

CAMBODIA 2019: Meet Srae Hai Heng

Let me take on a visit to one of the girls that is being supported with tuition fees + \$2.50 pocket money per month for only the last 4 months by Lotus Outreach (lotusoutreach.org).

Meet Srae Hai, she is 18 years old. Here she is with her grandmother in their house:



Srae Hai failed the High School Certificate this year and so we went to visit her to find out why.

Granny, a fiercely proud and powerful 64-year-old made a mistake in her life: she obliged her daughter to marry when she failed school. After marriage, the husband started to drink and so the daughter dumped her two baby girls on Granny, blaming her for divorce and misery; she never returned.

We asked Srae Hai how she felt about being abandoned. She told us that

she suffered from a lot of teasing when she was young, not having any real parents. But at 10 years of age she decided not to be affected anymore! Now she is happy.

Last year her sister, Srae Hong, failed the High School Certificate because she had no transport to go to the mandatory tuition which is far away and so now has a job in a restaurant where they give her a meal a day, basic wages and the boss is kind. She wants to become a cook and is saving up to join a school. We were happy to tell her that we know of schools with full scholarships and are looking into it for her.

Srae Hai's tuition in 3 subjects is also far away. She goes with a friend who is often late and so she has missed a lot. (School is nearby.) She was also surprised at the failure as another girl in her class passed with only passing 2 subjects! She and others (only 22 of 42 passed in Science, Social Studies kept for slow students) tried to fight it but there was no result.

So, they live on vegetables they grow, selling some fruit by the roadside; basic food, clothes and \$10 a month are wages for caring for the land for the owner given to the Granny.

Yes, there are lots of mosquitos, of course they have a net and, no, the roof is fine, it does not need mending (I asked!)



So next time you feel like complaining about your life, please think of Srae Hai (and the millions like her), stop, smile and be glad that you don't have such enormous obstacles to overcome on a daily basis.

Stay happy and healthy, mujin