

PART 2 ADVENTURES IN CAMBODIA

One night following a group dinner in downtown Siem Reap, Cambodia our foursome piled into a tuk tuk (motor scooter powered pedi-cab) for the Night Market. I've been to the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul and La Boqueria, (public market in Barcelona) which are bustling beehives of activity, and I guess I expected something reminiscent. I was wrong. I felt claustrophobic in the tight aisles lined with scarves, purses, costume jewelry, and replicas of Cambodian art. Sales people breached personal boundaries, desperate to sell their wares.

The way back of this virtual warehouse is reserved for foot/shoulder massages. Two long rows of pink vinyl plush chairs with ottomans provide venues for treatments, all for three American dollars. The siren calling me back to this massage parlor was a stage show replete with four heavily costumed lip sinkers singing the Hava Nagila (a traditional song performed at every Jewish wedding and Bar/Bat Mitzvah I've ever attended). Mugged by massage sales people, I submitted my feet to a young Cambodian Masseuse. As if the spa treatment was not enough, the stage performers provided additional entertainment. Costume changes occurred with each song. Performers became Whitney Houston and even Carmen Miranda. The Adam's apples betrayed their female dress, revealing them to be transvestites.

I could not shake the disquiet I felt in that chair observing the torn stage steps, ripped backdrop, and shabby costumes. Tiny children, left to their own devices, roamed the room grabbing bites and drinks with little to no adult supervision. The therapists looked a bit conscripted handing over their payments to a woman with a wallet. I tipped my therapist \$2.00 for a total payment of 5.00 for my excellent foot-rub. She acted as though she might cry with gratitude.



Such is the way of travel....