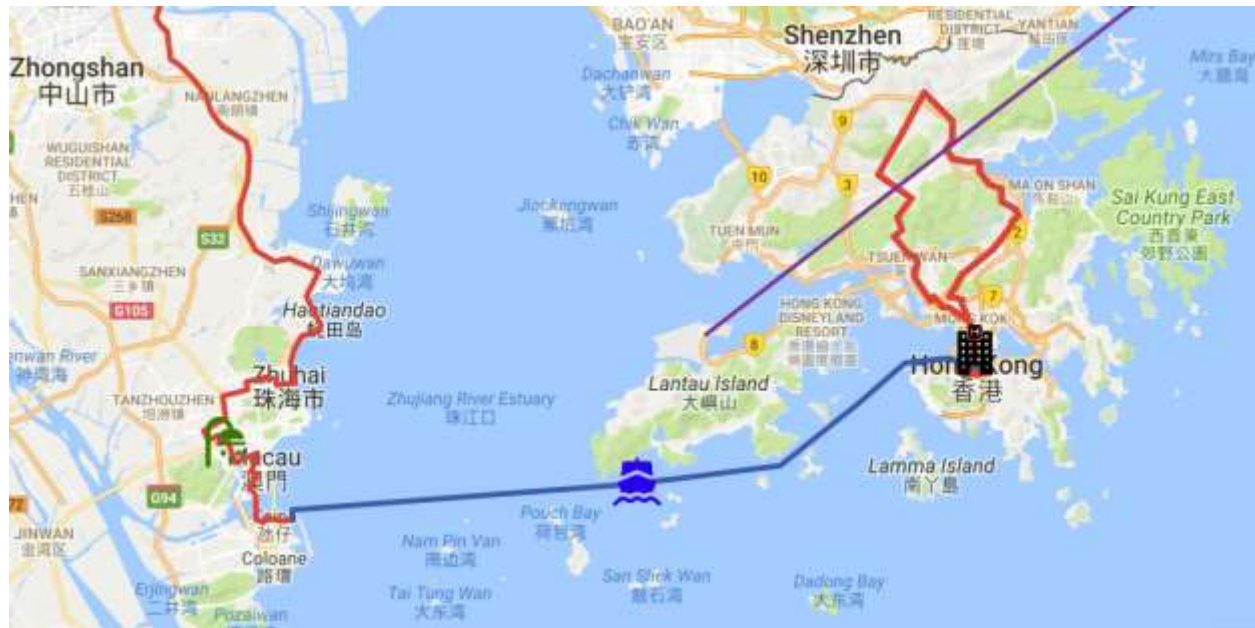


Season 10 – Part 3. Macau and Hong Kong



Sa 30.7.2016, day 384. Don't arrive in Hong Kong on Saturday night without having booked a hotel! (Zhuhai – Macau -Hong Kong – Kowloon, 54 km)

We were treated to pancakes with chocolate chips for breakfast and then we headed off. The border crossing was quite busy with hordes of gamblers crossing over into Macau for the weekend to get rid of all their cash. Still everything was quite efficiently organized and the whole process didn't take too long. There was the usual taking off of all the bags and sending them through the x-ray scanner, but we have got used to the procedure. Soon we were in Macau. We were expecting glittering sky scrapers and were quite surprised that we actually found quite old dilapidated buildings with tatty air-cons jutting out from every window. We found a great place serving cheap vegetarian food then we biked around a bit. Soon we found the glittering casinos. We biked past them in awe. We hadn't planned anything for the day, we were somehow thinking of spending one night in Macau, but we thought we would have a hard time finding a cheap place to sleep. So we finally decided to take the ferry over to Hong Kong. We biked over to the ferry dock. It was a very unpleasant ride on really busy roads that had been built without any considerations for bicyclists whatsoever. When we arrived, we found that baggage had to be checked in, like at the airport. We asked around a bit and one girl at the information told us that there was another ferry leaving from the island of Macau. I asked if it was a car ferry and she said "Yes, yes, yes!".

So then we had to find out how to get over to the island. There were three bridges. None of them allowed bikes. Earlier in the day we had already been turned back by a policeman on a motor bike as we were riding towards one of the bridges. So we decided to try and take a bus. After a long search for a bus station, we asked if we could take the bikes on board. "No, no, no!". So we had no choice and we started to ride towards the bridge. Almost immediately a policeman turned up out of nowhere. "You cannot ride over the bridge!", "So how do we get to the island?", "You cannot!". So what do we do? We have no Visa to go back into China, we cannot take the ferry with our packed bikes, what do we do? Finally it turned out that there was a very narrow footpath on the bridge and we could push our bikes

over the bridge. A distance of about 3 km. We finally made it to the ferry terminal on the island, only to find the exact same set up as with the ferry terminal on the mainland. So we had no choice, we started packing all our panniers into our duffel bag and into the trailer getting everything ready to check in the bags. We were told that we would have to box the bikes if we wanted to check them in. We were desperate. Finally we were told that we would have to take the bikes on the boat ourselves if we didn't want to box them up. I asked if we could leave the bags on the bikes. They said yes! I couldn't believe it! We could have simply pushed our fully packed bikes onto the boat and we would also not have had to bike out to the island!

We disembarked the high speed catamaran in Hong Kong in the dark, quickly found internet and something to eat and started to look for a place to sleep. We quickly saw that Hong Kong Island would be very expensive, so we decided to take a ferry over to Kowloon. The closest ferry didn't take bikes, so we had to bike eastwards along the coast to get another ferry. Finally we arrived in Kowloon. We decided to bike around and look for a hotel, as booking on the internet we could not be sure that there would be a good place to store our bikes. And so started a very long quest for a hotel. Most of the hotels we found were way out of our budget, the cheaper places were tucked away somewhere in residential blocks of flats with a tiny elevator and no way to take our bikes inside. Midnight came and went. We were really tired and started thinking about simply finding a quiet spot somewhere in a park and wait for morning, so we started heading back towards the center of town down by the water's edge. And then in a side lane we finally managed to get the last room of a little hotel. It was after 2am. The people running the hotel seemed to be having a little party and were drinking wine. They were very nice and helped us carry all our stuff up the stairs. They couldn't believe all the stuff we had and when I then came up with the trailer they completely cracked up. We were so happy to have finally found a place and couldn't wait to just have a shower and collapse on the bed but it was not to be. There was a knock on the door. They asked us if we could roll our bikes out to the reception to take some photographs. What a day!



























Su 31.7.2016, day 385. Relaxing! (Hong Kong, 0 km)

We had an absolutely delicious sleep followed by a wonderfully lazy day just strolling around, having a coffee here and there, admiring the skyline and planning the few things we had to organize before heading off for the next leg of our journey.

Mo 1.8.2016, day 386. Biking round Hong Kong (Tsim Sha Tsui – Sheung Shui, 85 km)

I had quite a busy day. A rather large typhoon was announced to hit Hong Kong on Tuesday, so I decided to try and get everything I needed to do sorted before then. The first thing was to go and collect the new trailer hitch, that was waiting for me in a bike shop close to the Chinese border. I could have taken the train, but I was looking forward to do some biking to explore the hinterland of Hong Kong. The route I chose to get there was terrible, along busy roads and through towns that were very complicated to navigate. The scenery and also the atmosphere with the approaching typhoon however was wonderful. I found the shop and was happy to see that the trailer hitch seemed to be the correct model. I also bought some other bits and pieces and was given a great brass horn. I took a very small road over some mountains on the way back and it turned out to be a wonderful ride, with great nature, some nice views and a wonderfully quiet winding road. I even saw a couple of monkeys doing their thing at the side of the road. I finally arrived back at about 2:30 after having ridden 85 km with a total elevation of 2000 m. I really am in good shape! Then I rushed over to the Chinese embassy to sort my Visa. There was quite a long wait, but the whole process was super simple. I had all the paperwork sorted (fake train tickets in and out of China and fake hotel bookings, copy of the passport, passport photo, filled out 4 page visa application form, copy of health insurance), I was at the counter for less than 1 minute, was given a receipt and told to pick up the passport on Thursday. Wonderful!

In the evening we had a nice stroll down by the water's edge admiring the skyline and watching typhoon Nida slowly pick up force. We were half thinking of having a Fondü or Raclette at a Swiss restaurant to celebrate Swiss national day, but looking at the prices we decided on having some instant noodles from 7 Eleven instead.

The typhoon struck Hong Kong at about 4am in the morning. I went out for a quick look at the wind lashing the trees. It was a level 8 typhoon, but it didn't seem too violent to me.









Tu 2.8.2016, day 387. Typhoon day (Hong Kong, 0 km)

I went for a bit of a walk in the morning, the wind had died and it wasn't even raining. The only way of knowing that there had been a typhoon was that the roads were completely devoid of traffic. This was quite surreal, usually traffic here is terrible! There was also the odd uprooted tree and a couple of blown off branches lying around, but nothing serious. Later in the day I headed out to buy a Garmin Bike GPS. I think navigating over to the bike shop the day before finally convinced me that a GPS would be a good idea. The phones work, but are a pain in the neck as you always have to stop to check where you are or try and navigate while riding, that is not really the safest thing to do, especially if the roads are busy. Also the phones can't be operated if it is raining hard and everything is wet.

I also took some time to fix the trailer. After fitting the new yoke and new tire it looked as good as new again. I wonder if it will make it all the way back to Switzerland?





We 3.8.2016, day 388. Meeting friends (Hong Kong, 0 km)

Again it was a lovely day. We had arranged to meet Frank, a friend of mine from my days at the ETH. I met him 2 or 3 times before here in Hong Kong and it was great seeing him again. He has always got completely crazy projects going on. Definitely one guy who is not leading the “Office 9 to 5 - TV - Sleep – Repeat” Life. We also met up with some other friends of his, who were also fascinating people. Eric, who is a musician and will be heading off to Nauru soon, the only country on earth he hasn’t visited yet and his ex-wife Christina and their very energetic 4 year old son.



Th, Fr 4-5.8.2016, day 389.

We thoroughly enjoyed our last days in Hong Kong, we finally stayed in the Dadol Hotel and got quite friendly with the manager and staff. I picked up my Chinese visa, once again the visa was completely unproblematic to get. We went on a very enjoyable trip out to Stanley Market, which is right on the southern tip of Hong Kong island. We were lucky enough to capture the front seats on a double decker bus. It was better than any sightseeing tour. We also found a bike shop that was hidden on the second floor of a very obscure street but turned out to be a huge shop packed with high end bikes and bike parts. We managed to secure two bike boxes, a reasonably sized one and one huge one. The good thing was that the small box fitted into the big box, the problem I saw was that the big box might be too big to take on the plane. But we could always chop it up and make it smaller.

I also bought a new lens for my Sony camera. I paid an incredibly low 150\$ for the lense making me think that maybe it is a fake. I'll probably never know.

And so one more leg of our journey slowly came to an end. For me already now it is unbelievable how far we have come and every additional leg and additional country will make it even more incredible. I am really looking forward to Japan, I just hope it will not make too big a dent in our budget!











