

Udorn Thani



Thailand becomes part of us. Our experiences here influence the way we think, feel and act. Through exposure to Thai culture we are changed, and forced to grow, to look beyond ourselves and our lifestyles. We come to the realization that there are other ways than ours.

This supplement to Wings 1974 has two purposes: to show school events in the spring and to give a glimpse of the contrasting impressions that make up life in Udonthani, Thailand.





We are
lost
in a menagerie of
sounds
imprisoned in the
mural
whose brilliance
and luminance is
muted and washed
into a
single
color

by that
immortal jewel
a stroke of undiluted paint

While
Innocence
in its full splendor
leaves its
own tint in
a secluded
corner
of the mural
and captures the
mind.

-- Dean Williamson

"Farang kee maa!"

I guess I could tell you about the temples with their gold roofs or the boats full of exotic fruit at the floating market or even of the Buddhist monks "whose saffron robes dot the early morning landscape." But even the phrases are tiresome clichés by now and you could find it all in any travelog.

My most precious memory of Thailand delves beneath the tourist attractions and will never become hazy or obliterated with time. Before the days of communist scares I would explore the countryside around Udon on horseback with my friends. We would start out in the early morning freshness on a trek that would stretch many miles before we forced ourselves to turn back.

At a village, children would herald our arrival by waving and calling "Farang kee maa!" meaning, "Foreigner ride horse," the event being so astounding that everyone was called to come witness the spectacle. Chickens and dogs would scatter to make way and a whole crowd of kids would follow us to the outskirts of the village. The adults would be busy with their chores, tending food stalls, pounding rice into flour or watering vegetable gardens. The old people stayed near the houses, watching over the chores



thickets and dry dust turned up by the horses when the path turned into a scene from a Tarzan movie. Vines climbed through the branches of towering trees to hang across the path with leafy elegance. The green undergrowth was lush and cool.

When our paths became roads of soft dirt with no dangerous holes we would not have to prod the horses into picking up speed. They would start out trotting, then, fighting for the lead, break into a headlong galloping race. We wouldn't stop them. The speed was a fantastic feeling. Sometimes in the hottest weather they would gallop for a mile or more. When we came upon one of the frequent reservoirs where villagers were bathing and fishing we, too, would take to the water with our horses for relief.

In the heat of the afternoon we finally would come dragging back, and even if the same route had to be retraced there were new sights to see or old ones we missed. Passing a farmer tilling his land with his kwai or spotting an ox cart slowly moving up the road—however common these sights, I enjoy them still.

At last home, the horses and me both bathed, I would swear I wouldn't be able to ride for a month. But a new crisp morning and a spirited horse would call me back time and time again to follow paths never taken before.

—Dianne Griffin



or the younger children. If we happened to get lost in someone's backyard we had nothing to fear. Nobody was going to blow our heads off for trespassing.

As we passed through different villages there would be a noticeable difference not just in landscape but in pride. Some villagers seemed to take little pride in their surroundings. Great piles of trash and collected junk might lie strewn about their homes. Other places would seem immaculate. Huge rain trees and bamboo stretched along the sois to make a shady lane of sun dappled beauty. The homes, however modest, seemed clean and some might be adorned with potted flowers. It was a pleasure to ride through a village that showed such pride.

Out in the wide open rice paddies the sun could be murderous and a lonely shade tree was a relief to both horse and rider. A meeting with an inquisitive water buffalo (kwai) meant watch out! Many did not take too well to horses, or maybe it was us. I have been snorted at, charged at and scared to death more than once by a suspicious cow or a just plain ornery bull.

Many times our paths led us into jungle area, sometimes quite by surprise. We would be picking our way through thorny





The Center

Buddhism is the soul of Thailand. The philosophy of the Dharma is central to Thai life. Socially, politically and economically the Sangha (monkhood) is a powerful force in Thailand and Southeast Asia.

Foreigners see Buddhism in different ways. Some are drawn to the festivals and ceremonies; others are fascinated by the philosophy of the Buddha. Still others encounter mainly the wats (temples and monasteries) or the monks themselves.

Wats are scattered throughout Thailand. The glint of sunlight off a golden spire, a glimpse of white plaster in the jungle, a Buddha image impassively surveying the countryside from a mountaintop—all are signs that a wat is near.

For some these remote wats hold a magical fascination. The sight of a wat, far off on the horizon, seems to call travelers to stop and rest. Making a journey, a pilgrimage, to a primitive jungle temple can be an intense religious experience.

Some people are impressed most by the saffron robes and shaved heads of the monks. These religious men rise early in the morning to go from house to house to get the rice that is their daily food. After returning to the wat they follow a regular schedule of meditation, study and prayerful chanting. Almost every Thai man becomes a monk for a short time before he marries and some devote their lives to the Eightfold Path of Buddhism.

Still other westerners find the seasonal festivals and ceremonies to be the most exciting aspect of their Buddhist experiences. Every full moon marks a Buddha holiday, with the more important festivals coming at the beginning and end of Buddhist Lent (the rainy season) and at the three-fold anniversary in early May of Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death. Perhaps the most memorable celebration is the combination of Buddhist and traditional customs at Song Kran, when everybody throws water on everybody else for three days in April.

Finally, the thing that stays in the mind after any of these encounters with Buddhism, beyond the flowers and the prayerful hands, above the haze of incense or the glow of candles as the faithful circle a wat in the moonlight, is a certain silence—a sense of peace.

—Dan Bashaw

questions

he asked
 why?
 (not
 without
 ignorance I
 thought)
 are They
 so
 devoted
 and live in
 two worlds
 —ours and
 Their inner thoughts—
 battling the
 ever
 present and universal
 Suffering
 by solitude
 and extinction
 of
 the individual
 why?

I answered.
 Don't you
 worship
 someone
 called
 God.

—Dean Williamson





Bai Suu Khong*

The marketplace is more than a trade center. It is a vibrant people center, a mind blowing experience in sight, smell and sound. A sensory trip.

You enter through a dingy alleyway lined with shops. Open air stalls sell wicker baskets, plastic ware, hardware, pottery. You immediately notice the contrast between traditional goods and modern electronic appliances.

The market is contrast. Colors flame in brilliant hues of red and yellow in defiance of the washed out grey of the awnings and walls. The smells of dried fish, durian, flowers, dusty bolts of cloth combine and mix in the air about you.

Sounds permeate the marketplace. The calls of the food venders, voices hassling over prices, transistor radios, Chinese, Thai, Lao, Hindustani and a half dozen different languages give a hectic disjointed effect to the drone of the traffic in the nearby street.

The market is intense—nervous, fast-paced, constantly in flux, an environment of contradictions.

A stall selling candied fruits, another specializing in jewelry and still another offering incense and candles . . . A small Chinese shrine is a minute island of peace in this ocean of bustling activity. You find the exit, a montage of food stands, street vendors and samlor that spills out onto the sidewalk. You enter the relative peace of the busy downtown streets.

(*Bai suu khong means go buy things) --Dan Bashaw

Bai Teo*

A samlor pedicab squealed to a stop in front of my house and the driver asked where I was going. I said Bantan, which is an area about two baht (ten cents) away from my house. I climbed up on the red plastic seat and the driver pedaled his way to my friend's house.

I went up to Deek's door calling her name and began to take off my shoes. When she appeared, I, the younger of us, wai'd a greeting first, putting my palms together in front of my face and dipping my head in a slight bow—"Sawaddi, ka." She returned the greeting. This is the traditional way of saying hello and good-bye in Thailand.

Deek had just come home from high school. She was dressed in the regulation Thai school uniform, a white shirt and blue skirt and her hair came just below her ear lobes, according to the rules. She excused herself to go put on cooler clothes, which at home consisted of a cotton shirt and sarong. A sarong, or pah tung as it is usually called in the Northeast, is a long tube skirt that is wrapped around the waist with the excess folded and tucked in at the top to form a large pleat. When Deek goes out she wears western clothing.

Deek led me into the main room of her weathered wooden home. This room is used for almost everything except cooking, which is done outside at her mother's soup kitchen. In the corner Deek's grandmother, Et, was sitting with her feet tucked under her because it is against Buddhism to point the feet toward someone. She was rocking Deek's sleeping baby sister, Gnun, in her cradle, a nylon woven hammock. Et's mouth was bright red from chewing betel nut. Women her age frequently use betel nut as a pain killer, chewing it constantly as they become addicted to it.

Deek told me that her father, Phol, would not be coming home that night because he had to go guard his next door neighbor's house from thieves (kamoys). During the day Phol works in the rice fields outside Udorn. When Phol goes to work he wears a shirt and loose cotton pants. He wears a wide brim straw hat and a pakoma tied around his waist. A pakoma is a piece of cotton checkered cloth that can be used as a sweatband, bathing towel, lead rope for water buffalo or for wrapping bundles.

Deek's oldest sister and her husband, Thai, came in just as we were leaving to go eat. Thai is a dentist and wears the little fingernail on his left hand long to signify that he is above the working class men. They came with us to her mother's shop, where we had noodle soup and then the specialty of the hot season, a mound of sticky rice served on a piece of banana leaf, with a sweet coconut milk sauce poured over it and juicy slices of yellow orange mango on top.

(*bai teo means go have fun)

--Linda Grunwald





SPRING

Softball: Anticipation,

Excitement, Noise, High hopes



Jack Metz

Lou Cook

Newcomers

This spring has been the first time overseas for both Jack Metz and Lou Cook. Jack, a seventh grader, came here from Arizona and Lou, a sophomore, is from Louisiana.

They both were surprised at coming to Thailand. Jack pictured it as an uncivilized place without any bit of Americanization. Lou had heard of war and pictured Thailand in a turmoil of fighting. Although Lou thinks Thailand is a good experience and that there is a lot to learn from Thai customs, he would much rather be back home in Louisiana. Jack feels this is a once in a lifetime chance for him to see Thailand and how other people live. He likes to get out with the Thais and enjoys bargaining in the shops. Both Jack and Lou like mangoes and sticky rice.

Jack, a Cancer, hopes to work in the mathematics field, as a teacher or an architect. Gemini Lou sees a future for himself as a lawyer. Thailand and the yearbook staff wish these two farangs happiness in their future dreams.

— Tammy Rogers

I, Malcolm Baker, in the interest of counter-
ing hyper-intellectualism, hereby leave my
Algebra II book to Virginia A. Chappell and
my collection of cobwebs to abandoned
school buildings.

M. S. Baker

I, Linda Grunwald, hereby leave the swings
to my little sister Heidi, my tuna fish sand-
wiches to Mr. McElroy, my white tooth
smile to all of my teachers that put up with
my bi-monthly trips to Bangkok, my chemis-
try notes to Judy Sheil and my grades in
Beginners Typing to Kenny Knowlton.

Linda L. Grunwald

I, Dianne Griffin, hereby will my talents in
performing accurate chemical experiments
to John Cupp and Steve Seigrist, who need
all the help they can get. I leave to Tammy
Rogers two large feather dusters, because
she's always wanted "wings to fly," and to
Martha Maxwell, my New York accent so
she'll have something to change to when she
forgets her southern one.

Dianne K. Griffin

Seniors



Cathy Zurko, Pat Rivero, Malcolm Baker, Linda Grunwald

I, Sunyo Pearson, hereby leave my cooking
ability to Martha Maxwell, my love of the
Army to Dan Bashaw, my social life to Steve
Brietweiser and John Cupp and all of my
A's to Steve Seigrist.

Sunyo Pearson

I, Pat Rivero, hereby bequeath my secrets
and my apple charm to Tim Bond. I leave to
Jim Doughty his M & M's and peanut butter
cookies. To Kathy Schoonmaker and Dean
Williamson I leave Mr. McElroy's math pro-
blems so that they can earn extra-credit A's.
And to Dan Knowlton, alias Ivan Vassilevitch,
I leave the Oxen Meadows.

Patricia Grace C. Rivero

I, Cathy Zurko, hereby leave my astrological
powers to Tammy Rogers, my full know-
ledge of history to Martin Baker, the arche-
ological ruins of locker 26 to anyone who
wants them, and my voice to Martha Maxwell.

Cathy M. Zurko

Graduation

Wednesday, 12 June 1974

8:00 p.m. Air America Theater