BICYCLING *around the* WORLD

Photos by Paul Jeurissen
Written by Grace Johnson

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Front cover: Looking out over the desert in Tajikistan.
Left: Rickshaws in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

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WORLD

This e-book is dedicated to the many cyclists we have met around the world.

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Designed & edited by Grace Johnson.

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Right: Pushing the bike up yet another steep incline in the American Southwest.

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Left: Thiksey Monastery in Ladakh, India.

INTRODUCTION

Bicycling Around the World celebrates bicycle travel and culture around the globe.

Come pedal with us through the icy Himalayas, the barren Pamir Highway, tropical East Africa, and the chaos of Dhaka in search of unique cycling images.

We also show you glimpses of bicycle culture via painted rickshaws, overloaded cargo bikes, and even two-wheelers piled high with cotton candy.

“We” are photographer Paul Jeurissen and his partner Grace Johnson.

In 2010, we set off on a multi-year tour. Wherever we go, we search out bike culture, dramatic landscapes, and remote places.

By the end of this book, we hope you’ll agree that the world is best viewed from a bicycle saddle.

Right: Family transport in Agra, India.

PHOTO PROJECT

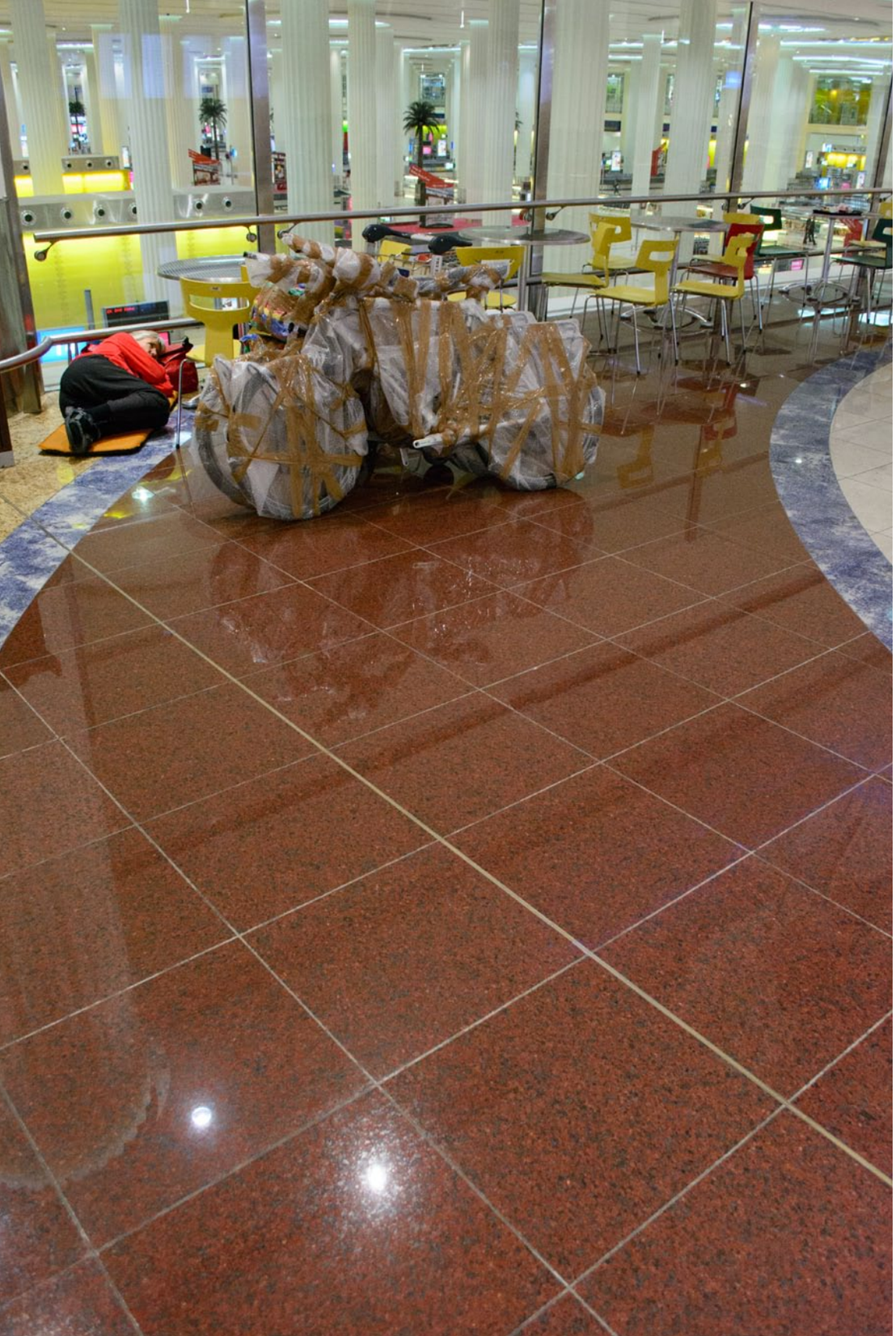
In Amsterdam, I grew up surrounded by two-wheelers. They were just everyday objects that you used to go to the shops and school. Later, when I started cycling through other countries, I saw they meant different things to different people. And that they could be an interesting photography theme.

Then in 2005, it was goodbye to expensive analogue film and hello to digital photography. With the possibility of unlimited shots, I could finally start taking pictures of the subject that now fascinated me - bicycle culture.

I called my new photo project *Bicycling around the world in search of inspiring cycle images.* After trips through Asia, Africa and North America, Grace and I set off in 2010 on a multi-year journey to explore the world and international bicycle culture.

- Paul Jeurissen

Right: One of Amsterdam's many bikes.



THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Finally, we were off to Asia with nothing but our touring bicycles and panniers - stuffed with way too much electronic gear. We were both anxious, wondering what the coming years would bring. And at the same time, we were looking forward to the upcoming adventure.

Southern China

Previous Pages: Crossing the Li river.
Above: Simmering pots help entice new customers.
Right: Snacks for sale in Jinghong.

Above: A local shoe repair man mends Paul's sandal.
Left: Stopping to admire the view.
Following pages: A bicycle lane in Chengdu.

CARGO BIKES

Chinese market women love them since they are relatively light and easy to maneuver. The ladies use them not only to transport goods but also as a product and restaurant stall, which they can set up on any street corner.

TOUGH GOING

It only took one downpour to turn the road into a cyclist's nightmare. The heavy, wet clay stuck to our wheels and brake pads, bringing us to a halt. The mud was so thick, it even snapped Paul's derailleur.

Above: Posing for a self portrait.
Right: An original Chinese Flying Pigeon bicycle.

WEAPON

The elderly saleswoman was furious! A new girl had taken over her spot, and she refused to leave. The old lady began whacking the girl's legs with the front wheel of her cargo bike. When that didn't do the trick, she pushed the wheel back and forth over her foot. Success finally came as the girl stood up and moved away from the old woman's place.

Above: Waking up from a midday nap.
Right: A balloon saleswoman in Jinghong.

Above: Traditional architecture can still be found in places.
Left: Pedaling through the karst mountains of Southern China.

South East Asia

Previous pages: Shwedagon pagoda in Yangon, Myanmar.
Above: A decorated rickshaw wheel in Penang, Malaysia.
Right: Chinese tourists take the ‘grand tour’ of Penang.

LIVING ROOM

This Thai chauffeur from Chiang Mai was very proud of his trishaw, which he had decorated with personal memorabilia.

Above: Cycling through Angkor Wat, Cambodia.

Above: Family transport in Siem Riep, Cambodia.

BARBIE DOLLS

A must-do in Malacca, Malaysia, is to tour the town in a decorated rickshaw. Of course, the little girls loved the Barbie dolls, and they would try to convince their parents that this was the one they should ride in.

Above & left: At dusk Malacca's rickshaws turn their lights on.

BUDDHA

What's special about cycling in Thailand is spotting enormous Buddhas in the distance. They often appear to float above the treeline.

SWEET TREAT

The cotton candy bike was a favorite amongst kids in Vientiane, Laos. They would all peer inside and plead with their mothers to buy them one of the pink and white concoctions.

Indian Himalayas

Previous pages: Prayer flags flutter above the Indus River in Ladakh.
Above: The Maitre Buddha statue in Thiksey Monastery.

Previous pages: Stopping to rest near Leh.

Above: Looking out over the Leh valley from the roof of Thiksey Monastery.

Above: Multicolored peaks near the top of the Baralacha La Pass.

OXYGEN PLEASE!

Wheeze, gasp, wheeze... We sounded like two asthmatic seniors as we pedaled and pushed our bikes up yet another high pass. Sure, the scenery was gorgeous, but we also longed to be able to breathe.

Above: Cruising down the Nakee La Pass.

Above: Kyi Monastary in Spiti.

PRECARIOUS

After so many river crossings, we became overconfident and hurriedly ploughed through yet another fast-moving stream. Then Paul stepped on a smooth rock and lost his footing plus grip on his bike. His trusty steed sunk under the ice-cold water. But luckily, he was able to grab it before it went over the cliff.

TENT WITH A VIEW

After dinner, we asked a Tibetan where we could set up our tent. He pointed to an opening between two hills and said, "Camp in the valley behind. You will be sheltered from the wind there." Upon reaching the spot, Paul looked at me and declared, "Tomorrow - rest day."

Above: Heading down the Baralacha La Pass, a glorious 1,700m descent.

India & Nepal

Previous pages: Taking a break in Fatehpur Sikri, India.
Above: An ingenious use of pedal power.

Above: A Bollywood film star adorns the fender mud flap.
Right: Indian bicycles can nver be too decorated.

JUGAAD

A popular Indian expression is "jugaad," which roughly translates to "make do / a creative hack." Attaching a gas cooker to your bike's top tube is an innovative solution for a food stall. But if it's safe, that's another question...

Above: And Grace thought she carried too much on her bike...

BUMPER CARS

Indian roads are full of every imaginable form of transport. Sometimes it felt like we were inside a giant game of bumper cars, except here we tried to avoid crashing into other rickshaws, carts, and people.

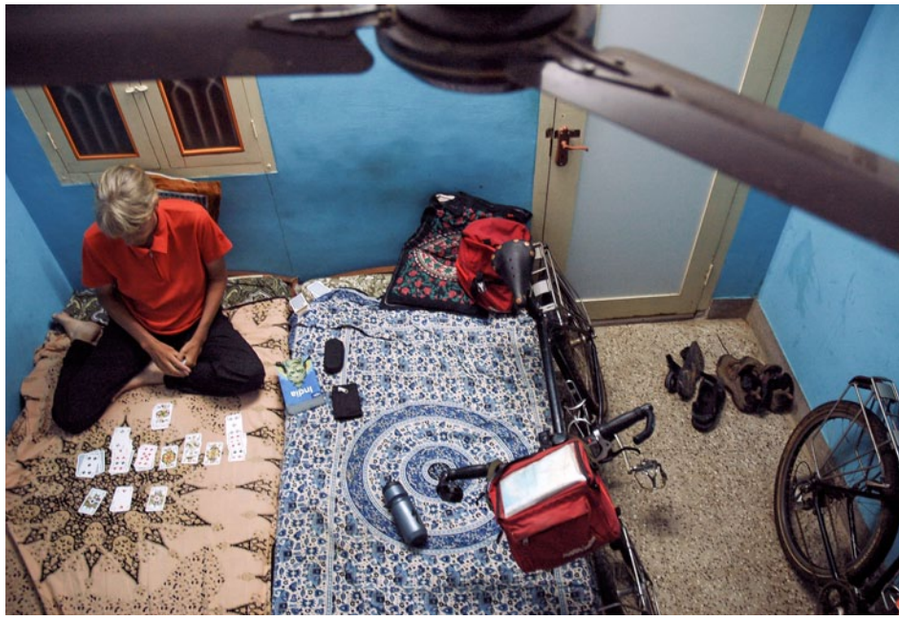
Above: The view from our favourite Agra restaurant.

Above: Cotton candy for sale in North India.
Following pages: A day at the beach isn't complete without some ice cream.

PRABHA
ICE CREAM

CURIOUSITY

“Where are you from? Where are you going?”
The schoolgirls wanted to know everything
about us and why we were traveling on bikes.



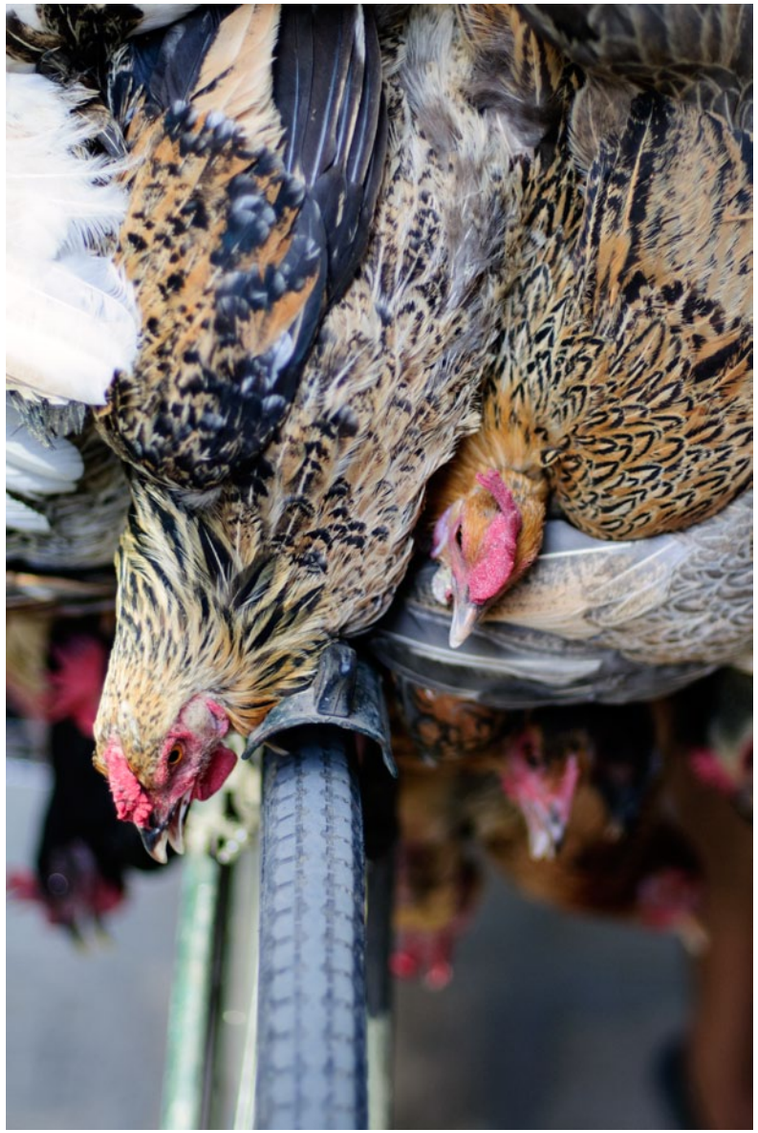
Above: Passing the time in an Indian hotel room.
Left: Transporting cloth to the market.

Above: Father and son push their overloaded rickshaw.
Right: A traveling knife salesman near Chandigarh, India

Above: A bicycle shop in Kathmandu, Nepal.

CLAUSTROPHOBIC

We stopped for some chai and biscuits, but our rest stop was short-lived. A crowd soon gathered, and we became completely hemmed in by the curious onlookers.



Above: Chicken transport in Kathmandu, Nepal.
Right: The best parking spaces in Agra are reserved for bicycles.

Above: Pedaling through a South Indian town.

WEDDING BIKE

An Indian wedding procession is made up of the groom riding a white horse (he usually looks a bit shell-shocked), followed by dancing family members, a brass band, and at the very end, the neon wedding bike.

Pamir Highway

Previous pages: Cycling through the vast Pamir landscape.
Above: Camping near Sary Tash, Kyrgyzstan.
Right: Curious kids come to visit our tent.

DAUNTING

After acclimatizing in Sary Tash, off we headed towards the mountains. The snow covered "Pamir wall" appeared impenetrable, and we wondered how on earth we were going to get over it.

KOGA
KOGA

Previous pages: A river crossing near the Kyrgyz-Tajik border.
Above: The dusty, desolate town of Karakul.

Above: A market salesman in Murgab, Tajikistan.

Above: Posing for a self portrait in Tajikistan.
Left: Cycling through an endless sea of grey.

Previous pages: Taking a rest near the Chinese border.
Above: A lone outhouse alongside the Pamir highway.

VAST

Enormous, vast, immense, are just some of the adjectives used to describe the Pamir scenery. To truly appreciate it, you have to pedal it yourself.

BICYCLE TRAVELERS

The highway is popular amongst long-distance cyclists, and we enjoyed stopping and chatting with them. (Clockwise from above left: Julian & Ellie, the smiling Japanese guy, and Marcel & Alena.)

Above: Looking out over lake Bulunkul.

Above: We could see for miles in the distance.

BANGLADESH

Previous pages: A rickshaw graveyard in Dhaka.
Above: Paul smiles for the camera.
Left: An early morning traffic jam.
Following pages: Parked rickshaws line the streets.

NEELAM

GLAMOUR & GUNS

Birds, flowers, automobiles, and even airplanes are popular subjects that appear on rickshaw bodies. Our favorite theme was Bollywood "Glamour & Guns."

Previous pages: Local traffic in the countryside.
Above: Dhaka rickshaws are piled full of passengers.
Left: A curious chauffeur.

GOOD FORTUNE

After placing a coin in the elephant's trunk, the elephant blessed Grace by gently patting the top of her head with his trunk.

WINTER CHILL

In the cold, damp winter months, the chauffeurs wrap themselves in every blanket, scarf, and tea towel they can find.

Above: How did they load it up in the first place?
Right: Too heavy to pedal.
Following pages: Main street in Mymensingh.

PERFEC
WALTON

EXPERTS

In the West, you have backseat drivers. But in Bangladesh, you have backseat bicycle repairmen. They crowd around you, giving advice on the best way to repair your flat tire.

MAGIC POTION

He started by shaking his stick of bells. Then he poured various liquids into the cup. A bit more jingling and mixing, and the potion was ready. Magic!

Above: Technicolor rickshaws in Dhaka.

Morocco & Oman

Previous pages: Heading towards an oasis in Morocco's Draa Valley.
Above: The Djemma el Fna square in Marrakech.
Right: Pedaling through the stunning Anti-Atlas mountains.

MOROCCAN TEA

Forget dried out mass manufactured tea bags. Fresh mint tea was a taste revelation. When we combined that with sitting on a cafe terrace watching local life, we were sold on Morocco.

Above: A kasbah in Southern Morocco.
Right: Cycling past yet another verdant oasis.

ASPHALT FURNACE

We always wondered what it would be like to pedal through the Sahara. Once there, all we could think of was, "It's so hot, it's so hot... Why didn't we carry more water?"

Above: We woke up covered in sand.
Left: Wild camping under the shade of a thorn tree in Oman.

REFRESHMENTS

Omani coffee shops were the highlight of a day's ride through the hot, barren desert. They served Indian curries, chicken burgers, and most important of all - ice cold soft drinks.

Above: A lone grocery store in Oman.
Left: We had excellent internet reception that evening.

East Africa

Previous pages: Clowning for the camera in Malawi.
Above: That must have been a balancing act.

Above & right: Bike taxi plates in Malawi.

CHARCOAL BOYS

The locals cook on charcoal stoves, and the charcoal boys were busy day and night transporting it to the villages. Their two-wheelers were always overloaded, yet they still managed to pedal up some of the hills. They even helped Grace push her bike up a few of the steeper inclines.

UNENDING

The road lay over the subtropical landscape like a never-changing ribbon. The only reason to stop was for a chat and cold cokes in a local village.

LIVERPOOL

Previous pages: A traveling department store in Uganda.
Above & right: Enthusiastic school kids in Malawi.

TOUR DE SCHOOL

Our tent leaked. So as soon as dusk approached, we were on the lookout for somewhere dry. We often knocked on school doors. There, the headmaster would give us a warm welcome, a classroom door key, then a tour of the buildings.

TAXI CHAUFFEURS

The chauffeurs hang out together, smiling at female passersby and listening to their radios. They don't always relax. They can pedal fast when they need to, even when they are transporting a big African mama on their back seat.

Previous pages: A bicycle taxi speeds to his destination.
Above: Banana transport in Uganda.
Right: Surprisingly enough the man could still push his overladen bike.

FRESH FISH?

They were for sale, but weren't recently caught. The guy untied one from his handlebars and started hitting a tree with it. The fish was so stiff that it didn't bend an inch.

Above: Older sisters can be annoying at times.
Right: Family transport in Malawi.

The Americas

Previous pages: Heading across Uyuni's salt lake.
Above: Freezing cold + washboard + sand = cycling the Bolivian Altiplano.
Left: Stopping to visit a local church.

DESOLATE

We regularly came across cemeteries on the Altiplano. They had us wondering why anyone would want to live there in the first place.

Above & left: Locals enjoy a day out in Sucre, Bolivia.

Previous pages: A cold night camping on the Salar de Uyuni.
Above: Old beaters live on in Bolivia.

Above: Street art in Salta, Argentina.
Left: The road twisted and turned like a carnival ride.

Above: We expected the stagecoach to arrive at any moment.

FOLK SAINT

Argentines offer children's bikes at one of the many Gauchito Gil roadside shrines. They do so to thank him for the miracles he has performed – and to ask for more.

OTHERWORLDLY

We were still on Earth, but were we? The lunar landscape of the American Southwest felt like cycling on a different planet.

Above: Camping by Lone Rock in Utah, U.S.A.

THE END?

Like Argentina's Ruta 40, our bicycle photography project is never-ending. After 10 years, it is still an exciting theme, and we decided to celebrate this milestone by bringing out a photo book. We hope you have enjoyed looking through it.

- Paul Jeurissen & Grace Johnson

ABOUT

PAUL JEURISSEN was born in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. In 1981, he pedaled across the U.S.A. During this trip, he not only met his future wife Grace, but also fell in love with photographing the American landscapes, people, and the journey itself. Since then, he has specialized in bicycle imagery. His pictures have been used around the globe in cycling and travel publications.

GRACE JOHNSON grew up in Seattle, then moved to Holland in the 1980s. Her background is in architectural drafting, and in her free time she enjoys photo editing plus graphic design.

THE PHOTOGRAPHS in this book and even more bike culture and travel images are available at *www.pauljeurissen.nl*

MORE VISUAL STORIES from our bicycle journeys can be found at *www.bicyclingaroundtheworld.nl*

SHARE THE LOVE OF BIKES. This photo e-book was freely given, and we encourage you to continue the gift of giving. Why not send it on to a cycling friend?

Left: Paul & Grace cycling in Tajikistan.
Back cover: A young rickshaw chauffeur in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

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