

MOROCCO

This year, I started my trip by meeting Kate Montgomery, Mark Phillips, and Stan Thompson at the Hotel Central in Casablanca, right across from the Port de la Pêche (Fishing Port). We began our trip with a good Moroccan lunch, and then we went to see the Hassan II Mosque.



GHANA

We took a plane to Accra that same evening and arrived at about 3 AM. Akwaba! Welcome!

The next day, Peter joined us in order to accompany us to the store in order to buy the boots and machetes that we were going to take to the villages. Just this once, I drove the vehicle. But it became my only time, as I quickly learned that driving while white is risky to one's wallet, as I was pulled over and fined twice for false pretexts.



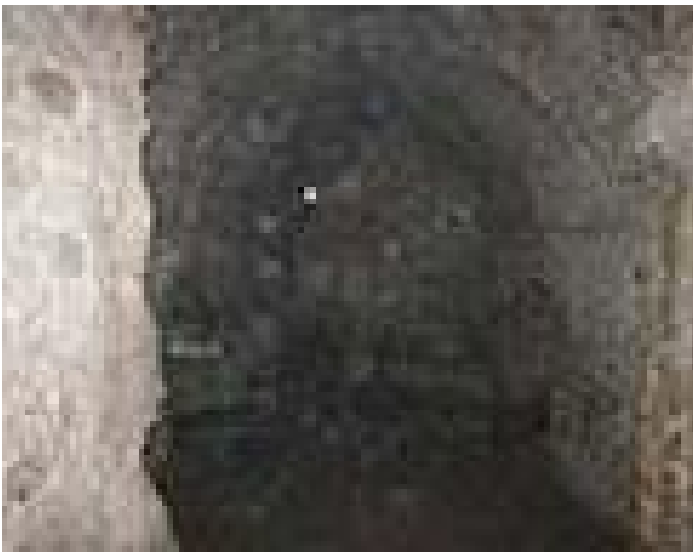
Above: we met at the Hotel Mensvic, which I had frequented since 2003. The hotel is near the University of Legon where I gave a seminar in 2003.

CHAPTER 5

Left: before starting out, we arrange the cases of boots and machetes on the roof of the car. At the end of the trip, I discovered that the roof of the car had developed dents from Peter's feet.

CAPE COAST CASTLE

Below, left: one of the rooms where hundreds of men crouched for months, waiting to be loaded and stacked on slave ships. Right: Stan surveys the Gulf of Guinea for enemy ships.



JUKWAH



Jukwah is a few kilometers north of Cape Coast. We stopped there briefly to say “hi” before continuing on to Mmaniaye.



The next day we visit Jukwah for a second time--this time to deliver boots and machetes. The "king" or Omanhene of the Fantis lives in Jukwah. We visit with him and he thanked us for our efforts.

MMANIAYE



We arrive in Mmaniyaye at 9 PM. The village is waiting for us and lights a bonfire with lengths of bamboo which burn hot and fast. Right: the town crier hits the gong-gong to call villagers. Above and left: a kerosene lamp that contribute to indoor pollution. Electric lights are now much better for health of humans and of the planet.

Cocoa



The next day, we make a bunch of small excursions around the village. We start with the cocoa farmers. Above: fermented beans dry on a carpet made of palm leaves. Drying takes about two weeks. Every afternoon, they have to be covered because of daily rains. Middle, left: I show the spots where myrids have pierced the skin and deposited fungal spores that eventually rot the pods. Bottom, left: the young man shows how you should cut the stem with a sharp machete in order to prevent a wound that will infect and eventually kill the tree. Right: a cocoa tree that has been carefully treated with pesticides and fungicides produces good-looking pods and the tree looks healthy. Note the cocoa leaves on the ground which act as mulch and help the soil retain moisture.

Gari



Gari is made of cassava, introduced by the Portuguese during the 15th century to provide a calorie source for the slaves. To make it, one grates the tuber, lets it ferment, one presses to extract the juice and finally dries in a large flat pan. Since it is fermented and dried, gari will not spoil bacterially. Instead, it molds. But slowly. It was designed to serve as a long-term source of sustenance during the trips through the jungle when days might pass in order to go from one village to another.

Below, palm fruits being removed from their clusters before they are boiled and pressed.

Palm Fruits



Domestic Work



Top left: doing the dishes. Right, teen-agers are expected to get water morning and evening every day of the week. Middle, left: three women take care of a baby, chat, and cook. Bottom, left: every morning at 5 AM, women and children sweep the village of garbage and filth. Bottom, right: making shingles for one's roof using palm leaves and sewing them onto a framework using palm fibers.

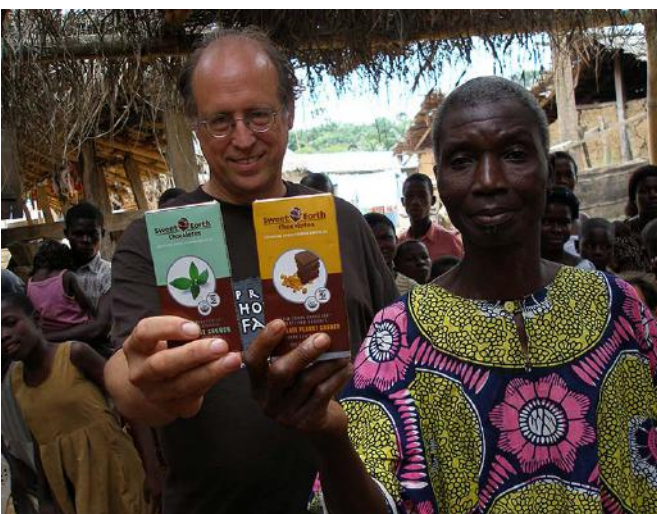
Coconuts



Top left: certain young men are agile and relish climbing the trunks of coconut trees in order to cut off a few coconuts. The green ones are full of coconut milk, which is so refreshing and nourishing.

Left: children help their parents. This young girl is carrying a platter of dried fish to the market for her mother.

The Gift Ceremony



The gift ceremony and the hat dance. Top, left: the young men beat the drums made of plastic containers. Right, one of ten women performing the hat dance. Middle, left: the chief also dances. Bottom, left: Tom and the chief show chocolate bars manufacture by Mama Ganache Artisan Chocolates, Inc. To the right, mchetes donated to the village.

Others



Top, left: they use palm stems to build models such as this helicopter. Or, they build a bird cage (right). Middle, left: the pied piper followed by his believers. Middle, right, a young man applies a layer of stucco to protect the muddy center from diluvian rains. Bottom, left, a village toilet. Note the corn cobs that function as toilet paper.

Next page, top and left: often, villages build their own schools. Right: they are going into the forest to cut a twisted tree, let it fall and dry so they can later convert it into charcoal. It is sold in large bags roadside. Straight trees often belong to the village chief or to a rich family living in the city. These are sold to lumberyards where they are converted either into furniture wood or beams for houses.



ADIYAW Gari



Adiyaw makes gari like all Fanti villages. Above, the young man is repairing his gari grater before using it to grate cassava (manioc). Right, women drying gari before bagging it up for sale.

CHAPTER 5

The Gift Ceremony



Adiyaw received us with dance and music. Top left: Peter Sewornoo off-loads boxes of boots and machetes. Right, Stan Thompson has already found a friend. Middle, right: Padmore and Mark. Middle, right: they make music with lengths of bamboo that are slammed on flat rocks. Bottom, left: “eyeglasses”. One is made of bamboo (left) and the other of a beer can (right).

Children



Dance



EBEKAWOPA



We slept that night in a church on the cement floor. Right, we woke at 6 AM (the village being already busy). Here we see the village kitchen. They are in the process of making our breakfast, which consists of an excellent red-red.

Jungle Still



Breakfast is being served at 10 AM. So we have time to do a little exploring. First, we visit a distillery, where they make schnapps (called koutoukou in Côte d'Ivoire). The distiller heats the palm wine in an old oil barrel. The vapors pass through a plastic tube immersed in a pond and then in a plastic container.

Cocoa



Top left: a cocoa tree with Trinitario blood. Right, top and bottom: Reverend Sampson. Top, he is holding mistletoe, which kills cocoa trees by sucking their juices. Bottom right: a Forastero (aka Amelonado). Bottom left: a cocoa farmer shows his small harvest (between seasons). The two main seasons correspond to the two rainy seasons.

Cooking

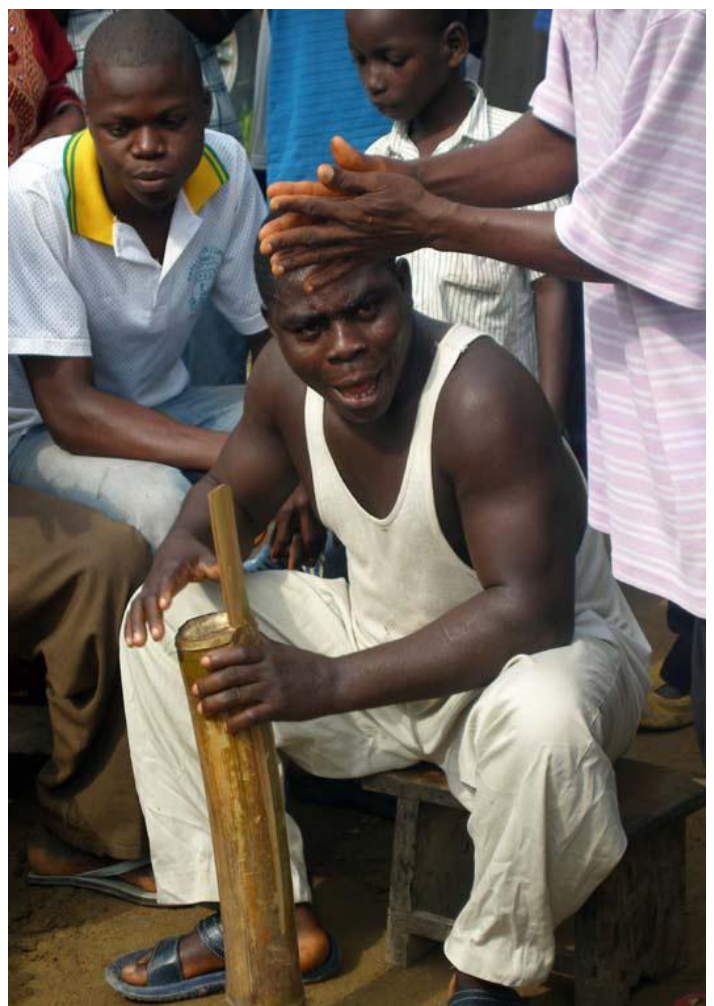


Left: Women prepare our breakfast, which is red-red. They are cooking black-eyed peas or cow peas in palm oil. Right, they fry slices of plantain in palm oil. Hence the name, red-red.



A chicken hotel. The chickens climb the ladder with aplomb. A plantain sucker leans against the hotel. The parent plant produces plantains for one season. It also produces suckers. Then, one separates off the suckers and replants them to get new parents and new crops.

Dance



Rev. Sampson arranged for dance and music in order to honor us before the gift exchange. Above, the dance troupe enters the village. Middle, left: women join them. Bottom left and right: young men make music and rhythm.

CHAPTER 5

Our Gifts to the Village



And in Exchange

...



We exchange gifts. We (PH&F) give boots, machetes and t-shirts. They give us bananas, plantains, and a very pretty roaster (see next page).



GYAWARE



We leave to visit our fifth village, Gyaware, which means in Fanti: “too far to come visit your.” On the way, I made a mistake (bottom, left). Instead of putting the tires on the high points of the ridges, I choose the right side where the soil is soft. Thankfully, we found some pieces of bamboo which we put under the tires on the right side. Once we arrived, the town crier beats a gong-gong to call the village together.

CHAPTER 5



Top, it's a village located right next to Kakum National Park. The houses and paths are artistically placed. Middle: we are waiting for the rain to stop before we start the gift exchange ceremony. It rains a lot in Gyaware because it is located right next to the rainforest. When one cuts the trees of a rainforest, one terminates the periodic rains. Bottom: everyone rejoices at their good fortune to be given such valuable tools (see this page and the following page).



Middle, we explore the forest primeval, where we find traces of forest elephants, who have the habit of plunging through, breaking everything in their path. Middle, right, a young man brings home wood for his mother. Bottom, village children say good-bye.



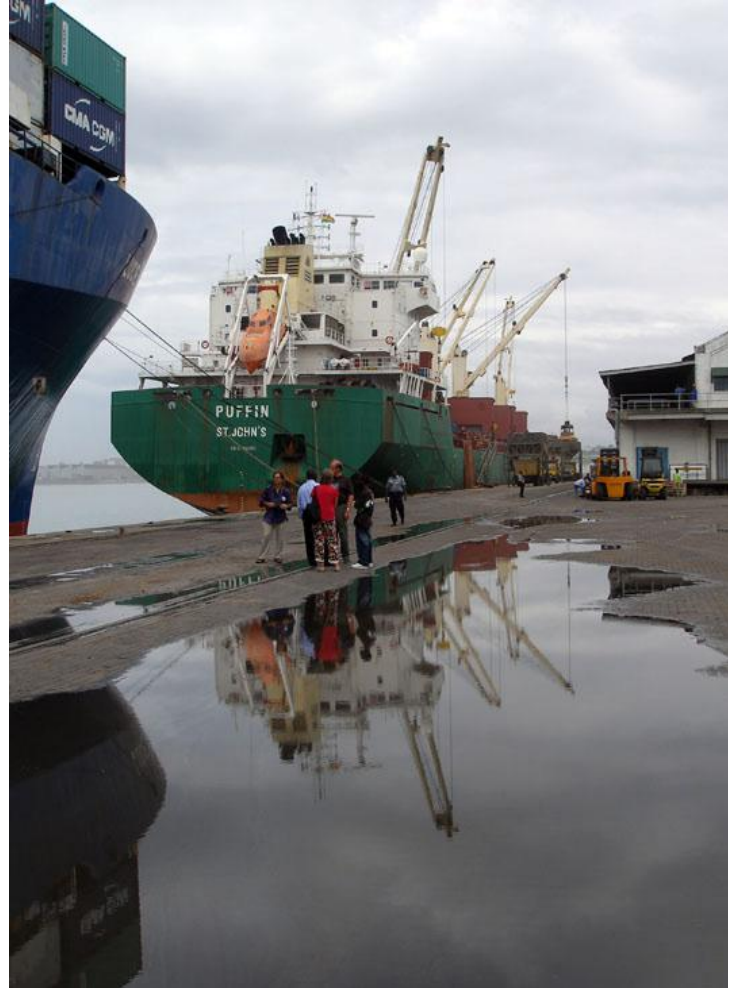
CHAPTER 5

KAKUM NATIONAL PARK



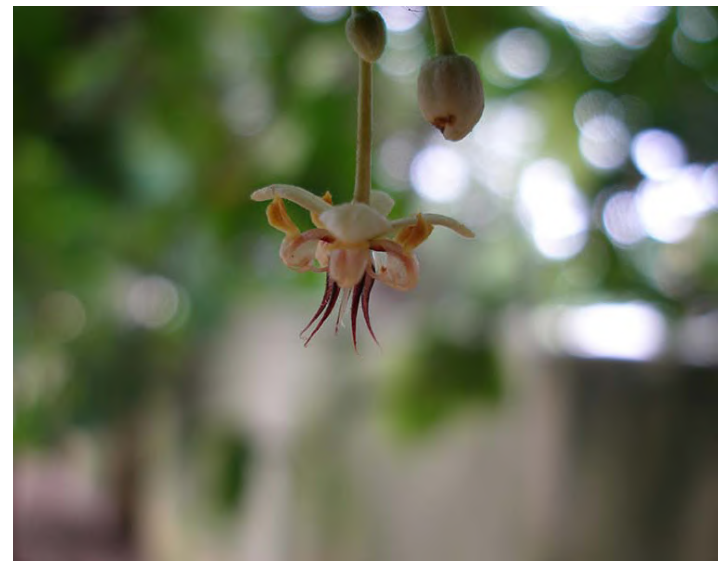
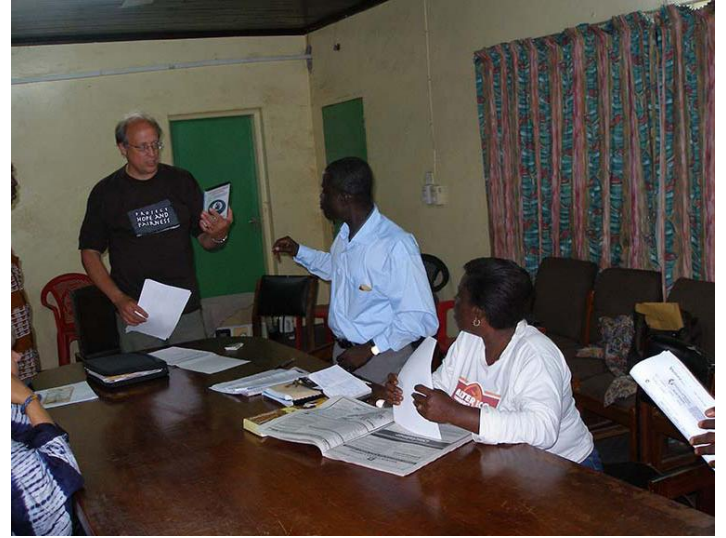
We visit Kakum National Park. See page for more details about the park. Since there are lots of tourists that visit, there are also lots of sales persons (bottom). They are selling fried breads.

TAKORADI

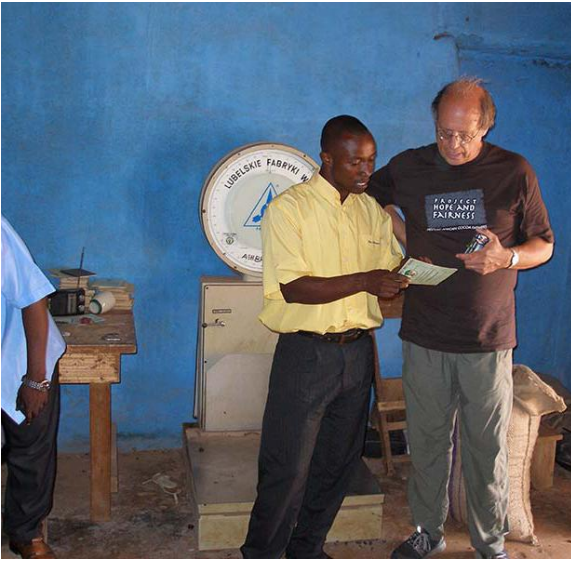


One day, we visit the port of Takoradi from which they export many tons of cocoa beans and where they also manufacture cocoa mass, cocoa powder, and cocoa butter.

KUAPA KOKOO



Top: we visit Kuapa Kokoo, one of the largest Fair Trade™ cooperatives in the world; it has about 65,000 members. Middle, left: Green-Green, a dish where a completely green sauce covers two large snails and a mound of fufu. Stan, after tasting his Green-Green says to me, “Mark my words, Tom, this is the last time I take your advice on what to order.” Middle, right and bottom: three pictures of the cocoa flower.



Top, left: Nicholas shows Tom a farmer's notebook in order to show him the system. Right, the grasscutter (agouti in French) in a cage. GrasscuttersLes agoutis deviennent de plus en plus rare, alors ça paie de les élever. A droite, des membres d'un village qui élève les agoutis et les escargots.

FROM LAKE BOSUMTWI TO ADA



After our visit to Kuapa Kokoo, we stop by Lake Bosumtwi (see page 32 for more details). We stayed only an hour and then set out for Accra.

Bushmeat



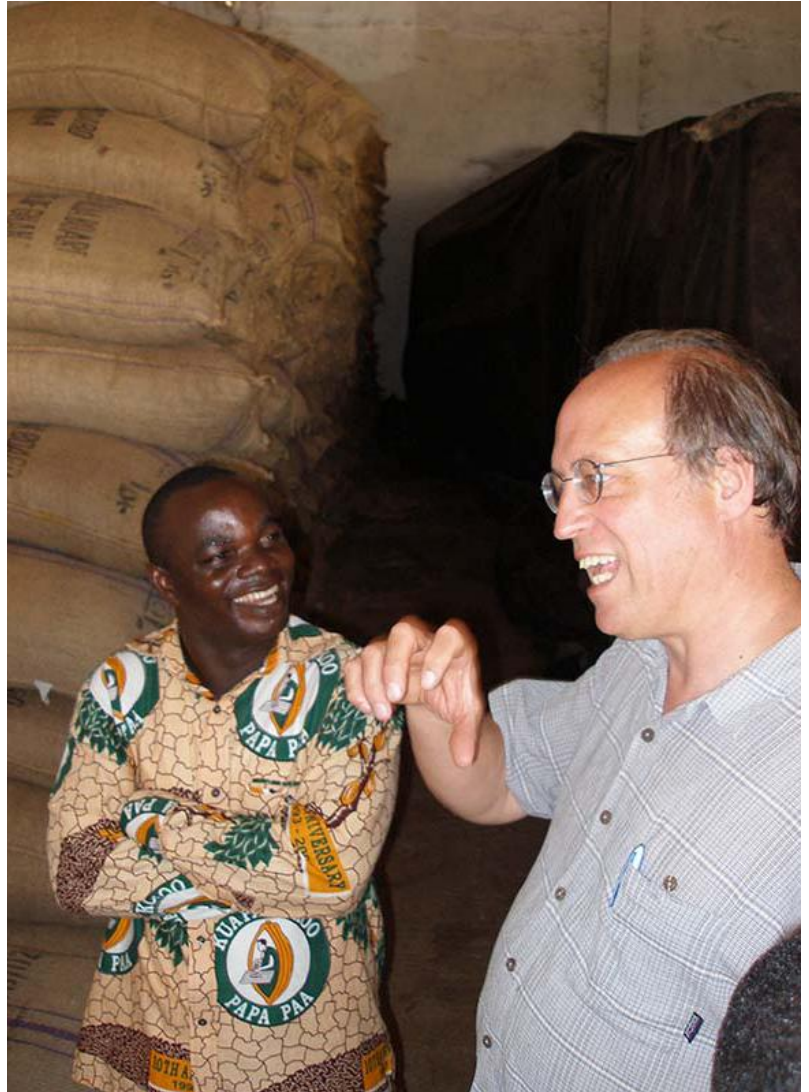
On the way, we meet these young men who are selling bushmeat. Left, a dik-dik and a pangolin (still alive). Right, forest chickens (that's what they call them).

Bonwire--the Home of Kente



On the way, we stopped at Bonwire, which is the home of Kente Cloth, a fabric that is; typically made in this region. The technology is similar to what one sees in Côte d'Ivoire. The patterns are different, however.

Accra--Kuapa Kokoo Warehouse



ADA

On the road to Ada, we stopped in the suburbs of Accra to visit the Kuapa Kokoo warehouse, where beans are kept before they are graded. Our host showed us the fumigation system, in which bags of cocoa are tightly wrapped in a rubber tarp and then fumigated with a poisonous gas--usually methyl bromide. This is now illegal for all other purposes (used to be used on spices) because methyl bromide damages the ozone layer.

Right, the map shows that Ada, our destination, is located at the mouth of the Volta river. On the way I saw baobab trees for the first (and hopefully not last) time. It's a bizarre looking drought tolerant tree.



CHAPTER 5



Above: houses next to the ocean are made of beach plants rather than forest plants. And as we discovered in the forested regions, houses made of natural materials are actually cooler because they breathe. Only downside is the penetration of water during heavy rainstorms. Middle, left and right: we visit Peter's mother, who must be so proud of her son. Right: Peter's mother is preparing cowpeas (black-eyed peas) for sale at the local market. Below, left: the boat that Peter ordered is on its way. Bottom, right: we clamber aboard.



The boat takes us to the mouth of the Volta. On the edges, one sees the homes of the rich, who have chosen a particularly beautiful setting in order to enjoy the beauty of this estuary. Above, left: a well-appointed fishing boat. Right: houses built of natural materials on the beach; on the other side is the sea. Below, left: Peter with Mark and Kate. Right: a vacation house for the rich.

DEPARTURE FOR IVORY COAST

It was a magical mystery tour and Peter did his job right!

