

## La reapertura no es tan fácil (Perú, 24.07.2007 to 21.08.2007)

The resumption isn't so easy

After 6 months we arrived at the 24th of August again in Lima. It took us two large flights, the first from Frankfurt to Miami with a 12-hour stop in Miami and then again a 10-hour flight to Lima. We landed in the early morning at 06 o'clock, totally exhausted and our first impression from the city wasn't be so nice because the first what we saw where the suburbs who aren't very pretty. It was wintertime here so the sky was totally cloudy for most of the day. Well the people here have to sustain this kind of weather for around 4 to 5 month, but for us after one week this was enough.

At our second day in Lima we released our bicycle from there prison. They were guarded in the storeroom at the KOTRA office (Korean chamber of commerce) in San Isidro/Lima, in the room of their air condition machines. So a lot of wind could enter in this room and with the wind a lot of dust from the city entered. The result was, that our bicycles where covered with a solid black slimy paste. It took around two hours to get them a little bit clean because we wanted them to carry in a taxi to the hotel, but lucky as we are, the director of KOTRA invited us for a free ride with their company car. In the hotel I continued with the cleaning action and to get all the stuff together, because for the storage and the transport they were disassembled, it took around two days. Also I changed some parts, like the brakes (from Magura HS33 to Shimano Deore LX) and our saddles (from Brooks to Selle SMP TRK).

We needed around a week to get back in the rhythm and to arrange our next tour trip. Then we were ready to start again. Our first sight that we spotted out was the mountain range of Ancash and the city of Huaraz on an altitude of around 3100 meter. But after six months without training and acclimatization we couldn't immediately start from 0 meter up to over 4000 m (to Huaraz a high pass had to be crossed). So our first decision was a ride for this first part with the bicycle stored in a bus. As I told you our acclimatization from our last staying was like water under the bridge so we just started from zero again. The first meters weren't very easy and every step forward required a minute for breath taking. So for the first 3 days we've got a lot of headache and for the consumption of this pain, it was good to drink some cups of coca tea and also to find some nice restaurants. In addition there was, not so far away from Huaraz, a place called Monterrey with hot thermal baths, a good choice for relaxing. In Huaraz we found a nice guesthouse (El Jacal) not far away from the central plaza. Then we decided to make a round trip to Chiquian with our bicycles, only with a little of equipment to get a better acclimatization and condition. This choice was good idea, because after this round trip our following track had to go to the north following the river downhill for a couple of days and then rise again a little bit. So we would have a good acclimatization and condition, because on the way to Chiquian we should have to climb around 1000 meter. The first meters on this short trip was easy with soft climbing, but then on the second day, we encountered a strong head wind and as well a heavy climbing part. Mun Suk wasn't very happy with this situation and when we arrived, a little bit exhausted, in a small town called Conococha, she wasn't such as happy and for her part she decided to go back to Huaraz. But with a slightly persuade and a small bus that arrived just in this moment, we took this chance to reach Chiquian. Unfortunately this way to Chiquian was mostly downhill, so normally this decision was a shame for me because a downhill ride is the real profit for a cyclist, but after I saw the road condition this conclusion wasn't the worst. Around 1000-meter downhill on a rough descending slippery dirt gravel road, well this isn't really a great advantage.

We rested 2 days in Chiquian and under normally condition our round trip would take us up to the Pastoruri Mountain area. But no one could give us some reliably information about this route and the only dependably information what we clustered together wasn't such as enjoyable. The information was that on a very short distance we should have to climb again around over 1200 meter on a very dirt track and then, on a slightly not used trail, also in

worst condition, we should have to go downhill, uphill and then again downhill for around 60 km. Well sometime it is hard to catch the right information beforehand, but in Huaraz and on the way to Chiquian nobody could give us some information about this part. So the only choice was, well the other was to fight very hard for two or more days, only for surviving, to catch a bus back to Conococha and then downhill boasting up to Huaraz. We decided the choice on a part with a bus and so, on the same day we arrived back in Huaraz. For the compensation of this short and little bit unsuccessful trip we made a day trip tour on the next day to Chavin to make a visit of the pre-Inca Chavin ruins there.

At least at the 12th of August we started, fully armed and heavy loaded to continue our bicycle-world-tour trip. We followed the river Santa downstream, between the Cordillera Blanca and the Cordillera Negra and this route was very pleasant. Also the traffic wasn't such as heavy so we could enjoy this ride. We arrived at 4 o'clock in the afternoon in Caraz. The following day we let our bicycles in the hostel to make a visit of the Laguna Paron. Well it wasn't so far from the city, around 32 km, but this lagoon is up on the hills on an altitude of 4150 meter, so it was a good choice for this day trip to take a transport for the climb of around 1900 meters. When we arrived and after a short walk the view over the lagoon was really awesome. Such a beautiful lagoon with deeply turquoise water surrounded by massive snow-capped peaks. We and another German couple that came with us in the same taxi was the only visitors of this gorgeous place, so we could enjoy this natural environment without any hassle. After Caraz was Huallanca our next stage of this journey. The first 20 km was easy to ride on a good paved road only with some short parts where some landslides have demolished the surface. On this way another natural environment was waiting for us. The canyon "Cañon del Pato" where the Cordillera Blanca and Cordillera Negra nearly gets together only separated by the river "Rio Santo". Here we had to cross under tremendous walls of bare rocks and crossing through 36 tunnels on a very small and dirt road. This site was amazing only the crossing parts of the tunnels was a little bit frightening because some of them was so long, so we had to cross them in totally darkness. This was in fact a very scary moment because, riding in the darkness with the possibility of a vehicle who came across and no place to hide, because the tunnels were so narrow and there was only enough space for one automobile.

As you could see we survived this part and after the tunnels we arrived in Huallanca, a small town. The only interesting part of this town is the hydroelectric power plant station. But regretfully there is nothing to see from the power plant as the hydroelectric part is covered inside the mountain. So first we looked for a place to stay for the night and after chat with some locals a man offered us a room in his house furnished with two mattresses on the floor. A little bit poor but better than nothing. We took a very cold shower and then we visited the town and walked a little bit around, to get some relaxation for our handicapped muscles and nerves. To cross the town was only an 8-minute part of slow walking so we made this trip around 4 times. We thought that the following part couldn't be such as hard as the part before because the route was following the river downstream. But, perhaps we made a bad shot because downstream it isn't every time equal as downhill. So the first 10 km, again on a dirt gravel track, was a tuff climbing to do. Only the amazing surrounding could give us a little bit of compensation for the struggle that we had to fight. For Mun Suk the fight was too hard so she decided more to push her bike than riding it not only the uphill part so also some parts of very steep downhill sections. Well this road wasn't really for enjoying. After 7 hours we had made only 25 kilometres and the next place, where we could find a place for a rest was far away. Then after hours a bus came down on our direction, so we stopped them and we induce the driver to take us a part of the way. First he wants to get a high price for this ride but after a short conversation we've found an agreement. So appreciatively we arrived in the darkness in Santa, the first city down on the Panamericana highway. Our bags and the bikes were totally dust crusted from the road soil but this wasn't interesting for us, only we want to find a place to rest for the night. Santa isn't such a big city so the decision for a hotel was fast. We pushed our stuff inside, took a short shower and then we looked for a hot meal for this day. Once more the choice was between chicken and chicken. Sitting and eating, drinking a beer and launching the TV in the front of the restaurant we catch up the

notice that the south of Peru was effected by a violent earthquake. The people in Santa said to us that they also could feel a little bit of this earthquake beside the epicentre was around 750 kilometres far away. We, in fact, felt nothing about this earthquake because at this time we where still riding in the bus to Santa. We heard that Ica and the surrounding cities where mostly affected by this earthquake, so we felt very sorry for the involved people and the nice places, them who we visited around a half year ago.

After Santa our next bigger destination was Trujillo. There we arrived at the 16th of August and on our schedule plan contained now a little bit of culture education and environment. Chan Chan the biggest adobe settlement in America or perhaps of the world and Huaca de la Luna and Huaca del Sol, some pyramid adobe constructions from the Moche period where on our visiting list. Also we found a very nice hostel with cable TV, with a big king size bed, a bathtub and a private garage in front of the room. First we thought this must be an expensive hostel but the price was cheap enough for us and we had to pay for this luxury only 10 US\$. However the only hoax was, that the first 3 nights a free music for the whole night from the disco beside was included, so to get to sleep was only very late at the break of the dawn possible. But after 3 nights with deafening Latin music the disco was closed and so we got a very tranquil and peacefully place for the rest of our 7 days lodging.