



Dr. Teh Ban Hup

A PAEDIATRICIAN WITH A HEART FOR PEOPLE AND AN EYE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY SHARES HIS EXPERIENCE FROM BEING A PRO-PROGRAM MODE USER TO MASTERING THE ART OF ADVANCED POST-PROCESSING.

WORDS JAYNE KENNEDY / IMAGES DR. TEH BAN HUP

THIS PICTURE:

Marble sculptors
of Mandalay,
Myanmar.

Have you ever sat in your doctor's office wondering what he does in his spare time, as he methodically steadies the stethoscope over your chest? As a practising paediatrician, Dr. Teh Ban Hup spends a good deal of his time diagnosing illness, administering medication and listening to parents' worry about the measles. Off duty, he grabs his camera kit and snaps away at the world beyond the hospital doors.



DR. TEH BAN HUP BIOGRAPHY

A practising Paediatrician by day, an avid photographer whenever there's spare time. Spending most of his time indoors professionally, is driven to Teh travel and collect portraits of different cultures across the world. A fan of post-process editing, he has already produced two e-books which have been published in print due to overwhelming demand. Visit his website to purchase and download a copy for yourselves: www.banhup.com.

Through photography, this doctor finally felt able to express his creativity. A lot of us assume they're boring, straight-edged people with no time to sleep or eat, but Dr. Teh has proved us all wrong. Once a self-professed "pro-Program Mode user", Dr. Teh has moved up the ranks with two published e-books on the art of Post-Processing. On his blog, he personally admits, "It had always been to just shoot and let the lab do the rest of the work. There were days when I actually shot without the film properly inserted! OK, sometimes even without the film!" On the days that the roll of film was in the camera, Dr. Teh was disappointed with the lack of control and outcome of quite a number of his pictures and almost gave up. When DSLRs came into view, it opened a whole new door of possibility in post-editing- this is what revived his interest in photography.

From his first camera, a Fuji 4700, Dr. Teh quickly moved onto a Nikon D50 and hasn't looked back since. He's moved from the D50 to the D200, trading and buying until he obtained the Nikon D3, with a Nikon 17-35mm/2.8, 24-70mm/2.8, 70-200mm/2.8 VR, SB 800, and the list goes on. Dr. Teh claims he suffers from NAS, Nikon

"The books had tonnes of methods but it took a lot of trial and error to get where I am"



LEFT: SUGAR BABY

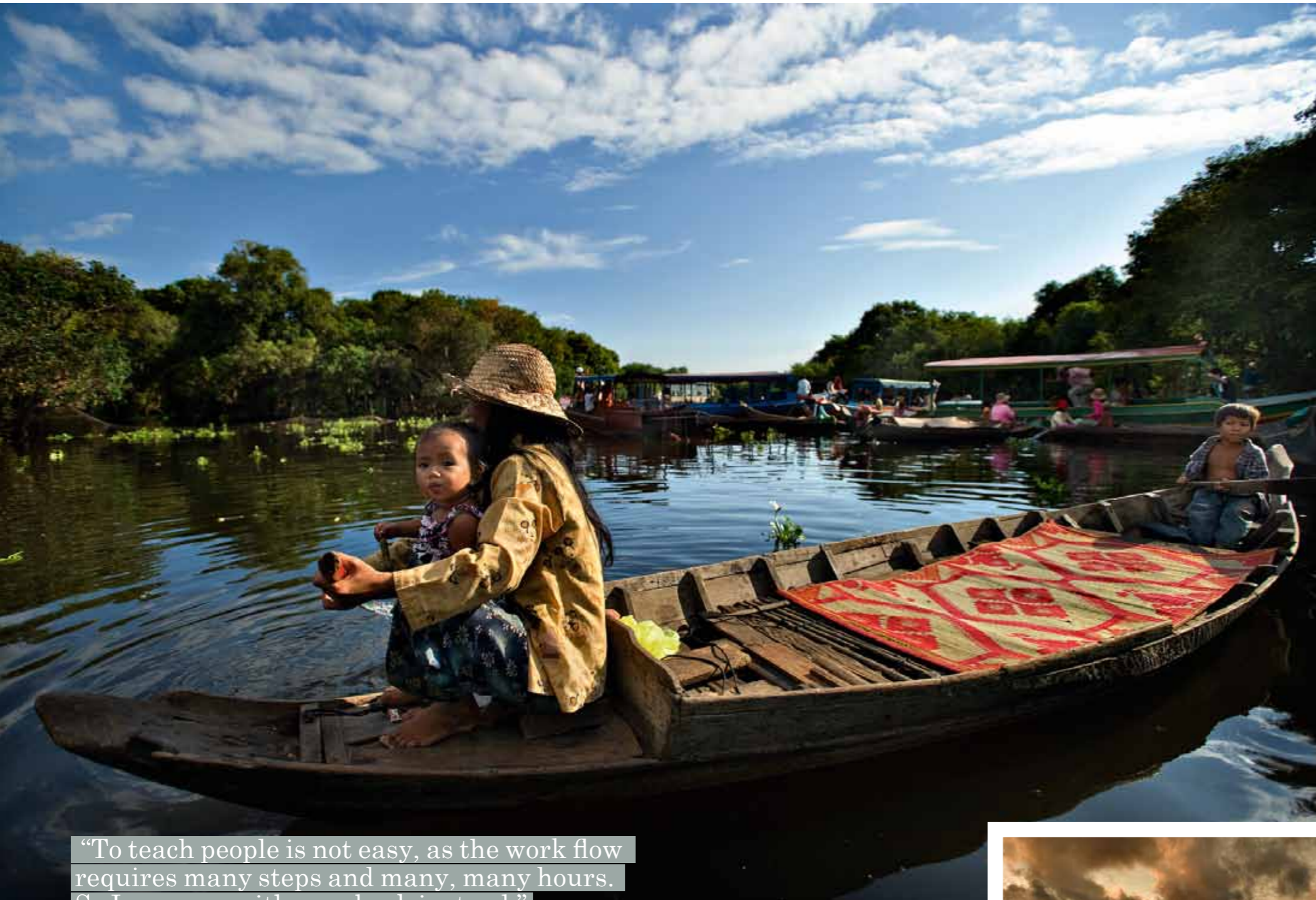
Taken in Guilin. Each time I raised my camera he would show a victory sign. I had to get my wife to distract him.

THIS PICTURE : PRAYERS

This is Pak Jingga taken in his compound during the 1st photo safari that I organized for a group of photographers.



Dr. Teh Ban Hup



“To teach people is not easy, as the work flow requires many steps and many, many hours. So I came up with an e-book instead.”

Acquisition Syndrome, of which there is no known cure (if you do know a remedy, email us!). Surely, only a doctor could come up with that!

Now, the world of photography was made available to everyone as DSLRs became more affordable. Dr. Teh, realising this, promptly began doing research and started honing his skills. As most of you know, the photography scene is a close knit community, and many enthusiasts invited Dr. Teh to join them for photoshoots and outings. “I’ve always wondered how people’s pictures turned out so colourful and vibrant. I didn’t even know Photoshop existed, so I had no idea how to edit my images,” shared Dr. Teh. “I bought the programs and didn’t know what to do with them. The books had tonnes of methods but it took a lot of trial and error to get

where I am.” Through these support groups, he found a photographer that he felt he could connect with, and admired greatly. He began studying Manny Librado’s technique and style, emulating him until one day he finally contacted the man himself.

Manny asked Dr. Teh to go to Bangkok to learn a few tricks of the trade with him. Not one to let an opportunity fly pass, Dr. Teh bought the first ticket available and became Manny’s second student ever. However, Dr. Teh felt that his pictures actually appeared worse than before as fast-paced Manny ran his workshops akin to the F1 racer on the racetrack. Dr. Teh was forced to keep up and move on regardless, but the doctor was no stranger to pressure and dealt swiftly. Since then he has developed his own technique the way he likes to

TOP:
Taken at Tonle Sap, Seam Reap.

TOP RIGHT:
Caretaker of the Nyaung Ohak.

MIDDLE RIGHT: CURIOSITY
Taken in Sapa, Vietnam. Each time I took a shot of him he wanted to see the result on my camera’s LCD.



THIS PICTURE :
Sunrise at Kusamba fishing village, Bali.

see his photos.

In Dr. Teh’s professional mind, he envisions the final shot before shooting. Standing in the environment, he breathes in the background, mood and lighting. When all the key ingredients are swirling around in his head, he stacks them together into a tight visual piece, then shoots. This is the basic routine he goes through before snapping any images.

As a lover of detail, Dr. Teh enjoyed macro photography. His home is littered with lens and equipment suited for shooting flowers, insects, and plants. However, as a man who deals with life threatening issues every day, this subject matter quickly got boring and tedious. He shifted his focus to



THIS PICTURE:
Sunset fishermen
of Jimbaran, Bali.



“Regardless of that, follow your passion. Go out there and just shoot. Life is about trial and error....”

bird-photography and quickly got the apparatus needed. It sure sounds good to be on a doctor's payroll, doesn't it? In no time, Dr. Teh realised that bird-photography was incredibly time-consuming; he could spend days outdoors and return with no shots whatsoever. This ate up much of his family time, and that was not something Dr. Teh was prepared to sacrifice for a few shots of feathery friends.

An excerpt from his blog explains his choice of subject matter: “Available light portraiture is the mainstay of my photography, and travel photography. Even though I have two flashguns, I hardly use them nowadays. I enjoy available light photography as I can shoot almost anywhere at almost any time with minimal set up.” For a man with little time to spare, Dr. Teh's patience on relying on equipment is slim. “Gone were the days of me carrying umbrellas and lightstands. Now with the mind-boggling high ISO performance of the D3, failing light is less of an issue.”

As a professional in his career, Dr. Teh loves people. Personally, it is no different too. Faces of young and old live on his blog; each person's uniqueness is distinctly captured and saved for life. Many photographers dislike editing images, and others condone it. In Dr. Teh's images, the post-processing looks natural and unintentional – you can't even tell if the image has been touched up as the editing is so subtle. Whether this is 'cheating' or not is irrelevant, for the editing is an art in itself.

Every now and then Dr. Teh does his best to give back to the community that supported him in the first place. He often holds workshops on post-processing editing and portraiture, often coupled together as he admits it is difficult learning straight out of a book. Theory is one thing, and practice is another. However, as a paediatrician, Dr. Teh's time is limited. “To teach people is not easy, as the work flow requires many steps and many, many hours. So I came up with an e-book instead.” His e-books are largely a sum of everything he has ever learnt, and has even been turned into a printed publication due to high demand – and true to his philanthropist nature, the proceeds of his first e-book went straight to charity. Do visit his personal website as it includes tips that he has learnt – the generous Dr. Teh has no plans to keep his tricks to himself.

For those who are wondering, Dr. Teh has in fact participated in a handful of contests online and has won a good portion of them. “It's funny, I haven't collected any prizes because the cost of posting the prizes to me is more than the reward!” laughed Dr. Teh. All jokes aside, Dr. Teh's main reason for joining is to see where he stands in the mass of photographers. “One wouldn't know how good he is until he is put with other photographers,” explains Dr. Teh. “Regardless of that, follow your passion. Go out there and just shoot. Life is about trial and error – some things you can control, others you can't.” And if you can't control it naturally, you sure can post-process it!

TOP:
Discipline. Taken in Mandalay, Myanmar. See write up in Facebook album.

OPPOSITE PAGE:
Green Hmong. One of the tribes of Sapa, Vietnam.