

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY and the REBUILDING OF SUEY SANG'S HOUSE.

Newsletter 10 - March 2006



From this.....















...to this...



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In my last newsletter I spoke about Mrs Sang and how her house was falling apart. I mentioned how she had no way to repair her house herself and how we were going to supply her with the necessary materials to do so. I also said that I'd love to just build her a house, but that we wouldn't due to our philosophy of offering a hand up, not a hand out. Well..... it just so happened that the day we had organised the delivery of the materials needed to repair her house fell on International Women's Day. It occurred to me that a great way to acknowledge and celebrate International Women's Day would be to actually work hand in hand with Suey (Mrs Sang) to rebuild her house with her. My friend, Angela Short, is also here helping out for a couple of months so together we set off to the Suey's place to rebuild her house. I'll let the photos tell the rest of the story.....

 <p>Delivering the materials was quite a challenge. At some points we had to push and pull the trailer through sandy dirt. It could only make it so far and then we had to organise for an ox cart to take it the rest of the way.</p>	 <p>First we had to "deconstruct" almost all of the original house. We kept the house the same size, partly to prevent jealousy from other villagers. We didn't want to be seen "giving" her a bigger house.</p>	 <p>Suey's oldest son, Get, helping out.</p>
 <p>No need for measuring tapes out here. Just grab a twig, stick or piece of palm leaf.</p>	 <p>Ok, I'll admit it - Suey, Angela and I didn't do ALL the work singlehandedly. In fact Sovanne and Weeble (our other driver) worked far harder than we did.</p>	 <p>Suey and I working on the frame.</p>
 <p>Suey and I. Angela and I were most grateful for the "handyman" skills our Dads had taught us over the years.</p>	 <p>Starting on the roof. The palm leaves are remarkably water and weather proof.</p>	 <p>Three of Suey's five children. Jai, Donder and Toit.</p>
 <p>Some of the neighbours came to help.</p>	 <p>Suey teaching Angela how to secure the palm leaf panels.</p>	 <p>Nailing down the bamboo floor. (Yes, I did bang my thumb many times!)</p>
 <p>Toit sanding down the "floor boards".</p>	 <p>Sovanne and Weeble hard at work. The guys were great and worked exceedingly hard. Weeble was only hired for the day as a driver, so went way beyond the call of duty.</p>	 <p>Looking more like a house.</p>



The boys cutting palm leaves in order to secure the roof.



Almost there - finishing off the roof.



Suey working on the roof.



Fishing for lunch.



A big thank you from Suey.



We finished the house just in time. It rained that evening. And the final cost to totally rebuild this house - less than \$50 USD (less than \$70 Australian)!