

03-28-09 Making Rice Mats

Please remember I'm a plumber and be forgiving regarding my spelling and punctuation.

On the way back home to Mae Sai from the children's shelter in Ban AYO we decided to stop at our friends' home.



Peter is from Australia and retired here in Thailand. His wife, Nok, is from East-Central Thailand.

Nok is a great cook. Her sun dried pork is the best I have ever eaten. She also makes great ant egg with vegetables dishes.

About a half hour after we arrived it started to rain again. It



was a very hard rain with thunder and lightning like the day before. Peter and Nok ask if we wanted to stay as they have a room available. They have five rooms that they rent. They are Thai style rooms with two common cooking areas and two community baths.

We said: "Great!" as we both like their company. It was a nice visit and, as always, great food.

In the morning, Daeng and I woke up about 7:15. The compound was quiet so we went for a little walk to the main road. There was a man selling plants off a little wheeled cart. Daeng bought a plant that has nice smelling flowers for Nok.

As we were walking back we saw two ladies, on their porch,



weaving something on this wooden loom. Daeng said "Hello" in Thai and they invited us in.

They were working together weaving reed mats. The finished mats ended up about four wide and six foot (4' x 6')



long. They were just big enough to sleep on.

They are called rice mats but are really reed mats. The reed is just a little smaller than a pencil. With rice mats the weaving material is much smaller, about the diameter of a tooth pick.

We watch as they worked together, one lady moving the wooden loom as the other lady put fresh reed on a stick and pushed it thru the threads. She then removed the stick leaving the reed. The other lady would



drop the wooden part of the loom compressing the reed next to the last reed. She



would than twist the smaller end around the thread while the other lady put in a new piece or two of reed.

I told Daeng they should have some music with a heavy beat going as they worked together in a timed manor.



When they did about six feet of mat they would remove from the loom and tie the ends



and set it aside to be dried in the sun.



They would thread up the loom again and start over. Total time to make one was about 15 minutes. They were selling them for 20 Thai Baht (60 cents US).

It was fun to watch them as they were quit happy in their reed mat making.

We said: "Goodbye" and promised to give them a printed picture the next time we went thru the area.

Onward with our trip home to Mae Sai.