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THE SUMMARY OF WORK DONE BY

The Coordinating Group <sup>for</sup> Religion in Society

December 1976 - March 1977

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After the reconciliation program on the New Year's Day (by visiting and giving consolation to soldiers and police, who was injured, in the Pra Monkut Hospital, and The Police Hospital, and also visiting and giving consolation to the people who was caught on 6th October, 1976 at Thammasart), we still keep on visiting them and giving them on what they really need. What follow is the summerized of the work being done.

1. Helping the inmates

1.1 We helped the inmates on the basic needs and visited some of them especially those who could not cope with their situation mentally. We wrote letters to them and answered their letters with our sympathy.

We contacted some of them every week. At first our work did not go smoothly, because we had only a few volunteer workers and the criteria to use the money on helping the inmates was not clear enough. But after we had set up a definite working group (five full time workers) and set up a definite criteria on helping the inmates, the problems were solved.

An other problem we had on the begining was the suspicions of the policemen who were in charge of the prison, because, at that time, our group was not yet formed up formally. So Ajarn Somchat Cha-urntony (accompany by Pra Maha Kajit Siritwatto) went to visit the inmates himself and explained to the policemen about our group activities and purposes. Though the suspicion was not all gone, but it reduced tension.

On March 3rd the court had released the inmates (both men and women) more than 200 people at the same time. We helped these people about slippers and travelling fares. The people who had been bailed before that day came and helped these people too.

1.2 Help to bail the inmates out

There were a lot of inmates who suffered the condition of being in the prison physically and mentally. Our group decided to give money to their parents or relatives so that they would be bailed out. Up to March 3rd, we had helped to bail eleven inmates out. They were:

1. Mr. Prayoon Kualka-noeng,  
the bail was 20,000 bath in cash, on January 14th.
2. Mr. Parelchai Poolkeit,  
to hire a property for the bail 3,000 baht, on February 4th.
3. Mr. Chatchawal Sae Dan  
to hire a property for the bail 3,000 baht, on February 4th.
4. Miss Toom Nual-la-wit  
to hire the property for the bail 2,500 baht, on February 7th.
5. Mr. Mai Swanyohang  
to hire a property for the bail 2,500 baht, on February 21st.
6. Miss Duangta Aim-ka-ja  
to hire a property for the bail 2,500 baht, on February 21st.
7. Mrs. Jalya anvejakul  
to hire a property for the bail 2,000 baht, on February 28th.
8. Miss Sumraeny Chaleo-slip  
to hire a property for the bail 2,000 baht, on February 28th.

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9. Miss San-gaim Chaem-phen  
to hire a property for the bail 2,000 baht, on  
February 28th.
10. Miss Jitra Pan-sri  
to hire a property for the bail 2,000 baht, on  
February 28th.
11. Mr. Langsan Intarachai  
to hire a property for the bail 2,000 baht, on  
February 28th.

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Besides bailing them out, we also helped them on travelling fares (to reach home). And on one case we helped her to find a hospital so that she could deliver her child.

II. Helping family of the inmates

There were a lot of inmates who earned money for their family. When they were arrested, their families were in difficulties. We tried to help them in the way that their families could take care of themselves in the long run. So we gave them money as little as possible, visited them often and gave them the advice of how to earn money, i.e. by selling things, such as fried banana. They are:

1. Mrs. Wanphen Suphatee, who is Mr. Thongsook Suphatee's wife. Mr. Thongsook was a member of the Federation of Labour Committee. He was arrested and held in Saitsiri Prison. We had helped Mrs. Suphatee to set up a small shop selling fried banana. It costs 1,000 baht. We also took one of their 5 children to see the dentist.
2. Mr. Chatchawal Sae Dan arrested on October 6th, 1976. We gave his family 900 baht for overdue three month's rent.
3. Mrs. Jalya Tonvefakul arrested on October 6th, 1976. We gave her 960 baht to set up an occupation.

III. To visit wounded soldiers and policemen

On the New Year's Day and Makabuja's Day, we went to visit wounded soldiers and policemen at the Pra Monkut Hospital and the Police Hospital. We gave them books and flowers with sympathy and consolation.

Report on visiting wounded soldiers and policemen

At the Pra Monkut Hospital and the Police Hospital

On the Makhabuja's Day

Makhabuja's Day is an important day of Buddhism. It is a good occasion to make merit (do good things). So we organized a visit to wounded soldiers and policemen.

This visit was conducted by Pra Maha Khajit Siriwatto, accompanied by eight buddhist club's students. We reached the Pra Monkut Hospital at 10:00 a.m. There were 170 wounded soldiers. We gave them flowers and best wishes for them to recover. Pra Maha Khajit also gave a Khamma books to Col. Jumlong Lokaklin, Vice-Major of Suratthane who was wounded from the fighting with communist in the South last year. He was interested in our group's background and objectives. He understood our work and will give us support.

Most of the soldiers were satisfied with our visit except a few soldiers who thought that we were leftist student. But after we had explained, they understood.

Then we went to the Police Hospital. There were fifty wounded policemen. We visited them all.

From our point the visit gave us more understanding and sympathy to the wounded soldiers and policemen. It was obvious that they were the victims of war more than anything else. War gave man nothing except suffering.

Coordinating Group on Religion in Society

REPORT ON NEW YEAR'S PROGRAM: A SUMMARY

PROGRAM: Visiting wounded soldiers and policemen. Visiting students and those who were arrested at Thammasart University campus (October 6th, 1976) and still waiting trial. We do believe that they are innocent, deserve to be visited, given hope and their morale boosted. Sending well-wishing cards, flowers, presents, other necessities to all detained at the incident. They are all innocent and share the same fate. We have ten members for each visit.

28 December, 1976 --- The Police Hospital --- Patumwan, Bangkok 5.

On December 28, 1976, our group reached the Police Hospital at 1:00 p.m. We were welcomed by the authorities there. Most of them were wounded from the attacking of the communist at Ban Chumsaeng, Viengsra, Surattani province, two of them from Pitsanulok, one of them from Kabi. These policemen came to the hospital on 17 December, 1976. They were wounded by the bullets of M.16 and Arga and bombs. On the day we visited they were in a secure state, but not yet cured. When they were cured they would have a permission to rest for sometime and then they had to return to their duties. The young ones were eager to return to their duties, but the elders who had families were fed up with the fightings and war. The gifts that we gave them bring them good feelings. We did not have much time so we mixed the opportunity to understand them more. It was two hours visit.

29 December, 1976 --- Women's Prison

Klong Prem - Lad Yao, Bangkok, Bangkok. "Arrived at 9:00 a.m., submitted petition for official visit. No high-ranking authorities to give permission, but able to have one monk and one layman visit four inmates for twenty minutes. Later visits lasted ten minutes every Wednesday from 10 to 11 a.m. Conversation is recorded by machine and notes by a prison guard".

Inmates:

1. Nantawan (ex Dep. Sec. NSCT/TU. 1)
2. Wanida
3. Suthira (Dep. Sec. NSCT TU 3)
4. Sa-Ngiam (Mahidol)

All arrested at Thammasart, Oct. 6, with friends. But these are refused bail. (actual number is thirty, but these four are being separately detained). They are being held on nine charges. The visit was described... "finding the four women in normal health, living in a two-story wooden house with four female guards. Food ordinary (not too bad). Allowed to read books on the Dhamma and other non-political books. They go to court every thirty days".

29 December, 1976 --- Bangkok Prison, Nonthaburi Province.

Six Inmates:

1. Sutham (Sec. Gen. NSCT)
2. Apinant (Actor in mock hanging)
3. Surachat (Chula student leader)
4. Viroj
5. Prapang (Prachomklow Tech student leader)
6. Anupong (President of TU Drama Club)

These six were arrested at Seni Pramot's residence on Oct. 6, on the same nine charges as the previous four, plus the added charge of lese-majesty. Visits can be made every day from two p.m. except holidays. The team was able only to meet with Surachat and Apinant.

In Bang Kwang Prison there is a special detention area for political prisoners (Dan Piset): a two story house, three in each room, ten to fifteen hours a day. Allowed to do gardening, same food as other prisoners. Not many people visit them for fear of being accused of dangerous to the society. Only Dhamma books and academic books allowed. No comic books. Many of them are studying Law. They are acting as their own lawyers and seemed to be in a "strong united state of mind".

Inmates:

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Thongsuk | 6. Pornchai |
| 2. Nopporn  | 7. Supaporn |
| 3. Yodthong | 8. Arom     |
| 4. Suvit    | 9. Sanyalak |
| 5. Taweesap |             |

These nine are detained in ... quite comfortable conditions, ping-pong, walking around books, even political, are allowed...

Please note: Mr. Jaran Dittapichai, has been refused bail and visitors. The authorities at the prison say he is under jurisdiction of the military, but Dao Siam carried a story that he had escaped jail but there are other interpretations, namely, that he has been killed. Also Mr. Thongsud has asked for support for his family, wife and for four children - at present subsisting on selling fried bananas.

30 December, 1976 --- Bang Khen Temporary Prison, Bang Khen Police School Bangkok, Bangkok.

Inmates: Total number 359 (265 males/29 females). Thirty have been refused bail, and fifty-five are considered "danger to the society". These inmates have been sent from provincial prisons after the 'witchhunt' Most are poor and cannot afford bail.

Conditions of detention: "... living in six cells (7 x 7 metres) eighty in each cell, allowed to go to the roof once a week, two meals a day (at first food described as poor quality, now better). Inmates complained about crowded cells, causing tension, arguments and fights. They asked for writing material, books, medicine and some clothes.

7 January, 1977 --- Clong Prem Central Prison, Lard Yao, Bang Khen, BKK.

Visiting day is Friday from nine a.m. to four p.m. These inmates were arrested before the 6 Oct. at Orm Noi Labor strike.

Inmates:

1. Supap (Kasertsart Grad)
2. Pisit (Chula Engineering Student)
3. Wimut (Laborer)
4. Wanta "
5. Thong Lue (labourer)
6. Proma "
7. Narin "

Detention Conditions: "... appear to be in normal health, food as the others, some are translating books, studying languages, and teaching each other various subjects, including Dhamma".

20/1 Groups 3, Trim District, Sikhonphum,  
Surin.

December 9th, 1976.

ASKING FOR JUSTICE

Head of Police Department:

Mr. Han Yodsai, the village headman of Trim District, accused Mr. Suk Suppanam and Mr. Kid Suppanam of "Dangering the Society" on November 11, 1976, by giving 3 reasons:

1. They did not go to the temple and did not give money to the temple.
2. They persuaded other people not to go to the temple.
3. They did not help in developing the village.

As I am a son of Mr. Suk Suppanam, I like to confirm that these two persons never behaved like what Mr. Yodsai accused. Because:

1. Whenever they had time and money, they usually went to the temple and contributed some to temple. If they did not go to the temple it meant that they did not have time to go and they have no money. However, they had given a lot of money to the temple.
2. I could confirm that these two persons never persuaded other not to go to the temple for they themselves liked to contribute too.

Especially these two accusations has nothing to do with the "Dangering the Society".

3. These two persons never absented themselves from joining with others to develop their district for it was their own benefits also.

Besides that, these two persons never did anythings to show that they were dangerous to the society. For example :-

1. They never robbed anybody.
2. They've never gambled.
3. They've never flirted and raped anyone.
4. They've never been a rogue.
5. They've never blackmailed anyone.
6. They've never opposed the law.
7. They've never done anything against the law.

Both were diligent and being the very good example in working and in the agriculture in their village. They are devout Buddhists; and behaved in the way the Buddha taught.

The actual cause of being accused by Mr. Yodsai was that once Mr. Suk - Suppanam cut the branch on the ant-hill in the field of Mr. Sukroang where the villagers had built the spirits joss-house. The villagers and Mr. Han Yodsai were not satisfied. They went to see higher authority with the accusation that Mr. Suk Suppanam had acted against the public interest. But at that time after the inspector had investigated, he concluded that Mr. Suk Suppanam was not wrong.

Because of the accusations failing, Mr. Han Yodsai was very angry. He declared that if he could not get Mr. Suk Suppanam arrested, he would be the village headman no longer. After that, He tried to malign Mr. Suk, Suppanam and at last he succeeded.

I forgot to tell you that there were others who were accused by Mr. Yodsai Mr. Makt and Mr. Wan Suppanam were the next victims. Both were the grandfather of Mr. Suk Suppanam, their age were between 70-80 years. They were accused of Dangering the Society by Mr. Han Yodsai.

This act of Mr. Yodsai was very dangerous to the society. For the sake of peace, I likely to ake you to arrest him to be punished by the law. Please,

Yours faithfully,  
(Sat Suppanam)

LETTER FROM JUSTICE

Head of Police Department  
The following information was received from the village of ...

1. They did not go to the temple and did not give money to the temple.
2. They persuaded other people not to go to the temple.
3. They did not help in developing the village.

As a son of Mr. ... I like to mention that these two persons never behaved like what Mr. ...

1. Whenever they had time and money, they usually went to the temple and contributed some to temple. It is not true that they did not have any money.

2. I could confirm that these two persons never persuaded other people to go to the temple for they themselves liked to contribute to the temple.

3. These two persons were mentioned in the report for they did not want to develop their village for themselves but for the village.

These two persons were mentioned in the report for they did not want to develop their village for themselves but for the village.

1. They never contributed to the temple.
2. They never persuaded other people to go to the temple.
3. They never helped in developing the village.
4. They never gave any money to the temple.
5. They never helped in developing the village.

Both persons mentioned in the report were mentioned in the report for they did not want to develop their village for themselves but for the village.

The actual case of being accused by Mr. ... was that Mr. ... was mentioned in the report for they did not want to develop their village for themselves but for the village.

Because of the ... Mr. ... decided that it would be better to ...

I thought it better to tell you that ... of Mr. ... of helping the society by Mr. ... This act of Mr. ... was very dangerous to the society. For the sake of peace, I likely to ...

Yours faithfully,  
(Mr. ...)

TONGCHAI VINIJKUL

Vice-President of Students Organization of Thammasart University

Tongchai had a role in fighting for the justice of society since he was a pre-university student (1972). He was the member of the early committee of Siam's Youth Group which had many students from many schools who thought of the duty toward the society. This group played a very important role in that period. In 1974 he was elected to be the secretary of the National Pupil Centre of Thailand. From this position he had joined in activities with the University students seriously such as; the people and labourers movement in fighting for justice i.e., asking for higher wages, for fixing maximum price of rice in the market and asking for the American Air Force Base to go out, etc. When he was the student of Thammasart University, he was elected to be the first year representative of the Students Parliament. In the next year, he was elected to be the Vice-President of Students Organization of Thammasart University on outside University activities which was an important part of the students movement. In demonstration against the return of General Prapass on August 1976, he was in charge of conducting the demonstration to be in order and peaceful way. The rightist sent men to harass the demonstration. It caused injury and death on the people who came to demonstrate. But he could set the demonstration so that the people were in peaceful and definite in what they were struggle for. (at last they won). Again in the demonstration against the coming back of General Thanom, he was appointed in the same position, then when the situation became more tense on October 5th, 1976, Thongchai decided that he would dissolve the demonstration the next morning. But it was too late. The Government sent policemen to suppress the demonstration. That caused the bloody day in Thammasart University.

As a friend who used to work with him. I can say that he has a deep concern in the duty toward society and the following generations. He is serious in his work (that is) very rare in his generation. He was an excellent student when he was in school and always got good grade. He was expected to be the top in the overall pre-university examination. But then he left that opportunity, turned to work in social activities, and was not care much if his grade was worse. He is a student leader who devote himself to the people. And no one ever question him of his sincerity. He leaded thousands of people very well and full of responsibility. On the bloody October 6th, 1976, there was a suggestion for a student leader as he to run away. But he insisted on facing the same fate as the people who were there. And he did what he said.

Now he is held in B angkaen Prison with ten charger. He has to be trial in the court of criminal and military court. Even though his present situation is so hard, he is in good will and joyful. He is also helpful to his friends in the prison. I do not know what will happen to him but I know that he can face it peacefully.

.....

Doctor Lert

arrested by Danging Society charge

Doctor Lert finished his education in medical science from Faculty of Medical Science, Siriraj University in 1955. He has a wife who is a nurse and a daughter who has just finished pre-university school. His interest is in traditional medicine. He found out that traditional medicine could get rid of worms in the intestine. There were two kinds of medicine that he found useful to get rid of tape worms and earth worms. He tried to convince that traditional medicine was very useful. He had some demonstrations at Faculty of Medical Science by himself but it failed. No one was interested in this. It was 20 years ago, and now people just begin to realize the important use of traditional medicine. He used to wrote to Sal-Siriraj also. But the editor did not pay attention to it.

He went to study in Israel for sometime. He went to see Kibbutz and interested in how to build up an ideal community. He saw that there was declination of both economics and spirit in Thai villages. There were needs to rebuild





BANGKEN DETAINMENT CAMP

11 FEBRUARY 1977

CO-ORDINATION GROUP FOR RELIGION IN SOCIETY

I write to you in hoping for your help. My mother is the family's head but she is too poor to bail me out and is over occupied by the increasing economic burdens. My father had passed away since I was very young. We are together with five brothers and sisters, I am the third. At present, my eldest brother has his family to look after, my elder brother is jailed with the charge of drug addiction, my two younger brothers are low paid labourers. My mother is a textile worker. My mother who is very old is working so hard and even harder these days in which everything rockets its price. I always dream of being able to come out and help her.

My name is Miss Lee Hua Sae Jeer. My father is named Kiatek, my mother Soil Eng. I was born in 1959, in Bangkok (cannot remember the certain place of birth) My present address is 050 Soi Jarernsook, Rama 4 rd, Kongtun District, Amphur Prakanong Bangkok 11. Now I am 17 years old.

I have never had a chance to learn in a school, for my parents have too many children and my father was dead many years ago and my mother is too old and we all live in poverty. I worked all day long in a textile factory since I was 7-8 years old, and never had change like others to enjoy my early years. Before being arrested, I work at Century Textile Company, Smauthprakarn.

Hope to have some news from you soon.

All the statements are true.

Lee Hua Sae Jeer - Woman prisoner

BangKhaen Police Cadet Temporary Prison  
Bangkok, Thailand

25 January 1977

Dear Friends in the Ecumenical Group,

I, Pornchai Poolkert, was picked up on the 6th of October 1976. I want to tell you about my background and ask you for some help. I have two sisters and one brother. I am the youngest in the family. My eldest sister is married and lives with her husband in the countryside. At the end of last year, after my sister had an argument with my mother, she stopped giving money to my mother.

In our home now we have five people: my father and mother, two nephews, and me. My father works very hard to raise our family. When I finished M.S. 3, I was not able to find any job. I wanted to continue my education, but my family had no money to support me. My mother has no earnings and she has to look after the two nephews.

In 1975 I was hit by a motor car and one of my legs was broken. It took six months for it to mend. It was not long after that when I was picked up on the 6th of October 1976. That made me feel very bad, and my mother has been very worried about me. She has tried to get some help, but my sister, brother, and other relatives have given us no help. They do not like us because we are poor. So my mother doesn't go to ask for any help.

Then on New Year's Eve your group came to visit us. I was informed that you could help me and my friends. Then you contacted my mother. Since she did not know anything about your group, she was unwilling to tell you very much. Now I have explained to her about your group, so I hope you will contact her again.

I believe your group will be able to help people who are poor as I am. Also it is my hope that your group will grow. And someday, if I am able, I want to pay back the help you have given me.

With high respect to you,

Pornchai Poolkert

P.S. Would it be possible for one of you to come and talk with me sometime? I am very frustrated. I want to talk with someone in your group.

BangKhaen Police Cadet Temporary Prison  
Bangkok, Thailand

22 January 1977

Dear Friends in the Ecumenical Group,

I, Chatchaval Sae Dan, was picked up on 6th October 1976. On New Year s Eve your group came and gave us some books. You also said that if I have any problems I can write to your group.

At that time there was an item of news that we would be released on the 21st of January 1977. But it was just a rumor. On January 21st they just postponed the date of our trial to the 18th of February 1977. So I don t know how much longer I have to remain in jail. I have already been in jail now for more than 3 months.

As for me, I am innocent, and so I believe I will be released soon. I am strong both in body and in spirit. But I am worried about my father and mother who are my responsibility. Let me tell you about my family.

I am now 25 years old and have been working in Bangkok for many years in a car repair shop. My father and mother used to live in Phit-sanulok. My father worked as a laborer, carrying bags of rice. But then he became too old for that kind of work, so he helped my mother selling little things. In 1975 I brought them to Bangkok to live with me. I continued doing my work, and they sold Thai sweets and cakes. My family life was much improved then. However, five or six months later, my father got sick with a mental condition, so my mother had to stop working to take care of him.

I have one sister and one brother. My sister is 7 years old and goes to school at Wat Suthasumri. My brother is 15 years old and does several different kinds of work. He does not show up around home to help out, so I am the only one who can help the family.

I used to earn 1,500 Baht (\$75) a month when I was working. Our house rent was 300 baht a month, and what was left over we used very carefully. After I was picked up my mother had to borrow money from other people. She also had to ask the owner of the house to give us more time to pay the rent. We have not paid any rent since the time of my arrest. How the owner has asked my mother to find someplace else to live. Right now my mother cannot afford to move to another house, and the owner seems to be sympathetic to our situation, so she has not given any reply yet. Prior to my arrest, I never missed paying the rent. However under the present circumstances, we cannot postpone it much longer, or my family will have to move out. All of this is very difficult for my mother. She has to find the money for food and also for the rent. I don t know how much longer it will be before I am released.

My mother is now 50 years old. She has not been able to come to see me very often because she is not used to travelling in Bangkok. It has made me feel very sad each time I have seen her. Her life was very hard in the

countryside; and now she has to endure hardship again. Here in the jail, each time I eat my meals I wonder if she has been able to get enough to provide the food needed for our family.

All that I have written here to you is straight from my heart. I hope your group will be able to give some consideration to my plight and that you'll be able to help my family. Please forgive me if I do not express myself very well in writing.

With high respect to you,

Chatchaval Sae Dan

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BANGKHAEN DETAINMENT CAMP

CO-ORDINATING GROUP FOR RELIGION IN SOCIETY

Dear friend:

I am a girl named Noi Kengsopha. I lived at 106 2nd Nong Ngui Luem Village, Seul District, Amphur Kantraluk, Srisaket Province; with my father, Mr. Dae and my mother, Mrs. On Kengopha. I am their first child with three younger sisters and three younger brother. We are terribly poor growers. I finished my primary education P.4 from the local village school. After the last harvest season, I left my family for Bangkok hoping that I would get a reasonable payment here and be able to send the money back to my dear father and mother. I started working full time on the 22nd, August 1976 at Ban Loung Loj Kul, 99 Moo 19, Soi Suanluang, Pathanakan Rd. Suanluang District, Amphur Prakanong, Bangkok. My salary was 300 baht (\$15) a month. My employer owns a small shop in the Thammasart University. On the fifth of October, he phoned me to look after that, Prinda 5th, shop and sell goods there, and he would take me back home in the morning after. It took me two hours to reach there. I stayed there from ten o'clock in the evening through the night and was captured in the morning after for I found no way of escape. My boss bailed me out of the prison. I could work under him again with a payment of 600 baht (\$30) a month. Until the 27th of December, my woman boss hit me with a broomstick so hard that it broke. I had been tormented by them many times before, and I always kept patient for I always bear in head that I am just a servant. But this time I was very badly hurt so I could not stand anymore. Two days after, I told others to watch me collecting my things: and I did leave that house in purification. In the opposite, my boss accused me that I stole his diamond ring and my mother took it later. My mother had never left our village before in her life and she knew nothing. After that accusation, he went to our village and took my mother with him to be jailed in Bangkok at the Prakanong Police Station. When I heard the news, I felt half dead, I felt deeply sympathetic for my mother in her unjust fate, but nothing I could do. I waited for my father and Kun Nun District officer, and we went to that police station together, when my boss saw me, he asked "why did you dare to run away from me?" I simply answered "If your wife did not hurt me, I will not run away". So he withdrew the charge against my mother, but also the bail of nine. Now I am jailed in Bangkok. My father came to visit me sometimes, but everytime he had to borrow others money to pay the travelling expense. My father and mother are not healthy in their old ages, and still have to take responsibility of my five little younger brothers and sisters. I crave for my freedom and also my missing happiness in helping my parents. I beg you and your group to have pity on me.

Noi

Translator's Note: The original letter was written in Thai, in hand writing and not very good spelling. Anything in the blanket was interpreted by the translator.