



It was pitch black when I set foot into the temples.



Laden with equipment, I could do naught but follow the light before me, and the nebulous silhouette that preceded it.




This was unfamiliar land to me; a land that I had never treaded upon. To be honest, within the tenebrosity of the night, the conjectures of the place that manifested in my mind were rather ominous.


Shattered Lens

Reflections from Project Battambang


Photos: Project Battambang
Captions: Aaron Tang (YLLSoM Class of 2016)



It was painful and exasperating that there was only so much a camera could do, to bring light to the darkness that reigned through and through.



Through the doorway, the wailing wind seeped through, strengthening the strangely hiemal environment that clawed at our skin.



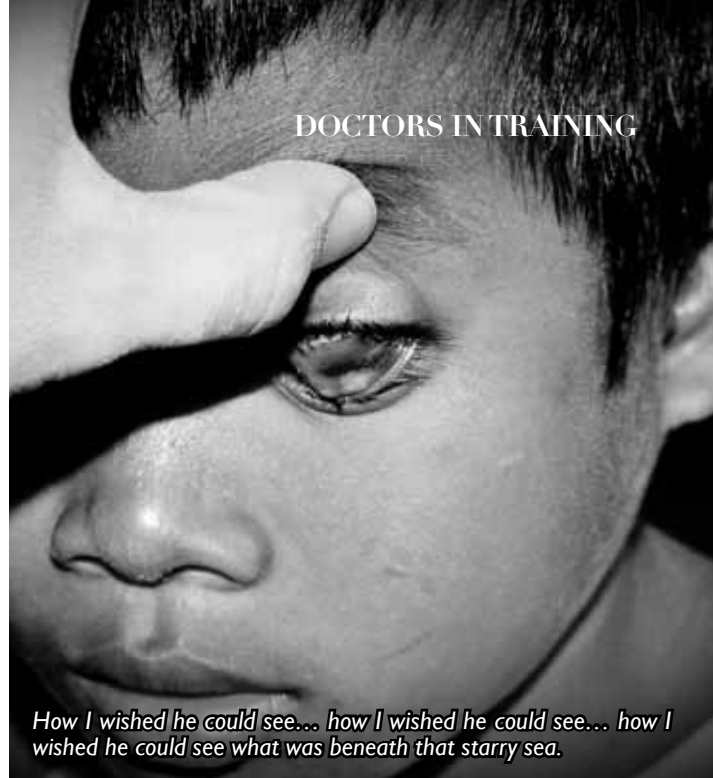
The audible wails...



And the inaudible ones...



I needed more information about the place, more than what my eyes could proffer me. Without hesitation, I scoured my immediate surroundings and took a shot, squeezing out a grainy frame beneath the starry night sky.



DOCTORS IN TRAINING

How I wished he could see... how I wished he could see... how I wished he could see what was beneath that starry sea.



From above I heard the rustle of agitated bats. Oh how much blood they must have shed! For a thud, followed by a loud cacophony of falling rocks followed...



Triggering a thought that pricked my conscience... I was fortunate to have a roof over my head, as I've always had. I could only imagine the number of people around here who didn't!



And the ones that often slipped unnoticed...

About Project Battambang

By the Project Battambang team

Project Battambang is an overseas community project organised by students from the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore. For the past two years, the team, mentored by Dr Ong Yew Jin, has been going to the district of Poipet, located near the Cambodian province of Battambang and on the Thai-Cambodian border, with the main focus of supplementing local primary healthcare services, and developing effective and sustainable rural healthcare programmes for the community in the long run.

Aside from community health screenings, the team also conducts household surveys shedding light on the needs of the community, and tailored health education programmes seeking to improve the health situation of underprivileged Cambodians. The team also supports the development of village schools and education of needy students in the area.

To ensure long term sustainability, the team works alongside two main local contacts: the Missionary Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and accompanying students from the Phnom Penh International Medical University.

If you are interested in joining or supporting the project, or finding more about it, email Project Battambang at med.battambang@gmail.com or visit our website at <http://www.projectbattambang.com>. **SMA**



And then I saw it... for deep within the doorway, I saw first light. This was the reason why I, and perhaps everyone else, was here... the firm belief, that despite all darkness, light was to shine!



Upon the child who always wanted to take that leap of faith.



When first light came, I realised that all this time, they had already been running for it.



Even between child and child.



There were tough roads to traverse, but we knew that the view was worth it.



Upon the child eager to learn...



Upon the child awaiting surgery...



Such tenacity and determination they had! In overcoming all odds that lay before them,



In the care that they showed for one another,



And so as we watched them run,



And looked into their cherubic eyes, we couldn't help...



It was strange though, for in that time... I realised they knew joy better than I did.



But wasn't I the one who held up the boy who was lost within the crowds?



Wasn't I the one who reached out to the hand that reached out to me?



But to my surprise, the light revealed something that I had not expected...



For carrying me all this while... was the child I thought I had helped for a mile!



Smiling, I held his hand, and said,



But lift them up, and help them on towards first light.



And so we climbed and climbed, through the undulating ruins of the dilapidated place.



And then I saw, in the distance, a most wonderful sight that blew my mind. Light had come, and triumphed over darkness!



"Well, let us walk together to the end!"



END