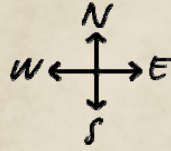


Hansen Journey Log



Log entry date: November 25, 2007

I (Joe) recently returned from a trip to Cambodia to visit the boy's home we are preparing to work in. The trip was about nine days long. Cambodia is 14 hours ahead of MST so 12:00 noon here is 2:00 am the next day there. Needless to say it took a few days to recover from jet-lag!

The guys at the boys' home are really cool and enjoyable. School is the biggest priority for the boys during the school week. They love sports and play volleyball, basketball, and soccer any chance they get. On the weekends they are allowed to watch TV and play on the PS2. You would think it would get a little tricky with 13 guys and only one TV and two controllers for the PS2, but it was not a problem between the boys. The guys also like cards and strategy games like Risk. We ate every meal in the open air because the weather is constantly warm and humid (tropical). Two of the older boys help teach classes on the native language after school.



a few of the guys eating dinner



Kosal giving me horns



a common sight as you move out of the city



the core of Phnom Penh

From this trip we got an idea of what it would be like to live in the capitol city, Phnom Penh. The difference between the province and the city is vast. From what I have heard, the city has really progressed in the last four years. Although I was advised not to drink the water or go to the local doctors, they do have most things you need. The markets are very diverse and reminiscent of a huge flea market. It seems if you know the right people, are willing to pay the price, and wait long enough, you can get anything you want from the states - except good pizza or tasty fast food.

Corruption is a large problem. It is very common to be stopped by a traffic cop for nothing and be expected to pay him a bribe. Mail is not reliable. You have to bribe the post office clerk so see it at all and, if it is a package, odds are you won't ever see it. Less than 5% of the public teachers have a high school education, and students have to pay bribes to pass tests whether you have a good score or not. You can't find an original CD or DVD anywhere, but you can buy a high quality copy of a movie still in theaters in the US for \$2.

From what we have learned, a vast majority of the population make 50 cents an hour and work almost every day of the year. This is not enough to pay for a two room (not to be confused with a two-bedroom) apartment. The cost of housing has doubled in the last few years. The cost of power and food has also gone up. For most people it seems to be enough to have a few meals a day. After learning this it was surprising to see the amount of people that dressed in slacks and dress shirts. Of course, what we pay for a shirt in the states is 10 times or more for a similar looking product. When a shoe they sell says NIKKE and sports a swoosh, you get the picture that you aren't comparing apples to apples.

The guys are much more fortunate than the vast majority of the population. They have three meals a day, a roof over their heads, and a good education available to them. Rene and I are very excited about this opportunity and look forward to working with the boys there. We still have much preparation to do and there are a few kinks to iron out. It looks like we will leave for Cambodia April 1st.

Prayer Request Updates:

Please pray God will bring someone to rent our house by March 1st. We would like renters who are responsible and love the house!

Thank your for your prayers,

Joe & Rene