



The Indonesian government is promoting tourism by providing services such as this. The part of the highway system that we used seemed modern and well maintained. Some views we saw along the way to the Borobudur Temple are shown on this page.



This hilltop near Semarang was covered with many antennae.







In the countryside we saw food stands along the road.

Rice paddies and banana plants were common sights along the way. Coffee trees also grow in the shade of large trees but coffee production was not emphasized on the tour. This seemed a little strange in the land that years ago gave us the American slang word for coffee, Java.



We passed through several small towns during the 3 hour trip to Borobudur. Here is an example of a central area.



The tour guide, Hans, said the type of building shown on the right had a store located on the ground floor and living quarters in the second story. One of these units would sell for about \$60,000 USD. To provide some perspective he also said an average annual income for a worker was about \$3000 USD.



Gasoline stations all looked new and well maintained. Our guide, Hans, said that gasoline costs about \$2 USD per gallon. This price is much lower than we have seen in other countries we have visited so far. Hans said that the low cost is consistent with the low annual income for typical consumers. It must also be related to the abundant petroleum reserves of Indonesia.



We stopped at a coffee plantation for a rest stop on the way to Borobudur. They had hand crafts for sale and two beautiful little girls dressed in traditional Indonesian costumes.

The girls performed a dance and then tourists would take pictures and give them a dollar bill.

We finally arrived at the Temple of Borobudur. Borobudur is an ancient Buddhist temple that was created about 800AD. The fact that this amazing structure was designed and built without modern technology remains a mystery. The structure does not have internal spaces but consists of stone terraces connected by stone stairs. The terraces and walls are decorated with many niches containing Buddha statues and the walls are decorated by stone carvings that depict Buddhist traditional stories and lessons. It was built by Buddhist Kings of the Sailendra Dynasty, possibly to enhance the image of Buddhism when Hinduism was growing in strength across the Indonesian archipelago. From historical accounts it appears that the temple was

abandoned soon after its creation, when the Sailendra Dynasty was overthrown by the Hindu Majapahit Empire around 850AD. The temple was unused for the following 1000 years and was gradually covered with jungle growth. It was unknown to the outside world until it was found by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1814. Over the next century, Borobudur was cleared and the process of restoring the two million pieces of andesite stone begun. Our guide explained that after clearing the jungle away, the temple was exposed to vandals who stole the heads and hands of many of the Buddha statues as well as other stone from the temple. The temple was also damaged by water and shifting of the earth under the structure. There have been two restorations carried out on the temple. The first restoration was apparently not very well done so a second restoration was conducted. The most recent restoration project was assisted with funding from UNESCO. In this last restoration effort much of the stone was removed to expose the underlying support. A concrete foundation was then constructed as well as a modern system of drainage and protection of the foundation from water damage. The stone façade was then restored to its former configuration. When pieces of the stone carvings were missing they simply put in plain stone bricks. However, the missing parts of the Buddha statues were not replaced unless they found the exact piece that had broken off. They have an inventory of stone carvings found on the site or returned by collectors that archeologists are sorting through. When they decide where a particular piece belongs on the temple they install it.

We were awestruck when we first saw the Borobudur Temple. From a distance it appears to be a huge mound covered with thousands of stone protrusions. As we approached it the detail of the stone Buddha sculptures and other carvings on the terraces of the temple became apparent. Here are some pictures of what we saw in the Borobudur Temple.







Upon closer approach the Buddha statues in each of the niches can be seen. Most of the Buddha statues have no head.

Our tour guide, Hans, led us up the steps and explained the figures on each terrace. According to Hans the height of the steps was purposely made much higher than normal because climbing to heaven is supposed to be difficult and hard work.



This Buddha near the top of the temple still has its head.



At the top of the temple are multiple bell shaped structures called a stupas.

The temple is capped off by a large stupa shaped stone structure.







Climbing down the large steps was harder than climbing up but we finally made it.

After the tour of Borobudur Temple we made our way to a pavilion nearby where the Borobudur Resort Hotel had a wonderful hot Indonesian style lunch prepared for us as part of the tour. Of course, the inevitable vendors of craft items were also present so after lunch we bought some Indonesian puppets called Wayangs. The tenacity of

the vendors in the two Indonesian ports we have visited has amazed even the seasoned travelers on board the ship. Here are a couple views of the vendor tents and people haggling over prices.





In the photo below, taken from the luncheon pavilion, the Borobudur Temple is shown at the top of the hill in the background with some vendor tents on the right.

We were in for a little more excitement after we had boarded our bus for the trip back to the ship. A vendor came to the bus window where Barbara was sitting and showed her some puppets he had for sale. They were just the type she had been looking for. Somehow they were able to arrive at a price of \$10USD for two of the puppets. Barbara quickly got her money and started down the aisle of the bus. As she approached the



front of the bus the driver started the bus rolling forward. She yelled that she was trying to buy a puppet but thought the bus wouldn't stop for her. The vendor was still tapping on the window even though the bus was rolling. Well --- the guide got the driver to stop the bus and Barbara went down and got the puppets in a transaction that took only a minute or two. She returned and walked down the aisle of the bus with the puppets to cheers and clapping of our touring companions. Here she is with her collection of puppets (Wayangs) displayed after we got back to the ship.

As the ship prepared to get underway at 5pm there was another sad scene on the pier as a crowd of Indonesian relatives and friends of the crew waited to see us depart. This was much like the scene when a contingent of soldiers leaves a community on the way to foreign service. In later conversations with crew members who had visited with relatives it was clear that they had been through a painful separation but they were philosophical and looking forward to vacation and a longer visit when their current work contract came to an end. Here is a view of the people remaining on the pier.

This completed our visit to Indonesia and we got underway for Hong Kong.

