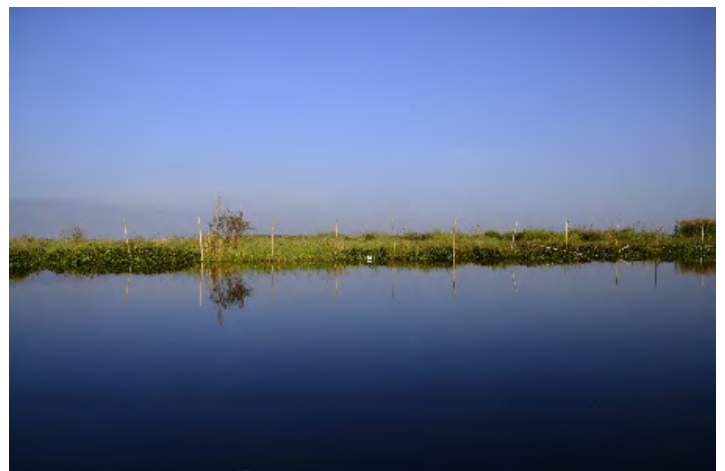
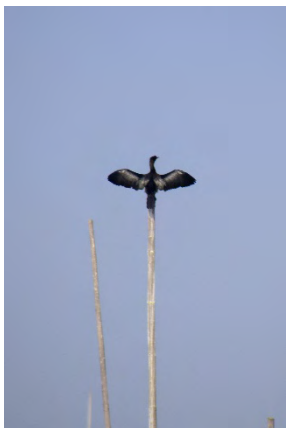
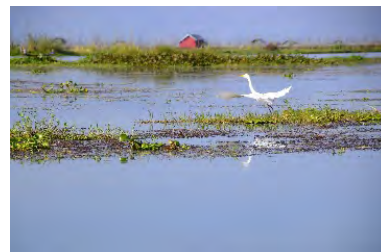
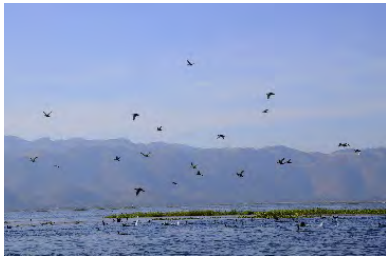


Day 8 Inle Lake

We woke up to a cozy room as the coals from our fireplace were still throwing heat. Breakfast was a buffet on the lake (although we ate indoors). Fresh omelets, good bread, crepe, French toast, noodles. All the regular fare, but somehow more delicious. We tasted mohinga, a fish soup local to Myanmar. Pretty sure I won't taste it again.



Our long boat picked us up at about 800 this morning while the lake was still quiet. We drifted and watched all the birds fly. We saw one small brilliant blue one, too fast to get a picture. We saw another blue one that looked almost like a blue egret but Toe told me she thinks it was a purple swamp hen. There was a bird book in our room, but I could not find it. The hour across the lake was again filled with the sun, wind and water on our faces. But it was morning and it was cold so we huddled under the blankets.





Toe described another way of fishing on the lake. A group of men, each in their own boat, with nets in the water between them, stand on the tip of the boat and all hit the water with long bamboo poles to scare the fish into the nets. This morning we saw three men doing just that. They stood on their boat and continuously hit the water. And we saw other fishermen on their own, also standing on their boats with their nets. I don't know how they don't fall in.



Our first stop this morning was the market. Again we lucked out as the market is only here every 5 days as well. This time, everyone comes by boat, both to sell and to shop. It reminded me of the market in Hoi An, Vietnam which was also on the water. I don't want to keep repeating myself, but the smells, the colors, the sounds, the smiles assaulted all our senses. The sight of all the boats lined up was a sight to behold. We stepped off the boat onto the mud and walked by stalls and stalls of souvenirs. Toe told us the quality and the prices would be better in Yangon, but I bought whatever I saw that I wanted. I would rather give the money to the villagers than to the city people with overhead. We bargained, we had fun, we interacted with the locals in that way. I bought some beads from one woman and she touched all her items with my money for good luck as I was the first sale of the day. I took her picture. We walked across a bridge and while I was looking out I noticed a monk taking my picture. I smiled for him and then switched places and took a picture of him. I guess my gray hair is different here. I did notice one or two women with gray hair, but most women cover their heads so you can't see their hair. Only later did I realize I missed my opportunity to get a picture together!



We walked away from the souvenir vendors into the heart of the market. Most of the people here are from the PaO tribe so we saw lots of orange or terrycloth turbans. We also noticed how many people chew betel nuts, both young and old, and have the red teeth to prove it. There were lots of kids around helping or hanging out with their parents. The market was in sections, for bamboo poles, for tobacco leaves, for meat, for fish, for veggies and fruit, for sweets, for household goods, for haircuts. And everywhere we went we were as big an attraction for them and they were for us.





