

John Chow's Bali Trip May 2005

Part 1: Arrival in Bali, Friday 20 May 2005

This is my second trip to Bali to attend the another 10 day intensive teacher training course in Yellow Bamboo. The first course was September 2004 – not a year yet. This was going to be a good one - because we were assured that the founder of Yellow Bamboo, Pak Nyoman Serengen, will be teaching us daily.

I arrived via Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) where I stopped over to buy a Panasonic GS400 camera and accessories for this important training.

Due to all those advice I received from well-meaning relatives, I had ensured that my luggage was properly locked, although, frankly speaking, I do not believe in the defence's assertion in the Sharpel Corby's case. After paying my US\$25 entry fee at the customs, I collected my luggage from the conveyor belt and headed, quite excitedly to the exit. The arrangement was for the hotel we are staying n, to pick us up at the airport. I surveyed those people holding up cards for he tourist. My name is not there. No "Yellow Bamboo" either. I walked up and down. No sign of anybody from the hotel. hmmm..... This is off t a bad start. I waited for another 30 minutes. No sign. I have no choice. I have to ring Alvin Donovan. I do not know what the hotel is either. Went to the public phone company at the airport. Rang Alvin who said he will ring the manager of the hotel, and I am to ring back again 10 minutes later. That I did, man. I was getting desperate. Alvin said Ibu vera, the manager was going to pick me up. Ibu Vera? Manager? I sound important now. Feeling better. A woman comes to pick me up in Bali. That sounds exciting. I was expecting perhaps somebody in her fourties. Unfortunately, 10 minutes after I hung up, I saw the "Yellow Bamboo" sign. It was a man, not a woman. Never mind. He introduced me to another man, who lead me to his 4 wheel driver. We are going in this? Yes. Am I the only one this trip? Yes. Okay, can complain for being the only boss.

The trip from the airport to Lovina (oh, I found out that is where we are going just then) takes about 3 hours. I chatted to the driver. He happens to be the driver of Ibu Vera. Oh! That is the connection. Still, I would like to meet Ibu Vera, whoever she is. She sounds interesting. Just a feeling. I still envisioned her to be in her fourties, married, have a few kids. I asked the driver about the economy, the Bali bombing, etc. I asked about other spiritual teachers and who he thinks are good. The name Pak Chakra came up. Oh, he happens to be a relative. That is good! I also accidentally found out that my acquaintance Kumara is his relative! What a coincidence. I also confirmed that Kumara is of royal blood and the grandson of the last king of the Buleleng region of Bali - of which Lovina and Singaraja is the centre. We even passed by the Pandji Sakti's grand house on the way to the hotel. It is quite near the hotel. It is actually quite near Pak Serengen's house! I was to find out other coincidences later, in the next few days. More of that later.

I need to get a new sim card for Bali to ensure I keep in touch with my family and friends, so the driver stopped at a shop nearby and I got a new sim card. I feel safe and wonderful now. Wait a minute, my bladder is full and bursting. I don't think I can wait any longer. I really needed to wee. I asked the girl whether I can use their

toilet. She laughed. Okay, she allowed me to go to the back of the shop, which is a house. All the 3 girls laughed aloud. Hurry! They said, encouraging me. Unfortunately, that was a subconscious call to my bladder to hurry up and get it out fast. Women just don't know the right instructions for the right time sometimes. "Lekas!". They laughed. I was bursting, and running to the toilet. Thanks, girls. Encouragement for men to come faster should be applied at the proper occasion, and not when it has got to do with male genitals. I just made it there in time – not a second to spare. By the time I got back to the shop, the girls were all smiles, all happy they did a wonderful job of urging my bladder on! My God, is this my customary Balinese welcome? I wonder.

Okay, I got to the hotel. Checked in. Hotel staff seem very friendly and homely. Yeah. I like this. The hotel seems very quite. hmmm..... too quite. Are the rest of the Yellow Bamboo people in yet? The receptionist said she does not think so. Am I the first one to arrive? Yes? oh I checked into my room. Got a shower. Unpacked, and then went down to have a look at the surroundings. The swimming pool is nice. There is a big open air hall at the back. That is nice for any meeting, concert, or a martial arts hall. Great! The sea is at the back of the hotel,. but it is not accessible because there is a fence and a wall separating the land from the sea. The gardens are quite nice. There is an area in front of a few separate bangalows that is nicely planted with coconut trees. I like the look of one of the bangalows – with a traditional Balinese roof – which is an adaptation of Chinese roofs.



The swimming pool



The big hall



John Chow with the lovely manageress of Celug Agung Hotel, Lovina, Bali.

Guys, come to Celug Agung Hotel, even just to meet this lady.

Celug Agung is a nice quiet hotel.

I wanted to see what beach we can train Yellow Bamboo in. I went to the back of the hotel compound at the back, right to the water edge. There is no sand in the beach. It is a wall, and the sea is just at the edge. No good. I went outside of the hotel compound and turned left to go towards the general direction of the sea. Wandering and finding my way, I managed to get to the sea yet again. Hhmmmm..... not much of any sandy beach. Not a place to practise Yellow Bamboo exercise. Back to my room.

Oh! I hear some European voices from downstairs. At last! Another foreigner. Hang on,the voice is familiar. It must be Peter Semjonow od Sweden. I went out to my verandah and looked. Yes, it is Peter. Hi Peter? Did you just arrive? Yes, I can not talk to you now. I have to take a shower because I am coming with a friend who is arriving soon. Gee! I have been side-stepped for a friend. Better be an important friend, or else your Yellow Bamboo won't save you, Peter. So I have to wait. Actually for many hours. If I remember correctly, I could only talk to Peter either that night, or the next day. The "friend" turned out to be his new female friend. Okay, Peter, you are forgiven. ☺☺☺

Diner was quite good at the hotel. The staff is very hospitable. More about that and a short description of the staff later.

This is the first day.