



Planting the rice seedling bed for the rice paddy

SAI LOM RUDURAUN A Warm Breeze from Thailand

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The bathtub in our yard!
Flowing in from Burma

Greetings friends and family!!

Once again we are getting wet here in Sangklaburi! The monsoon season began early this year and caught us a little unprepared but we are sorting our way through the puddles!! Already it has been raining since late April. It has been a busy past six months since we last wrote to you.

Currently we are in the process of finishing one of the mud houses and also building an enormous kitchen on the land. We started rice seedlings about a month ago and just started planting the paddies out a few days ago. It is exciting, our first year to grow our own rice. Here is a brief glance at some of the projects we have been working on over the past six months.

JANUARY



Helping to make mud bricks at Mon temple for school

January brought us many wonderful volunteers to help with things on the farm. For over two months, we had over fourteen people coming in and out helping for different durations of time, mostly between one and two months. With their help we started to make mud bricks to build a school at a temple for Mon children along the Burmese border. We then went on a three day hike into Tung Yai Narasuan Wildlife Sanctuary just outside of Sangklaburi with some children from one of the other local children's homes. We hiked into three Karen hill tribe villages and helped in doing paperwork to register undocumented people.



Building the kindergarten for Karen children at Nun's home

We also helped friends to build a kindergarten mud brick school house at a children's home run by a Buddhist nun for Karen children in Tung Yai Narasuan Wildlife Sanctuary just outside of Sangklaburi.

During this time, we also began providing care for one of our girl's mother who is very sick with HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. We spent most of our time at the hospital for two weeks helping to care for her. Finally she is recover some and is currently taking ARV (anti-retro viral) medication and is doing much better.

FEBRAURY

In February we received funding from one of our partner groups, Wongsanit Ashram to lead a 7 day training in natural earthen building for local Mon, Karen, Burmese and Thai participants. Tdai from Pun Pun community in Chiang Mai came down to help lead the training. During the 7 day training we finished

our composting toilet, built a mud brick bread oven and started our gigantic Playhouse. Participants from the local village as well as Mon groups from Sangklaburi participated in the training. Also over 100 students from two different schools came out to assist in the building, play in the mud and splash in the river during the 7 days.

The Playhouse is a huge round building in the shape of a daisy with a center circle and 6 pedals. The center circle has a main stage and seating area for theatre. The adjoining 6 circular rooms will be used for natural weaving, dyeing and cotton spinning, puppet making, dance, yoga and meditation and other arts and craft activities with the children. We still have lots of work to do on the building and will continue work through the rainy season.



Mon children from local school painting the composting toilet



The beginning of the 6 pedal playhouse.



Painting the composting toilet with natural paints.

MARCH

During the month of March, Jim was invited to Mandalay, Burma for two weeks to lead a training in Participatory Learning with a Thai monk for a group of teachers at the largest Buddhist monastery school in Burma. The temple school, the largest in Burma, has over 6,000 students and a staff of roughly 130 teachers. My time in Burma was wonderful and the teachers at the school were very inspiring. Many of the teachers, some only 19 years old, had over 100 students in their class!!! What a challenge!!!

Following my trip to Burma, we took the kids up to Chiang Mai to visit friends at Pun Pun community and to visit a new school that is starting in Chiang Rai working with hill tribe villagers.



Schwedagon Temple in Yangon, Burma



Group playing, group learning in Burma!



Palace in Mandalay, Burma



Jim with the teachers in Mandalay, Burma

APRIL, MAY & JUNE



Rice seedling bed ready to be transplanted.

During April and May we spent most of our time on the farm in Wiakhadi, planting trees and working on the buildings. We purchased a truck full of trees and planted them around the land along with many fruit trees that we started ourselves from seed. We will have lots of fruit in a year or two!!

We have been dreaming of having a children's library at the Whispering Seed for a long time, and one of our volunteers helped to make that dream a reality. Jon Berger helped out on the farm for 2 months and donated our first large shipment of children's books for our library. We are grateful for his wonderful donation, as we now have a large collection of children's books in both Thai and English.

Jon has also contacted friends and family and more books are on their way to Whispering Seed from the USA and India. We are planning to use the second floor of the kitchen as the library until we can build a separate building. Once the library is established at our farm, we will then start a mobile library project to bring the books out into Tung Yai Narasuan Wildlife Sanctuary to share the books with Karen children living in remote villages. Thanks again to Jon helping to start the Library!!!

We have been working to finish one of the mud brick houses which now has two downstairs rooms, 2 upstairs porches and 2 lofts. The house will be used as an office and for kids to play and learn in. We have also been building our new kitchen for the past two months, but still have much more work to go. We hope to move into the new kitchen within the next few weeks. We are all very excited!!



Planting the rice out in the paddies with local Karen children.



Clay faces taking a bath



Hiking in Tung Yai Narasuan Wildlife Sanctuary



Trip to Thong Phaa Phoom with kids from village

JULY-Going to IDEC in Australia and World Challenge youth exchange from England!!!

Thanks to the Sandy Barnes and all the wonderful staff and students at the Preshil School in Melbourne, Australia and Tamariki School in Christchurch, New Zealand, and Cecelia Bradley one of this year's conference coordinators, we will be able to attend this year's International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC) in Sydney, Australia. Nao, Jim and our friend Harn from Burma will spend about two weeks in Australia visiting schools and participating in the conference. Thank you for helping us to make it to this year's conference!!!!

When we return from Australia, we will have 2 youth groups come to work with us through the organization World Challenge. Students and staff from King Edward VI and John Of Gaunt School in England will be joining us each for a week to help work on the Play House and help out and learn about the Whispering Seed. We are looking forward to their visit!!



Almost finished our first mud house!!

UPCOMING PROJECTS



Ready to pain the earthen house.

Teacher Training Program in Holistic Learning & Sustainability-

After working with one Burmese group in China and then having the opportunity to travel inside Burma and work with teachers at a monastic school there, we have decided to start a Teacher Training Program for teachers from inside Burma and also for Karen and Mon teachers along the Thai-Burmese border. Jim will be working with Wongsanit Ashram and friends from Burma and Thailand to design a 1 year residential program in Thailand. We hope to start working with the first group of teachers starting around the end of this year for a 4-6month period. We hope to have the 1 year program designed and ready to start by next June of July 2007. The program will incorporate many aspects for teachers to not only learn about holistic learning and alternative, democratic models of education, but also will include trainings in different aspects of sustainable living such as Permaculture, natural house building and holistic health care. We also hope to include in the program study tours in Thailand and India for the teachers to directly experience different models of learning communities. We are currently designing the program and curriculum and are starting to look for funding sources for the program.

WISH LIST FOR WHISPERING SEED

We are in need of a few things here at Whispering Seed to help make life a little easier for us. The following is a list of supplies which we could use some help getting. If you have any of these, or know where we might be able to access them, we would greatly appreciate hearing from you.

- *laptops-we are in desperate need of laptop computers
- first aid supplies, homeopathic and naturopathic medicines
- children's books
- children and adult rain jackets (for children in the village)
- umbrellas (for children in the village)
- tooth brush and tooth paste for kids in village
- summer clothing for children
- floor loom for weaving
- blank notebooks, coloring books, English workbooks
- pens, colored pencils, markers, paints
- toys, games, puzzles
- donation towards purchasing fruit trees for the land

That's all for this issue of Sai Lom. But we do want to let everyone know that Jim will be back in the states for about a month this August. It has been over two years, so I am looking forward to this visit home to see friends and family. If you do have any donations, they can be sent to my family's house in Pennsylvania and I will be able to take things back when I come back to Thailand in September. Donations can also be made on our website.

Thank you all for your support of Whispering Seed. We hope you all are doing well and hope to hear from you soon!!

With warmest blessings!!

Jim, nao, and the children at whispering seed!

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