

## **Traveling from Jakarta to Central Java, Bali and Singapore**

### **December 19, 1991 (Travel)**

Does anyone really know what time it is? We think it is Thursday but we have not seen daylight in two days! Our plane left Detroit Metro Airport four hours late so we missed our connection to Singapore. Northwest Airlines arranged for us to stay overnight in Tokyo (in a village by the airport) at Japan's version of a Best Western; western-style food but still quite strange. The only other Americans are a back-to-nature looking couple who are visiting their parents in Jakarta and an older gentleman who works for the State Department. Peter looks very athletic in his jogging suit. After a little anxiety, we checked in at the Garuda Airlines counter at Narita airport. It seems that they had no record of Northwest changing our reservations but arranged for us to fly directly to Jakarta rather than going through Singapore. It really helps to have an Executive Class ticket though — much more attention.

By the way, flying from DTW to NRI was approximately 13 hours. Depending on the winds, the flying time varies from 11 to 16 hours! We just boarded our Garuda flight to Jakarta. It will take about 7 ½ hours. The music on the plane sings "it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas." Peter wondered how you can really tell in the tropics. The Christmas music is so old that it must be the original tape delivered with the airplane. The cabin crew are very professional and courteous. As we boarded, they took our boarding passes from us and seated us like we were at the theater. We are right up in the nose on the lower level of a 747/200. The stewardesses have lovely ikat blue and green long narrow skirts with blue tailored jackets. The men look like waiters. I must stop now; we are being served champagne. We just now crossed the equator!

### **December 20, 1991 (Yogyakarta, Central Java)**

We arrived in Yogyakarta in the evening after worrying about whether our luggage would catch up with us. No fear, surprisingly we were met at the airport by a man with a sign with our names on it. We did not realize that our reservations included shuttle service to/from the airport. It is strange arriving at night and trying to sleep with no idea where we are. We read until 9:30 p.m. GMT/Zulu time. I slept for about four hours and read for another three hours.

The Duta Guest House is about 25 minutes from the airport in Yogyakarta. The lobby is OK and the tropical landscaping in the courtyard is very lovely. Our room faces the courtyard and the furnishing are marginal. However, this room has an interesting bathroom. Although the room has a window air conditioning unit and a door directly into the bathroom, the bathroom is actually outside with no ceiling over the tiled floor and bath tub (and sink and toilet fixture). Little lizards

everywhere but quite cute. We both took a cold shower and tried to wash our hair, very complicated. Breakfast is served on an open-air terrace — toast and boiled egg and tea and a banana.

### **December 21, 1991**

Yesterday we went to Borobudur, built in the eighth century and considered to be one of the most magnificent Buddhist shrines in the world. It fell into decline during the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries when there was a transfer of power from central Java to the east. For centuries it lay forgotten, buried under layers of volcanic ash and jungle growth. In 1815 Europeans cleared the site and in the 1900s the Dutch began its restoration which continued into the 1980s. It is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Our guide recited some very interesting stories about the bas-relief's on the temple walls.

The Yogyakarta city tour was disappointing. We also went to the Kraton, the sultan's palace that was not as elegant as one would expect. The bird market was a little bit of a culture shock. Other than that, the usual stops of puppet, batik, and silver factories with high pressure sales tactics used to force one to buy. We hardly ate anything yesterday. Peter started the day taking a bite out of a pastry that we left overnight in our room (gift from the owner that previous afternoon). It was covered with tiny gnats, welcome to the tropics! We got back to our room around 4:00 p.m. intending on going to a restaurant in a nearby hotel for dinner but we fell asleep and did not wake up until 9:00 p.m. This morning, we woke up at 5:30 a.m., an accomplishment. At breakfast we spoke again with an older women from Edmonton, Alberta who was traveling alone. We had the usual breakfast of coffee/tea, boiled egg, and dry toast, and banana.

### **December 21, 1991 (Sanur, Bali)**

We arrived at the Segara Village hotel complex around 2:30 p.m. The Balinese reception/lobby was most charming. The complex is made up of several different "villages." The first room we were assigned was nice but faced the back (opposite of the garden view) so we changed to a one-story bungalow by one of the two pools. A little bit of construction going on but our bungalow is very charming — Balinese furnishings, wood shutters, nice bathroom, and outdoor porch and patio. There are other two-story units resembling traditional rice granaries. We will try to take a look at the different units available before we leave. The beach is not as nice as we expected but the charm of the authentic Balinese architecture more than makes up for it. We ate dinner at the open-air restaurant here. I had chicken satay and Peter had a vegetable dish. We went to bed at 9:00 p.m. in our air-conditioned room.

## **December 22, 1991**

We woke up around 5:30 a.m. and decided to walk down (south) to where the other hotels are. Very humid even at 6:30 a.m. At the end of the road, we reached the Bali Hyatt Hotel and stopped for breakfast. Built in the 1960s, it looks like an American version of a Polynesian resort in Hawaii. Breakfast was OK, coffee very strong, like espresso (cup of Java?). We could not believe that the room rates started at \$180 per night (double) plus an extra 20% for high season (Dec 10 to Jan 7). These rates are 3-4 times what we are paying at the Segar Village! We took a taxi back to our hotel and immediately headed for the pool.

There are very many children here. Seems like mostly Australians. Haven't seen any Americans yet. Many of the little Australian girls had their hair braided cornrow style. We then walked to the beach to the museum Le Mayeur, the famous house of a western painter who lived in Bali from the 1920s onward. His paintings were a very unusual style. The museum, however, is very over-promoted! I also bought two sarongs for the fabric and paid \$50,000 RP for the two. Started out at \$40,000 RP each. We came back to the hotel and had lunch with apple pancakes, yoghurt, and salad Nicoise with caviar for Peter. Another dip in the pool, then we read for a few hours. We did not have a very good experience with dinner. Went to a "Suisse" restaurant across the street. We were the only customers and carpet on floor smelled strongly of mildew with air conditioning. Cotton was thrown over everything to resemble snow and white Christmas trees. Christmas music playing on the speakers, not exactly the tropical ambiance we were looking for. I had pea soup and Peter had a dumpling with goulash. The waiters were very friendly; we felt a little sorry for them that there were so few customers. After dinner another swim and early to bed. Although there is a little construction outside our cottage it is very pleasant and furnished in Balinese furniture with a tile floor.

## **December 23, 1991**

We got up a little later (6:00 a.m.) and took some pictures around our "village." Peter put his Walkman out by the pool to record some of the bird noises and someone picked it up. We will follow up later. Breakfast of oatmeal for me, rolls and pancake for Peter. Coffee is like espresso. I had tea. The theft of Peter's Walkman seems to be the focus of the entire hotel security force. They insisted on having Peter explain the facts over and over again to different people while we were trying to leisurely recline by the pool.

In the afternoon, we went to Kuta beach and a little shopping. Every five steps a young man flashed a display of gold watches as he opens a black leather briefcase. Where do all these

watches come from? We figured that the reason they are so persistent is that one sale is probably a month's wages! I did find a nice antique shop and bought an old Chinese vase, tiny Chinese pot, and a Thai bowl (Sukhothai). About 3000,000 RP. Very good price! I also bought an inexpensive ikat throw for 20,000 RP. We ate at Poppies restaurant in Kuta with a very nice garden setting. Peter had a traditional fried rice dish with a piece of chicken (we could not identify from where on the chicken) and I had a type of traditional Indonesian egg rolls. It was very hot and humid. We drank a large beer. Peter was a little uncomfortable with a kink in his shoulder. I went directly back to our hotel and he went to get a shiatzu massage at a Japanese Health Spa down the road from our hotel. He was a little nervous at \$30 USD for two hours. I will decide whether I need one too after he gets back!

### **December 24, 1991**

Peter is a new man! His massage took 2 ½ hours last night. He was showered, steam bathed, drenched in ice cold water, another shower, another sauna, etc. all to get him ready for the massage. He said his back was “cracked” several times and even the bottoms of his feet were massaged by a women. This morning his back feels fine. After our usual breakfast of yoghurt and apple pancakes, we departed with a driver and guide for Kintamani (the volcano) and stops at several villages along the way. We also stopped at the temple and summer home of former Indonesian president Sukarno. On Bali, both men and women must have their knees covered and wear a sash to enter a temple. Menstruating women are not allowed.

We started out driving through several villages of Celuk, Batabulah, and Sukawati, Batuan and Mas. We stopped at several “antique” shops along the main tourist road. The prices were way out of our price range! We were however very impressed with the several family businesses we stopped at including stone carving and weaving. The whole family live together with the showroom near the roadside and living quarters connected — beautiful gardens, a temple or shrine in the center, a music stage with full gamelan orchestra and instruments all set up. We were told that most families also form their own orchestra for entertainment! We then visited the temple and gardens and natural spring at Tampak Siring just beneath the former summer home Sukarno. We ate lunch in a restaurant at the rim of the volcano crater. It then began to pour rain. After lunch we headed south through some of the most beautiful rice-terraced land that we have ever seen. It also stopped raining. A few more stops and we were back in Sunar.

We then decided to take a walk around Sunar and discovered several inexpensive antique shops. At the last one we bought an old carved stone head, a statue of an angel, and several small carvings. The shop was run by an old women that led us back to many other rooms filled with

antiques. We also stopped at a sarong shop. We went for a quick swim at the hotel before attending a Christmas eve buffet with entertainment at the hotel. Wonderful gamelan music and a complete Balinese ballet (Samayama Ballet Troup). It was a wonderful evening.

### **December 25, 1991**

It is Christmas Day. We signed up for an all-day cruise aboard the Bali Hai catamaran. We went through the Badang Strait and then to the island of Nasa Penida. We met a nice couple of Americans who had lived in Taiwan for three years and just moved to Tokyo for the next three years. Michael and Ty Crop from Ford Motor Company. We anchored just off the island and went snorkeling. Very beautiful although I got stung by a small jellyfish but no problem. We also took a ride on the inflatable water sausage. It seats five people and is pulled by a motor boat. You sit on top and are pulled by a rope. Cheap entertainment. Also, a buffet with traditional (trying hard) turkey dinner that was very good. When we returned to the hotel, we went for another swim. And then to Tenaga Naga restaurant for dinner. Lovely garden and architecture (Chinese food, but high prices and only OK). Hotel doctor also came by around 9:00 p.m. because Peter had a blocked ear. He went to Sanur Beach Hotel with her for treatment. Everything now OK.

### **December 26, 1991**

Our usual breakfast again. We spent most of the day at the pool and read. We found out that a gecko lizard makes the sound that we hear in the early morning. Eh-oh. We took a walk down the road towards the Bali Hyatt and stopped for an early dinner at Madi's Restaurant. I had pizza and Peter had grilled prawns and French fries. It was a very quaint atmosphere and we sat in front of a fan.

### **December 27, 1991**

Today we went to Denpasar in the early morning. Very nice professional taxi driver. We also passed several tropical nurseries which were charming. We tried to find a place to eat breakfast in Denpasar. No such luck. Finally, we settled for a very friendly Chinese restaurant. I had fried rice and tea and Peter had mixed vegetables and noodles and coffee. The market was very interesting. Everybody in Bali buys their chickens live. So many unusual fruits and vegetables. Durian (stinky fruit) smells horrible, but is supposed to taste divine. We want to come back early tomorrow morning with our camera. Denpasar is very noisy with exhaust fumes. We saw very few Westerners.

We also walked to the Bali Museum; waste of time — one building with some sculptures and ceremonial things. Another was under restoration. Nothing to lose at \$100 RP per person. Even the landscaping needed some attention. Back to the hotel and the pool. We then went to the Mare Restaurant down the road around 6:00 p.m. We were the first dinner customers and the cook was out front trying to lure us into his restaurant. Everyone very friendly. I had grilled prawns (at table) with peanut sauce and Peter had grilled whole snapper. For desert we had banana pancakes with vanilla ice cream. The usual Bintang beer as well. We walked to the beach to look at the stars. Very different configuration in the southern hemisphere. I cleaned up and organized our suitcases and room before returning. What got me started was seeing a little lizard jumping out of my open suitcase when I started looking for something.

### **December 28, 1991**

We slept in until 7:00 a.m. and thought we would expand our horizons and order one apple pancake and one banana pancake (and yoghurt). We got one pineapple pancake instead. That's the tropics. We took a taxi back to Denpasar to take some photos at the market. It is a Hindu holiday today so many businesses are closed. We saw several processions along the way. Women, maybe 15 to 20, all dressed up in the same outfit and carrying large tall configurations of fruit on their heads. All in a line to the temple. They then blessed the food to take it home to eat. They also left some for offerings. After another swim in the pool, we arranged to drive to Tanah Lot; a beautiful temple on top of a rock out in the water. Many local people were climbing up to the temple to make an offering and to bless their food with holy water. We passed many small villages on the way back. It just started raining as we approached our car at Tanah Lot (rainy season). It had only rained twice since we arrived and just for 15 minutes but real downpours! We walked down to Mare Restaurant for banana pancakes and ice cream.

### **December 29, 1991 (Ubud, Bali)**

Today we leave our hotel in Sanur and drive to Ubud for two days. Sinta, our concierge, asked us to take some of her Christmas cards and mail them from the U.S. She says it takes four weeks for delivery from Bali. The Segara Village is full and we are constantly asked what time we are leaving because several people want to upgrade to our bungalow right by the pool.

We arrive in Ubud (actually a village just outside the town) at the Caheya Dewata Guest House around noon. The view is spectacular! But the reception staff were unorganized with some new construction by the reception desk. Our room is OK but kind of like camping, no air conditioning, bathroom with sink, toilet and two wall nozzles and floor drain for the shower. The

ceiling of the bedroom and bath is open with very high thatched roof above. We also had a small balcony. We really feel like we are in the jungle. Birds, geckos, and many bugs everywhere. However, the view overlooking the Ayung River Valley with rice terraces and mountains and white water stream is outstanding. We took a taxi into Ubud and got a map of Ubud and had lunch at Murni's Warang Restaurant by the bridge. Service was slow as usual. I had fried rice and Peter had noodles. We bought tickets for Legong dancing at the temple in town and stopped at the Lotus Café for carrot cake and tea prior to the performance at 7:30 p.m.

### **December 30, 1991**

Last night was a real experience. As they say "it's a jungle out there." It was also a jungle in our cottage. We went to sleep amidst sounds of frogs, birds, and some distant singing and gamelan music, but were shortly awakened by very loud "eh-oh" sound of a large lizard. It sounded like he was right by the head of the bed on Peter's side. Peter was more disturbed than I so I walked up the path to the front reception area by the road to ask whether these reptiles should be in our room. At first the security guard thought that I had seen a prowler in the room. He did not understand the word "reptile" until I imitated the "eh-oh" sound. He and the other man at the desk sent a "boy" back to our room to assure us that these lizards generally stay up in the high thatched ceiling. Needless to say, we did not sleep very well, particularly since we earlier saw a spider with legs 6" long on the body the size of a golf ball in a bush right next to the pool. After waking up this morning with nothing more than a few mosquito bites we will probably sleep a little better tonight.

We went for an early morning walk down the road to the Amandari Hotel — the most luxurious resort in Bali and only place in Ubud with air conditioning except some units at Ubud Inn on Monkey Forest Road. Only 26 cottages that cost between \$300 and \$600 per night! Very nice place with the most spectacular pool that we have ever seen. It is located on a terrace with no wall except to enclose the water on the outer edge. This gives the illusion of the pool fading into the beautiful view of rice paddies off in the distance.

After breakfast of eggs, toast, and coffee, we took a taxi to the end of Monkey Forest Road and walked through the Monkey Forest where a small band of gray monkeys reside. The monkeys can become really pesky if they think that you have food. One man almost got his pants torn off because he had a bag of peanuts in his pocket. We did a little bargaining at some roadside shops on our way back into Ubud. We had lunch at the Bridge Café. By the time we got back to the Cahaya Dewata, we were caked with dust and sweat. It must be 100 degrees here today. We took one last tropical shower. Read a little and had dinner and went to bed for a 4:40 a.m. wakeup

call to get a 7:00 a.m. flight out of Denpasar to Jakarta. With no phones, a wakeup call consists of one of the “boys” banging on our door until we respond. A driver will take us to Denpasar.

### **December 31, 1991 (Travel)**

This morning we departed for Singapore. We left Ubud at 4:45 a.m. with no traffic, the drive to the airport only took about 45 minutes. A dozen or so porters ascended upon our car as we arrived. We ate at the airport, coffee and fruit cake. Airport food is expensive all over the world. Our flight to Jakarta is very full (Airbus). The Singapore Airport is very, very clean and well maintained. Everyone is so friendly!

We checked in at the Mandarin Hotel on Orchard Road. Very nice room but the entrance lobby is early 1970s décor. We went to the Singapore Botanic Gardens for the afternoon, very spectacular! Apparently it is one of the largest and most diverse in the world. We took the city bus back to our hotel, had our complimentary drink — “the emperor” — at the bar and looked around our hotel. Singapore is an unbelievable shoppers mecca, but we were tired. We ordered a room service dinner and watched the New Year’s Eve festivities from our window overlooking Orchard Road which was closed around 9:00 p.m. for the celebrations. Very relaxing and pleasant evening!

We awoke at 4:30 a.m. and taxied to the airport for a 7:00 a.m. flight to Tokyo (six-hour flight). The Tokyo Airport was very crowded as but Business Class service was excellent as usual. On our flight to Detroit (747-400) we had perfect seats 11J/K in the upper berth. The exit row with a pull-down jump seat was in front to support our legs. The flight to Detroit had a “translator” — actually a Kimonoed Geisha Girl to serve tea and cater to the Japanese business men. A little nauseating. We hoped to arrive in Detroit at 2:30 p.m. after an 11-hour flight. A terrific vacation, but probably our last to Asia for a few years!