

'The most fascinating aspects of Indonesia'

'Contemplating Nature'

By Paweł Gajewski

The most exciting thing about Indonesia can be expressed in two key words: Variety and Complexity. These words are linked and have slightly similar meaning but the main difference I see between them is that 'variety' is stretched out in a horizontal way and 'Complexity' in vertical. Both are mixed and meet in one place- pulsing core, the heart of the Indonesia that never sleeps. All the time in a rush, melting and exploding. There's no coincidence that Indonesia has the biggest amount of active volcanos. It's whole like a volcano of living! Don't be misled! Underneath the peaceful and harmonious surface, when you focus a little bit you can see floating magma of creation and destruction. In just one second the paradise can change into hell, love into fear. And you cannot overrule it. All you can do is adapt and observe. This is Indonesia from my imagination. I would like to think after my journey to Indonesia(because I haven't been there) that what I've written here is all wrong, and I didn't know anything about this land.

What's exciting for me is that Indonesia is a thousands of islands, from very big to tiny, uninhabited. Each island is different, has it's own character. You can spend whole life discovering it's rich nature and you will be still far from saying something. It's a beauty of discovering. You would like to know deeply something but all you do is reaching a point where you don't know anything and you have to redefine everything you know. Everything is so connected and mixed that the best strategy is to observe and take it as it is. Just be with that, cherish it.

At first glance on every island you see snow-white, soft sand, crystal water, vital leaves on the delicate and hairy palm trees. It's a common view of the paradise. It is only a part of the whole picture. Mostly People of 'western culture' seek relaxation and "paradise on earth". This view is something from their dreams. You can wiggle on the hammock, drink fruity cocktails and at night chase after beautiful Indonesian girls. Everything is exotic, fresh, juicy and warm. Of course It's a great opportunity to live this 'dream' for a few days and see how it is to be a God of pleasure.

But not for a long time... because there are many things to explore and exquisite explorer like me don't stop. When you leave the cozy view of straw-roofed bars of Bali, you enter the real jungle. Immediately you feel smaller. You are in a viscera of a tangled, big organism. Everything is moving and changing. Suddenly you realize that you don't know how to look or how to walk. You feel like a small baby pushed into strange, unknown world. You have to learn everything once more. Hear it's music and rhythm, play with it. Then gradually you will see the channel to connect Mother Nature. That state is full of love and beauty.

When you leave the jungle, you can see artificial hill made of stone. It's called Borobudur. Enormous Buddhist stupa. Absolutely stunning for me! Sculpted in stone stories of Buddha Shakyamuni and his teachings. I imagine myself sitting on the top of it and seeing magnificent view of the jungle during the sunset. You can rest, relax yourself, feel safe and meditate with hundreds of Buddha's faces. Feel peace, emptiness of space and thoughts. I would stay there for a whole day, listen to strange sounds of monkeys, birds and other creatures. Watch a Milky Way, breathe deeply.

What's also exciting is Indonesian biggest city, one of Giants, Jakarta. It's a central point of distributing treasures and goods from all over the Indonesia. Melting pot with invisible order that grows from chaos. Filled in a wealth and a poverty next to each other. This Incredible contrast makes this city active and vibrant and also shows that life cannot be black or white, everything is mixed and complement. I would like to meet people living here. See through their eyes, see their views on life. I would like to taste all of Indonesians dishes, rich cuisine with variety of colours, taste, smell, aesthetic. Food is a very important aspect of life. The word 'diet' comes from Greek and means 'way of life'. I agree with that etymology and I'm curious to taste a soul of Indonesia. Nowadays street food is very popular and it's true especially in Asia. I'd like also to taste the street. Eat it with pavement! I've also seen on youtube traditional Indonesian theatre and I'm fascinated in it. I'm keen on art and always seek to see how emotions are expressed in different places all over the world.

I'm impressed with Indonesians dealing with different cultures, languages, religions, frequently contradictory interests. It's a very complicated issue and I think it's the biggest challenge for this country to build a bridge of dialogue and understanding. I like the policy of freedom and preserving diverse nature of the country. There is a space for a different religions. For example, let's look on the Sulawesi Island. In Kete, village inhabited by Toraja, (ethnic group of this Island) you can see an 'animistic' funeral ceremony. Family of dead member can prepare for a funeral even for one year. They spend all of their savings, often also borrow money. For me, this ceremony looks like a 'celebration party'. People don't suffer. Instead of that they show their respect to the deceased, send good wishes, make his journey solemn, magical. They use colourful clothes, ribbons or sculptures to make it more sacred. They dance, sing... sacrifice plenty of animals, cutting their necks. It's cruel from our perspective but it's very simple and natural for them. They don't think it's wrong. Without judgement, you can say for sure that they are true and still naive. Whole ceremony is prepared for the wealth of the dead relative, to give him a better position in the 'paradise', to wish him a good and peaceful journey throughout known world to sacred, mysterious land of ancestors, ghosts and gods.

There are many more fascinating aspects. I didn't even want to mention all of them, I just want to show that there is so much to explore, experience, understand that you can't write everything in a volume of two pages. It's impossible. Personally, I want to see and taste everything. I'm very hungry and I'm lost. You have to forgive me. I wrote a journey through my imagination, only a few pictures. Indonesia has it's own rhythm and music. If you listen to it, you can dance with the spirits of this land. Everything has it's own function and meaning. It's a natural way of existence. In Indonesia it is still unspoiled and disordered. Chaotic, natural. You can look on Nature. But Nature is not trees, not sand but something that it means. That's the most fascinating thing to feel. I think in the core of Indonesia, that heart I mentioned in the first paragraph, is a mirror when we can see ourselves. It constantly reflects clearly our own image.

