

3 – YOGYAKARTA



Thursday, 6 July

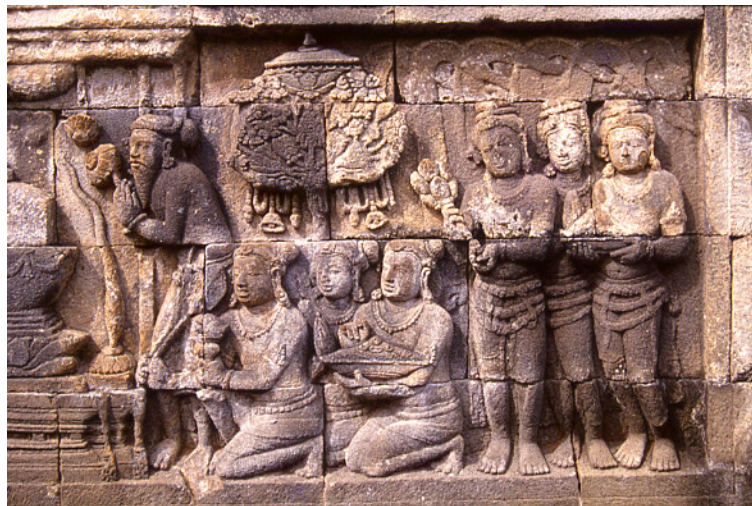
After a wonderful night's sleep in a quiet bedroom, I woke at around 6.30 to the sound of general activity in the house; I now felt pleasantly refreshed. After I had washed, I relaxed a little until I was called to the dining room for breakfast. A traditional Yogya meal was served: rice with chicken and specially prepared hard-boiled eggs (not unlike Chinese ones), served with two types of sauce. It was very tasty and nourishing; afterwards I felt fully restored to good health.

Afterwards I packed up my belongings, collected some damp clothing that had been washed for me on the previous day and prepared to set off with Mr Nugroho and two of his daughters to Borobudur. As he was travelling to Kudus with his family today, this was putting him out of his way. All I wanted him to do was to leave me to a bus station, but he would insist on driving me to the famous Buddhist temple.

We took photographs, said goodbye and set off at about eight o'clock. We arrived at Borobudur an hour later. Although there were some Indonesian visitors there at this early hour, it was not crowded. Mr Nugroho left me to the ticket office and we said goodbye. I thanked my friend profusely and set off for the great temple. Having left my rucksack in a storage room, I bought a ticket. It was a fine, clear morning – ideal for photography.

Straight ahead was the great temple, built some time between A.D. 750 and 850 during the Shailendra Buddhist dynasty, but abandoned soon after completion because of the decline of Buddhism and the shift of power to eastern Java. The site was cleared in 1815, and in 1973 a \$21 million restoration project was begun. Built in the form of a massive symmetrical stupa wrapped around a hill, the temple is one of the greatest Buddhist relics of south-east Asia, along with Cambodia's Angkor Wat and Burma's great Pagan temple. At one time it was painted white or yellow in order to reflect the rays of the sun; all that can be seen now are the stone carvings of religious scenes and many

depictions of early Javanese life, arranged in a clockwise direction (right to left) around the stupa.



The Buddhist temple at Borobudur

As the temple looked very Indian and because I do not care very much for Indian art and architecture, I felt vaguely repulsed by the huge structure before me. However, as it

was regarded as one of Indonesia's most famous attractions, I was interested enough to see it for myself. I refused the services of a guide and simply made my way around the huge temple at my own speed, stopping occasionally to take photographs or look at some of the details. As most of the tourists were skipping the sides and only climbing to the top using the central staircase, I had most of the place to myself. At one stage I heard a guide speaking Mandarin Chinese to a young couple, and I asked the lady in Chinese if she was from China. She told me that she was from Taiwan. Shortly afterwards I was invited to join a local family for a photograph; when we posed, a young lady smiled at me and held my hand.



A Javanese family at Borobudur

I finally reached the top by about ten o'clock, when tourists were beginning to arrive by the busload. It was now time to leave. I took one last photograph and quickly descended using one of the side staircases. As I did so, an Indonesian girl said hello and asked me where I was from. She was a very pleasant young lady who told me she was twenty-one years of age. I paused briefly to buy some postcards and continued our conversation. She introduced me to her boyfriend and his family; they very kindly invited me to go with them to the beach just at Parangtritis, beyond Yogya. As I realized that this would save a lot of messing around with buses and as I had no immediate plans, I accepted their offer and walked with them to their dilapidated old minibus, which they had hired for the day for a mere 2,000 Rp. It was genuinely falling to pieces!

As we drove to Yogya, we chatted and laughed. The girl was particularly good humoured. She asked me if I had a girlfriend and I stupidly said yes (which wasn't entirely true). 'Why didn't she come here on holidays with you?' I was asked. 'Because we broke up shortly before I had decided to come,' I replied (which was more or less true). En route through the city centre, we stopped at a bank so that I could change money, but as it was now past midday, the bank was closed. As my friends had no watches and as clocks often tended to be wrong in this part of the world, few people seemed to have any accurate idea of time.

On our way to the beach, an invitation to stay at the young man's house and visit a batik factory (which did not interest me) later changed to an invitation to stay at the young lady's home, which seemed to be quite a distance outside Yogya. I did not refuse this offer, but said that I would be putting her to too much trouble.

We finally reached the beach, parked and walked down to the strand. The young girls and two older women stayed here, but the young couple and I walked back to a

restaurant to have lunch. We all ate something simple and I paid the bill. We then returned to the beach, where we paddled in the water, splashed around and took some photographs. As before, I noticed that all the women and girls here wore one-piece bathing costumes with tee shirts worn over them for the sake of modesty.



The beach at Parangtritis, near Yogyakarta

We then returned to the minibus and set off for Yogya. I sat in the front this time and promptly fell asleep. When I woke, we were approaching the city centre, and I felt hot and tired. The previous invitations now conveniently forgotten, the young couple asked me which losmen I wished to stay in. I looked in my guide book and asked for the Asia-Africa Hotel. As they failed to find it, I decided to leave them in Sosrowijayan Street, where all the cheap losmens were to be found. The young lady wrote her address for me, we said goodbye, and I turned down a narrow alleyway named Gang II.

When I came to a little losmen that seemed to be full of character and was in a quiet corner, I asked if there was a room for me and was told that there was. I peeped into a tiny room containing two beds just off the reception area and, as it cost only 3,500 Rp per night, I agreed to take it straight away. I dumped my bags in the room, hung my damp washing out to dry, and took a much-needed shower. Refreshed, I relaxed for a while and wrote some of my diary, which had got far behind. I also chatted to an Australian girl named Sandra for a while; she had been travelling around this part of the world for some time and had been in Sumatra. She showed me some photographs that she had taken.

Later I went out to change some money, as I was badly in need of it. I walked down the *gang* (alley) and bumped into Heidi, the Danish girl whom I had met some days previously. We were surprised to see each other. She told me about a *wayang golek* or wooden puppet show that she and a couple of fellows were going to see in Hanoman's Forest Pub, which had a restaurant attached. As it sounded like a nice idea, I decided to join them. I found a money change bureau nearby, got \$150 worth of local currency, then met Heidi and a Canadian chap named Michael outside. We haggled and got a couple of *becaks* (pedicabs) for 500 Rp per person.

It was quite a distance to our destination. We ended up at what looked like a good restaurant with a wide-ranging menu, a dance floor, and an area for the puppet show, complete with a gamelan orchestra. Although we were supposed to wait for the other chap, named Nick, we started without him. The three of us decided to try the Western food on offer. Heidi ordered a T-bone steak and I asked for a beef dish called 'fillet

mignon Hawaiian style'. Although we all asked for the meat to be well done, everyone's helpings were rare and therefore rather tough. The portions of French fries and vegetables were miniscule. At one point Andrea and Claudia from Germany walked in and sat in front of us. They were surprised to see me, especially as they had lost me after the Dieng plateau! I explained what had happened and continued with my meal. Andrea looked very becoming this evening in a light summer dress.

In the middle of the meal, the puppet show started. I was not able to give it my full attention while I was eating, but later I concentrated on it more. I chatted to Andrea again briefly and then went backstage to observe the action better. The musicians were in great form; at one stage a lady laughed so much that she had to be supported by some of her colleagues. As I stayed put after the others had gone back to the restaurant area, the puppeteer made a noticeable effort to play the puppets more in my favour. The gamelan player nearest to me shook hands with me, spoke to me in English and made me feel welcome. He finally pushed a mat over in my direction and invited me to sit down. I now had the best seat in the house, in the heart of the gamelan orchestra; no doubt some of the subsequent jokes were directed at me!

At one stage, the young *dalang* (puppeteer) made one of the male puppets make eyes at a female puppet who was singing and, out of sight from the audience, stuck the puppet's finger under the character's sarong to show that he was becoming more than interested in the lady. The musicians fell around laughing at this.

The show lasted for about an hour and a half, and finally ended. I returned to my companions in the restaurant and a musician sat down at an electric organ to play music of quite a different kind. Claudia left at this point; I could have done so too, but as the lovely Andrea joined us, I stayed put. We chatted for a long time and I tasted some rice wine, which was quite good. Nick, the English chap who had finally arrived, was quite merry by now.

Finally we decided to make a night of it, paid up and left. Nick and Michael sang and joked as we walked along the deserted alley in search of a *becak*. We finally found one, bargained with the cyclist, and set off for our places of accommodation. We arrived back in Sosrowijayan Street late, said goodnight and parted. Quite an eventful day!

Friday, 6 July

After a sound sleep, I was woken by a familiar cacophony of voices, music, an imam calling the faithful to prayer over a loudspeaker, and a bird singing. Recorded gamelan music could be heard coming from the restaurant across the road and the bird was whistling the melody in tune with it; the notes were *mi, do, mi, do – la, fa, la, fa*, with the first two pairs of notes slightly faster than the second two pairs. I was quite fascinated by this. Despite the noise, I liked this place and found it very agreeable.

Without hurrying, I rose, washed and had breakfast with Sandra, the Australian girl, whom I had met the previous day. She recommended the unusual but tasty 'black rice pudding': a mixture of black rice, banana and coconut. I chatted with her and took my time.

I had planned to walk to Nitour Inc., a place where *wayang golek* (wooden puppet shows) were staged, but it was rather late when I eventually set off. I walked down hot and noisy Malioboro Street past countless shops, *warungs* (stalls) and eating places, and was waylaid by a chap who said that he was from the nearby travel agency. He told me that the puppet show would be over and urged me to go to an exhibition of batiks that was due to close at midday. I had no intention of looking at batiks, but as it sounded sufficiently interesting, I decided to give it the benefit of the doubt.

As I walked towards the place, I was approached by another young man who said that he was from the workshop, and he accompanied me to it. I certainly would not have

found the place by myself as it was not signposted. When I was told that the prices were cheap, I began to sense that I was being lured into a trap.

Inside I was greeted kindly, invited to sit down to watch some women at work while the technique was explained to me. I was then invited to have a look at the items on sale. One glance was enough to tell me that there was nothing in the place that interested me. However, I looked through some of them very quickly and a fellow selected the ones that I had paused to look at for closer inspection. He and another chap tried to tie me down to one that I liked and offered a discount but, as I did not want to buy anything, I left. I was annoyed that I had wasted time doing this.

I now walked on, following my map, to the Taman Sari – a ‘legendary historic bathing complex’ in an old, dilapidated palace. It took me some time to reach this landmark. Just as I arrived, it suddenly and unexpectedly began to rain. I sheltered in a little restaurant nearby and bought a bottle of mineral water as I felt thirsty by now.

The rain soon cleared and I went into the palace, accompanied by a young man who acted as a guide. The place turned out to be very disappointing: it consisted of a series of underground tunnels leading to a central square, where there was a mosque and a dried-up fountain. I wondered why on earth this place had been advertised as a tourist attraction. The ‘guide’ then tried to lure me into his batik shop, but I refused to go. He instantly lost interest in me and brusquely told me to walk on and turn right. This I did and instantly got lost. I wandered through some narrow alleyways between little houses that had been built in the grounds of the former palace, and finally found my way out.

I now made my way slowly to the Agastya building nearby for a show done using *wayang kulit* (shadow puppets) at three o’clock. On the way it rained again and I took shelter in a small *warung* (eating place), where I had simple meal of *nasi goreng*, which cost very little. I relaxed and left unhurriedly.

I walked along some more streets, made my way out of the palace region and crossed over to a pleasant housing area, where a lady and I eventually found the small building where the puppet shows were held. As the hall was open at the sides, it was pleasantly cool inside. I recognized some of the musicians – especially an elderly woman who looked as though she did not have any teeth in her mouth. She seemed to be a leading musician.



Wayang kulit (*shadow puppet*) performance, Agastya building, Yogyakarta



The dalang (puppeteer) and gamelan orchestra at the wayang kulit puppet play

The audience, predictably, consisted entirely of tourists. As I had come here chiefly to take some photographs, I paid little attention to the play. Once I had taken my photos, I sat down to watch part of the performance but, as I was hot and tired by now, I did not fully engage with it. As I had bought tickets for the famous Ramayana Ballet, to be performed at full moon this evening, and would be going with Heidi, Nick and Michael, I left shortly after four o'clock and got a *becak* back to my losmen. The journey took quite a long time.

While I was washing and getting ready, a German girl whom I had first seen in Bogor and had seen again in Pangandaran, accompanied by a tall handsome fellow, suddenly appeared on her own with her rucksack, looking hot and bothered. Herta (not her real name) had tried about four different losmens locally and could not find a room. As the place that I was staying in was also full, I offered her the use of my spare bed. She accepted gratefully.

I chatted to her after she had washed, then set off for the bus to Prambanan which, I was told, would leave at ten to six. I waited outside the tourist information centre with some other people and the bus turned up at about six; we drove off ten minutes later. En route, we stopped to pick up more people from various hotels. The journey took about half an hour. Soon we arrived at the large modern open-air theatre, which looked very smart and impressive. All the people working here wore a standard form of official dress, which was simple yet elegant.

I had managed to secure a seat near my companions, but I failed to find them. Shortly afterwards I looked up and saw them entering the wrong section; a steward quickly redirected them. Although many of the seats were empty, the place soon filled up.



The Ramayana Ballet at Prambanan, near Yogyakarta

The performance started at seven o'clock precisely with dramatic lighting and a procession of dancers making their way to the stage. Offerings were made to the gods and suddenly three great Hindu temples behind the stage were floodlit – it was most impressive. The 'prelude' over, the story of Ramayana then unfolded. I made a vague attempt to read the printed summary and follow the storyline, but soon I just sat back to enjoy the spectacle. It was very well done, despite the fact that it was rather contrived and was performed for foreign tourists. High above the temples, a full moon could be seen shining brightly.

The costumes worn by the dancers were fabulous and the dancing of the main characters, especially that of the captured goddess Sita, was refined and most impressive. Moments of gracefulness were contrasted with scenes of tremendous energy, especially in scenes where there was fighting. Towards the end, an army of apes appeared. Some of the dancers were young boys, who were quite funny to watch. I tried to take some photographs, but because of the low level of light, realized that my efforts would probably prove to be pointless.

The performance – the first of four – finished just before nine o'clock and we left and headed for the bus. I spoke to Andrea and Claudia, who would not be here tomorrow evening and who would be making their way to Bali. I wished them the best and said goodbye until we met in Bali.

By the time I boarded the bus, I discovered that more people had been squeezed into it and so now I had no seat. I stood for the duration of the journey and chatted briefly to an American girl. When we got off in Yogya, I followed her, Sandra from my lodgings and a couple of fellows to a nearby restaurant, where we had a good meal. As I had not eaten since lunchtime, I was feeling quite hungry by now. We chatted for a while, paid up, left and returned to our lodgings. As Herta was already in bed, I crept into my room quietly. She woke up briefly, then went back to sleep. I got into my bed and soon fell fast asleep.

Saturday, 7 July

I woke early, to the familiar sounds from outdoors, including the gamelan music and the bird singing to it. Herta then woke from a deep sleep and sat up, practically naked,

looking rather dazed. There was a long silence, during which I savoured the fine, firm contours of her sturdy Germanic body, and then she finally greeted me. She fumbled around, found her malaria tablets, sat up again, lit a cigarette and chatted to me. Shortly afterwards I popped outside to get some tea for both of us; when I returned, she was dressed. After we had drunk our tea, we washed and went across the road to the restaurant for breakfast.

When we returned to the losmen and sorted ourselves out, we said goodbye and I set off, once again, for Nitour for the morning performance of *wayang golek*. I tried my skills at haggling for a *becak* as I walked down Malioboro Street and finally got one for just 500 Rp. However, the driver (keen to make a commission, no doubt) began to tell me about the *wayang golek* factory – in other words, the factory where the wooden puppets were made. I assumed that he was talking about the place that I wanted to go to, but when we began to go southwards instead of westwards, I realized that we were going somewhere else. I kept telling him that I wanted to go to Nitour and repeated the name of the street, but he assured me that all was in order and that we were heading in the right direction. When we finally ended up at a small puppet factory in a different part of the city, I refused to go in and ordered him to take me where I wanted to go. It then transpired that he did not know where the place was. However, we eventually found it. I paid him and went inside. I had arrived by about 10.15; now I was told that the performance did not start until eleven!



Wayang golek (wooden puppet) performance at Nitour Inc., Yogyakarta

I sat down for a few minutes, enquired about the bus to Mount Bromo, then went out for a quick walk. I found my way to the post office, where I bought airmail paper, envelopes, some postcards and stamps. By the time I returned to the tourist office, the performance was about to start. It was held in a small, tatty room that looked like a school classroom, where the walls were painted a pale shade of institutional green. Like yesterday afternoon, my intention of coming here was mainly to take photographs in daylight, which I started to do almost immediately.

I then went behind the stage in order to watch the wooden puppets being operated and found a tall, slim English girl sitting on the floor beside a lady, who was explaining the music to her and showing her how it was written in numbers, usually in groups of four. After a while the English girl began to play a small six-keyed *saron* or xylophone in front of her, while the lady pointed to each number on the page of music. Although very simple, it was tricky enough, for the left hand had to move in a contrary motion in order to dampen the key that had just been struck. I was rather puzzled by the numbering system: 1 to 6 were the numbers used, but 4 was omitted. I asked about this and was told that the note symbolized by the number 4 was left out because of the type of scale being used in the music; the musicians were using a *slendro* or pentatonic scale. I sat watching, fascinated, and hardly looked at the *dalang* and the puppets. Occasionally I asked questions and the English girl, who spoke Indonesian quite fluently, answered them. It turned out that she was studying gamelan playing in London. It seemed to me that, although she was interested, she was not really a musician at heart.

When the performance ended, we chatted to the very elegant and helpful Javanese lady, then experimented on the instruments. While the English girl practised a piece that she had copied from the printed music, I tried my hand at playing the various instruments. Once again I noticed that certain notes on the xylophones sounded very much out of tune to Western ears.



Muslim girl, Yogyakarta

The young English lady and I then left and walked to a restaurant at a crossroads nearby, where we had lunch and chatted to a very friendly and good-humoured Muslim girl who wore a veil and had a magnificent set of teeth. She laughed a good deal and spoke English very well. I was not expecting a girl like this to be so outgoing; I would have thought that most Muslim girls would have been more reserved.

We lingered over our meal and, after we had finished, walked up Malioboro Street together. I left the English girl at the main tourist information centre, where I made a

couple of enquiries, then returned to my losmen. I arrived back much later than planned; I wanted to continue writing my diary as it had got so far behind.

I had only written a little when Josephine and Alain (the Swiss couple) suddenly arrived. They asked for a room, but the losmen was full. I let them put their big bags in my room while they went off to find another place. They returned shortly afterwards, having found lodgings, and we crossed over to the restaurant, where we had afternoon tea together. It was good to see them once again. So far, all had gone well with them; like me, they had gone to the Dieng plateau and had enjoyed seeing the sunrise from it.

At about 5.45 p.m. I excused myself and dashed off for the bus for the Ramayana Ballet. The bus was actually there at ten to six; when I went to board it, I suddenly realized that I had forgotten to bring my ticket! I had to run back to the losmen, get the key to my room from Josephine, grab the ticket and rush back again. I sat down in the bus in a lather of sweat. I immediately realized that running in this climate was not to be recommended! I need not have rushed, for the bus did not leave until ten past six – the same time as the previous evening.

Once again I was on my way to Prambanan to see more of the great Hindu Ramayana epic enacted in music and dance. When we arrived, I hurried over to the ticket office and queued to buy a cheaper ticket. An English girl standing behind me, who had been on the bus, asked me for advice. In the end I bought two seats at 3,000 Rp together as they were the only ones available in the cheaper range. We went in together and found a couple of good seats in quite a good spot. My companion this evening was slim, very pretty, and her hair had been dyed blonde. This was Sheila (not her real name), who had Irish ancestry on her father's side. Although not exactly my type, she was a very pleasant and friendly girl. She had finished studying and, like me, was still living with her parents.

This evening's performance turned out to be enjoyable, but not as dramatic as I had been led to believe. Everyone had told me that this evening's episode was the most popular and the best. Certainly the place was packed. The highlight of the performance was when the god Hanoman burned down a temple; real fire and red lighting were used to create a very realistic effect.

The ballet finished at about ten to nine and we walked out to our waiting bus. The journey back to the city centre was quick. We walked down the alleyway to the restaurant in front of my losmen and sat down for something to drink. I treated Sheila to two cups of coffee and I drank a small bottle of beer. We had quite a long chat, during which I discovered that this pretty young girl seemed to be mainly interested in swimming, beaches and shopping. We finally said goodnight and returned to our respective lodgings. By now I was tired and had no trouble falling asleep.

Sunday, 8 July

I woke up early to the familiar sounds outside and later got up. I went over to the restaurant for breakfast, hoping to meet Sheila, as arranged, but she did not show up.

Without rushing, I left later and made my way to the Kraton or Sultan's Palace. I had left visiting this important palace until this morning as I would be able to watch a rehearsal of traditional Javanese dancing. This fine city was certainly the cultural capital of the island. After a good bit of haggling, I finally secured a *becak* for just 400 Rp. Because *becaks* were not allowed along the far end of Malioboro Street, we had to take a circuitous route. The entrance to the large palace was full of stalls, *becaks* and tourists. As my cyclist claimed to have no change (though he probably did), I was forced to give him a 500 Rp note.

I walked in, paid another 500 Rp for a ticket, and wandered around the palace complex on my own, without a guide. All the buildings and halls were open at the sides, like pavilions. Although some of the reception halls were elaborately decorated, nothing

appeared to be particularly pretty. I saw the instruments of two gamelan orchestras in two different pavilions; musicians were already seated to one side of one set of them, which presumably would be used to accompany the dance rehearsal.



The Kraton, or Sultan's Palace in Yogyakarta, and the gamelan orchestra

I continued looking around the complex and returned to the pavilion just as the music had started. The musicians were all dressed in official court costumes, consisting of a cap, a dark blue jacket and a light-coloured sarong. The instruments, gongs and metallophones, sounded very harsh; here the musicians played using the *pelog* or seven-note scale, which had a couple of most unusual intervals. The music was slow moving and plodded along. However, it was a very interesting experience, for I realized that the music was much more exclusive and genuine than anything that I had heard so far.



Dancers rehearsing in the Kraton, Yogyakarta

I sat down with hundreds of tourists all round the large pavilion and listened. The orchestra played for a long time until the dancers finally appeared. At first we watched a lady, dressed in an elegant sarong, a brief top and an ornate headdress, who danced in a most wonderful manner, with her arms and hands moving sinuously. Undoubtedly, the various positions of the arms, hands and fingers were symbolic. She often stood on one leg, the foot of the other resting on the calf of the leg on which she was standing. Judging by the way she was trembling, some of the postures must have been very uncomfortable to hold for any length of time. The performance was very refined and wonderful to watch.

The next item featured two dancers: a man and a woman. This too was excellent and most interesting to watch. Later I moved to the opposite side of the pavilion and sat near

a very beautiful oriental girl and her American boyfriend, who was also studying gamelan playing, though in a different city. Alain suddenly appeared, looking for batteries for his flash, and so I let him borrow mine.

I chatted to the American chap while we watched the next dance, which was done by four men dressed as warriors. The dancer nearest to us was visibly sweating and trembling from holding such awkward poses. This time, most of the hand and foot movements looked very forced.

While I was watching this dance, I spotted Sheila sitting opposite and so, when the dancing was finished, I went over and joined her. Shortly afterwards two girls, one Australian and the other English, whom Sheila had met previously, joined us. While we sat chatting, we were besieged by a crowd of young students, mostly girls, who wanted to talk to us. They then wanted us to write our names and addresses in their copy books, and also write our comments on their standard of English for their teacher. Most of them found it difficult to understand our questions and replied haltingly. We discovered that many of them had only been studying the language for quite a short time. However, as they were such lovely young people, we did not mind them interrupting us.

Finally they were called to attention by their teacher and they left in a hurry. We made an attempt to look around the palace grounds, but the place was about to close and we were obliged to leave. We crossed the large square outside the palace and walked to the restaurant where I had eaten lunch on the previous day. Today I ordered a very tasty dish of chicken cooked in soy sauce with rice. We chatted and took our time; when we finished, I paid for everyone as the bill was not very expensive. The girls were quite surprised by this and were very grateful.

As the two girls were about to go off somewhere else, Sheila and I set off for Sosrowijayan Street. She wanted to go back to where she was staying, get her bathing costume and use the swimming pool in the nearby Hotel Garuda, which I gathered was quite plush. We decided to share a *becak*; I let her use her charm and we finally got one for just 400 Rp. She told me that she had managed to get one this morning for just 300 Rp. It was very pleasant sitting close to her at the back of the pedicab as we travelled back to our lodgings.

Before leaving her, we made an arrangement to meet this evening for a drink. I walked back to my lodgings, where I wrote some of my diary, stopped to wash, then wrote some more. Later, Josephine and Alain appeared in the restaurant and, shortly afterwards, I joined them once again for some afternoon tea. I decided to eat something this time and ordered the 'club sandwich', which was quite good.

Today I did not have such a rush to get to the bus for the third performance of the Ramayana Ballet, and this time I remembered to bring my ticket. While waiting outside the tourist information office, a girl asked me a question and I started to chat to her. She was from Wales and her name was Donna O'Keefe – she too had Irish connections. She sat beside me in the bus and we chatted on the way to Prambanan. She turned out to be a very warm and friendly girl. Unfortunately she was off to Jakarta and heading back home, having spent a couple of years in Australia.

She, like me, had not bought a ticket for the ballet, as she had tried to purchase one too late. I bought a couple at the venue for 3,000 Rp and would not let her pay. In gratitude, she offered to treat me to a beer afterwards. We found a couple of good seats and watched the performance together. This evening's final episode was good fun as there was a great deal of horseplay and comic interludes. I enjoyed it more than the previous evening's performance. Donna, who had a small Olympus camera with her, was able to get down very near the stage and take photographs. Occasionally her camera would not work; I managed to sort out the problem, which meant that she was able to continue until she used up her roll of film. She enjoyed also the performance.

When it was over, we travelled back on the bus together, chatting. When we got out, Donna began to head for a good restaurant in the Kembang Market, but I had to tell her that I had arranged to meet somebody else. We walked to my regular restaurant and found Sheila there – though she already had company in the shape of a hunky-looking young American guy. I should have left both of them alone, but as Sheila saw and greeted me, I sat down with them. Donna went off to leave her bag in her place and returned shortly afterwards. I detected a hint of tension in the air; Donna was obviously disappointed in me and I in Sheila, who now very obviously had her eye on the American chap. He was definitely not my sort. However, we relaxed a little as the evening wore on, especially when I exchanged seats with Sheila, which enabled her to sit closer to the American fellow and me to sit nearer Donna. I allowed her to buy me a small bottle of beer; she ordered a large bottle and a meal for herself. Sheila refused my offer of a drink, but treated the American lad, who was out of money. He consumed a considerable amount of beer at her expense.

Tired, we finally said goodnight, paid up and left. I went to bed feeling ready for a good night's sleep, especially as the beer had made me a little tipsy, but as soon as I got into bed, the television was switched on outside and a group of lively people sat down to watch the final World Cup soccer match between Germany and Argentina. Because of the racket, I was unable to sleep and became rather annoyed. I peeped outside and spotted Fiona. I called her over and asked her if her room was any quieter. She said no; she too was unable to sleep because of the noise and was only watching the match so that she might become bored enough to fall asleep.

I sat up writing my diary for a while and then became so tired that I finally put it down, turned out the light and fell asleep.