

Balance

The whizzing and humming of motos, tuk-tuks, and trucks piled high with humans and other parcels smash together, somehow the vehicles themselves do not collide. Even people on bicycles bravely weave themselves into this mix. I sit inside one of the many tuk-tuks in the dusk of evening weary from a day long flight, the heavy air blowing in my face. I am sure I am going to die in the chaos that surrounds me. However, as I watch something unexpected unfolds. Underneath the chaos on the surface is a firm sense of balance. I just had to watch closely to see it. Watch I did each day I was in Phnom Penh. When I looked closely what I saw was a beautiful dance in which everyone made room for everyone else. Each vehicle coming from every which way looking like it would crash into another instead slid into this pattern I saw unfolding. I was obsessed with the traffic patterns while I was in Cambodia. I just couldn't believe it could work. Here in Maine on a highly trafficked summer day we have trouble with the pattern of one and one letting each other into a single lane. As my days in Phnom Penh drew on I even became comfortable crossing the street on foot. It was like playing a game of double dutch on the playground at recess when I was in elementary school. You had to watch the movement and look for your entrance and just at the right moment you jump in. Crossing that street was exhilarating because I was part of this precarious balance.

