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Orphans & Disadvantaged Association

Opportunities of Development thru Art



ODA Celebrates Pchum Ben Festival

September 2013



ODA celebrated Pchum Ben last week – this is a festival to commemorate & show their respect for their elderly departed relatives (& parents of the orphaned children)& a very special time for them to remember everyone who has been in their lives.



Carrying Cambodia – Many of you have seen the loaded vehicles in Cambodia when you were on your trips here – well – ODA challenged them all - cramming 20 in the mini van – 12 in my Rav & Leng wouldn't tell me how many in his car!! (he knows I have a heart attack at how many people cram into vehicles & on motos etc here – so he figures not telling me will save me worrying!!!).

We were joined by Sry On's father & sister (her mother stayed behind with a policeman as security for the ODA home) & also the villagers surrounding ODA at Siem Reap, hired a 'taxi' truck & crammed ?? (I couldn't count how many people they transported) – all standing up bumping over the roads in the rain & all happily smiling & soooo excited to be going to this special pagoda which has amazing art works all over it's walls!





ODA kids serving the older villagers first.

We arrived & cleaned up the inside of the pagoda & the girls, Sry On & some of the village ladies, set about cooking for meals & the special foods for Pchum Ben. They made traditional oval sticky rice balls flavoured with other special foods for the festival at the pagoda the afternoon before - & at 4am the monks sounded the drums

to wake everyone for the traditional walk – chanting prayers after the monks – if the monks don't lead the chants – the dead people won't be able to eat! - they all circled the Pagoda 3 times clockwise, throwing the oval rice balls so their dead relatives would have special treats to eat.

They slept at the Kulen Pagoda that night – all very exciting fun for them, bunked down with many other people – our group stood out as they had mosquito nets to huddle up & sleep under!

They also use the Pchum Ben time to pray for special people in their lives & they prayed for all the kind supporters of ODA who help Leng to provide food, education etc for them all - wishing you will have long healthy & happy lives with plentiful rice!!!!



There were quite a few sleepy heads the next day I can tell you – inc Leng - it's tiring being Father to so many kids at 4am!! Note however the little kids were far too busy having fun to go to sleep during the day!!!!





Interesting note – they don't know if their relatives told lies in their life but apparently their lips & mouths shrink if they have - so they also cook thin vermicelli with a lovely sauce so 'lie telling' ghost rel'o's can still enjoy the feast!!



How special to share these experiences with these lovely kids – great to see them having a traditional Khmer upbringing without the ravages of what life often constantly hands out here! Their eyes sparkled as they helped old villagers to fill their bowls with all the shared food that most people bring with them. They are growing into very lovely, caring & learned people! A great tribute to Leng Sry On.

