

Love - ຄວາມ ສົມ

Respect - ພົບ ສົງ

Responsibility - ຄວາມ ຮັບ ຜິດ ຈຸດ ຈຸດ
October 6, 2001
St. Demetrios Church

Loyalty - ຄວາມ ຈື່ງ ສົມ ພົມ ຄີ
Upper Darby

WEDDING - ການ ແຕ້ງ ການ

BRIDE - ຜົວ ສາວ

GROOM - ເຈົ້າ ບ່າວ

Hi. My Name is Larry Woodson and I am from Overbrook, Kansas. I would like to introduce my wife of 23 years, Dee Ann Woodson. I would also like to introduce Mr. Allan Best and his friend Mandy.

Having introduced myself, I think a moment is necessary to explain how I came to be in Upper Darby today for this marriage between Kack Thoumma and Saymany Phaxay. In 1964, then a young Kansas farm boy, I graduated from Kansas State University and accepted a volunteer teacher position at the teacher training college in Luang Prabang, Laos.

The two years in Luang Prabang flew by as did the following three years at the Sisavongvong University in Vientiane, the capital city of Laos. At the Universtiy, I worked with some thirty American volunteer high school teachers assigned to the English Section.

By 1970, the war in S.E. Asia had generated thousands of refugees. Many of these refugees had fled the war areas of NE Laos and were being relocated in more secure areas closer to the capital city of Vientiane. It was about this time in history that I accepted a contract position with the Agency of International Development in the Refugee Education Section.

I was assigned to work with Mr. Khamphong Phaxay, who was working in the Laotian Ministry of Primary Education. Together, we were given credit for the establishment of 117 classrooms throughout the refugee settlements, thus providing opportunity for elementary schooling for more than 5,000 children. The USAID Director, Mr. Charles Mann issued a letter of commendation in recognition of this accomplishment. This recognition would not have been possible without the outstanding efforts and hard work of Mr. Khamphong Phaxay.

Those who are close friends and relatives of Khamphong's know the family history far better than I do. For others, I feel I need to briefly tell you of some of Mr. Khamphong's family challenges and sorrows.

Due to the hostilities in Laos, he was separated from his first wife and his six children. After his first wife's death, he married Khomphong, the bride's mother. All together Khamphong had ten children, one of which was killed in a communist forced labor camp. Khamphong spent two years in the labor camp, where thousands died of overwork, starvation or torture. Following his release from the labor camp he was forced to struggle for mere existence under the watchful eye of the communist government. Only his strong will to live, his faith, and his determination to help his family enjoy a better life, allowed him to survive.

Khamphong's brother was also incarcerated and killed.

With a past filled with sorrow, sacrifices, hardships, hunger and difficulty, it becomes more important to appreciate this day and this blessed event. Let us celebrate this day and this occasion and may many happy days follow. May this generation and future generations never forget the sacrifices made by family, parents and relatives.

I will close with two Lao Proverbs:

A good wife is like a jewel. Di mea Dee, Pan gheo khun lang.

ໄດ້ເມັດຄີ ປານແກ້ວ
ຄູ່ມສິງ

If you are looking for an elephant, look at its tail. If you are looking for a woman, look at her Mother. Bung sang, high bung tang, bung nang, bunt mee.

ເບິ່ງ ກຸ້ງ ໃຫ້ ເບິ່ງ ຫາງ
ເບິ່ງ ມາງ ໃຫ້ ເບິ່ງ ເມັດ