



yo Pearnik



Cambodia's ORIGINAL FREE Tourism and Information Magazine
Est.1996 Issue 180 August/ 2011 www.bayonpearnik.com





Cycling the World

Most Europeans come to South East Asia by taking a seat on an airplane for a day. A few also travel here by bicycle – but nobody ever set out with bicycles and dogs. Sybille and Michael Fleischmann pedaled in June into Sihanoukville with their male Rhodesian Ridgeback 'Gomolf' and their mixed-breed bitch 'Diu' after starting in Munich, Germany, 11 months and 11 days earlier. For the Bayon Pearnik Magazine, they report about their adventurous travel:

BY SYBILLE FLEISCHMANN:

„Do the dogs pull the bicycles?“ people on the way kept asking us. – „Unfortunately not,“ we had to reply, „we pull them in the trailers – except uphill. But in return, they protect us when we sleep in the tent at night.“ The people nodded while keeping their eyes glued on Gomolf. „I've never seen such a huge dog before,“ they said many times and kept a proper distance. „What does he weigh?“ some wanted to know. – „45 kilograms,“ we answered and caused astonishment again. „More than my wife“ some Asians commented, smiling. We could tell a few of them that we came overland. Curiosity and the spirit of adventure made us do that extraordinary trip.

We crossed fifteen countries, covered nearly 2.000 km over seas and far more than 10.000 km on the land. We cycled 6.000 km, the rest of the way we travelled on narrow trains, swinging buses – and one time also on a truck, sitting on a cargo of potatoes. We never flew, that would have been very difficult and expensive with the dogs. To do it without flying does not

make it easier either. Even though everything is one big landmass, there are not many routes from Germany to Cambodia.

„It must be great to travel with dogs“, some Europeans who we met on the way (and who probably never traveled with dogs yet) reckoned. „Is it not very difficult to travel with dogs?“, others (who maybe have one themselves) asked. Well, they are both right. It is great to share such an adventure with four-legged friends. They are always happy and make us smile very often.

We make many contacts just because of them. Sometimes we have been invited – despite or because of the dogs. But Gomolf and Diu sometimes put the hospitality to the test. In Laos, they hunted the pussycat of a New Zealand family through the garden, the cat gave her owner a deep scratch and finally saved herself by running up a tree. The three-year-old daughter burst in tears terrified and did not stop crying for a long time. All that happened just one minute after we had arrived there. But after the kids had a test drive in the dog trailer, we got back in their good books again. In Serbia, Diu secretly pulled a whole duck roast out of the closed (!) oven of our host – and gobbled it completely. „The dog is from India... she can not help it“, we said ashamed as we solved the



riddle about the missing duck. The woman nodded understandingly and disappeared in her kitchen. She came back with some pieces of meat and threw them all in front of the dog. Diu pounced on it as if she had not eaten anything for several days. „She is totally starving“, the good-natured Serb noted and went away to get supplies.

The travel got really difficult as the winter, that we had feared for the longest time, finally caught up with us. We had been in Almaty, Kazakhstan and wanted to apply for our China visas.

Unfortunately, that was only possible with detours and took nearly three weeks. As we could not get a hotel room with the dogs, we had pitched up the tent in the city park. By night, we lay shivering in our sleeping bags at 10°C degrees below zero. When we could finally enter into China, we were stopped at the border: Our dogs had to be put in quarantine for one month, we had to wait there. At that time, we were in a tiny little border town in the middle of nowhere in Northern China. The temperature was at about 20°C degrees below zero, at night it was even colder. To make matters worse, none of our credit cards worked and our cash was nearly finished.

Especially in those situations, it came up that humanity is stronger than cultural differences. In Almaty, a penniless artist helped us by hosting us for a few weeks in his small room. In Northern China, the quarantine officers





organizer an interpreter for us, who became a friend very quickly because he supported us bravely during the endless discussions about the accommodation of our dogs. He even lent us money out of his own pocket until we had a new credit card. As we said goodbye to him, he told us with a wink that certain

'present' to the officer,... their creativity can develop freely. But actually, we had almost completed the process. The man who wanted to fill in our visa forms, we successfully got rid of. On the table, that is placed in front of the building next to a huge sign 'QUARANTINE', we gave a wide berth. We got the visa form



directly on the counter – for free. Ballpens, we have with us. We even asked, where to make the cross for a business visa. „Here, next to letter 'E'“, the friendly woman had answered. We made the cross at the 'E', gave the officer on the next counter the documents, they glued the visa inside, we paid. It would have worked out smoothly – but then we threw an eye into our passports.

„That is wrong“, Michael muttered slowly, „these are tourist visas. We need business visas, because only these we can extend later – and we want to stay for a while. We explained the mistake very friendly to the men behind the window. A little bit unwillingly, they finally decided to solve the problem their way.

Unbelievably, we eyed through the little window and watched surreptitiously, what was happening inside there. Still they had our passports – we should never lose sight

people had asked him to keep an eye on us – but he would only tell them that the two Germans are harmless.

We were extremely happy, when the quarantine and the winter were over and we could finally cycle through Southern China, Laos and Thailand. It was very hot and the roads were partly very bad. On the other hand, we spotted friendly faces everywhere, we appeared. The locals waved to us, lifted their thumbs approvingly, invited us to stay at their places or gave us fruits or drinks – even if we could not speak any words of their language. This motivated us a lot – and on a bicycle journey, motivation is nearly as important as drinking water.

Then, the day had come: Coming from Thailand, we entered Cambodia in Cham Yeam. Now we would finally reach the country, that we had defined as our first goal of this travel. Like always, we had collywobbles as we slowly came nearer to the border. Could it happen, that we get problems because of the dogs? However, things turned out different, and we were tuned into the country in a special way.

In the beginning, everything went better



than expected. We had waited until the morning to cross the border. We wanted to be fit and slept-in, because this checkpoint is notorious between travellers: We had heard that the pricing of the visa fee is very flexible. One might often be urged to pay this or that extra-amount for on the spot health checks, give one Dollar for the visa application form and give a

of them. „Look now... he found what he was looking for“, Michael said, looking to the officer, who had rummaged around in a big cardboard box for a while. In the box were visa forms in heaps. They had been sorted into little stacks once, then fixed to single rolls with rubber bands – and finally stored in wild chaos in the mentioned box. I was quite amazed when I saw, what the man behind the window had pulled out: A little, blue hair drier. They wanted to blow-dry the wrong visas out of our passports.

The two men showed great skills in what they did. With the help

of hot air from the drier, they could slowly remove the visa-stickers from our passports. Obviously, they had no 'Invalid'-stamp for such purposes, also they were apparently not allowed to just paste over the visa. „The visas have consecutive numbers, that's why they have to remove them“, Michael guessed. We had lost some drops of sweat due to the worries about our valuable



passports in the meantime, but then, the officer handed them out to us prominently. On the maltreated page, a business visa was resplendent – valid from now and and we did not have to pay anything extra.

Suddenly, we were in quite a hurry to get away from there. With our freshly blow-dried passports in the pockets, we jumped on our bicycles and could finally ride into Cambodia. Ten days and uncounted liters of sweat later, we reached Sihanoukville. Here, we got a wonderful welcome and could enjoy the comforts of civilisation again: Jason T., an old friend of Michael, hosted us in his apartment. It had – oh, how wonderful! – a shower with running water, a real kitchen and even chairs and a table. We had to do without all those things for a long time and missed them badly.

Now, we have our own room and look forward to a break from travelling. We will spend the wet season in Sihanoukville and make new plans in that time. We definitely want to see more of



Cambodia and travel throughout the country with our dogs and bicycles.

For more information, see www.cycle-for-a-better-world.org

It is but it Isn't

The photo of an alleged "Naga" last month is real!! But it's not a Naga. It seems a large number of people have or have seen this photo before. Well you've been had. A little airbrushing. make up the date and location. the Thai's have been flogging thousands of them to everyone ever since.

Photo by LT DeeDee Van Wormer, Naval Special Warfare Center Public Affairs Officer.

Note the fact that the fish had been gutted. In the Thai version it's been airbrushed over and the photo flipped.

At the time of the find, Blake was leading students on a beach run at the Naval Special Warfare Center, Coronado, California. "It was unlike anything I had ever seen before," said Blake. "It looked like some sort of prehistoric throwback."

San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography was notified of the find. Although this specimen was dead, it was a rare find. The institute has only been able to collect four specimens of the undersea giant.

Scripps' Senior Museum Scientist H.J. Walker came to the site



The Oarfish (*Regalecus glesne* Ascanius, 1772) was found on the beach at the US Navy SEAL training center on Coronado Island in 1996! This 23 foot example was discovered by Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) Instructor Signalman 2nd Class (SEAL) Kevin Blake.

and removed the creature's head and tail for anatomical study. He speculated on the death of the fish, saying it probably met its maker after an encounter with the propeller of a boat. The oarfish is the longest bony fish in the sea. Also known as the ribbon fish, it can grow up to 50 feet in length and weigh as