

ADVENTURE CHILE (part 1)

Osanna Vaughn

Two or three hours of heavy turbulence over the Atlantic made it rather difficult to sleep, wondering (in a rather detached manner) if we might have to divert somewhere to check that no bits had fallen off the plane! Even so, the pilot ploughed on, so I reckoned he knew what he was doing. Once over Brazil, things calmed down and, as the sun began to rise, the Boeing 777 began its descent into Santiago de Chile. And what a stunning sight from my window seat. First a landscape that might belong to another planet: barren expanses with amazing patterns formed by millennia of erosion; winding dry river beds, gulleys criss-crossing like a fisherman's net, dramatic canyons gradually leading into the foothills of the cordilleras, majestic peaks rising towards us as the plane came in to land. Hmm... this might just be the most impressive aerial approach I've yet experienced.



Crossing the cordilleras

Pedro Delano (Chairman of Subud Chile) and Sarah Becker (International Helper) met me with smiling faces, pleased to see that the fine weather (summer more than autumn) that they had requested was delivering up 30 degree temperatures and clear blue skies (as it would the following days). They whisked me home to Sarah's house, where we chatted and drank coffee before I took a nap. Later Sarah took me to a lookout point from where she showed me the whole city spread out in every direction, surrounded on all sides by Sierras, and in the evening I had my first latihan with the very welcoming group. Subud Santiago's house of many years is elegant and spacious, with a

delightful, large back patio area, which irresistibly invites you to sit and linger over a cup of tea (or a yummy soup prepared by Sharif), discussing every aspect of Subud life in Chile... or singing a few songs. I immediately felt at home.



Relaxing in the patio

The following day, Sarah's husband Laksar arrived from the north of the country and we drove over the sierras with their two daughters to Valparaiso on the coast, where we enjoyed a tasty fish lunch on the waterfront. In the late afternoon we returned to the Subud house for latihan and a presentation from a dozen or more members who have set enterprise/endeavour development as their first priority. One goal is to make the Subud centre a 'casa viva' – an 'alive' house, developed in such a way that spaces would be available for every group need as well as projects extended out towards the community. After a delicious Peruvian sea-food soup, Pedro Delano and Rachmat Becker delighted us with traditional South American songs. The music was interspersed with much laughter, because the duo kept on forgetting the words; this did not, however, diminish the pleasure all round. To get a taste of it, please go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbAC-51t9Dw>

April 11th marked exactly 50 years since the opening of many members during Bapak's very first visit to the country. This was celebrated by latihan followed by a formal sit-down dinner. Words were spoken, images from that visit (and the four consequent ones) were shown, anecdotes were shared and, three enormous birthday cakes were presented to the seven or eight 'pioneers' in attendance, and then enjoyed by all. Guests also

included Elisa Sanchez Caballero, the Zone 9 Representative from Argentina. After the meal there was more music and dancing. The celebrations continued the following day (now joined by International Helper Emmanuel Aronie who arrived in the morning), with latihan followed by a family barbecue which brought together well over one hundred people, including family members and friends. The setting could hardly be more ideal or the atmosphere more delightful.



Pioneers of Subud Chile

Interwoven with all these activities, I had many chances to speak with different members interested in questions regarding the international association, Susila Dharma and enterprises. The discussions were always lively, showing a keen interest to understand and develop activities.

On Monday the mountains were calling. Pedro, Sarah and Nabilah Castillo (National Helper) took Emmanuel and I up the Cajón del Maipo, on a drive following the Maipo river as it threads its way through the different sierras. After reaching the point where the tarmac road turned into dirt, we stopped by the river to enjoy the song of the water cascading over the rocks and, in some cases, paddle our feet. On the way back we stopped for lunch at the Casa Bosque which, as far as I'm concerned, is the closest thing I've come across to Rivendell – the house of Elrond. I think the photos say it all...

...to be continued...



Casa Bosque aka Rivendell



The delightful woodwork...



The amazing interior...