

January 19, 2010

by [Kimiko Karpoff](#) on Wednesday, January 19, 2011 at 10:54am

We've had quite a first leg of the journey and I'm grateful to be here at Ave Maria in Battor. It is the home of Matthias and set up to easily accommodate guests. It's a compound with many buildings. I still haven't figured out who all of the people are here.

It's like Rivendale, a refuge after the first part of the journey and the realization that the journey may be more difficult than anticipated. For the Hobbits it was the reality of being pursued by powerful people intent on their failure. For me it is the reality of my self and my limitations.

Yesterday in the night I had awakened very early feeling somewhat unwell. It was so great to talk to Finn on Skype, but I could not sleep and by daylight I had overwhelming nausea and vomiting. Despite that we chose to push on, looking at each step and deciding to make a decision at each one.

At the market, Kaneshie, we stopped in to pick up Wade's shirt which was not ready. Already the exhaust fumes and trotro ride had started to take a toll. I just thought, "If I can get to the [Canadian] Embassy, I'll be fine." Trotro to transfer point. As I got off that trotro I began to feel quite dizzy and generally unwell. Wade suggested we take a taxi to the embassy and I was so grateful.

The embassy was air conditioned. While Wade met, I lay on the floor where I dozed for the duration of the meeting.

After unsuccessfully trying to catch a trotro to the down town area, we caught a cab. First stop, the bank. Again just standing at the teller window was exhausting. When we left for the post office, Wade offered to carry both heavy back packs and I gratefully allowed him to.

By the time we'd purchased postcards and stamps, a long 2 to 2 1/2 hour ride in a trotro seemed unlikely for me unless I could knock the nausea. Wade had mentioned that his friend Christian has a pharmacy in Mepe, but Mepe being our destination I felt I needed something before then. I sent Wade off in search of a pharmacy to get something like gravol.

He came back shortly with a story of being sent from one pharmacy to another, the second having a doctor.

Professor (retired) Kwame Eshun-Wilson was lovely to chat with, once we'd determined I could not have malaria, which of course was his first thought. I got some Avomaine tablets, took one right there and sat and chatted with the good doctor while Wade went to find lunch. We had one more bank stop and then to the trotro station.

This trotro was a bit bigger than a mini-van with two seats on each side in rows like a bus. But much smaller than a bus so very squished. And, as it fills, a third jump seat folds in the aisle. I was fortunate to be in a row with one child in it so the third seat was bum overflow. Five adults across was very tight. One very large woman got on and she could barely get down the aisle.

For most of the ride I put my head down on my arms and dozed.

We arrived in Battor. Wade picked up a few items and we walked here to Ave Maria, arriving around 7 pm. I took a second Avomaine tablet and went to sleep. I woke up at 8 a.m.

And so, instead of heading to Adexor today, it has been a day of rest. We walked to the market and that was enough. Before going I ate a little rice porridge and bread. And while I no longer felt nauseated, I feel far from well.

And so I am here but have not really ventured far from this room. So much more challenging to put yourself out when sick.



Fried egg sandwich and tea stand, Battor market.

It's still hot here, of course, but the humidity feels less and there's a breeze.

It's just about 5 p.m. and I'm noticing the first very small stirrings of hunger. I just ate a slice of papaya. The flavour so much more intense and sweet than any papaya I've eaten in Canada. While we can get anything in Canada, maybe we shouldn't. It gives a false impression of how fruit should taste.

Already I am aware of how challenging it will be for me to be here without a defined role. A role is an enabler, a crutch even. It is much more difficult to simply be than to do. I shouldn't make having a role sound so negative. It can be a door opener. I just know how much easier it is for me to have something to *do*. And I will. I will do what the family is doing.

Many small children here. Don't know who they all are, or to whom they belong. Walking to the market we passed through the school yard. All of the children waving and shouting Yavoo, Yavoo (white man). Here, I am definitely white.



Children visiting our room at Matthias'

Matthias works for the hospital here in Battor. We stopped by there on the way to the market. I believe Wade said he's a grounds keeper there. Wade said he also owns a home in a village.

It would have been interesting to see more of the hospital. It does not resemble a North American hospital. Small buildings in a compound. Lots of pregnant women around.

I need to stretch my body if I'm going to make it to the village any time soon.

Ate small amount of rice for breakfast with a little milk and bread. Papaya - delicious. Supper, rice and a fish stew. Ate mostly rice. The strong fishy smell and taste of the stew didn't sit well. Wade said it's typical of stew in the village although we would get less rice.

Met children and played on grass mat, read the story of the Little Red Hen. Funny. I had been thinking of that story earlier when Wade talked about what happens when someone gets a bicycle or some other useful thing and then everyone wants to borrow it until it gets broken.