

Saturday 1st February to Saturday 8th February, 2025

Saturday 1st February, 2025.

I had the best nights sleep for five days, so I am feeling much better today!

Still, we caught a Tuktuk to the supermarket. The driver didn't know the way, even with his Google map. He is probably not from Siem Reap. Then he wanted to wait for us (as that would mean a guaranteed fare with no percentage for PassAp). We usually say no, and just use PassAp as we finish our shopping.

Our shopping seemed expensive this week, but it is good to get the fridge quite full.

In the afternoon we headed off on the bike to the buffalo cart ride business (near the West Baray). We got there nice and early.

It is an interesting place. The buffalo are well fed and very calm around us (the tourists).

We watched how to make sticky rice. David had a go filling the bamboo with the already cooked rice (with a few sweet beans) and then filling it up with coconut milk. A plug of coconut husk and banana leaf gets shoved in the top and the bamboo length is put in the fire (sitting up at an angle) to cook.



Meanwhile we went on the buffalo carts.



There is a nice walk (bumpy pathway) around the village (between the house lots and their gardens), a nice leisurely walk for the buffalo, each with a handler. Our handler talked to us and tried to teach us a lot of words (that we already knew) but all credit to him for engaging.

On returning to the big open area, we got off the cart. Well, I did, down the two steps and I was walking off when I heard the crash.

The steps had rolled out from under David and he came down hard.

Of course, everyone rushed to help him up, when really he should have been left a moment, to catch his breath and to see if anything serious was wrong.

A really nasty hit to his back but he could walk, even though he was in considerable pain.

After a bit of discussion (and afternoon tea) it was arranged for him to go back in the Tuktuk, and for me to go on the back of a motorbike with one of the teachers and another teacher and one of the other students to ride our motorbike back.

It seemed to take forever to ride home (plus a free language lesson. I had to concentrate and talk in Khmer all the way back to school!)

David wasn't much better, but he got on the back of a motorbike and someone else rode our bike back to our apartment.

Having someone ride your motorbike is not like handing your car keys over. Everyone here rides a motorbike (except me!)

Sunday 2nd February 2025.

After a painful night, we went off to Neak Tep hospital on Sunday. \$20 consultation, \$15 of drugs and \$10 for two X-rays. Nothing broken! Come back in three days if it doesn't get better.

We spent Sunday very quietly and had home delivery dumplings for tea.

(Remember when I said our shopping was expensive? Very useful to have a well stocked fridge and cupboards, as David won't be walking or even riding for a few days.)

Monday 3rd February 2025.

David is not much better. He can sit or he can lie down, but he can't move easily.

Tuesday 4th February, 2025.

We went back to Neak Tep and met with the osteosurgeon. He prescribed another set of drugs and a referral for a CT scan (at Royal Angkor Hospital). The Neak Tep surgeon bent David's legs and raised them, and made him hold them up. He asked a lot of questions, quite a thorough examination.

Then we caught another Tuktuk to the Royal Angkor Hospital (out near the Siem Reap Eye) and got a 10% discount on the scan... only \$343 for us (American)... but a ten minute wait and bottles of water while we waited. Still cheaper and so much quicker than Australia.

Then it was back to Neak Tep at 4:30 to go over the scan, with apologies because the surgeon was running late (he was in surgery).

There is no damage to the spine.

He recommended ice for David's back in addition to the drugs. So Tuesday's Neak Tep visit cost \$30 (specialist) plus more drugs (another \$18).

We had heard that the hospitals and clinics charge a lot extra (compared to the pharmacies) for the drugs. The pills are all sorted into little pouches with just the right number of tablets (they cut the foil and charge by the individual tablet), but it is very convenient to have everything sorted at one place (and to not need another Tuktuk ride).

Wednesday 5th February 2025.

David is only slightly better. It is still very painful for him.

I walked into town. I had a few little tasks to do. I changed some big notes for smaller ones (for use in tuktuks). I bought a new black fine liner at the bookshop. I went to the pharmacy to get some more ibuprofen. I bought some bread on the way home.

The smoke in the air made breathing difficult for me (just getting over the cold/flu from last week), despite ministry officials assuring us all that air quality is good. I have had this sore throat for more than a week now.

Thursday 6th February, 2025.

Another day of David shuffling around like a zombie. He walked 0.2km yesterday.

I walked to school. It is only 900m along the “main” roads, which means I go past the sewing shop. Which also means I have to stop in to buy something...white cotton today (and as I can't spend just 1000R =25c, I bought four more coloured cottons. Sometimes I use them threaded double or even 4 “threads” at a time to do embroidery).

We have decided to have David start physiotherapy and after some searching online, have found a clinic quite near us, one with a lot of good reviews.

David's first appointment is tomorrow at 8:00am.

Friday 7th February, 2025.

Up early and ready for a short Tuktuk ride to the physiotherapist. The driver knew where to go and we got his number to call him for going home.

The physio building was a house and has been converted.

There is a large, spacious waiting room with a small gym to the side. A door opens into a room with three beds and quite a bit of machinery.

David lay down on a bed and they covered him with an ice pack for about five minutes. Then they connected some electric wires and replaced the ice pack. Nearly 15 minutes later (he could feel the electricity), the therapist, Srey Neat, came in to “work” on him.

And work she did. She massaged him, pummelled him, dug her knuckles and elbows into him, leaned her shoulder against him. And then she worked on his hips (one locked hip... no wonder he has trouble sleeping on that side).

She used an ultrasound on his back (to relax the muscles?)

She went through a series of exercises for him to do.

We bought a blow up ball, altogether \$29. \$20 for an hour and a half of treatment.



We called the Tuktuk driver and he came back for us, stopping at a local mechanic's shop to blow up the ball (cost us 1000R, but would have cost a local 500R).

Back at home and David can move but still has the twinges. He very conscientiously did his three sets of exercises on Friday.

And we both went to language class (another Tuktuk) where they moved David's room to a ground floor room so he didn't have to manage the stairs.

One bit of good news, is that our Angkor temple passes have come back.

That gives us another year of free visits to all the temples in the Angkor Archaeological Park.

Saturday 8th February, 2025.

No walk to the supermarket today.

Instead, I went in to resupply David's drugs. Some of them were cheaper at the pharmacy, but some weren't. So despite many people saying the hospitals cost much more, I think it would be easier to have your drugs supplied by the hospital (unless you had a chemist next door!)

More money exchanged too... you do need small notes for tuktuks (they often say they don't have change).

And I walked on to the other bread shop for two country loaves, which made up into nice sandwiches for lunch and left plenty to be sliced and frozen ready for toast (the Vegemite supply is dwindling).

David went back to the physio just before lunch, more hard work but he is moving quite freely now (even though it is still painful). There is no bruising, no redness, no marks at all on his back.

David has been working on his exercises at home too.