



Greetings!

Best wishes for the holiday season and the New Year! Our last newsletter was in May, so there is a lot to catch up on. As the monsoon season begins, the weavers we work with and buy directly from across Indonesia are putting their looms away and turning to their fields. Their subsistence agriculture will occupy them throughout the rains and through the harvest season, and we won't be back in the field to buy until the next dry season in April or May 2014. So, the start of the rains marks the end of our buying season, and the time for our annual internal review. We surpassed our USD 100,000 purchasing target for 2013, with half of this being spent in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timor on the islands of Timor, Sumba, Savu, Lembata and Flores. With our new website and e-commerce platform soon to come online, we hope to improve on these figures in 2014.

In this newsletter is information on our 2014 tours, links to recent Field Notes, a spectacular Textile of the Month from Sumba, news of exhibitions and the dye studio, and a link to a T-shirt maker with a difference!

(Left to right) Visitors to the Threads of Life exhibit at SpinExpo in Shanghai. Tamu Rambu Hamueti, designer of the Textile of the Month, and a detail from the textile.

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About

Threads of Life

Thank you to everyone who reviewed us on TripAdvisor: [now ranked #1 of 22 places to shop in Ubud](#)



Tours for 2014

In July 2014, we are working with Birds of Passage Travel Adventures to offer a textile tour of Bali and Flores. Visits with master weavers will offer unique insights into the forces at play in the contemporary tradition, enable insight into what Threads of Life and the Bebali Foundation are doing to sustain these traditions, and expose the visitor to some fabulous textiles. For more information visit [Birds of Passage's website](#).



Ama Namah Benu, raja of Boti, proof reading the Bebali Foundation book on the useful plants of Boti

Field Notes

There are two Field Note reports since the last newsletter. The

Threads of Life is a fair trade business that uses culture and conservation to alleviate poverty in rural Indonesia. The heirloom-quality textiles and baskets we commission are made with local materials and natural dyes. With the proceeds from the [Threads of Life gallery](#), we help weavers to form independent cooperatives and to manage their resources sustainably.



Donate to The Bebali Foundation

Threads of Life's nonprofit partner, the Bebali Foundation, works with the same communities as Threads of Life to support cooperative development and environmental sustainability. The Bebali Foundation trains weavers in the establishment and maintaining of credit unions, and the sustainable cultivation, harvesting and use of dye plants. Its groundbreaking dye plant and dye recipe identification and documentation is the backbone of ongoing work to safeguard endangered indigenous weaving traditions, and the livelihoods they represent, from extinction. To support the Bebali Foundation, please donate at

first is from [Timor](#) and introduces our new Timorese field staff Yansen Tuan as well as reporting on a book the Bebali Foundation has been writing on the useful plants of Boti, a village on the island of Timor. (This book was published and distributed across the Boti community in November). The second Field Note documents Threads of Life's participation in the [Shanghai](#) SpinExpo.



Textile of the Month

Lau Pahudu

Ceremonial Tubular Sarong (2013)

Tied by Hiwa Ranja Rudung

Dyed by Ina Jilik and Ata Hina

Woven by Hawu Rima

Rindi, Sumba

Warp Ikat, supplementary warp patterning with beading

Handspun cotton, natural dyes

64 x 146 cm (25 x 57 in)

Code # [T01.SU.RE.205](#)

Designed by Tamu Rambu Hamueti, [this textile](#) is from the Uma Penji royal household of Rindi. It is in the same tradition as the 2010 [Lau Pahudu Hada](#) (code # [T01.SU.RE.160](#)), blending techniques and motifs from the villages of Pau and Rindi. Both display extraordinary detail of ikat work and dye saturation, but with the current cloth this has been achieved on handspun cotton.

Lau Pahudu means a tubular ikat sarong with supplementary warp patterning. The ikat motifs in the main ikat bands are Wala Ai, a flower, and Karihu, which is a seashell representing the bounty of the sea. The Karihu motif relates both to the mythological time when the ancestors crossed the ocean to arrive in Sumba, and to the actual time during the 19th century when Rindi was founded. As such it may only be used by high ranking families descended from the village's founder.

www.bebali.org via Give2Asia, PayPal, or bank transfer.



Umajati Retreat

[Open since July 2012 and rated #5 of 168 luxury hotels in Ubud on TripAdvisor](#)

Surrounded by tranquil rice fields, Umajati is a lush garden property hosting two elegantly converted 100-year-old Javanese teak wooden homes that provide 21st century living in 19th century houses. Each has a kitchen and several private garden spaces around a shared swimming pool. Umajati is just 10 minutes north of Ubud and offers daily, weekly or monthly rentals hosted by Balinese house-keepers and cooks who specialize in healthy and vegetarian food.

www.umajati.com

1-bedroom house,
USD 190 per night.

2-bedroom house,
USD 245 per night.

Weekly and monthly rates are available on request.

Threads of Life on TEDx



Weaving a new approach to poverty alleviation: William



SpinExpo Shanghai and Beyond...

As mentioned in the Field Notes, October saw us at the [SpinExpo](#) in Shanghai hosting one of the biggest exhibits we've ever held. SpinExpo gave Threads of Life a 100 square meter (1,000 square foot) space to display our best textiles and curate a trilingual (English, Chinese, Japanese) exhibit of Indonesia's traditional textile arts. SpinExpo owner, Karine Van Tassel, wanted to remind the 200 state-of-the-art knitwear producers and thousands of expo visitors of their industry's historic roots in indigenous societies and sustainable practices. At SpinExpo we received a lot of commercial interest in the use of natural dyes. This was part of our reason for going: we wanted to understand the potential market opportunity and see whether non-traditional dye plants could be grown in and supplied from the communities we work with across Indonesia.

The SpinExpo opportunity came as the Bebali Foundation is looking to expand the scale of its natural dye work, moving beyond documentation and experimentation into small-scale production. This is both to develop income streams for the nonprofit, and to model the changes we are starting to see in the communities where we work. Fifteen years ago, a natural dyed cloth commanded ten times the price of a synthetically dyed piece. Now, in some areas, local demand for synthetically dyed cloth means that the difference is down to two times, and the only way for the natural dye work to remain economically viable is if someone in a community specializes as a dyer. In many ways, these developments mark the success of our work, participating in a revitalization in the local demand for traditional cloth. We have seen this happen in Bali and supported its development. Now we need to facilitate it elsewhere, and to do so, our staff need to understand how to run such a studio.

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Michel Garcia teaching the use of Symplocos at Couleur Garance

International Forum for Natural Dyes, Provence

A month after Shanghai, we were off to Provence, and the International Vegetable Dye Symposium at Couleur Garance, where we presented on the Bebali Foundation's [Plant Mordant Project](#). Couleur Garance is the European distributor of the Bebali Foundation's Symplocos leaf mordant and has a spectacular natural dye garden on site. We made many great contacts at the symposium and were inspired by [the dye plant garden](#) to begin developing our own educational garden.

The end of the Bebali Foundation's lease on its dye studio and dye garden in Ubud curtailed much of the foundation's research work for the second half of 2013. However, visits to the SpinExpo and Couleur Garance, and Umajati Retreat's purchase of 700 square meters of agricultural land inspired us to imagine a new dye plant garden, complete with a working dye studio that can also offer classes and workshops as part of the Umajati Retreat. With the help of a recent donation from SpinExpo, this idea will soon become a reality, with landscaping and studio construction to begin in the new year.



Serengetee: Wear the World, Change the World

Threads of Life has recently become a source for a new Los Angeles-based business called Serengetee. Serengetee has also chosen the Bebali Foundation as its Indonesian nonprofit partner, donating 5% of all their sales of goods decorated with Indonesian textiles.

The idea for Serengetee came while three college friends -- Jeff Steitz, Ryan Westberg and Nate Holterman -- were

traveling the world on Semester at Sea, a floating campus study abroad program. They toured markets in over 15 countries picking out authentic fabrics and meeting amazing people in all corners of the globe. Upon their return, they set out to create a new kind of clothing brand with a simple mission: to connect people to the globe through fabric while giving back to the communities that inspired their products. They launched Serengetee out of their dorm room in the spring of 2012 using every last penny in their pockets. Since the launch, Serengetee has become one of the fastest growing clothing brands in the world. Thanks to a strong fan base and a dedicated mission, they are helping change lives all over the world, one Serengetee product at a time.

<http://www.serengetee.com/>

Jeff, Ryan, and Nate are currently crowd-sourcing funding for a business expansion through their "[50-50-50 Campaign](#)" on [Indiegogo](#). The world needs more of their kind of vision, energy, ethics, and creativity. So, have a look at their video and give them your support!

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

from William, Jean, Pung and everyone at Threads of Life and the Bebali Foundation