

*Dear friends,*

summer in **TONGA** is upon us, temperatures are climbing well over 30 degrees, it is hot and humid. Christmas is close and in Europe it is snowing. At the end of last year's report we were worried that another cyclone might hit us, which luckily did not happen. Christmas 2016 we celebrated with our neighbours and on New Years Eve only the animals kept us company.



In early February we prepared house and garden for a longer absence, hauled the boat out of the water and packed our suitcases. This year we wanted to visit Taiwan on our way to Germany, which first proved difficult to book on a direct route, so we decided to stop over in Hong Kong only. Cathay Pacific offered a very cheap flight from Auckland via Sydney and Hong Kong to Zürich. Just when I was booking this flight, the airline offered a special add-on deal for February, Hong Kong to Taiwan and back, with one week stay. How lucky for us.



On February 16. we flew from Neiafu to Tongatapu and on to Auckland, New Zealand. We were lucky again to get out in time, because of stormy weather they cancelled further flights. In Auckland we arrived shortly before midnight and just stayed in transit until six in the morning, when our flight to Sydney and on to Hong Kong and Taiwan

departed. We wanted to stay three days in the capital Taipei and then travel by rental car through the country. As Germans we needed no visa for Taiwan and Taipei is considered to be one of the safest cities of the world.





中華民國 (臺灣)

**Zhōnghuá Mínguó (Táiwān) - Republic of China (Taiwan) (ROC)**

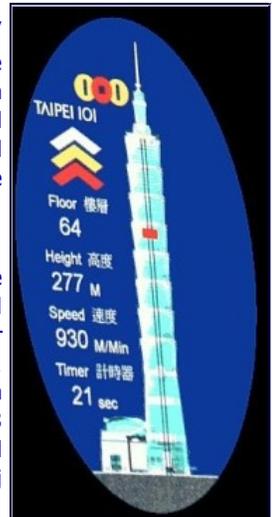
The island of **TAIWAN**, formerly called Ilha Formosa, ("beautiful island"), when the Portuguese discovered the island around 1542, is situated in the South China Sea and with 36,000 square kilometre, (13,900 sq mi) is smaller than Switzerland. It has more than 24 million inhabitants (639 persons per square km) who live mostly in the big cities and on the West coast. The eastern two-thirds of the country consist of rugged mountains. The history of the island is complex, first settlers came 15,000 - 12,000 BC, around 6000 years ago farmers from mainland China, between 1544 and 1662 the Portuguese, Dutch and Spaniards. Chinese rule until 1895, then it was a Japanese province until 1945, Chinese again, 1949 proclamation of the Republic of China (ROC) under Chiang Kai-shek to differentiate from Mainland China (PRC) . From the 1960's on the economy started booming and later democracy was introduced. ---The climate in

the north of Taiwan is subtropical with mild winters, in the high mountains also snow and ice. The typhoon season runs from May until October. The capital Taipei, founded in 1879, is divided into 12 districts and lies in the north-western part of the island (25° 01' 59" N, 121° 31' 59" E). Today around 10,000 people live on one square km. For more infos please refer to Wikipedia: [Taiwan](#) and [Taipei](#).



In **TAIPEI** we had booked a room in the **Beauty Hotel Bfun** in Zhongshan District, and because of the late hour, we had them pick us up with a shuttle taxi from the airport. The new Metro rapid transit line, which now connects the airport and city was just being opened when we left the country.

After a good nights rest we took a taxi to the Taipei Financial Center, the **TAIPEI 101**, to add one more building to our collection of super highrises of the world. The Taipei 101, having 101 floors above ground level, and shaped like a bamboo cane, was opened in 2004. With 508 meters it was the tallest building of the world until 2010, when it was superseded by the Burj Khalifa (828 m) in Dubai ([see our Bericht 2011](#), sorry only in German). The second fastest



elevator in the world (16.83 m / sec) catapulted us in 37 seconds from the 5th to the 89th floor, at 383 m height, where a glazed observation deck offers a good 360 degree view of every aspect of the city. Unfortunately it was quite hazy, but nevertheless we enjoyed the view and had fun with the corners made entirely out of glass, which offered interesting views and insights. Via a staircase we went up to the 91. floor, and could see the town from an open air terrace.





Many skyscrapers, especially in seismic and stormy areas, have devices (dampers) that can absorb vibrations of a certain frequency. In Taipei 101 it is possible to visit the largest tuned mass damper sphere in the world. The 660 ton damper consists of 41 steel plates each 125 mm thick, welded together to form a 5,5 m diameter gold-plated steel sphere. It is suspended from floor 87 to 92 and prevents the tower



from swaying more than 1 m in typhoons or earthquakes. On floor 88 of the building, is an interesting exhibition of carvings made of red coral and jade. In the lower floors are huge expensive shopping malls where we glimpsed some "glass" chandeliers.



Since we had planned only three days for the city, we continued with the MTR (subway) to **CHIANG KAI-SHEK MEMORIAL HALL**, built in 1977 to commemorate former President Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975).

Adjacent lies the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall Plaza, framed by the National Concert Hall and the National Theatre, built in 1987 in traditional Chinese palace style, and at the other end of the square rises the imposing 30 m high white and blue city gate.





The Memorial Hall consists of art galleries and a museum presenting the life of the late president. On top sits a huge hall with large bronze doors and a seated figure of Chiang Kai-shek looking out onto the square below. During the day at the full hour the change of guards ceremony takes place here. They march from the museum up to the statue, swirling their guns and after the presentation march down the large staircase and out into the square.



The next day started sunny and it was nearly 26 degrees C warm. We looked at the **PRESIDENTIAL PALACE** and then strolled through the city. Outside the new modern high rise district around the Taipei 101, the cityscape is characterized by smaller multi-storey residential and commercial buildings mostly looking not too well maintained.



Here and there a small colourful temple is squeezed in between the houses.



We made our way to the well visited extensive Longshan Temple with its many temple buildings, statues and Prayer niches. The 254-year-old **LONGSHAN TEMPLE** is

dedicated to the Goddess of Mercy, but there are also many other deities worshipped. We observed, that many incoming visitors put gifts, often expensive sweets or fruits, on tables and people leaving took things away. We asked what was going on here and the answer was, that you if bring a gift the gods will take their share, while you are in the temple praying, the rest you can take out again and eat it yourself. Makes sense.





Our next destination, the **NATIONAL MUSEUM**, shows how life in Taiwan's past looked and many artefacts (here a figure/armour made of jade tiles). It was interesting, but visited relatively quickly.

Towards evening we took the metro north to Shilin Night Market, where we gathered our dinner from many food stalls, while being pushed through the streets by the masses of visitors looking at the vast offering of goods and knick-knacks. Even here were open colourfully lit temples.



Monday we bought two day tickets for the Metro, which operates in many parts of the city above

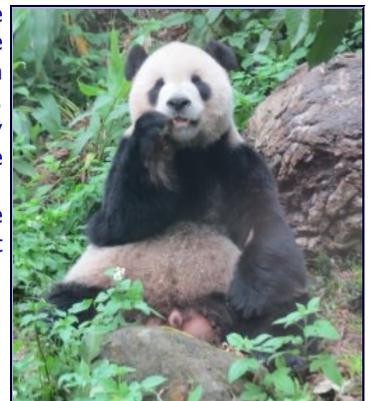


ground. We drove all across the city, got out every now and then and strolled through the streets. The red line runs all the way to **TAMSUI** ending on the river Tamsui, where we walked along the river, watching the fishermen and indulging in delicious grilled octopus and dried fruits. After a rain shower it cooled off, so we took the metro back to the city and changed to the brown line that took us to the Taipei Zoo.



Unfortunately, the Maokong glass bottom gondola that leads over the zoo was closed, so we visited the **TAIPEI ZOO** mainly because of the giant pandas. Tuan Tuan and Yuan Yuan came as a gift in 2008 from China (Tuan Yuan means "reunion" in Chinese) and had a cub 2013. There are only 1600 giant pandas still living wild in China, because they only eat bamboo, of which they need 10 kilos every day, and the bamboo forests are being destroyed by men.

In Taipei Zoo they have a large inside and outside habitat, where we could watch them through thick glass panels relaxing and nibbling at their bamboo or roaming through their territory.

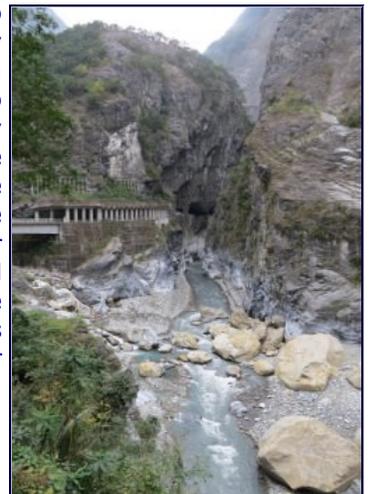




Tuesday we picked up our rental car at AVIS in the very east of town, which saved us from driving through the dense city traffic, and proceeded towards the east coast. Part of the route runs in a very long tunnel that leads through the coastal mountains and saves hours in driving. Reaching the grey-shrouded coast we turned south and visited the narrow, crowded port of **NAN FANG-AO**, where many fishing boats equipped with powerful lamps docked side by side.



The coastal road between Yilan and Hualien is considered to be a breathtaking but dangerous route, because it is very winding and hugs the steep cliffs and the coast tightly. Often sections are impassable after bad weather, but we had no problem and shortly before reaching Hualien, the largest city here on the east coast, we turned right towards the mountains and Taroko National Park. Driving uphill on the Central Cross-Island Highway 8, we came through the famous **TAROKO GORGE**, where the river Liwu, after dropping 3742 meters, cut a deep gorge in the limestone and granite mountains, leaving white marble-walled canyons. The road runs right along the narrow gorge, to stop and look is nearly impossible because of the high amount of visitor traffic, nevertheless we managed to do so shortly once or twice.





Further uphill at the end of the gorge the traffic decreased, most of the tourists turning around. The road leads high up into and across the mountains and we had planned to stay overnight near the Sun Moon Lake where lots of hotels are. The road wound up higher and higher and got more narrow with every turn, more often leaving only one lane for traffic. It was a bit eerie, when in the falling dusk the fog climbing up from the valley floors started to envelop us more and more. Only very few cars were still on the road, but driving through the dark, densely wooded mountains, was exhausting for both of us. Werner concentrated to stay on the narrow, unmarked road, which was sometimes only dimly recognizable in the fog, I tried to penetrate the fog ahead and closely watched the round mirrors set in the tight curves, to detect oncoming traffic better. We were already 2500 meter high and according to our electronic map many miles away from the next settlement or accommodation and we knew that we couldn't continue like this much longer. Clearly had we misjudged the road conditions and the needed time. We were close to stopping beside the road to spend the cold night in the car, which was not that tempting, when we saw a light between the dark trees. We stopped at a single house and I approached the door. In Taiwan like in Korea, not many people outside the big cities speak English and my Chinese was limited to hello, thank you and the numbers from 1-10. Therefore I was pretty relieved, when the man opening the door answered my questions in broken English. He told us, that there should be a hotel on the left-hand side in three kilometres distance.



Exactly three kilometres further down the road we actually found a house beside the street, but in the dark it looked more like a mixture of an auto repair shop and a store. We decided to ask anyway and entered the building. Inside, on the right hand in the midst of lots of trinkets stood two car seats and a large table next to which a pot on an open hearth on the floor was boiling, on the left two round tables, some chairs and shelves with food and other merchandise. An elderly couple looked at us expectantly and the woman reacted to my English question for a hotel room. She led us outside and down a very steep staircase, where she showed us a large, icy cold room with three roughly fabricated bunk beds without bedding. With some difficulties we asked her, if this was the only room available and she showed us another room. This was tiny, not much bigger than the double-bed inside. On the bed lay thick blue blankets!! This was our room for the night. The price was unreasonably high, but driving on was not an option. We also didn't care too much, if the bedding was clean, because of the cold we kept on most of our clothes and covered the pillows with towels. They had some hot water in the bathroom, but the toilets were 'standing only'....not very convenient.

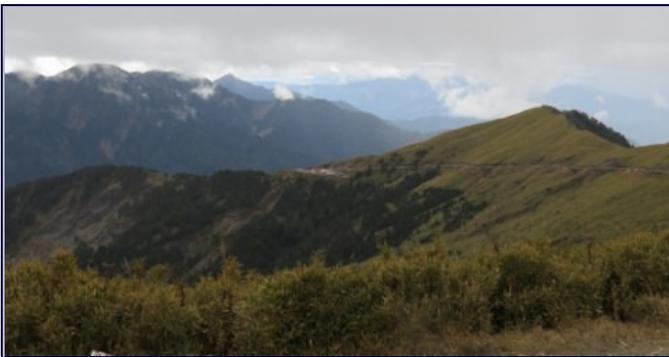


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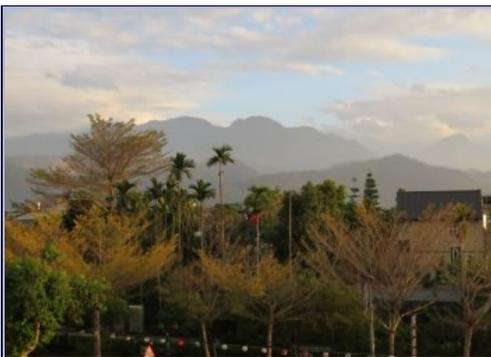


Even this cold night passed and when we got up, the sun was shining. In the store we could buy some instant soup for breakfast and carried on. We left Highway 8 for route 14Jia and passing nice views we made it to the top of the mountain road at 3275 meter. Here the wind was freezing and still some snow on the ground, but we had a beautiful view of the more than 3000 m high mountain peaks around us.





The road downhill was much wider and better and after only a few hours, at 760 m above sea level, we reached the **SUN MOON LAKE**, which is the largest natural lake in Taiwan and named because of its shape. Unfortunately the rain had started again so we only drove once around the lake and visited the town of **ITASHAO**, were still Aboriginal of Taiwan live. They are as enterprising as the Chinese and sell food and all sorts of things along the street. The so-called Formosan Aboriginal Cultural Village nearby is only a amusement park which we skipped as well as the boat ride on the lake.



Originally we had planned to drive further south high up into the Alishan mountains, but we were already way behind our schedule. We only had one more full day available and already had a booking of a motel room near the airport for the last night. So we went on downhill and stopped for the night in **JIJI**. The rain had ceased and the foothills shone in the evening sun. Thursday morning we left the mountains behind and drove west through the flat coastal area where many busy roads cut through industrial and residential areas.

On the right our route in turquoise. Again we used our navigation app OsmAnd+ on smartphone and tablet, while walking or driving here in Taiwan.





Trying to avoid the main streets we used small roads until we reached the west coast, a dreary, sandy area with dilapidated buildings, wind generators and abandoned graves. Reaching the ocean we turned North on Highway 61, which was still under construction. In pouring rain we arrived in the evening at our **Motel Cantaloupe** in the vicinity of Highway 1 outside Taoyuan City, about 10 km from the airport. That motel offered a nice surprise. Each unit had its own garage, from which a staircase led up to a



large room on top, very convenient in such a bad weather.

Our flight departed at 11:20 am on Friday and we got up early, because we had to give back the rental car. We had been told, that was possible inside the extensive airport, but Google showed the Avis office just outside the area and after a few detours we found that office. The woman at the counter waved us off, "no, no you have to go INSIDE the airport", but we had not seen an office there earlier, despite looking for it. The time was running out and fortunately the employee had to go to the other office anyway and led the way in her car. Without help we would have never found that office in time. We could finish the paperwork with the friendly employee in our car and she even drove us quickly to the check-in counter, which was still far away. Just in time we could do the check-in and board the 3,5 hour flight to Hong Kong.



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區

**Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (PRC)**

22° 18' N, 114° 10' E --Infos and map see [Wikipedia: Hong Kong](#)



Ten years ago we spent a few days in **HONG KONG**, visiting mainly Hong Kong Island, the Peak and some outlying islands. This time I had booked a hotel room in Jordan in the middle of **Kowloon** on the mainland.



We took the cheap fast train from the airport to Kowloon station, boarded one of the free hotel buses and had a nice ride through Kowloon until we came to the vicinity of our hotel. The buses only serve the expensive hotels, so we easily walked two busy blocks until we arrived at the **Evergreen Hotel**.



In the evening we had to walk just one more street and were in the middle of the bustle of the **TEMPLE STREET NIGHT MARKET**. After dark, many streets here are closed for traffic and hundreds of small stalls are set up that sell virtually

everything. Restaurants with tables in the streets, food stalls and flying vendors compete in luring people to eat. It was so easy and cheap to sample all the Chinese delicacies.



On Saturday we first visited the **JADE MARKET**, where different gems, semi-precious stones, jewellery and other souvenirs are sold. Then we made our way through narrow alleyways with a strange range of products (?? lizards ??) to famous **NATHAN ROAD**, THE shopping street of Hong Kong which runs North to South two blocks east of our hotel.





There we made our way south through the crowds until we came to the waterfront. Once in a while stopping to marvel at the bamboo scaffolding used in construction work, that is tied together by hand and reaches high up the tall buildings. On top of them, many workers scurry high above the road and after completion of the work, the scaffolding will be disposed of in an environmentally friendly way.



Unfortunately, the waterfront museums were closed, but we enjoyed, like many young and older Chinese, the parks around the **CLOCK TOWER**, the view of the hustle and bustle on the water and the magnificent scenery of the island of Hong Kong on the other side. A thermometer showed 13 degrees of air temperature, according to the news so far the coldest day of Hong Kong winter. To warm up we boarded one of the hotel shuttle buses that came by, made a sightseeing tour with them, getting off here and there, taking the next bus until we were close to our hotel again.





The next day we took the metro to **HONG KONG ISLAND**, which runs deep under the harbour waters. We strolled through the street canyons between the towering glass towers of the financial district, which we used for a double 'selfie' picture and visited the **TIMES SQUARE** with its classy boutiques.



Then we explored the small streets with open food stalls, the busy main streets, where the old trams still run along, and many shops. At our previous visit long ago we had bought a good 10" DVD-player for Werner to watch his extensive collection of operas and concerts. This was now failing and we wanted to replace it, but even here, where you get everything, that was not easy, because MP3 players had replaced it.



On Monday morning, my legs ached from walking the streets and it was raining, so we stayed at the hotel and watched the Oscars live on TV. In the afternoon we rode the metro to **SHAM TSUI**, where around Ap Liu Street is another quarter with markets and small shops this time focusing on tools, electrical accessories and the like. Here Werner was in his element - drills, screws of all kinds, LED lamps in all colours and shapes. Good that we still had some space in our suitcases.



For a change we visited the **LADIES MARKET** in Mong Kok the next day and later another market with computers further north, which I liked much better, but we couldn't stay long. No luck with DVD-Players so far.



In the evening we dressed warmly, because a cold wind was blowing and we wanted to watch the daily 15 minute laser show '**SYMPHONY OF LIGHTS**' at the waterfront. The 'Avenue of the stars' was closed for renovation, but near the Clock Tower we found a good place in the crowds directly on the water, where we had a good view of the entire scenery of Hong Kong Island. Punctually at 8 pm the music began and the lasers behind us and on the island started their bizarre dance in the sky.



On Wednesday most museum in Hong Kong offer free admission, so we visited the **MUSEUM OF HISTORY** and the **MUSEUM OF SCIENCE** and explored another district by foot. After eating at so many open food and soup stalls, this evening we ate in a 'real' restaurant.



Thursday the sun was shining and we took advantage of the good weather to catch the Turbo Jet to drive from Kowloon to Macau in one hour. The 50 kilometre long bridge connecting Hong Kong and Macau is still under construction.



**MACAU** or Macao, Special Administrative Region of the PRC, is an autonomous territory on the western side of the Pearl River estuary in East Asia, 65 km SW of Hong Kong and about 30,5 square km small. It consists of the Macau Peninsula itself and the islands of Taipa and Coloane, which are now connected by landfill forming Cotai.



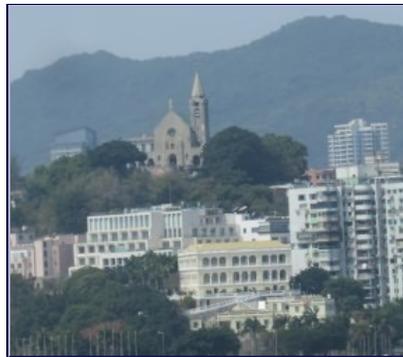
Here more than 21,400 people crowd on a square kilometre, it is the most densely populated region in the world, yet the area has the second (some say 4th) highest life expectancy in the world at 84.5 years, also today Macau is among the world's richest regions. In 1516, the first Portuguese landed on Macau and in 1557 the first European trading post was established in China long before neighbouring Hong Kong fell to England. Macau was returned to China on 20.12.1999 and thus was the last European colony in Asia. Gambling was already legalized in 1847.

[Wiki: Macau](#)



As Germans we only needed our passports to visit and received a day visa. Sitting in comfortable airplane chairs we enjoyed it, as the ferry raced across the water at full speed, passing the airport and small islets.

From the ferry terminal on the island of Taipa in the south of Macau, we went by bus to the north, passing by fantastic casino and hotel complexes, on the left suddenly the campanile of Venice appeared together with St. Mark's Square and further on a fairytale castle out of Thousand and One Nights. Across a high bridge we entered the northern island, only 7 sq km small, glimpsing old Portuguese churches on the hillside and sprawling gold-rimmed fantasy buildings in the centre, where the bus stopped. From here we set out on foot in search of the remnants of the Portuguese settlers.



Narrow streets led uphill to a square with a fountain, where an old Portuguese church stands, higher up the alley opens onto a shopping street that leads between old Portuguese houses to the market square and another church.





From there we went up the stairs to the façade of **SAO PAULO CATHEDRAL**, built around 1620 by the Jesuits. 1835 it burnt down during a typhoon, leaving only the façade impressively towering over the city and showing interesting details.



On the way back to the modern centre we passed countless small shops, that offered dried fruits, sweets and bakeries for free trial and being hungry by now we happily indulged.



Of course, we also had to visit one of the colourful luxury hotels with casino. The lobby of the **GRAND LISBOA CASINO** was full of chandeliers and the finest decor. On the lower floors a lot of people played at the slot machines, the higher we went, the more exclusive it became, the stakes at the gaming tables increasing with the floors. We could observe everything, but when I took a picture, three Security officials surrounded me and made it clear to me, that I was not allowed to do that.

Five of the ten largest casino sites in the world are situated in Macau and the turnover in 2013 was already six times higher than in Las Vegas, Macaus gaming revenue has been the world's largest since 2006. The gambling addiction of the Chinese and Asians is legendary.



It had become late afternoon and time to take the bus back to the ferry. After about an hour the Turbo Jet delivered us into the Harbour of Hong Kong Island and by metro we went back to Kowloon.

On the last full day of our stay we went back to Hong Kong Island and took the local bus along the coastal road to the town of **ABERDEEN**, where a deep bay offers a sheltered anchorage especially during typhoons.

Years ago, hundreds of sampans, traditional boats made of wood, lie densely packed in the harbour in the middle of the surrounding city. Entire extended families lived together on the water. Unfortunately, on one of the boats a fire broke out and a huge firestorm swept over the moored boats killing countless people and destroying many boats. For security reasons it was later prohibited to live on the boats any-more. Still, there are some families doing so today. We walked along the water, followed by owners of small boats, offering us a harbour cruise.

We were able to shake them off and explored the moorings and adventurous shipyards on foot.



Then we gave in, after haggling vigorously for the best price, and enjoyed an hour on the water, where the nice guide explained and showed us a lot of interesting things. We also came past two huge floating hotels with opulent Chinese façade and a shabby rear view, where outside the slaughtered chickens hung on the neck like in the yard of the widow Bolte (Wilhelm Busch).



On the way back by bus we stopped at **STANLEY MARKET** and strolled through the market stalls down to the sea, where we enjoyed dinner while watching the sunset, before continuing by bus and metro back to Kowloon. There we made last purchases at the night market.

The next day we had to be at the airport at 10 pm at night. Werner still had no DVD player, so we took the metro north to the Sham Shui Stop to visit the Computer quarter again. We entered every shop and looked around the stalls. At one of the stalls we bought a 4K Ultra HD action camera with complete



accessories including underwater housing for less than 50 euros. It was a good buy, the camera makes amazingly sharp pictures and movies.

Finally, at the corner of Yen Chow Street and Fuk Wa Street, we discovered a large house, the **GOLDEN BUILDING**. Inside on several floors were countless small computer shops. We pushed through the crowd of mostly male visitors, asked here and there and actually found a DVD player with a large 14" screen for a ridiculous cheap price. We also found several other small computer accessories.

At 8:00 pm we came back to the hotel, which had kept our luggage and took a cheap taxi to the airport. This time we had no problems and at 00:30 we took off for the flight to **ZURICH**, where we arrived at 06:30 in the morning and were picked up by my brother Ingo. After an hour and a half drive, my dad and Ingo's children greeted us in **WURMLINGEN**.



The next days and weeks passed quickly with medical appointments, a short hospital stay of Werner and with visits from and of friends.

The longest way had Ingrid and Jürgen,, who had just finished their second (!) World Circumnavigation on their sailing yacht JOSI



**TROSSINGEN**, 18 Kilometres from Wurmlingen, is the home of the company HOHNER, famous worldwide for its harmonicas and accordions. We visited the Harmonica Museum and two harmonica concerts in Trossingen and Werner got two new harmonicas and is always busy practising them.



In the South of Germany the days became very hot, which we enjoyed. End of June we took the VW-campervan north and visited Silke and Burghard in Lübeck. We had not seen them for a long time. Burghard and we went on to Heiligenhafen the next day, where his huge catamaran Barrakuda lies in the yacht harbour and Burghard also rents out apartments. Because it was rather cold and windy, we could stay in one of them (Thank you!) The next few days we explored Heiligenhafen and the island Fehmarn.

My father's ancestors were born around this area, the beautiful Holstein Switzerland. I had been here before in 1984 and had rummaged through old church books. Today you can do that comfortably on the Internet, without even leaving your chair, then I visited church archives and interviewed even nobles in their castles. As more information often leads to more questions, to which I could not find answers on the net, I dragged Werner to farms, stately homes and churches, where I interviewed the residents.



In Grossenbrode we surprisingly found an old acquaintance, who now runs a surfing school, we visited Sehlendorf, Oldenburg, Lütjenburg and drove all over the area, past Högsdorf and Flehm, the Birthplace of my grandfather. Unfortunately, the weather was getting worse, cold, heavy rain began to fall and wouldn't stop again.

On Friday we had enough, cleaned the apartment and started to drive south on the free-way (Autobahn). In Hamburg, which we had to pass, the G20 was about to meet and lots of roads there were blocked or dense with traffic. In heavy downpours it was stop and go from one traffic jam into the next. We needed 6 hours for 300 kilometres on the free-way. Reaching Hannover traffic got a bit better and we reached **GÜTERSLOH** at 8 in the evening. There we stayed with Werner's siblings for a few days. Then Werner went to **HOLLAND** with his sister and brothers, also visiting his son Ivo there and I took the bus home to **WURLINGEN** "enjoying" the 30 degrees heat while driving for 6 hours.

July went by quickly and soon it was time to pack again, oh dear, so many new things had to fit into the suitcases. Fortunately, our tickets to Auckland allowed 30 kilos per person.

In the morning of August 16., brother Ingo took us back to the airport in **ZURICH** and checking in at Cathay Pacific with 61,5 kg was no problem. After more than eleven hours flight we arrived at 7am in **HONG KONG**. For the next 12 hours we stayed at the airport. After some searching we found a nice seating area, where three seats stood together and we could lie down a bit until our flight to Auckland started. We were lucky, that in the back of the plane was empty space and we had all three seats in the row for ourselves. On Friday morning we arrived in **AUCKLAND, NZ** and stayed there for three days in the **Kiwi Motel** near the airport, where we could park our rental car right in front of the room. We did some more shopping and Monday morning took off again and arrived three hours later in **TONGATAPU**. The ferry did not leave until later in the week, so we had booked the plane to **VAVA'U**. The weather and view was fantastic, and the plane took us right over Kelelesia, Ha'apai and the steep north coast of Vava'u.



In **NEIAFU**, the Australian neighbours were waiting for us with their boat to take us back. In the last day light we arrived on the island and back home on **ANALULU**. Electricity and water were quickly put back into operation, the Cyclone shutters dismantled and everything thoroughly cleaned. Cockroaches and termites had done quite a mess, the wood of the shelves and closet doors of our furniture was badly eaten up inside and the excretions of the termites, tiny pellets of wood, lay in heaps on the ground. To rescue the furniture, we had to use a lot of wood preservatives. Luckily we built our house out of concrete. Werner built the roof construction for our patio roof, and we covered it with a blue plastic foil. Now we can sit on the terrace come rain or shine.



Next year we may fly to Germany in late spring for a few weeks, otherwise everything is still open. The cyclone threat is supposed not to be so high this season, we hope that it remains peaceful on the weather front and also in the whole world.

*We wish you all a*



**VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS  
AND A  
HAPPY, HEALTHY AND  
PEACEFUL NEW YEAR 2018!**



We thank our hosts for their generous hospitality and all of you for your friendship, 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*

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