

5: Yokohama and Kamakura

Apart from the heat, the first thing that strikes me about Yokohama is how new and clean everything looks. What a contrast to Russia and Siberia! As we walk along a corridor, once again on firm ground, I still feel the motion of the ship and the train in my head and realize that I am a little unsteady on my feet. Hopefully this will pass, I think to myself. We collect our luggage and go through one last customs check. Meeting the others outside, I bid an emotional farewell to Sue, Nori, Hiro and the gang. We've had a terrific time together and I know that I'll miss them. Indeed, everyone in our end of the train carriage has got on well together and by now we have all become good friends.

The next thing that I need to do is get myself to the train station. As it is already four o'clock, I have decided that I can only go as far as Kamakura, where I can stay for a day and then try hitch-hiking to Nara, the ancient capital. I have been told that the quickest and easiest way to get there is by taking a taxi to the station and then travelling to Kamakura by local train. However, Mr Oishi, one of the Japanese men on the train and boat, who has now been met by his relatives, conducts Jill, Arthur, Catherine (the American lady), his two Japanese lady friends and me to a small air-conditioned minibus. As not all of us can fit in, Catherine and the two Japanese ladies take a taxi. Soon we are driving through the smart, clean streets of Yokohama to the station. The city, which is really a suburb of Tokyo by now, looks very impressive and prosperous. Although it must be coming up to rush hour, there is no sense of urgency in the air and people saunter along in their summer clothes. Everything looks fascinating.

Soon we arrive at a large multi-storey building, which I discover is the train station. We tumble out of the minibus, and I have my first opportunity of attempting to speak some Japanese and bow in gratitude to our kind driver and his family. I stumble through '*Dōmo arigato gozaimasu – gokuro sama*' ('Thank you very much – you are very kind'). They return my bows and say something that I presume means, 'You're very welcome'. Mr Oishi brings us inside the station, which looks more like a huge shopping arcade full of kiosks, boutiques and shops. I discover that everything is well signposted in English.

First of all, Mr Oishi obtains a ticket for me by selecting my destination on a machine and inserting one of my banknotes, which represents a sum of money, in yen, ending in several zeros. Moments later he hands me a ticket and my change, which is a banknote representing a sum of money with less zeros than the one that I have given him (or so it seems to me). I am puzzled. Surely the machine hasn't given me enough change, I think; if it hasn't, Mr Oishi must have noticed, but he is smiling. Rather disorientated and quite unfamiliar with the money, I wonder if I have misread the figure on the banknote I have given him. I take the ticket and the change and Mr Oishi goes off to get tickets for Arthur, Jill and another man, who are all travelling to Kyoto. Catherine has gone off with one of the two Japanese ladies to get her Japan Rail Pass and exchange some money. There is a long delay before they return.

In the meantime I wander off to sample the novelty of mingling with the locals as they walk through the station in droves. It is a most pleasant experience. I am very much aware of the cleanliness around me and the smartness of the people's clothing.

Two elderly ladies shuffle past me in a slow, dignified manner; both are dressed in light grey kimonos with a wide *obi* (sash), white *tabi* (socks) and *zōri* (traditional sandals). In one corner of the station is a section of a model ship, with small stools nearby; not far away is a high-class boutique selling fashionable clothes, and downstairs I find a huge fruit and vegetable store.

At last we are together again and everything is in order. Our Japanese friends have gone overboard in their efforts to help the confused *gaijin* ('outside people' or foreigners); while all this has been going on, Mr Oishi's relatives are still waiting outside in their minibus. I have learned that the Japanese lady here had insisted on paying the taxi fare for her friend and Catherine. They are really charming people.

After listening to some final instructions, we say goodbye to our Japanese friends and the others, then head off for our trains. Catherine and I go together, for she too has decided to stay in the youth hostel in nearby Kamakura. We are only a minute or two on the platform when a train arrives, and we hop on board. It is a small commuter train that bears a passing resemblance to the London Underground trains. We find seats and sit down. A Japanese lady tells us in English that the journey will take twenty minutes, and she is absolutely right. When we pull into the station at 5.20 p.m., we see the sign:

鎌倉
かまくら
Kamakura

This is typical of the signs that we have been seeing along the route: the first line has the name in *kanji* or Chinese characters (the official version of the place name), the second line has the name in *hiragana* symbols for those who cannot read the Chinese characters (such as children), and the third is printed in *rōmaji* or the Latin alphabet for *gaijin* like ourselves.

We leave the station and go off in search of the youth hostel. As we have no map, we have to ask for directions. I ask a young lad who is preparing to go cycling somewhere with a girl. As he does not know where the hostel is, he asks some other people, then runs over to some buses nearby. He finally rushes back to us and, in very broken English, tells us that we should take a train to Hase. This in fact, was my original plan, but a station official had advised us to take a bus!

The young lad very kindly brings us to another train station nearby, gets our tickets from a machine, and tells us where to go. We now board a smaller train and set off into more rural parts. Three stops later we hop off and surrender our tickets. I ask a man in a shop for directions to the youth hostel and he draws us a map. We are amazed at how kind and helpful the people here are.

We walk through a few narrow streets (I have noticed how narrow all the streets are around here) and soon find ourselves by the sea. We then make our way along a busy road and finally arrive at a smart-looking modern building: the youth hostel. It is most impressive inside and looks more like a hotel. I pay ¥5,900 (about IR £23) for two nights, with dinner and breakfast included, which seems to be good value. There is a little confusion over our bookings, but soon everything is sorted.

As I am dripping with perspiration by now, the first thing I need to do is take a shower. After I have inspected my comfortable six-bed dormitory, with its television set and a section of *tatami* mats (where shoes and slippers must be removed), I make my way to the washroom, where I discover that I am about to enter a real Japanese bath. Although excited by this prospect, I feel a little apprehensive as I have never

been in one before, though I have read about how things are done here. Two men are drying themselves when I enter.

I leave my clothes in a plastic box, open the sliding doors and enter the *o-furo* (honourable bath). Wow, the heat! Following the strict procedure that is expected of everyone who uses a public bath, I wash myself outside the large tub by taking a shower. The water is boiling hot and I have to adjust it to a cooler temperature. Oriental people cannot fathom why some Westerners choose to wash themselves *in* a bathtub, where the water will naturally get dirty. Only when I am clean do I gently ease myself into the deliciously hot water, lie back and relax. What a wonderful feeling! At first I am here on my own and have the opportunity to experiment; when a man comes in, I observe what he is doing. Only now do I fully appreciate the benefits of the Japanese bath: a daily ritual that is observed by all, either at home or in public baths. Traditionally (I have read), 5 to 7 p.m. is generally dedicated to the family bath. Water is heated and the bath is filled. The eldest people in the family use it first and the youngest last; small children and babies bathe with their parents. If the house is small and does not have a shower, hot water from the bath is taken out in wooden buckets and splashed over the body in order to wash beforehand. It is the ideal way to remove the day's sweat and dirt, and then to relax. The family's evening meal follows shortly afterwards.

When I have finished wallowing in the hot bath, I climb out and dry myself in front of an electric fan. However, because of the heat, it is not long before I start perspiring once again!

Feeling so much cleaner and *very* relaxed, I go to the dining room, present my ticket and sit down to a filling meal of what seems to be minestrone soup, rice, and a big plate containing a type of meatball with a vegetable filling, a large boiled potato, some cold macaroni and lettuce. Having been told that we would be served traditional Japanese food, this is rather disappointing. An American chap joins me later and we have a long conversation, during which he gives me all manner of interesting and useful information. Afterwards I bump into Catherine and chat to her for a little while.

Although I am feeling a little tired by now, I decide to go out for a short walk. Just up the main road by the sea, I turn a corner and find myself in a narrow alley lined by small, traditional houses made of wood, complete with sliding doors and paper windows. Curious, I continue down the alleyway, stopping now and then to admire the little dwellings. People's voices waft from inside and I can smell food being cooked. All around me is the shrill song of cicadas in the trees. There are other sounds, such as the cry of an unfamiliar bird – *aar, aar!* – and, most puzzling of all, a loud repeated hiss – *wisss, wisss, wisss!* – that comes from somewhere in the undergrowth; I presume that this is the sound of unseen insects. What a joy it is a joy to be in the *real* Japan so soon!

On I wander, greeting an occasional person with '*Konbanwa!*' ('Good evening!') until I am brought to a standstill by the sound of music. From inside a house I can hear what I think is a *koto* – a thirteen-stringed zither of Chinese origin, plucked with three plectra or fingerpicks attached to the first three fingers of the right hand.

While I am listening to this, my concentration is interrupted by the nearby sound of drums and a flute. Curious to discover what may be going on, I make my way towards the music and, turning a corner, I discover that a Shinto festival is in full swing. *Shintō* or *Kami-no-michi* ('the way of the gods') is the native and oldest religion in Japan. 'Gods' is not the best translation of the word *kami*; the term is properly applied to the deities of heaven and earth, as well as to their spirits (*mi-tama*) that reside in the shrines where they are worshipped. As explained by the Japanese historian Motōri

Norinaga (1730–1801), ‘Moreover, not only human beings, but birds, beasts, plants and trees, seas and mountains, and all other things whatsoever which deserve to be dreaded and revered for the extraordinary and pre-eminent powers which they possess, are called *kami*. Malignant and uncanny things are also called *kami* if only they are objects of general dread.’ The Japanese have revered nature for millennia; here, where seventy-three percent of the land is uninhabited, and where ten percent of the world’s most active volcanoes are situated, nature is ignored at one’s peril. According to the Italian scholar Fosco Maraini, ‘The most typical Shinto rite is the *matsuri*, held to celebrate a deification, one’s ancestors, a purification, a sowing, a harvest or a good catch; it invariably ends with processions, games, eating, drinking, merrymaking, song and dance, miming, fires, popular explosions of colour, movement and gaiety.’*

What I have stumbled across seems to be one of these rites. In front of a miniature *mikoshi* or portable shrine, which contains a bale of rice straw and various charms, is a traditional wooden cart with a decorative roof, containing three drummers banging away as hard as they can. On the ground is a man playing a repetitive melody on a flute. Calligraphy on strips of paper hang from the side of the shrine. The whole spectacle is a veritable riot of colour.

The shrine and cart are illuminated by electric lights; farther along the alley are rows of square paper lanterns, also decorated with calligraphy. I walk on a little and pass under a red wooden *torii*, a typical Japanese gateway with a concave roof, and find myself in the hallowed precincts of a Shinto shrine. Here I discover that a festival for children is taking place – hence the music and lanterns along the approach. High-spirited children are buying huge sticks of candy floss, food of different types, toys and souvenirs, and there is great excitement when they discover that food is being cooked and served to them. When they realize that a *gaijin* is present, they shout ‘*harō!*’ (‘hello!’), ‘bye-bye!’ and ‘thank you!’ to me; when I reply, they giggle and run away. I bow and greet their parents in Japanese; they bow to me and respectfully return my greeting.

After looking at what is available, I climb some stone steps to an ancient wooden shrine, which is dimly lit inside. In the *shinden* or sanctuary, decorated with *shimenawa* (rope made with rice straw, with zig-zag paper streamers), are two more paper lanterns. I feel a great sense of awe as I stand alone in this quiet space.

Taking one final look around, I turn back, listen to more of the fascinating music and rhythms, and return by the same narrow alleys to the hostel, where I am back in the modern world. This has been a most unexpected treat – what a stroke of luck encountering a festival like this on my first evening in the country!

In the dormitory I find an elderly German who has been on the train and boat. Later, two Swiss chaps join us. As the German is now asleep, we have to be quiet. The two lads go to bed, but I stay up writing my diary, to the accompaniment of the cicadas’ shrill song, until after midnight. I am certainly in the East!

This morning, Tuesday 18th September, I wake before seven after a not particularly good night’s sleep. After shaving and washing, I eat breakfast on my own in the dining room. Once again, the meal is a curious mixture of Japanese and western food: scrambled eggs and bacon served with rice, fish soup, seaweed and a little bowl of salad. A pot of tea is also supplied. Despite the unusual combination of dishes,

* For both quotations, see Fosco Maraini’s *Meeting with Japan* (New York: The Viking Press 1960), pp. 145 and 148.

everything is very tasty – including the seaweed. When a young Japanese girl joins me, I watch her demure method of eating with a great deal of fascination, for it makes my attempts seem very clumsy!

Later I leave the hostel and, armed with a rather inadequate photocopy of a map, I begin a day of sightseeing. Although the weather has been fine earlier this morning, by now it has clouded over and there is rain in the air. The heat and humidity prove to be somewhat energy-sapping and depressing. I am already not in the best of moods as I have discovered what I suspected: I have paid ten times too much for my train ticket yesterday. It had cost me ¥3,100 (£12.40) instead of ¥310 (£1.24). I am annoyed with both Mr Oishi and myself for not being more observant.

I now make my way through the narrow streets towards the famous Daibutsu or Great Buddha, the main attraction in Kamakura. Just up the road I meet Catherine, who has already been to see it and speaks very highly of it. She is now about to leave. I wish her goodbye and continue on my way. Passing old wooden houses, little shops of all descriptions and tiny restaurants, I finally arrive at the site of the former Kōtokuin Temple, which was carried away by a tidal wave in 1495, leaving the huge statue of the Buddha out in the open. Buddhism, one of the main religions of China, was brought here to Japan, along with the Chinese system of writing, in the sixth century AD, via Korea. It is interesting to note that Buddhism has not spread in the East by dispatching missionaries to convert the heathen, but by mendicant monks establishing temples and monasteries near towns and villages, then remaining almost inactive until people gradually find their way to them.



Daibutsu at Hase, Kamakura

I enter the precincts through an ornamental gateway and pause to admire the various buildings. I then go to the ticket office and pay ¥120 to enter. I walk into a peaceful garden, its pathway flanked by trees, and suddenly the statue of the Great Buddha appears before me. He looks serene as he sits in the lotus position, deep in meditation. It is quite an awesome sight. As I almost have the place to myself, I am able to admire this amazing figure alone. Cast in 1252, this bronze statue, 42' 6" tall, is now mellow and has a pleasant light green patina. Some locals cast coins into a *saisenbako* (offertory box), join their hands in prayer and bow before the giant figure. I move closer in order to take a better look. The air is heavy with incense and all around me are the sounds of the cicadas, the unfamiliar insects and birds.

As I am quietly contemplating the statue and my surroundings, a young Japanese man respectfully asks me to take his photograph; I am happy to oblige. The two Swiss chaps in the hostel then appear and stop to chat to me. When they leave, I wander to the back of the arcade that surrounds the statue and look at a couple of smaller temple buildings. A man – or perhaps a priest – rakes loose stones by the pathway, and another calls for a colleague through a loudhailer. When I return to the statue, I discover that a couple of busloads of school children have suddenly invaded the place, shattering the silence. They form themselves into groups for photographs and then run riot, laughing, shouting and teasing me with cries of ‘hello – goodbye – thank you!’ I just laugh and take a photo of them. I do not mind the intrusion – they are good fun and add a great dash of colour. However, I wait until they leave before continuing to photograph the place. Once I have seen enough, I leave and go off in search of the next Buddhist temple that I want to see: the Hasedera.

It is not far away – just down the road and off a turning. The entrance is unusual: an old wooden gateway plastered with papers bearing calligraphy, and with a little stone shrine beside it. Once again I pay ¥120 for a ticket and enter. The temple grounds are small and built up the side of a hill. On one side is a pond full of huge green lotus plants. As well as hearing the sounds of cicadas and other insects, I now notice huge cobwebs with huge multi-coloured spiders on them. Following some local people, I ascend a flight of stone steps. I seem to be the only *gaijin* here; occasionally I bow to some of the people, wishing them good morning – ‘*o-hayō gozaimasu*’ – and am greeted in return. As I have noticed in the youth hostel, most of the young girls giggle at me, covering their mouths with their hands to hide their embarrassment. No doubt they are amused by my large nose, just as the Chinese are; the latter jokingly call us Westerners ‘*dà bizi*’ (‘big noses’).



Mizuko-Jizō statues at the Hasedera, Kamakura

At the top of the steps is a tiny, intimate temple surrounded by a multitude of tiny *Mizuko-Jizō* stone statues that are made to resemble children. *Mizuko*, meaning ‘water baby’, is a Japanese term for a stillborn or dead baby, and *Jizō* refers to a Buddhist bodhisattva or divinity who is said to protect children. All of the statues are colourfully dressed or supplied with toy plastic windmills. As it is amazing to see so many of them, I react like a typical tourist and take out my camera. In front of the temple incense is burning and its perfume wafts its way towards my nostrils. I feel as though I have been transported into a different world.

According to a brochure in English that I have been given, there are about 50,000 of these little *Mizuko-Jizō* statues in this one temple alone. While I am here looking at them, people come up to the temple, throw coins into the offertory box, and stop to say a short prayer. I am very moved by what I see.

Climbing some more steps, I arrive at a couple of modern temple buildings, one of which is being renovated. Following the arrows, I enter by a back door. Inside is an astonishing thirty-foot-high statue of Kannon, known as Guānyīn in China and popularly regarded as the goddess of mercy. This deity is an oriental version of the Indian Avalokiteśvara, the male Bodhisattva of Compassion. According to Buddhism, a bodhisattva is a being who has escaped from *samsāra*, the wheel of life, and who is about to enter *nirvāṇa*, but holds back in order to save mankind. The figure now before me is the largest wooden statue in Japan, made of a single piece of camphor wood. The gilded image, with eleven heads, is said to have been carved in AD 721 by the priest Tokudō Shōnin from half of a mighty log measuring one hundred feet long. It is a fine work of art; it stands high above me, its gold surface glinting in the dim light. While I stand gazing at this extraordinary statue, some elderly ladies come in to offer money and pray.

I have been in Buddhist temples like this one before, when I was in China in 1977. However, the temples, which had been closed to the public for many years during the Cultural Revolution, were in poor condition and only used as museums for foreign tourists like us.

Along the corridor leading to the exit are glass cases full of wooden statues – perhaps copies of others elsewhere, I think. I am surprised to discover that some of them depict naked women!

After stopping briefly to look at another large group of the little *Mizuko-Jizō* statues, I return to the garden and head for some caves. On the way I pass a small building; inside, seated on *tatami* mats are three people practising calligraphy, using large sheets of white paper and traditional brushes in the Chinese manner. There seems to be a small shrine within the building.

The caves are rather disappointing: one or two altars have been set up inside them and candles are burning. I am in and out in within a few moments. Outside again, I sit down for a rest, for it is very tiring walking in the heat. Feeling a little refreshed, I set off again along the quiet streets, passing shops. In the main street I go into a bank and change some money, so that I now have ¥50,000 (£200). I go into a large post office, where I discover that they have no airmail envelopes for the letter that I have written to my parents. I have already sent off some postcards in a smaller post office.

A short distance away is a large *torii* marking the entrance to the Tsurugaoka Hachimangū Shinto shrine. This is the main shrine in Kamakura where, a couple of days ago, there has been an exciting festival and archery competition, which unfortunately I have missed. I make my way along a tree-lined walk to the shrine, which is impressive: two red buildings approached by stone steps. The style of architecture looks rather modern – it turns out that they were built in 1828. My attention is attracted by colourful bales of rice straw, arranged in rows. In the upper shrine I find young priests dressed in pure white robes; young girls, in red and white, serve at souvenir stalls and sell *omikuji* (written oracles, selected by drawing a stick from a box). Although I have read about them, I have never seen them for real, and I find them quite fascinating. The impact of all these new sights, sounds, smells and experiences, on my first full day in the country, is almost overwhelming.

From here I walk to the Kamakura Kokuhōkan or art museum, which is also in the grounds of the shrines. Although I have read that it is ‘unusually good’, I find it very

small: it only contains a few Buddhist statues. This is disappointing as I have to pay a ¥150 entrance fee. I predict that visiting temples here will be expensive – but to hell with it!

As it is midday, I think about eating something, but as nothing is cheap around here, I decide to press on as I am not really hungry – this morning's breakfast is still keeping me going! Despite the fact that I feel drops of rain in the air, I leave the shrine and head off for another one, the Kamakuragū. I follow arrows that point me in the direction of the shrine and lead me through side streets. As a middle-aged couple seem to be going in the same direction, we keep together. However, when we arrive at a tomb, we realize that we have lost our way; the couple ask for directions and we set off again. After a couple of wrong turns, we eventually arrive at the shrine. The entrance is full of young children romping around.

When I enter, I am rather disappointed to discover that the place is relatively uninteresting. I learn that the buildings date from 1869. I take a couple of photos and, after a short rest, set off in search of the Zuisenji Zen temple. This is a fair distance from here, up in the hills. The climb up to the temple brings me away from the town centre, and now I find myself surrounded by trees and nature.

Chán Buddhism was founded in China by a monk named Bodhidharma in AD 520. It was influenced by the ancient Chinese philosophy of *Dào* or *Tao* (the Way) and introduced to Japan in 1191, where it was named Zen. In essence, Zen does not rely on scriptures or dogmas, but instead tries to promote an intuitive understanding of the world through personal meditation, self discipline and repeated practical exercises.



Zuisenji temple, Kamakura

I finally reach the entrance of the temple and pay for a ticket. I climb some steep stone steps that lead me to a fine wooden gateway. Ahead of me, framed by the elegant gateway, is a tantalizing glimpse of what lies ahead: the exquisite fourteenth-century temple building rising from a garden of tall red flowers. The beautiful sight takes my breath away. The place is enchanting and full of mystery. I slowly ramble through this small but peaceful garden – what magnificent flowers and shrubs! – and

stop to admire the fine wooden building. As usual, there is a box for offerings beside a statue. The temple is obviously not open to visitors; beyond a doorway I get a tantalizing glimpse of a corridor with *tatami* mats and sliding doors. It would be wonderful if I could look inside, but there is nobody around to ask permission. I notice that there is a tea house to one side. Stopped in my tracks by this peaceful scene, I gaze and drink in the peaceful atmosphere. Several visitors come and go, and everyone speaks in hushed voices. I am loath to leave. I amble around, examine a small wooden bell tower, sit on a seat to rest and finally leave. It is so much easier – and quicker – going downhill.



Zuisenji temple, Kamakura

It now begins to rain in earnest and so I put on a light rain jacket. As I have feared, it proves to be inadequate and soon I feel damp. At the bottom of the hills I reach the town and return to civilization. As the hostel opens at three o'clock, I decide to return to the station and travel back by train. I continue walking, splashing through the puddles, and pass a funeral. The black hearse has a golden roof, shaped like that of a temple, and all the ladies wear black dresses.

Back in the main street, I keep my eyes open for something to eat and finally buy two buns, one savoury and one sweet, which I eat in the street. Eventually, after losing my way briefly, I reach the station where, tired and wet, I set off for the Hase area of Kamakura once again.

Back in the familiar streets, a lady who has been on the train shelters me with her umbrella and tells me that she will accompany me to the youth hostel. However, when I spot a group of young men dressed in white bearing a *mikoshi* or portable shrine, I become excited, forget my tiredness, and, thanking the lady, I run after the noisy procession with my camera at the ready. No doubt this is an extension of yesterday evening's celebrations. The drummers and the flautist are still at it; the *mikoshi* bearers shout, men sing at the top of their voices (the leader through a loudhailer) and the air is charged with great excitement. Taking photos of the procession and the musicians, I run, dodging around the people in the streets. The *mikoshi* is brought up to the little shrine and placed in front of it, and I clamber up the steps to see what is happening. Two priests and a number of assistants emerge, all dressed colourfully, and perform various ceremonies while cameras click. Some of the assistants start a low moan; they and the priests enter the shrine and begin to chant to the accompaniment of strange, unearthly music played on various instruments, including a *shō* – a type of tall reed wind instrument imported from China, which sounds not unlike a mouth organ.



Shinto festival, Hase, Kamakura

The music and chanting suddenly stops and the priests and assistants emerge. The head priest now says a few words and the assembled people respond to whatever he

says by singing a strange song in guttural voices. Everyone bellows their own version of the melody. It is thrilling to be with these people – once again, I am the only foreigner.

Finally everyone claps their hands in order to summon the gods, then plastic glasses and a big bottle of sake are produced. The head priest invites everyone to join him in shouting '*kampai!*' ('cheers!') for the successful completion of the festival. Only those directly involved in it are offered helpings of sake. This done, everybody relaxes and the *mikoshi* is put away for the next time. By now, everyone is up to their ears in mud.

I take a final look around and leave, returning to the hostel by about four o'clock. Exhausted, I lie on my bed and rest; later I take a long, relaxing hot bath. I then get an envelope for my letter home at the reception desk and, following the example of the two Swiss fellows who are still here, I get the very helpful lady at the desk to write 奈良, 'Nara' (my next destination) in large characters on a piece of paper for tomorrow's hitch-hiking.

Later I enjoy a good and well-deserved meal with a couple of American girls, chat to them, buy myself a cup of coffee afterwards and then write my diary in the little dormitory. In the room is a Japanese chap who speaks only a little English but understands it better. Later, a German fellow arrives and tells us that he is on a trip around the world. Tonight I go to bed early.