

Wednesday 1 February 2012 – Cochin 34° Sunny

Mumbai to Cochin 590 nm



There is a lot of coughing and sneezing going on around us which Rick is also contributing to. Our Indian Guide was completely useless. There was a lot of industry around the port and Cochin was a busy, colourful place. Our first stop was to see the famous Chinese fishing nets that are held up on bamboo poles which lower them into the sea. There were quite a few palatial houses around and I saw a snake charmer with his hideous snake coming out of a basket. Then it was onto a hotel where we watched a martial arts demonstration of “Kalaripayattu” which is where all forms of martial arts originate from. There was lots of fighting with sticks, swords and knives which sent a few sparks flying. Then we saw a really bizarre traditional Kerala Art Performance of Kathakali. We had watched them prepare their make-up while we had our coffee and canapes. Kathakali is a classical 17th century, South Indian dance-drama, rooted in Hindu mythology. The two men dressed up in elaborate costumes and the performance started with the female giving us 10 minutes of eye movements, up, down, sideways, round and round, on and on. This was followed by the lifting of the eyebrows and eventually the whole face quivered. If this was not bad enough his head started to move from side to side and then weird things happened to his body. He then went on to mime a variety of emotions i.e. love, fear, valour etc followed by expressions like “bees sucking honey from the locust plant” this also went on for quite a while. Then the main drama started, nobody really got the story as we were all still shell shocked but we know that it was a tragedy which must have been something to do with love and betrayal. However, we all understood that the male had a sword and ended up with him cutting her throat and one of her breasts off. An Indian in a loincloth was wailing in the background and they were accompanied by drums played with sticks and fingers and there was a little little gong/cymbal. The drumming was very powerful and added to the strange atmosphere. It was too hot and humid to sit outside so it was back to our favourite cinema for 3 hours of “Ghandi”. We are having an evening in as Rick's feeling too poorly to go to the restaurant. He's milking it though as he has just asked me for a medicinal sherry.

