

## A Visit To Dalun- A 6 Room Basic School.



(Donated by Tony Yallop in memory of his wife Margaret )

A great celebration in a country village with all the pupils involved . The school is sited a couple of 100 yards from the road behind the JHS. The grounds were marked out with a neat wattle fence.

We arrived a little early to be greeted/ ignored by an exodus of Primary 2 children and an energetic teacher, charging out of their classroom and beating the bounds of their school grounds picking up every tiny piece of litter . The teacher then introduced himself as the head and class teacher for P2 and Kindergarten 2. A very busy man who obviously loved the children.

Then a stream of Primary 3 and Primary 4 , carrying 2 plastic chairs , on their heads, from the road, set up seating for the guests. Many of the very excited children were in their Sunday best clothes, a non uniform day as it was a special celebration and they were told they were going to dance not watch! ( In other schools that we visited the pupils were often left in the classrooms as this was an adult visit ... a shame )

The elders and mothers of the village came and took their place and the Chief came too. He was not expected as he seldom leaves his palace . There were the usual grateful speeches from the chief's linguist the MPs representative and head master. The MP had built the toilets and the head of the PTA had brought electricity to the school. The Headmaster explained that they had 494 pupils and they were very grateful for the desks that had been given but they are looking for more. Their other challenges/ requests were for an ICT lab (ICT is now on the syllabus for all basic schools but only a text book provided ), a Library as the students have to cross the road to reach books and teachers quarters. This is reasonable as it is over an hour from any town on a motorbike. We heard these challenges at every school we visited so were not surprised. The best was yet to come.

The very loud village 'talking drums' came in and deafened us but then the children, the boys from the p5 and 6 and JHS took to the floor with their smocks spinning and their sticks bashing ( cultural history is part of their syllabus at school) And then a rather portly master in a black suit with white shirt and tie joined in too. The children raised the roof with loud excited cheering as he had taught them the dances. Then it was the girls turn and in their home clothes they gyrated and bottom bumped just as their mothers often do. It was very exciting and so less formal. We were then presented and dressed in our gifts of clothes but it did seem that the whole community was with us. We did explore the classrooms which did have many desks in good condition.

I think Tony and Margaret would be proud .