

Peru, 21.1.-15.2.09

We arrive in Lima and it looks like somewhere in the Palestinian desert. It never rains in Lima. Everything green is only green due to watering. Further east in the mountains and 4000m high planes there is water and fertility. Much of the rainfall here runs of into the Amazonas Basin. And next east comes the Amazonas Basin with high humidity, warmth and high rainfalls.

Public transport is a lot in Peru, mainly busses which are cheap in general and the many minibusses, taxis, motortaxis, tricycles and velotaxis. All kinds of taxis are abundant and cheap. Busses and minibusses can be waived down and stop everywhere along their route. Sometimes even every 50m when passengers require it. Minibusses start, whenever they are full. In one case I counted 24, 21 adults including the driver and 3 children. After we stopped I took this picture.



The fare is always the same, whether you ride the whole length or just a bit. In many cases it was just one new Sol (sun) which is about 0,25€.

We stay south of Lima in Miraflores and it is touristy and noisy. Party atmosphere. Even the noise is not in our hostel, it comes from two neighbouring discos with a monotonous rhythm all night.

After only two nights we fly to Cuzco because bustravel would take around 40 hours and is not very nice with ever winding roads from the sea level Lima to the 3600m high Cuzco. It was not an easy decision at first, but after we looked into the alternative, which is the bus the decision was easier.

Cuzco - 3600m

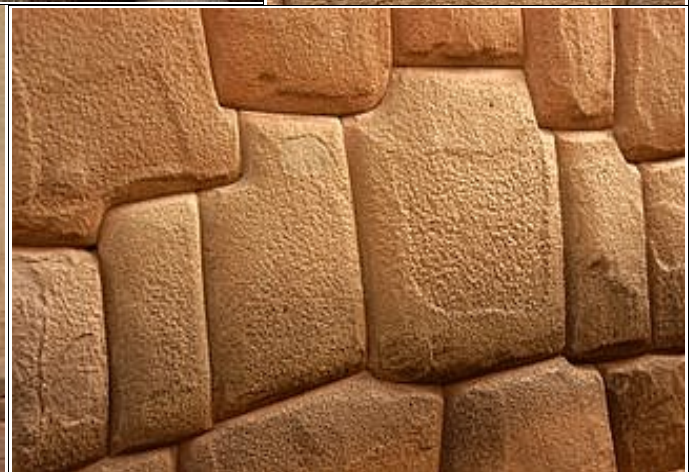
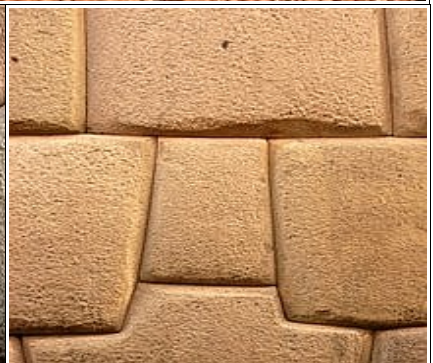
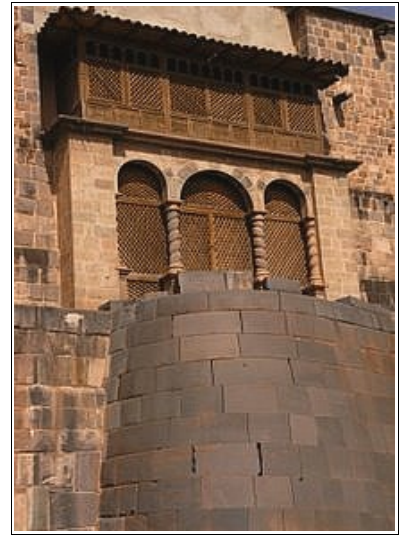


Cuzco is a small town high in the mountains surrounded by high mountains. People in Cuzco live 90% from tourism and this is why every few steps in town you will be asked to do a tour, eat in a certain restaurant, buy cloths or chickles (chewing gums) or have a massage. When I walk alone as a man the massage offers slide of into hints of sex. And the amount of "baby alpaca" sweaters, gloves, scarves, blankets

etc that are on offer certainly exceeds what can be taken from the Alpakas (or Llamas) that exist. So a good quantity of what is "bayby alpaca" is acrylic or a mix between the two. After a while we learn to distinguish, not before we had bought some of the fake, which is nice anyway. The price is also a good indicator. If a sweater only costs 10\$ it is – unfortunately unlikely to be genuine.

The town is beautiful with its clay, stone and wood buildings. Cuzco is famous for its many craftfully made stonework foundations to many buildings. They are the only testimonies of the great Inka culture that the Spanish Conquistadores left to see. Wherever

there is a church there certainly had been a great and important Inca temple before. The same story with the church like everywhere around the world that makes me angry every time.



Pisac – in the Sacred Valley

Our first trip leads us with a cramped Bus to Pisac, a small town in the “sacred valley” on the market day. The following pictures are from there and speak for themselves.

In Pisac we bought excellent coca leaves plus an alkaline mineral to help dissolve the ingredients. Chewing coca leaves was a great help on the Salkantay trek.



First we stayed in a Hotel near the main Placio de Armas (Weapons-Square! - all the Central Squares seem to be called like that in Peru!). We had negotiated a half price reduction to 24\$US because we are in low season due to rains. But the Palacio is noisy all night so we moved and found a quiet hostel for only 35 Soles (11\$) where we stayed until we left Cuzco. Out of hundreds tour operators for the Salkantay trek we decided for one only to find out that all of them then book a tour from the same sub contractor. In the tour company of 12 we find us in there are at least 6 or 7 different tour operators with different prices.



The hiking tour over the 4600m high Pass at the foot of the Salkantay and Humentay mountains, both over 6000m high, snow and ice capped was an adventure. For one thing it was the high. Even though we were in high altitude for a while before to acustom our bodys with this difference – mainly in oxigen levels. The local custom to drink tea from Coca leaves and – during the hike – have one cheak full of Coca leaves with some mineral ingredient so that the ingredients dissolve slowly. It numbs cheak and gums but seems to help to be



able to climb in high altitude. So, off we walked with big cheaks. The first camp was on 3700m on an inclined slope, with nothing much but a 8 square meter shelter with tin roof for all twelve of us to sit and eat in the dry. It was cold. The night looked well with our rented down sleepingbags - until it started to rain heavily



and, as we found out in the morning, all tents

leaked heavily. We survived the night quite well with wet sleepingbags on both ends. Others were completely wet. All the following day with the crossing of the pass it continued to rain, and on the pass it snowed. This did not give us good views and no chances to dry our things.

Mules carried the kitchen, food and 5kg of our personal things. We still had a beautifull hike up the pass with endless streams offering their water to drink. I eat snow to welcome this touch of winter. To make a long story short, we barely managed to dry our things each day and got wet again in the tents at night for three nights. And we relaxed our bodies in a beautiful hot spring bath one evening. The last night we stayed in a hostel before we climbed the last 500m to Machu Picchu.

Machu Pichu



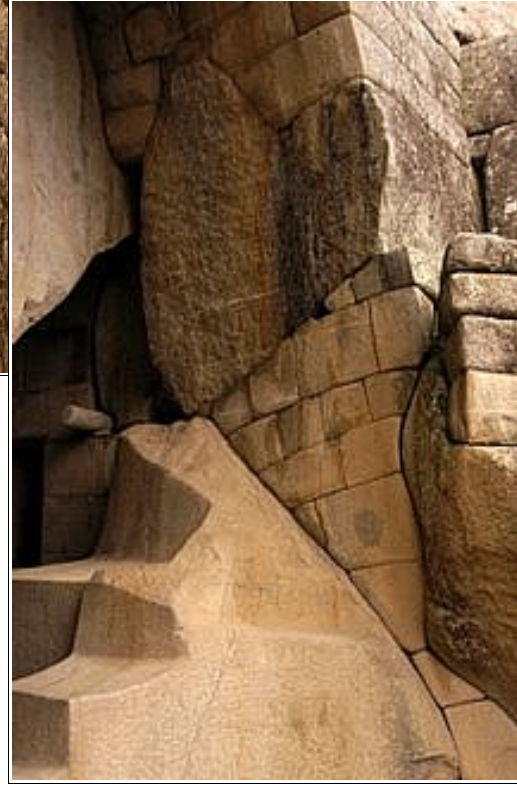
In Machu Picchu I can feel a powerfull energy in the ground, very grounded like a cone in the earth. The beauty of its stonework, the unimaginable toil that was needed to create all this and the question why they deserted it after hundreds of years of building, unfinished, all this is stunning. There exist many theories, many ideas of who they where, why they choose to build here on the incredible steep cliffs and why they disappeared. But all are phantasies of todays minds looking in an ungraspable past. We do not know and we cannot know. And we do not need to know! They had created a paradise on a top of a mountain, with superior technology, with incomprehendable care so that even the garden walls

are perfectly fitted and “glued” on to the steep 75 granite cliffs that they survived many centuries without maintanance. They had created ample teracces to produce enough food for many hundred people. The walls and buildings survived many earthquakes and now up to 3000 Tourists daily.



How could they do it?
How could they work granit and smooth it down as much as they had?
How could they move these up to 30 tons heavy blocks to the construction site and then into

place so perfectly that no mortar was needed and that one cannot get a paper in between the gaps?





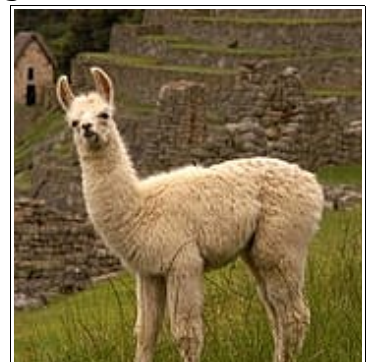
We got up very early and climbed fast to be among the first 400 allowed every day to Wayna Picchu to get a good view.

2.2.1959 - 2009

Life seems to be a constant initiation starting with birth and ending with our death. Step by step towards the

unnamable that we all are. For my 50th birthday I got a note that my mother, who had died 10 years ago of cancer, had packed a small parcel for me to receive just then. This message touched me deeply in my heart and let my love flow – and my tears. It meant a lot to me, this late message of love.

We travelled in a bus on a huge high plane on 4000m to reach lake Titicaca through a lovely landscape with adobe houses, fields of corn, Quinoa, Potatoes, Grains and lots of herbs and other vegetables (in this altitude!), grazing Llamas and Alpacas and wide blue skies between snow capped mountains in their 6000s.



The energy of this huge high plane (4000m) of Peru is very peaceful. As if the old Inka and pre-Inka energy is still prevalent here and has not given in to modern life yet. The indigena culture, that is still strong here, this humilde (humble), deep and peacefully connected way of life. Live in the moment where you are born lightly and die lightly. This deep peace that can be felt, this slow and powerfull vibration is touching. My heart responds again with joy and inner peace. Again, as many times before on this journey, I believe that this feeling of inner peace and joy is what life wants to see us in, nothing else. All the striving that I know so well in my life back at ZEGG, the striving for one good goal or another that keeps me running is a distraction and cannot lead to this peace. One thing is that they seem always to have time for a chat, for human contact. In ZEGG that means for me to put priority on people and not on work. To create and take time for whatever comes. This is what makes every day new and special. And to focus more on



this simple and profound inner happiness in every moment the joy of being (Da-Sein) within this wonder of life. Thus being creative and active, from a live in touch.



We did a short visit to Chucuito on Lake Titikaka and enjoyed the thin air on almost 4000m and the beauty of the land and water. One morning we visited the man made floating islands of Uros, an old culture of indigenas now living from tourism. Some call this islands “floating souvenir shops”...



Again and again we notice coincidences and learn to trust them. Whatever we need and want and focus on it in a very relaxed way, often turns up: We are looking for cheese in Chucuito in the evening in a shop which does not have cheese. There are not many shops. A woman just entered was selling cheese earlier on the street and wants to buy something, too. So we could buy cheese from her.

In Puno I visited a dentist to replace a lost filling, on 3920m altitude!

Colca Canyon, Chivay

Colca Canyon is high in the mountains of Peru near Peru's second biggest city Arequipa and one of the deepest Canyons on earth. We looked down to the Colca river more than 1500m and the mountains around are even higher. The canyon drops more than 2500m at some places.

It is very remote and the new road crosses a pass on 4900m. We are on a tourity bus trip and only stay 10 minutes. I have the ambition to run up the missing 100m to reach 5000m the first time in my life and do a Coca leaf ritual up there. The ritual is offering three Coca leaves on a stone and piling up three stones on top of it with wishes and prayers. I run up in thin air, manage well and it starts snowing. Just in time I am back in the waiting bus, out of breath but very happy.



Colca Canyon is known for its about 40 exemplars of Condors living there. Condors are of the vulture family and reach an average wingspan of 3.15m and can grow up to 4m wingspan. Their life expectancy is 80, when they live in the wild and 45 in captivity. They fly up to 300km to find food, dead animals and fulfill an important role in pest control. To start to fly they need winds and thermic. That is how this 2500m deep canyon is perfect for them.



When the Inca reached the Canyon their priority focus was agriculture to feed the people and to form allinances through mariages. Dialogue not war and conquer! They build many terraces to have space to grow food. The life expectancy of the people was 80 years. When the Spanish came, their priority was mining for gold and silver and dominion. Exploitation and conquista of believes. The many teraces deteriorated and the life expectancy fell to 35 years. This says a lot to me!



In the Colca Canyon we still saw lots of evidence of how the Inca had increased agriculture and enhanced fertility. All the land around the Colca river is terraced. Terraces are still used. Water was and is scarce and was distributed in many chanel throughout the valley very intelligently.



Again we could see how strong still are local customs. The market women still wear their traditional cloths, richly embroidered hats, vests and skirts. It is so beautiful to enter a different region and meet different, new customs. How refreshing in this already so globalized world.



It is amazing how all these different cultures of indigenas create beauty in so many details, specially in their ways to dress for daily life. We spent some hours in the hot (!) thermal baths that are so abundant in theis vulcanic region and eat a delicious meal near the market under a plastic cover in the rain. Afterwards we went to a cafe for “postres” (desert) and found a “Torta de Selva Negra” in Chivay, Peru on 3400m. The owner of the cafe had made the Black Forest Cake, a cake from my hometown in Germany and was asking if it was anywhere near the original. It was a lot better than the Schwarzwälder Kirschtorte that I find in Belzig, only 700km from Baden-Baden!

And along the way we have always a lot to organize through the internet for the following courses in Brazil, Mexico and the USA.

