

Day 3, Part 2a Bagan, the rest of the day:

Toe picked us up after breakfast and we went off to one of the temples to see a view of the Bagan temples again, but this time from the top of a temple for a panoramic view. On the way we passed the gold

Dhammayazika Pagoda built in 1196 A.D. The name means "Pertaining the King of Law."

It has a solid circular pagoda with an elaborate and unusual design. The three lower terraces, which are adorned with terracotta tablets illustrating the Birth Stories of the Buddha, are pentagonal, and at the base on each side, there is a small temple with a square basement enshrining an image of the Buddha. They are all built on a raised platform enclosed within a wall, and there is an outer circuit wall which is pierced with five gateways. Very elaborate. But we did not stop



there other than to take a few pictures. So, we took our pictures and then drove around to the next temple, whose name I just don't remember. It was made of red brick and had a long staircase leading up to a balcony level with a 360 degree view of the plains of Bagan. As in most temples, there were vendors, this time selling sand paintings. Since we had just floated over all the temples that morning, this view did not overly impress us. But for anyone who hasn't ballooned, this would be a great spot to get an overview of the temples. But then Ben noticed that if you stand at one of the arches, there is a gorgeous framed view of the Dhammayazika Pagoda.



From there we went to visit a local village. We had told Toe that we were interested in seeing more than Temples. We wanted to see the people, how they live, the local color. So Toe arranged for us to visit one of the

local villages. She chose one that she thought would be less touristy (no t-shirts being sold) and in fact we were the only ones visiting. When we got there, there was a locked gate (remember what Toe said when she first picked us up? It is very safe here, but we are human."). An older lady came to take the lock of the gate and let us in. She was expecting us as Toe had clearly been there before. We asked Toe whether the villagers got paid to show us around and she told us that she personally paid them a small amount. Nevertheless, when Toe wasn't looking, several women



held out their hands to us asking for money. Toe was furious when we mentioned that to her and her whole point of paying them was so that we, the tourists, would not be harassed.



The women were very welcoming and showed us around their home. The homes are primarily made of woven bamboo and are called *eit wine*. There was one large room, a living area, surrounded by two bedrooms and a small kitchen. The toilets are still just a hole in the ground, sometimes covered with an outhouse and sometimes not. The bedrooms were essentially just one large bed. The living room also had a raised platform where some of the family members slept.



There were large canvas bags and baskets everywhere in the house, filled with fresh peanuts which they grow in their fields. They proudly showed us the peanuts, invited us to sit down and have some. Nothing like fresh peanuts! We felt



safe eating them since they were in their shells.



This particular house had some electricity. It was actually a bit strange to see the electric tower not far from the ancient temple. As of three months ago, electricity became available, but not everyone can afford to have it. First there is the cost of installing it. Second is the cost of keeping it. Few villagers can afford that. But this family had a small refrigerator which was their pride and joy. After thanking them and waving good bye, we walked around the village to see what life here was like.



We saw women doing laundry which is still done in basins or buckets.





We saw women (usually the young ones) carrying buckets of water as all the water has to be brought from the lake (really a reservoir) across from the village gate. One woman posed for us with her buckets of water, and her pose reminded me of a dancer.



We saw mothers with their children. We saw lots of children running around. And the children have the most beautiful faces.



We saw oxen being used to turn a wheel for the grain and oxen pulling carts.



We saw women separating the grain from the chaff. In fact, it seemed mostly women who were doing the work. I imagine the men were working outside the village, in the fields or other places.



And we saw these ceramic jars, LARGE jars, everywhere. They are used for storing water or anything else that needs storage. You may have noticed them in an earlier blog where they were being sold near one of the temples or in the village homes we saw from the balloon. You will see them again later in today's story as well.





We continued walking around the village meeting people, smiling and taking it all in. We walked past a field of hay with a resting cow on our way to the lake. As we approached, another young woman came with her buckets, hanging from a stick on her shoulders, to fill them with water. And notice, the water is not exactly crystal clear. And the buckets not light. And how many trips does she have to make to get enough water?

