

6 – UBUD AND AROUND BALI

Monday, 16 July

After breakfast this morning I tidied my room in anticipation of Cathy's arrival, then completed my previous day's diary entry. Cathy duly showed up and was given tea to drink. After we had chatted a little, I wrote some postcards and finished a letter to my parents, which I posted shortly afterwards. A Canadian girl arrived, took the room beside ours and, while I wrote some more postcards and a letter to a friend, Cathy chatted to her. The two girls then wandered up to the town centre.

When I had completed my letter, I joined Cathy at one o'clock and we went to a nearby restaurant for a tasty lunch. Both of us were feeling rather sleepy today and somewhat subdued. Afterwards we wandered down towards the Monkey Forest, stopping now and then to ask about rates for hiring bicycles, motorbikes, and cars; we were still trying to plan how we could travel around the island and see the places that we wanted to see. We passed the Monkey Forest without going in, then found our way back to our lodgings by a different route. Tired by now, we relaxed in our room; I read a little and fell asleep for a while. Later I began to pack my things in readiness for what we had finally decided to do: cycle around the island.

We chatted to the Canadian girl outside for a short while, and at 5.30 we set off for the *kechak* dance in Bona village. We were outside Gustie's Shop in good time and clambered aboard an empty minibus. It soon filled up and we were off. We arrived at a large wooden hall by about 6.15 and, because we were the first to arrive, got good seats at the front. Other people then began to arrive and by seven o'clock the place was crowded; many had to stand.



Kechak dance, Bona village, near Ubud

The *kechak* dance turned out to be fairly dramatic, but it had a roughness about it that I had not encountered before. There was a great deal of horseplay and clowning around, which the audience enjoyed. As the action moved fairly quickly, it was obviously tailored

to suit the tourists. Interestingly the music was not provided by a gamelan orchestra, but by a choir of a hundred men, who effectively imitated the sound of a gamelan orchestra.

After this came the *sanghyang dedari* dance, performed by two 'untrained' little girls with their eyes closed and – supposedly – in a trance. This time the accompaniment consisted of a chorus of men and women. At the end, when the girls slumped to the ground, a priest sprinkled them with holy water and they were shaken until they woke.

The final item was a *sanghyang jaran* or fire dance, in which a fellow (also supposed to be in a trance) danced around the burning embers of coconut shells with a wood-and-straw hobby horse, then walked over (or between?) the embers. To me it looked as though he just kicked them all to one side.

The show was over by 8.45 and we clambered aboard our minibus. Back in Ubud, we walked to the food stalls in the market place and sat down for a simple meal. Once again, I found my dish of chicken and vegetables rather too spicy for my liking; the spice in the food served in the restaurants for foreign tourists was obviously toned down to suit them! I spoke to an Austrian girl sitting beside me – she was travelling alone – and a Belgian couple at the other side of the table joined in the conversation. Later the Austrian girl left and suddenly Heidi, Nigel and Vincent appeared. We chatted to them briefly, excused ourselves and went home to bed as we were both tired.

Tuesday, 17 July

This morning I woke to the sound of heavy rain. I was surprised to see Cathy sleeping the other way around in her bed. When we got up later, I learned what had happened; she had woken during the night to discover that there was a leak in the ceiling and that water was dripping on her bed, near her head. She now found a pool of water on the floor; by now her bag and all her belongings in it were wet. We were annoyed by this turn of events, for we had decided to hire bicycles today and go off cycling.

We ordered breakfast and sat outside to eat it. As it began to clear and blue sky appeared, we took heart, packed just what we needed and left our big bags with the people of the house. However, when we were about to leave a little later, it clouded over and began to rain heavily once again. We decided that it would be pointless to do anything today, and so we stayed put, lazing about. I finished reading a little book containing the full story of Ramayana, which I quite enjoyed.

Later we retrieved our bags and asked to be transferred to another room, which the lady showed us to. Although it was bigger and a little more luxurious, we were allowed to have it at the same price. Linda, the Canadian girl, then appeared and I chatted to her until she left for Kuta later in the morning. When I returned to our room, I found Cathy asleep on her new bed. I lay on my bed reading a newspaper and fell asleep too.

We both woke at one o'clock and, as it had stopped raining, walked to the nearby Tropicana restaurant for lunch. Today I had a very tasty chicken saté with peanut sauce, rice and a salad. Afterwards I ate a slice of coconut pie, which was delicious.

When we had finished, we returned to our room, where we rested and read for most of the afternoon. At five o'clock, Cathy went off for a walk and I went out shortly afterwards. I explored some laneways that I had not been in before, emerged at the main road, crossed it and headed northwards. The little road that I now followed did not seem to correspond with anything on my map, but it eventually led me to some pretty fields and scenery that were bathed in the unusual late afternoon light; dark clouds now filled the sky.

At six o'clock I met Cathy at the main junction in Ubud and we walked to a restaurant where Cathy had been chatting to two Dutch girls, Else and Anja, whom she had met in India. I joined in the conversation and later we ordered something to eat. As two of the

dishes I ordered were 'finished', I had to order for the third time. I had a vegetarian dish of rice and vegetables, which was not bad.

Just before 7.30 p.m., Cathy and I excused ourselves, paid and stepped out into the drizzling rain. We were hoping to go to a performance of a *raja pela* dance, but we discovered that it had been replaced by a Balinese two-hour version of the Ramayana story. We bought two tickets and walked to the nearby hall. The performance started soon after eight.

Although the show was well done and very energetically danced, it seemed rather tame compared to the more professional and refined version that I had seen in Yogyakarta. The music here was so much louder and harsher. Nevertheless, we both enjoyed it.

Afterwards we spoke briefly to the Belgian couple, Marina and Eddie, about an alternative plan to travel around the island by car if the weather turned out bad tomorrow. We then returned to our losmen and went to bed.



Wednesday, 18 July

Once again it bucketed down during the night and so we woke, at about 6.30, to yet more rain. As it seemed that we were not destined to go cycling around the island, we decided to opt for the 'Plan B' that we had agreed upon when speaking to the Belgian couple on the previous evening, which was to find a suitable vehicle and drive. We rose, washed, breakfasted on black rice followed by fruit and, having left our gear in the room, we set off for the town centre, where we met Eddie at the tourist office as planned. As he and Marina were just about to have breakfast, Cathy and I hunted around for a vehicle of some kind. A rather old jeep looked fine, whereas the more modern Suzuki vans had small and uncomfortable seats at the back. As the best choice seemed to be a six-seater van, I suggested that we try to get hold of the two Dutch girls to bring the number up to six. We walked to the Belgian couple's place, where we told them of our intention, then returned to our losmen, where I talked to the Dutch girls through the window as they were still in bed. They seemed to be keen on the idea. Cathy disappeared and I filled in the time writing my diary.

While the Dutch girls were eating breakfast, Cathy reappeared and said that the van was parked out in the lane. We quickly got ourselves ready; I left my bag with Mr Sukadana again, and the Dutch girls did likewise. One of the girls, Else, walked to the post office, while the other (Anja) and I went outside to the van. We clambered aboard

the positively luxurious vehicle and Claire drove us to the post office, where we waited for Else and collected the Belgian couple.

When everyone was ready, we set off with Cathy still at the wheel. We headed eastwards towards the coast at a nice, gentle speed and stopped shortly afterwards for petrol.

We now drove towards the uninteresting town of Gianyar through a rather busy and unremarkable area, then turned southwards to Sidan, where we stopped to look at the Pura Dalem Palace – a temple of the dead. As I predicted, it was a rather uninteresting place. We donned sarongs to enter; I gave a small donation and had a look round inside. The place looked like most other Balinese temples: it was stark and had ugly stone carvings. Outside were people trying to sell us souvenirs; fortunately they were friendly and not very insistent.



Bale Kanbang (Floating Pavilion), Klungkung

From here we drove to the small town of Klungkung, where we stopped to see the Taman Kertha Gosa or Hall of Justice and the adjoining palace with its Bale Kanbang or Floating Pavilion. The latter was quite attractive. The paintings on the ceilings in both places were interesting. Although the weather had cleared up considerably since the morning, it now clouded over again and began to rain a little.

Once we had taken a good look around here, we left and drove to our next destination: a little fishing village named Kusamba on the south-east coast. Myles in

Dublin had told me about this place and I had read about it in my guidebook. Despite the rain, it turned out to be quite pretty. The beach had black volcanic sand, the curious little fishing boats were painted all colours of the rainbow, and there were fine views of the mountains and some islands out in the rough sea. The large island straight ahead of us was Nusa Penida.



Kusamba beach

While we sheltered from the rain, I chatted to a Dutch-Indonesian girl whom I had remembered seeing in Dieng, Java. When the rain stopped, we wandered along the beach. A local man who spoke good English brought us to some little huts where salt was being produced from the sea water. The equipment that was being used was quite primitive, but it all worked. The local people crowded around to stare at us.

After this we returned to the van and drove to the nearby ferry port of Padangbai, where we stopped for lunch at a small restaurant. There I met the young English lady gamelan player whom I had originally met in Yogyakarta, and a French couple who had been in Ubud recognized me. Two of the others and I had a basic meal of *nasi goreng* (fried rice), which was not particularly appetising.

Fed and refreshed, we set off again. This time I sat in the front, map-reading. We now found our way up the mountains to the quaint village of Tenganan. We parked in a large car park, then paid to enter. It was a definite tourist trap, but fortunately there were few tourists about. Nobody pestered us to buy anything and the little shops along the main street were relatively unobtrusive.

This sweet little village, with its three unusual parallel 'streets' (for want of a better word – there was no traffic), belonged to the original Balinese people. According to my guidebook, several unusual old customs still survived. There were places where the unique double *ikat* (tie-dyeing) cloth was produced, and I also heard strains of the local *gamelan selunding* music coming from various buildings. The two streets that ran parallel to the main one looked more genuine and interesting. Here, among the curious little buildings, I felt as though I was in the real Bali. Various unusual and quite powerful farmyard smells wafted up my nostrils as I wandered around the ancient village.

Later, we met up again at the van and Eddie now took the wheel. As he had never driven a right-hand vehicle before, this was quite a challenge for him, but he did very well. We drove back down to the main road, passed Candidasa beach, wound our way up the hills to a picturesque spot where we stopped to take photos, decided not to bother going to Ujung in order to see the water palace, and drove on to Tirtagangga.

I was quite surprised when we arrived there, for the description in my book seemed to conjure up a totally different picture. It turned out to be a tiny hamlet and its famous water palace was almost invisible from the road. Nonetheless, it was quite an attractive little place. All around could be seen picturesque terraced paddy fields.

Cathy and I hopped out of the van and walked over to the Dhangin Taman Inn, recommended in my guidebook and, without any trouble, secured three double rooms. We called the others over, parked the van nearer and went in to take a look at the rooms. Cathy and I got the best of the three: ours had a little water fountain outside, and a partial view of the paddy fields.

When we had installed ourselves, I washed, changed clothes and went outside for a short walk, which enabled me to see the place in the fading light. When I returned to our room, I wrote my diary for a while until Cathy and I joined the others for a meal in the losmen restaurant. Eddie and I ordered grilled tuna with chips and salad, and had to wait quite a long time for this. We finally were given our food when the others had finished their main course! For dessert I ordered a banana pancake, following Marina's example; it was quite filling.

I then excused myself, took my medication and gave some of my malaria tablets to Marina and Eddie, who were short of them. We made plans for the following morning, said goodnight and repaired to bed. I finished my diary and read a little before sleeping. It had been a pleasantly relaxed and enjoyable day.

Thursday, 19 July

For some strange reason I did not sleep very soundly during the night. Cathy and I rose at about seven; while I washed, Cathy went out for a walk. As it was still too dark to take photographs, I decided to have breakfast as soon as I was ready. It did not take long to be served: I was given two slices of toast with an omelette between them, then a cup of tea.



Paddy fields at Tirtagangga

After I had finished eating, I ventured out, even though it was still cloudy. I walked in the direction we would be driving later this morning, and climbed up some steep steps to a losmen that had a terrific view of the picturesque terraced paddy fields. As luck would have it, the sky cleared and the sun began to shine, which enabled me to take some good photographs. Afterwards I made my way back down to the road. I walked on a little and found some spots where the views were even more spectacular. The area was very

beautiful indeed. As I got quite carried away taking photographs, I had to force myself to stop. I stood for a while listening to the sound of water far below, then returned to our losmen. The clouds had cleared a little and now I was able to catch a glimpse of Mount Agung, the main mountain on this eastern side of the island. However, when it suddenly started to rain I realized that I no longer had my umbrella with me – I had left it at the top of the steps! I had to turn back and climb up them again. Fortunately, it was still where I had left it.



Paddy fields and the Water Palace at Tirtagangga

When I finally returned to the losmen, I decided to visit the Water Palace beside it. I paid to go in and saw around it in a few minutes. As it was pretty enough, I took a few photos. Some young boys were splashing about in the water. After I had seen the place I left and returned to the losmen, where we got ready to leave just after nine o'clock. This morning I volunteered to drive. I had a little difficulty in starting the motor, but soon we were off.

As there was hardly any traffic on the road, the going was very easy. Anja sat beside me in the front and followed the map. We drove past the spectacular paddy fields and climbed up and down the hills. We should have turned to the left at one point in order to pause at a place that afforded a fine view, but we missed the turn. However, we stumbled across some very pretty valleys that were full of terraced fields, and we stopped now and

then to photograph them. We passed through some little villages, then turned to the north-east and entered a much drier region. Here the clouds suddenly disappeared and the sun shone fiercely. We turned a corner and gasped when we encountered a dramatic view of Mount Agung, now no longer encircled by clouds. We stopped to photograph this high conical volcano.



Mount Agung in the north east of the island

We then moved on and for a long time I drove at an easy pace through some very pleasing scenery, with the sea on our right and glimpses of other mountains (now enveloped in cloud) to our left. It was so much quieter in this part of Bali; there was so little traffic and the villages were tiny. We passed a few temples, but did not bother to stop.

A little farther on there was signpost pointing to a waterfall and so we decided to stop and have a look at it. I had to turn back and drive along a narrow lane to the left. When we reached the end of the lane, I stopped the van in a square. Two young boys ran up to us and insisted on bringing us to see the waterfall. I was not inclined to bother about it, but the others were keen to see it. One of the boys asked me to park the van on the opposite side of the square. Reluctantly I gave in and did only what I was able to do – reverse the vehicle. The young fellow disappeared and the other walked with the van on the other side. Back I went, slowly, but at some distance from the wall I suddenly heard a

loud noise from behind. As I had seen nothing, I asked what had happened. The boy went to investigate and told me that I had bumped into a couple of motorbikes. I had not seen them in the side mirrors, which I was relying on, for most of the back window was obscured by the back seat of the van. Somebody restored the two motorbikes to their upright positions and said that there was no problem. However, there were now a couple of minor scratches on the back of our vehicle; Cathy had informed me that as the owner had checked the state of the van carefully, we would have to pay for any damage. I was quite annoyed by this unwelcome turn of events.

I then joined the others and we set off to see the waterfall; we walked for about twenty minutes along an ascending rocky path, which was hard work in the heat. Although the waterfall was pretty enough, it was nothing special. On the way back we stopped at a stall to drink something. Refreshed, we moved on and returned to the square with our two young guides, whom we had not managed to get rid of. I was shocked to see that a crowd had gathered around one of the motorbikes and the rider, a German chap who had rented it. He showed us two pieces that had broken when his motorbike had fallen. Like us, he realized that he would have to pay for the damage. Although he realized that the accident was not entirely my fault, he nevertheless expected me to pay him as it was not his fault at all. After a lengthy discussion, I ended up paying him 20,000 Rp (about IR£7) and agreed to contact him on the morning of Friday, the 27th. I was very annoyed about the whole incident, and it took me some time to cool down.

I let Cathy drive and we set off once again. We stopped briefly at a bathing place that was not particularly interesting; I sat in the shade while the girls splashed about. We drove on afterwards and finally came to a halt at a very smart seaside hotel that I had read about. The place was decidedly upmarket. We parked the van in the grounds and were led past bathing pools to a good restaurant, where we sat down to a late lunch. By now I was ravenous. It was very pleasant to sit in the cool interior as it was so hot and sunny here. I ordered chicken saté in peanut sauce which, although tasty, was not particularly filling. As Else did not eat all of her meal, I finished it for her.

Afterwards the girls went off for a swim. I sat outside at the sea front, and paddled in a pool. We relaxed here for a good while, then finally met up at the van by four o'clock. We then drove to our next destination, Mount Batur, Bali's most famous and most spectacular volcano. We turned left at Kubutambatan and drove uphill along a fine but very twisty road that passed through a lot of tropical vegetation and fine scenery. The light was unusual: sunlight mixed with the dark and threatening clouds that encircled the top of the volcano.



Mount Batur



Lake Batur

The higher we climbed, the cooler it became. Soon we were up in the clouds, where it became dark and started to rain. The little villages on the edge of the extinct crater looked very scruffy. When we stopped a couple of times to take photographs of the volcano and a lake far below, which was just about visible in the evening light, hordes of local women descended upon us in an effort to sell us a variety of things: postcards, sarongs, jackets, fruit, and so forth. We drove off as quickly as possible and, changing our plans, we drove down towards the lake in the crater, then along it to a village where we looked for a losmen mentioned in Else's guidebook. We failed to find it and so stopped at one named Under the Volcano, which was mentioned in my book. A man here showed us three clean and good quality rooms which, he told us, normally cost 15,000 Rp for one of them and 20,000 Rp each for the other two. For us, he told Marina and me, he would charge 12,000 Rp apiece. We said that this was too expensive and went across the road to look at another place, which was a good deal cheaper but of very inferior quality. We returned to the van to discuss the matter and, seeing how undecided we were, the man finally offered us all three rooms at 10,000 Rp apiece. This was the price that Marina had suggested to him. Delighted, we moved in, refreshed ourselves and met later in the restaurant.

The owner now appeared again and tried to interest us in a Balinese fish dish for all six of us, but as nobody was particularly interested, we ordered separately. I chose the rather boring fried rice special and afterwards had a tasty fresh fruit salad, which included passion fruit – something that I had not tasted before. The service was very slow.

When we had finally finished eating, we paid up, said goodnight and went to bed. There was barely enough light in our room for me to write my diary; before I had time to finish today's entry, the generator was switched off. I groped my way across to my bed and slid in between the sheets, where I soon fell fast asleep. Another successful day – despite the unfortunate accident with the motorbike.

Friday, 20 July

Up at about seven this morning and out for a short walk. I was accompanied by a very self-assured and loquacious young boy from Tasmania, who had a very strong Australian accent – so strong that I found it difficult to understand everything that he said. His favourite expression was, 'It would freeze your butt off!' Together we walked down to the hot springs and then to the lakeside. It was a fine, clear morning – not too cold – and the scenery looked terrific. I returned to our room, wrote some more of my diary and, at

eight o'clock joined Cathy and the Dutch girls for a dip in the hot springs. The temperature of the water was quite comfortable and relaxing. We wallowed in the water for a while, used the shower, then returned to the water briefly. I dried myself and changed before returning to our room.

We then met again for breakfast, which took a long time to prepare. Except for Else, who ate a cheese sandwich, we all had banana pancakes with chocolate. Cathy and I were served last. As soon as we had finished, we set off.

I took the wheel again and drove along the very bumpy road (much of which was under repair) to the crater ridge. We stopped a couple of times to take photographs. The view became more dramatic the higher we went. When we reached the ridge of the crater after passing the scruffy and touristy villages, we got out of the van to take more photos. We also managed to buy fifteen litres of petrol up here.

We now drove back down the mountain, along the same road that we had approached it yesterday afternoon. Once again the scenery was fine and it was easy for me to drive downhill. When we reached Kubutambahan on the north coast, I turned left and we headed westwards, with the sea on our right, towards Singaraja. We stopped at the Pura Beji temple, which was up a side road, and got out to have a look around. It was quite a pleasant place and the stone carvings here were a little more refined.



The Pura Beji temple and Lake Buyan

When we had finished our visit to the temple, Cathy took the wheel and drove us to Singaraja town, which turned out to be quite scruffy. Here we turned southwards and headed back to the mountains. Up and up we climbed and found ourselves approaching a bank of cloud. We should have come here earlier.

Despite the mist that now descended upon us, the scenery still looked dramatic. All of a sudden we found that we were approaching a deep valley that contained Lake Buyan, which we saw on our right. We stopped to take photographs of the lake and some small monkeys who were scampering along the roadside.

On we went again and soon approached Lake Bratan, which lay on our left. Because of the clouds, all was dark and gloomy. We soon spotted the famous lakeside temple of Ulun Danu and stopped. As it began to rain, we decided to eat first. We tried a plush restaurant just inside the gateway where we paid to visit the temple, but on discovering that it was too expensive, went back out to a smaller and cheaper establishment. Here I had a basic meal of fried chicken with rice and a tiny salad, washed down with a glass of tea.



The Ulun Danu temple on Lake Bratan

When we had finished eating, we went off to visit the temple. It turned out that we could not actually go into it – we could only see it from the outside. I clambered about in an effort to get a good photograph of it. Although it was quite a pretty little place, it came as something of an anticlimax. However, I was delighted to have seen it, for it was a very well-known and much photographed Balinese Hindu temple.

As everyone else had walked back to the van, I joined them once again and jumped into the driver's seat. It was pleasant to drive down from the mountains to the plain below, for the scenery was very fine in this region. We were now back in familiar territory, amid flooded paddy fields, workers in coolie hats and water buffalo. Once we had emerged from the thick cloud, we were bathed in warm sunshine. Bali was certainly an island of great contrasts.

When we reached the foot of the mountains, we faced a challenge: how to find our way back to Ubud through the maze of roads. Eddy did the map reading; unfortunately we missed a turn to the left and had to take an alternative route farther on. We finally swung eastwards and found ourselves at a large and impressive temple surrounded by a moat. This was the Pura Taman Ayun in Mengui. As we were in the mood for a break, I parked the van, and we got out. Following a hoard of tourists, we went inside. The rules seemed to be very relaxed in this temple; I put on my sarong, but nobody else did. There

were people of various nationalities here, with guides speaking a number of European languages. The place itself was quite pleasant and rather unusual. In the inner courtyard was a row of photogenic shrines with thatched roofs.



The Pura Taman Ayun temple in Mengwi

We followed Cathy up a tower, where we were able to enjoy a good aerial view of the place. Outside, on the road, I walked away for a short distance until I had a good shot of the temple and its moat.

Cathy now took the wheel and off we set for Ubud. Finding the way proved to be quite tricky and at one stage we took a wrong turn. However, the scenery that we drove through was superb and looked extra good in the evening light. After a considerably long time we eventually found ourselves back in familiar Ubud. As we were passing the processing laboratory, I went inside and collected my slides. The bill came to twice the amount that I had been quoted!

Next, we dropped the two Dutch girls off at their lodges and drove the van back to its owner. Naturally the man was not at all pleased about the damage done to the back of the van. He sat us down and we argued and bargained for a long time. At last we brought the price down to a reasonable \$40, which was still too much for such little damage. I paid him using two of my travellers' cheques. I was not too annoyed by this, but the

thoughts of how much I would need to pay the owner of the motorbike made me uneasy.

Cathy and I now said goodbye to Marina and Eddie, and we walked back to our losmen. En route I stopped to buy a ticket to Lombok island, for I had decided to sail there on the following morning. I then changed some more money. At our losmen, we discovered that as Mr Sukadana had not realized that we would be back this evening, he had no room for us. Fortunately Anja and Else had checked into a losmen nearby and had reserved a room for us in case we might need one; Cathy now set off to confirm that we would stay in it. I asked Mr Sukadana a few questions and paid him for the accommodation so far. I then took all my bags and walked to the Weda losmen, where I found Cathy. We had been given quite a good room for 8,000 Rp.

After I had sorted out some things, I washed and left with Cathy and the Dutch girls for a meal. We met Eddie and Marina in the food market, and joined them for a simple but not very appetizing meal at a food stall. As Eddie wanted to pay me for the malaria tablets that I had given him, I let him pay for my meal. We then said goodbye, and Cathy and I returned to our losmen. I sorted out some more things for tomorrow's journey, gave Cathy her slides, paid her what I owed her, and got myself ready for an early start on the following morning. I sat up in bed writing my diary until about eleven o'clock, then went to sleep. It had been a very pleasant three days.

Saturday, 21 July

I slept little during the night and got up just before 5.30 a.m. Although it was still dark outside, the cocks were crowing loudly. After I had packed and got everything ready, I found a lady and asked her for some breakfast. I also brought her my rucksack and some washing, but a man appeared and advised me to bring my belongings to Mr Sukadana's losmen, as I would be returning to it after my visit to Lombok. I quickly walked to the losmen, found Mr Sukadana and left my things with him. I then hurried back, and finding breakfast ready, ate it quickly and washed my teeth. Before I left, I kissed Cathy goodbye while she lay in bed.

I was at the Perama office by seven o'clock and boarded the bus, where I sat with two young Dutch girls at the back. We set off shortly afterwards, picked up some more people and drove to the port of Padangbai. While chatting to the girls, I looked at the scenery outside; the villages and fields looked beautiful in the early morning sunshine.

We arrived at the familiar ferry port shortly after eight o'clock and received tickets for the boat. Before boarding, I sat down in the restaurant for some tea and cake, which I had to demolish quickly as it was time to board. The boat, which was old and in poor condition, was packed with people, and we had to make do with some space on the floor inside. Although the sides were open to the elements, it was horribly stuffy and smelly where we were. When we began to leave at nine o'clock, I moved over to one side of the boat, where I had a fine view of the island slipping away. It was a beautiful morning; the sky was blue and the sun shone brightly. Bali soon disappeared as we made our way to Lombok, the third and last island that I planned to visit.