanted to buy some nice things, but Werner had to go back to the hotel with a taxi because felt awful. I made my shoppings and then drove back in our rental car all by myself quite a long distance through the dense traffic. In the weeks in Indonesia we had become accustomed so much to the Indonesian way of driving, that I did not care, I just went with the flow and arrived safely.



The next day Werner was feeling better, we returned our rental car to Andre's shop and a van took us to the airport. Fortunately we had calculated plenty of time, because we were stuck in traffic a long time and a quick detour made it even worse. With no time to spare we just made it to the plane in time for take-off and sank relieved down on our seats. A few days ago a plane had fallen off the runway leading into the ocean and we still could see some parts of the rescued fuselage on the edge of the runway. Fortunately, our plane managed the take-off safely, we glided away and the Indonesian archipelago vanished behind us in the clouds.

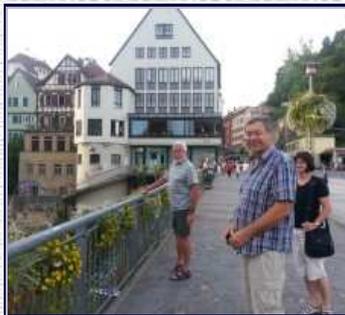
We had a short flight with Malaysian Airlines to **KUALA LUMPUR**, where we had to wait for 7 hours at the airport. Then we sat for nearly 13 hours in a Boeing 777-300 of KLM airline, which delivered us to Amsterdam in the **NETHERLANDS**.

In **AMSTERDAM** Werner's son Ivo lives in the middle of town and there we stayed for the next five days. Experiencing the town of Amsterdam with its old town hall, lifting bridges, nautical museum, seeing the Grachten (canals) in Ivo's little boat, excursions into the vicinity of Amsterdam. One highlight was a visit of the famous Rijksmuseum, that had only opened again recently after many years of renovation.



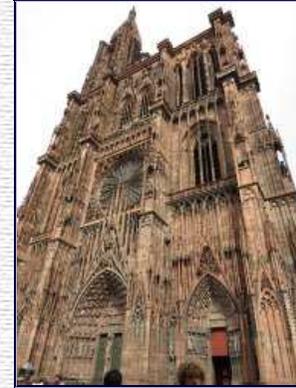
Here one of its most renowned paintings, the Night Watch of Rembrandt.

On Wednesday, April 24, we flew from Amsterdam to the airport near **Stuttgart** in **GERMANY** and went with the train to **Tuttlingen**, where my father picked us up. The next months we stayed in **WURMLINGEN** with my family and Werner was meeting up with his siblings. We visited our doctors and underwent the routine medical checks. In June, while preparing for a tour of Germany to visit various friends, the PSA test Werner had done showed alarmingly high results. The ultrasound examination by the urologist showed suspicious lumps in the prostate and the following biopsy in July showed evidence of cancerous cells in the prostate. Pretty shocked we discussed the possibilities with the doctor. Due to time constraints, waiting under medical supervision was not an option, also the cells seemed to be pretty aggressive. Amidst all the options, the only solution was a radical surgery and our departing date planned for August 9, moved far away. I rebooked all our flights, hotel rooms and rental cars. Thanks to the internet we could educate ourselves about the various operation methods. The best one seemed to be the Da Vinci method, where the doctor performing the surgery is sitting relaxed in front of a screen and with sensors around his fingers, aided by a robot and other surgeons, controls four or five instruments, which were inserted into small incisions into the stomach area.



The clinic in Tübingen had been performing this type of operation for a while and Werner could get an appointment there in a few days. On August 8th Werner was successfully operated there. My cousin Peter and his wife Marianne, who live close to the clinic, took us in and showed us Tübingen and I could stay with them, while Werner was in the clinic.

Already on Monday, 12th, I could pick up Werner, but we had to drive back to Tübingen the next day to have the catheter removed and have a final exam. Early in the morning after removal, Werner could not go to the toilet and "our" urologist in Tuttlingen had to place another catheter through the stomach lining. With catheter and the accompanying plastic sack I delivered him the next day to **Durbach** in the Black Forest, where he had to stay in a rehab clinic for three weeks. I could visit him several times while he was there. Werner had to carry around that catheter nearly up to the end. Durbach and its surrounds are well-known for its good wines grown there and the Alsace is only a few kilometers away. Fortunately, near the end of the rehab, we could make a nice tour to **Strasbourg** in **FRANCE** and visit the cathedral.



During the time in rehab, the clinic urologist performed an ultrasound examination and noticed a cyst, where some lymphatic fluid was collecting. During the surgery in Tübingen they had also removed 17 lymph nodes besides the prostate, all of them free of cancer. Maybe one of the lymphatic lines had not been properly closed during surgery and had now formed this bladder in the stomach area. The urologist in Durbach stated, that it would go away by itself in the near future. Werner was released from Rehab on September, 5th and was to be examined by his urologist in Tuttlingen the week after. At these examinations on September 11th and 25th, the cyst had rather grown larger. The doctor voiced his concerns to let Werner travel like this to Tonga, where medical help was not so good. This bladder could grow and therefore block the blood in the main vein going to the right leg, which could be fatal. Again there were several options to get rid of the bladder. One was to punctuate it, insert a syringe, suck the fluid out and insert antibiotics, which should cause the leak to close off. But that was not a safe method and could also cause inflammation. An open or minimal invasive surgery, where they cut a window into the bladder to allow the fluid to run into the stomach lining and be absorbed there was more promising. The clinic in Tübingen had no openings, only the brand new hospital of Villingen-Schwenningen, about half an hour's drive from Wurmlingen. There an open surgery to put a window into the cyst with a five-centimeter long stomach cut should be performed, a routine operation they said. On October 4, Werner was rolled into the operating theater at 11 o'clock a.m., I was told to be back at 2 o'clock p.m., then it was to be 3 p.m., and then 4 p.m... "no, no, everything is fine" I was told by the nurses. Finally, way past 5 p.m., Werner was brought back into his room with a big bloody bandage on his belly.

Only the next day we were informed what had happened. The operating doctor had cut open the main vein for two centimeters instead of the cyst!! Massive loss of blood - thumb into the wound- the quickly summoned vein specialist had to make a huge cut in the stomach to sew together the vein. To sum it up, Werner had a 20 cm long wound and the cyst was still intact. In the following week, while trying to punctuate the bladder, another doctor managed to put the needle too far and into a nerve. Werner got tremendous pains in his right leg, even massive



doses of pain killer did not help and he was not able to move his leg anymore. CT-examination, ultrasound of the veins, neurological examinations and all that, with various catheters coming out of his stomach. This clinic was only open for 9 weeks yet, a conglomeration of two separate clinics, that now according to a staff member, had to deliver 150 per cent performance with only 70 per cent of staff. Many things went wrong there and they made more hair-raising mistakes in Werner's case. Some days later the head physician punctuated Werner's cyst again, they administered antibiotics inside the cyst and Werner was released from hospital on October 10. his leg was still not functioning properly.

While rebooking our flights in July I had had to name a new date and had already extended the proposed recovery date from the first prostate surgery by four weeks and booked for October 20th.

Some days before the second planned departure date, two ultrasound examinations showed that the cyst had grown again pretty large. The only solution was a new surgery, to try again putting a window into the cyst. The head physician of Villingen-Schwenningen Hospital promised to perform the surgery himself. I rebooked all our bookings again! On Monday October 21st Werner was on the operating table once more. The old scar in the stomach was opened again and the window cut out this time successfully. Later the wound got infected, which once more prolonged the hospital stay, but at least the fluid in the bladder was getting less. On October 31, Werner was released from the hospital and subsequent ultrasound examinations showed that the surgery was a success at last.

On November 24th we finally could depart. My brother Ingo delivered us to the airport in Stuttgart and with a short transit in Paris, we arrived late afternoon of November 25, in



SHANGHAI, in the People's Republic of **CHINA**. Shanghai, or in Chinese Pinyin 上海 lies 31°14' N, 121° 28' E and is with 15 million inhabitants, or 25 million including the suburbs, one of the largest in the world. The name means "out to sea" and Shanghai is situated in the delta of the Jangtsekiang, on the river Huangpu, which cuts the town in half.

The peninsula of Pudong is crowded with skyscrapers. Here the Oriental Pearl Tower rises up and also the Shanghai World Financial Center, the aptly named 'bottle opener', which was during our stay with a height of 492 meter still the highest building in town and the third highest in the world, but in its shadow already the next tower is growing, which will exceed everything. By airport bus and taxi we drove to the Piaoying Bund Hotel in the inner city, from where we could see the famous skyline of Pudong and the river. Since April 2013 a stay of 72 hours in Beijing or Shanghai is possible without a visa. It was pretty cold in November, our plan had been to be here in August. Warmly clad we set out after dinner in a cold wind to stroll along the Bund, the street that runs along the river and provides a fascinating view of the dazzling lit skyscrapers on the other side of the river. The old buildings along the Bund were built end of the nineteenth century in European style. The 33 meter high tower of the sea customs building was at that time the highest building in China.



The next day we set out for the Bund again, then strolled through the town and along the shopping street Nanjing Road to the People's Square. In the evening, we had an appointment with a "colleague", the German "port captain" of the Trans-Ocean point of support and his local wife. They showed us the old French district and invited us to sample many superb local specialties (Thank You!). They also told us, to make a bus tour the next day. Of course, we followed their advice. These Hop on - Hop off buses drive a set route and for relatively little money one can ride on them between sights, including explanations, even in German, via earphones. Thus we went all the way to the former Expo area and then back to the Bund. On a ferry we crossed the brown river and boarded another bus which brought us to the Pearl Tower. The Pearl Tower, easily recognized by its

distinct form and two big balls, was a long time the tallest building with 468 meters and because there were no waiting hours here and it is situated closer to the river, we bought entrance cards for all levels. Unfortunately the view was somehow restricted because it was pretty foggy, but we could discern the Bund and our hotel on the other side of the river. On one of the platforms going around the tower, the floor was made out of glass, which allowed for astonishing views. Not all visitors were brave enough to stand on the glass. The next platform was only sheltered up to about 1.80 meter, 6 feet, and on the windward side, the wind was blowing so strong, that we could nearly not walk without holding on. My ponytail flew out horizontally and my head cover vanished in an instant. Later we went with the bus through ancient Chinese quarters and ended at the Yuang gardens, a village like quarter built in the tradition of the Qing Dynasty with a temple and a lot of restaurants and souvenir shops. The rest of the way back to the hotel we had to go by taxi, because the last bus was long gone.





On Thursday morning we took a taxi to the Maglev Train Station. The Transrapid Shanghai Maglev (magnetic leverage) train was imported from Germany and races with up to 430 kilometers per hour between town and airport. Eight minutes of gliding instead an hour's drive by bus, this we had to experience, even when it cost ten times as much for the same distance.



After nearly seven hours flight with Air New Zealand we arrived early in the morning at **AUCKLAND** in **NEW ZEALAND** and could board our Wendekreisen camper at 8:30 a.m. We had booked a much smaller model for one week off season, but because of all the delays it was high season now and all we could get was a four person camper, otherwise we would have lost a lot of money in cancelling everything. We were very lucky to have automatic travel insurance through our banks visa card, which covered many of the necessary extra expenses.

Thus we could move fast from Auckland northwards after having bought some provisions. The green rolling hills of New Zealand once more greeted us. After a few hours' drive, the jet lag set in and we stopped for the night in our comfortable camper at a parking spot close to a nice beach.





The next days we spent in **Whangarei** and **Opuā**, where we visited many sailing friends and made necessary shopping's. We also visited Sabine, a German lady, who works in Trixie's United Travel agency in **Kerikeri** and is doing a superb job since many years booking all our complicated travel routes for the cheapest price possible (THANKS!!)

Wednesday, December 4th, we returned the camper in Auckland and after a night in a hotel, the Air NZ plane delivered us in three hours to a hot airport on **TONGATAPU in the Kingdom of TONGA**. We wanted to go to Vava'u by ferry and had booked a room with Waltraud and son Sven, long time acquaintances of us and owners of Heilala Lodge. Their nice lodge is situated directly at the beach in the Southwest of Tongatapu Island. The ferry left three days later than scheduled, but we could move into a nice villa near the ocean and didn't mind the delay. (Thanks!)



Overnight the ferry Otuanga 'Ofa brought us to **NEIAFU in VAVA'U**, where neighbour Boris picked us up with his boat. On December 12th, nearly four month later than planned, we were home again on our property ANALULU on **FOFOA** Island. Hurray!



Christmas and New Year we celebrated with our neighbours on the island. In the meantime the year 2014 is nearly over as well, but more about that year in our next report, which will be certainly much shorter than this - I promise!

We are doing both well and especially Werner has recovered very well !

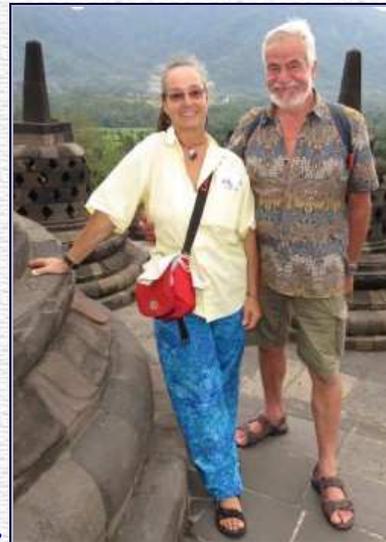


We hope you are all well and wish you all the best for the rest of the year 2014!



We thank you all for your friendship, your emails, good wishes and all the goodwill we received. We hope to meet you again next year or at least hear from you once in a while.

With our best regards from the South Seas



Elke & Werner