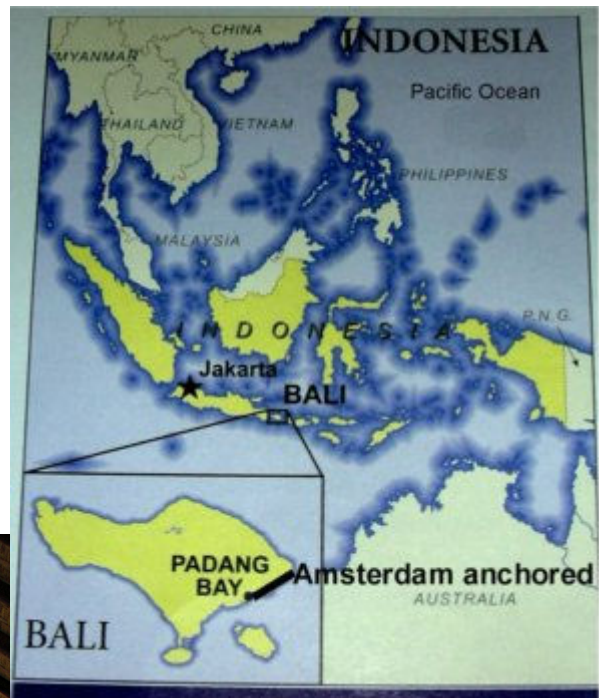


2/26/07 Day 42 – Padang Bay, Bali - Monday, 26 Feb 2007: About 7am we anchored in Padang Bay, on the island of Bali in Indonesia. Bali is in the chain of islands that make up most of the land mass of Indonesia. Padang Bay is one of main ports of call for cruise ships.

Since we were anchored out in the harbor we had to take the ship's tender boats in to the harbor landing at Padang Bay. About 8am our tour number was called and we boarded the orange and white tenders. It was about a 20 minute ride in the tender boat over fairly smooth water.



The tourist industry in Bali has been devastated by the drop off in business after terrorist bombings in a resort area in October 2002. It was over four years ago but the local economy is still suffering. The people in Bali made a real effort to make us feel welcome. They had a band and dancers performing in the dock area when our tender boats arrived. They had constructed a permanent covered breezeway over the landing and decorated it with bright colors. This structure served as a gateway to the small community of Padang Bay.

When we left the protection of the gateway we were mobbed by vendors selling wood carvings, sarongs, tee shirts, chess sets, and a variety of other craft items. The vendors were so aggressive and in-your-face that it was a bit unnerving. The Amsterdam tour staff had

warned us about this and recommended that we simply ignore the people and move on if we were not interested in the products. We pushed through, found our bus and got on board.

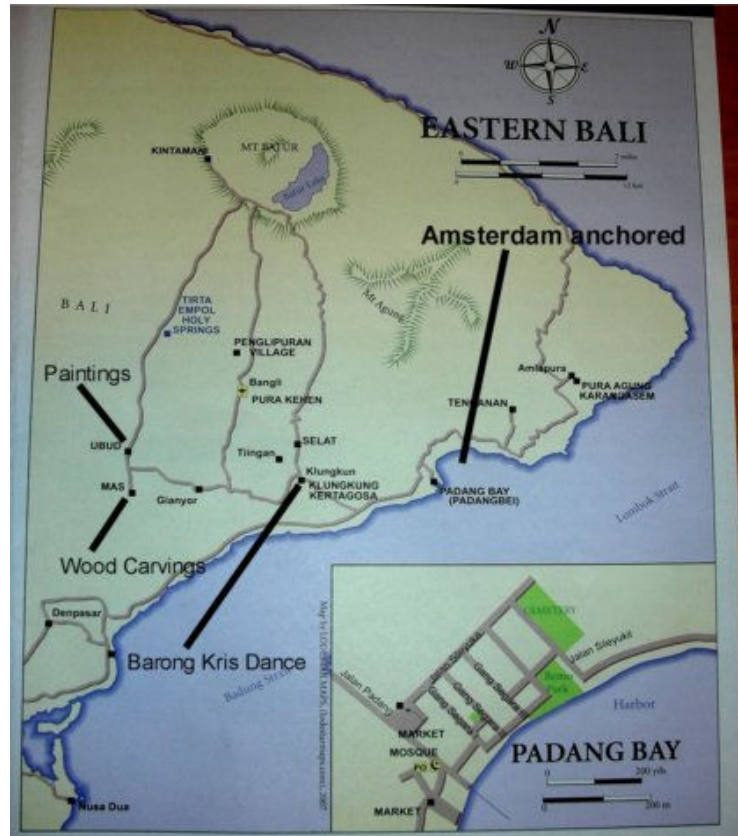
These land tours are sold to any passenger wanting to go but there are some people on the ship who are so disabled that it would be too risky for them on some tours. There is detailed

information about the difficulty of walking and climbing steps so people can judge whether they should buy-in to any specific tour. It is surprising how many people with handicaps end up going on bus tours bound for the countryside or other fairly rigorous walking conditions. Usually a passenger must be able to walk to participate in a tour. However, if the person needs a battery driven wheelchair the ship's staff is there to get the chair into the tender boat and onto the pier so that the passenger can get on with his tour. During tours the stamina and perseverance of some passengers with fairly severe handicaps is amazing. Here is a photo of a motorized wheelchair and the attendants trying to decide whether to put it in the passenger area or in the luggage compartment under the bus.





The bus tour we were on took us to a Balinese dance presentation in a temple complex in the city of Klungkun. We also visited two hand craft centers. The hand craft center at Mas specialized in fine wood carvings while the center at Ubud was for artists who painted in a range of styles. The tour was limited to sites on the Eastern end of Bali Island as shown in the map on the right.



The Balinese dance was an elaborate affair that was performed outdoors in front of at least 150 people from the cruise ship. We were seated in the shade of some large trees in front of a small terraced hill with a large arch at the top. The hillside and flat area at the bottom served as the stage setting for the dancers. The tour guide (Budi) had given us a printed description of the story that was depicted. The Barong Play represented the eternal fight between good and evil spirits. Barong (a mythological animal) represented a good spirit and Rangda (a mythological monster) represented an evil spirit. Even to our unschooled eyes it was pretty easy to identify the good guys and bad guys from their body language and with our script we could follow the story.



The costumes were probably the most interesting thing about the presentation. Here are a couple views of the dancers.



Our next stop was a large well kept complex of buildings, in the village

of Mas, where wood carvers were demonstrating their techniques and rooms full of their products were on display. Most of the carvings were depicting Balinese icons related to Hinduism or the history of Bali so we had difficulty relating and finding any carvings that we wanted to take home. We didn't want to leave empty handed so eventually we bought a wall hanging made of ebony showing a stylized image of the sun and moon.



Here are some examples of the things we saw in the show rooms.



Barbara got a chance display her Oak Ridge Library card in front of a Balinese dancer carving to show that the card made it to Bali, Indonesia.



Here are some women who are polishing small carvings and some men carving wood.



We went next to Ubud where there was large building for the display of paintings. We looked it over and didn't find anything that appealed to us. We got back on the bus and headed toward Padang Bay



through the picturesque countryside. Here are some views as we proceeded back to the boat landing.



To the left, a rice paddy terrace in preparation for the next crop.

On the right, rice paddies in eastern Bali.



After running a gauntlet of desperate vendors trying to sell their wares we retreated to the ship by way of the ship's tenders.

As we boarded the tenders we witnessed another local event related to the arrival of the Amsterdam. Many of the ship's crew has families in Bali. In the days leading up to our arrival in Bali you could sense the excitement of crew members who were expecting to see family members. Even Indonesian crew who did not expect to see family seemed to share in the anticipation. On our day in Bali the work assignments were arranged so that the crew could take time off to visit with family. Since we were in Padang such a short time the families had to come to Padang in order to visit the crew members. Arrangements were made for some of the families to visit the ship so they joined us on the boat trip out to the Amsterdam. There were also Indonesian families returning from a visit with their relatives working on the ship.

Luckily, as we prepared to board the tender we spied our room steward, Bayu, and his wife, Suci, leaving the tender. (Bayu told us later that Suci had been very nervous and had vomited while on the Amsterdam. That information made us appreciate even more the gracious pause they made here for pictures.) Bayu's two month old daughter, Holy, had been carried by her godmother past us and we missed her but we caught Bayu and his wife long enough to get their picture. The baby was named Holy in recognition of the fact that she was born on Christmas Eve. Bayu and presumably his wife and family are of the Hindu religion but curiously they honor the Christmas tradition. Bayu pronounces the babies name as Holly but it is spelled Holy, as in "sacred".



The brief time available for the crew to visit with relatives undoubtedly made for a bittersweet moment but the crew returned to work in good spirits. In conversation with our tour guide we were told that obtaining a job on a cruise ship is considered a mark of real success in Bali. It's difficult to get a job on a cruise ship and only the best and most experienced are chosen. We can attest to the high morale and enthusiasm shown by the crew members we see every day.

In the evening a troupe of Balinese dancers and their band came on board to entertain us after dinner. We particularly noticed a couple specific techniques used by the dancers. One was the spreading of fingers on both hands and extending the fingers so that it appeared the fingers were bending up past being even with the back of their hands. Another technique was to open their eyes very wide and look from side to side so that an unusual amount of the whites of their eyes showed. Unfortunately, we were not able to capture these moves in pictures. Here are a couple photos we got of the dancers.







We enjoyed seeing the Balinese dancing style and strikingly colorful costumes. That was a great way to finish off our visit to Bali.

The ship got underway about 11pm on the way to Semarang on the island of Java.