

THREADS OF LIFE

January 2011 newsletter



Weavers from Belu welcoming the 2010 Threads of Life Textile Tour to their village (left) where they later demonstrated spinning, dyeing and weaving techniques (center); the Threads of Life team at Limbong village in Lake Toba in Sumatra (right)

Dear Friends,

Following the success of last year's textile tour to Bali and Timor, Threads of Life and Jalan Jalan Asia Tours are again offering a [two week journey from 19th September to 3rd October 2011](#), this time to Bali and Yogyakarta in Java to meet weavers, dyers and batik artists, and to explore the culture and traditions surrounding the textile arts in Indonesia. During 7 nights in Ubud, Bali's cultural center, we will receive introductions to Indonesia's textile and natural dye arts at Threads of Life and the YPBB Foundation, meet local weavers, explore Bali's rich culture and countryside, and visit wood carvers, mask makers and painters. With 4 nights in Yogyakarta we have plenty of time to enjoy the rich heritage of central Java. Traditional and contemporary batik will be the focus of our journey, which will also include the 8th century Borobudur Buddhist stupa, the 9th century Prambanan Hindu temple complex, and the Sultan's palace. Returning to east Bali for the final 3 nights grants us the opportunity to visit Tenganan and meet its double-ikat weavers, and visit one of Threads of Life's weavers' cooperatives on the island's east coast. The tour price is USD 3,488 plus estimated local airfares of USD 225 (not including international airfares). Sign up soon as space is limited. Contact jean@threadsoflife.com

At the end of November, Jean, Pung and Frog travelled to the Lake Toba area of Sumatra with Sandra Niessen, author of "Legacy in Cloth: Batak Textiles of Indonesia", the definitive work on the textiles of the Batak peoples. With Sandra's encouragement, the YPBB Foundation sought a grant from the Dutch Embassy in Indonesia to fund two years of work reviving the textile arts of the Lake Toba region. Threads of Life's role in the project is to provide a stable market and guide weavers towards high quality and cultural integrity in their work. The YPBB's role will be in the participatory research of traditional dye recipes with the weavers and the sustainable use of dye plants. The initial field trip identified three potential communities for further work throughout 2011 and 2012. Watch this space for more news.

News of the YPBB Foundation

The YPBB Foundation is Threads of Life's YPBB's quarterly Indonesian language magazine to its network of weavers' groups across Indonesia is called Suara Budaya, or The Voice of Tradition. With circulation of 1500 copies, it ties the loose association of cooperatives we work with into a functioning network. Weavers share news with each other through notices in its pages, articles on the cultures of member co-ops elevate pride in heritage, explanations of dye plant cultivation and composting facilitate sustainable dye plant harvesting, articles

As mentioned in the last newsletter, we brought a group of Savunese weavers, dancers and musicians to perform at the Ubud Readers and Writers Festival. Wenten has written a thoughtful piece for our [field notes](#) section of our website that is worth reading.

In December, Made Rai Artha, also known as Lolet, resigned from Threads of Life to seek new opportunities. Lolet had been with Threads of Life from its earliest days in the late 1990s and was a central figure in the office, the gallery and the field. He is certainly missed within the organization, but as he said in parting, "When a tree falls down in the forest, it gives room for the younger trees to grow." While we are not seeking to fill his shoes directly, the wisdom of his observation is already showing as we share out the load of Lolet's former responsibilities and younger staff begin to flourish. We wish Lolet every success on his new career path.

on fair trade and bookkeeping encourage skill improvement, and field reports of YPBB activities maintain transparency with our partners. For just USD 3.50 we can print and mail four editions of Suara Budaya for a small weavers' group. With distribution to over fifty such groups, Suara Budaya is just one of the cost-effective ways YPBB multiplies the impact of its work. To support the publication of Suara Budaya, please donate to www.ypbb.org via Give2Asia, PayPal, or bank transfer.

Best wishes,

from William, Jean, Pung and everyone at Threads of Life and the YPBB Foundation

On Threadsoflife.com

Threads of Life is a fair trade business that utilizes culture and conservation to alleviate poverty in rural Indonesia. The heirloom-quality textiles, baskets and crafts we commission are made with local materials and natural dyes. With the proceeds from sales, we help weavers to form independent cooperatives and to manage their resources sustainably.

WHAT WE DO

This section explains the breadth and depth of our work. Behind the beautiful textiles seen in the gallery are months of [field work](#) each year [supporting women's weaving cooperatives](#) through [fair trade](#), [revitalizing traditional textile techniques](#), and [conservation efforts](#).

FIELD NOTES

Keeping people informed of our ongoing work in the communities is important to us. Every time our staff return from a field visit their experiences and observations are turned into a [field notes](#) slide show. Over time a rich archive of these will build up for visitors to browse through.

INDONESIAN TEXTILE ARTS

Fourteen slide shows explore the traditional [textile arts](#) from across the Indonesian archipelago while introducing the [weavers](#) and their [cooperatives](#), and the [materials](#), [natural dyes](#), and production [techniques](#) they employ.

OUR TEXTILES

Detailed descriptions, cultural references and photographs with high-resolution images [catalog](#) a varied and exciting sample of the best textiles produced by the weavers' cooperatives associated with Threads of Life.

OTHER PRODUCTS

Traditional links between livelihood, culture and nature are expressed through some of the world's finest [basketry](#). Diverse [cultural arts](#), including pottery, woodcarving and bead work, also retain a remarkable vitality. [Books, music and DVDs](#) illustrate and entertain.

CLASSES, TOURS and UPCOMING EVENTS

The [classes](#) offered at the gallery on the history and diversity of Indonesia's textile arts are an excellent way to gain a new level of appreciation. News of any tours, events or exhibitions we are offering is also to be found here.

HOW TO PURCHASE

Threads of Life sells its textiles, baskets, or other cultural artifacts through its [gallery in Ubud](#), Bali, and occasional overseas exhibitions and sales. Books, music and videos are available online.

THREADS OF LIFE TEXTILE ARTS CENTER

Jalan Kajeng 24, Ubud, Bali 80571, Indonesia
Open 10 am to 7 pm daily.

[Click for directions](#).

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YPBB FOUNDATION

YPBB stands for Yayasan Pecinta Budaya Bebali and is the name of the Indonesian nonprofit that the Threads of Life business is partnered with in its community work. [Read more](#) about YPBB's projects and funding.

GET INVOLVED

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