

# Bad Girls of Lanna

Our Story of Sex Work in Chiang Mai

By  
empower foundation



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## **Empower Foundation**

มูลนิธิเอ็มพาวเวอร์

**Empower is a sex worker organization in Thailand for women working in the sex industry. Founded in 1985, EMPOWER works from a rights based philosophy aiming to reduce discrimination and prejudice against sex workers, and deal with particular issues such as HIV/Aids and migration.**

**Empower strives to provide an avenue for sex workers to access their basic human rights like decent work, education, good health, access to the law, community, social and political participation in the moment. At the same time Empower strives to make these basic human rights available to all sex workers as a part of mainstream society by addressing current discrimination and stigma under the law and in society.**

**e-mail: [badgirls@empowerfoundation.org](mailto:badgirls@empowerfoundation.org)**

**website: [www.empowerfoundation.org](http://www.empowerfoundation.org)**

**tel/fax: +6625268311**

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.....for all bad girls, past, present and future.....

### Preface ...

In villages throughout Thailand rice is pounded using a wooden pile driver, which is often operated by foot. The rice is then sifted by hand using patience, keen eyes and skilled hands tossing large wicker trays to separate the rice from the husks.



Compiling 'The Story of Us', especially our early days, has been a little like this process. We have had to pound and sift through an enormous selection of sources, often contradictory, sometimes offensive, inaccurate and without fail, incomplete.

Luckily our combined lived experience of sex work in Empower allows us to piece together enough small truths and precious insights to make a delightful banquet of our past.

Naturally after so much pounding, sifting and plucking its not possible for us to be able to point to each individual grain or husk used to produce "The Story of Us" but we do sincerely thank all those who had recorded and left some of our story for us to find.

### The beginnings of sex work...

No one knows when the first man in the world paid someone for cooking his rice; washing his shirts; cutting his hair; cleaning his house; sewing his pants or giving him sexual pleasure. We don't know who the sellers were; what they thought or how it all came about. We do know that people have been buying and selling services for hundreds of years, and the services have developed into professions like cook, seamstress, laundress, hairdresser; sex worker and domestic worker.

It wasn't always paid work. Many valued and respected occupations began in slavery. Soldiers, agricultural workers, builders, police, domestic work, child care all once were work done by slaves. Sex work probably began in slavery too.



Chiang Mai Slave Trader circa 1905

### Siam in days gone by...

In the 1400's all people in Thailand, known then as Siam, were awarded a standardized value "sak di na". Your "sak di na" decided how much respect you earned. Taxation, compensation and court fines were all decided according to you "sak di na". Importantly the amount of land you could own was dependent on your "sak di na". It takes about 8 acres of farming land to support 4-6 people comfortably. Farmers for instance were awarded a "sak di na" of 20 allowing them 10 acres of land. Slaves, including concubines, had a "sak di na" of 5 allowing us just 2 1/2 acres. Under this system it seems like we were treated equally, albeit equally as badly as other slaves.

### Slaves?

Slavery reform in Thailand began in the 1800's when, by law, a man was required to prove he was destitute before being allowed to sell himself, his wives or his children into bondage. Slaves were bought and sent to work in farming, construction, manufacturing, military service, transport domestic work and sex work. In 1905 King Rama V abolished all slavery and all those enslaved had to find paid work to survive. Domestic workers became pseudo family members of their former owners. Sex workers moved into brothels. Other occupations began to be accepted as work. Domestic work and sex work, predominately done by women continues to struggle to be recognized as work even today.



When western men, Portuguese, Spain Dutch, British and lastly the French visited Siam in the 16<sup>th</sup> century there were well established brothels in the nation's capital city, Ayutthaya, and the port cities of Pattani and Phuket. Brothels were State run, managed by a civil servant who was responsible for buying and selling workers, the day to day management and record keeping. The largest had 600 workers. Both the brothel owners and the workers paid taxes. For centuries the State gained more income from brothels than gambling dens and opium houses combined. Customers were a mixture of local and foreign dignitaries; sailors; travelling merchants and government officers. Sound familiar?

In 1648 when customers paid between 50 satang to 4 baht; fifty satang would buy enough rice to feed a family of 4-6 people for a week (15kgs) and four baht bought enough rice for the same family for 3 months (120kgs). In 2010 our customers still pay a minimum amount equal to 15-120kgs of rice. Our work has a timeless value!



When the city of Ayutthaya was sacked and burned by Burma in 1767 no one recorded what happened to the hundreds of women working in the state brothels.

In 1805 Siam's first standard legal code was adopted, The Law of Three Seals replacing the code of "sak di na". The age of consent for marriage was set at 13 years old. Prostitution was defined, but not criminalized under the law. Several clauses referred to sex workers. We were banned from being witnesses in court (perhaps we knew too many important secrets). The law also cautioned men against marrying us and if we were found guilty of adultery we would be condemned in public and be forced to "work as a buffalo in the field".



**Chiang Mai** was first built in the 1300's but later conquered by Burma and left abandoned.

Early in the year 1500 it was brought back to life by forcibly relocating villagers from outlying areas. The wall around the moat is said to have been

built by 90,000 men in just four days. The new city was organized into guilds specializing in different trades and services. Those without a trade lived outside the protection of the city wall. Knowing how zoning generally works we guess that's where we were consigned to too, though no records can be found yet.

We know we were here though, as this is a brothel pictured in a mural on Wat Pra Singh wall dates back to the 1300's.

In 1512 a dirt wall, Kampeng Din, was built to protect merchants and others living outside the city. Some four hundred years later this wall was to become one of the three major brothel areas of Chiang Mai.<sup>1</sup>



Taken at the turn of the century around 1890, this photo was labeled "Lanna Prostitute". It is the earliest image we have found of our Chiang Mai pioneers.

Her short hair was a fashion made popular when the women of Phuket cropped their hair and successfully tricked the Burmese invaders into believing they were outmanned.

A century ago travel from Bangkok to Chiang Mai was a long difficult journey that few made. It took 3 months, as long as a trip

<sup>1</sup> number --- on bicycle tour

to Europe. Despite the difficulties river trade flourished especially reaching into Yunan China and across to Burma. Chiang Mai grew in size and importance. In 1897 Chiang Mai became part of the Nation of Siam.



### Brothels of Chiang Mai

Although there have been brothels in Chiang Mai for many centuries it is only in the last 200 years that we can find out more about them.



By 1730, the end of the Qing Dynasty in China had lifted the harsh penalties against Chinese emigration and hundreds of thousands of people migrated to Siam and many other parts of the world. They brought with them a new form of entertainment services, tea shops or 'Rong Nam Char'.

Men paid to be bathed, provided with sexual services and tea.

Over the next hundred years 400,000 Chinese migrants made Bangkok home. By 1889 . There were 245 opium dens, 128 gambling houses and 71 brothels along Soi Sampaeng.

Before long 'Sampaeng' (pictured here in 1906) became synonymous with prostitution and insulting phrases like "Sampaeng whore" which you can still hear today, grew up.



In the late 1800's a large floating pier (Tha Pae) was built on the Ping River in Chiang Mai as river trade increased. Madam Darb, a brothel owner from Sampaeng and a handful of her workers travelled the long trip to Chiang Mai. She opened the first Tea House in Chiang Mai, near where Wararot Market stands today.<sup>2</sup> This new phenomenon created a stir and Madam Darb was referred to as "The First Madam of the Walled City".

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<sup>2</sup> number \_\_\_\_ on bicycle tour map

In 1909 a VD Control Act was implemented. People now had to get approval and a licence to open a brothel. Sex workers were required to be over 15 year of age, registered and free of infectious disease. A coloured lamp had to be hung outside the house to show it was a brothel. Unlike the “red lights” of the West, initially most brothels sported a green light. Nowadays it is more likely to be pink with or without many fairy lights. The Act also said women and girls must be willing workers and able to come or go freely. The harshest penalties were reserved for “for anyone who seduces or forces a girl to enter or remain in prostitution.” These clauses were all in line with the 1905 League of Nations International agreement on trafficking and prostitution.

During these years, for the first time, rice became a cash crop being grown for money rather than solely for food. In 1913 further Westernization of Siam saw the introduction of surnames. Surnames followed the upper class system of passing along the male lineage and women had to change their name after marriage. However the kinship system in the north was matriarchal with family land passing from mother to daughter. The new system effectively gave our mother’s land to the men.





Modernizing Siam :Don't do this ... instead do this.

In 1920 the rice crops failed. It was catastrophic causing widespread hardships. Many had no choice but to sell off their land to those speculating on future rice sales. In 1923, for the first time in history a problem of landlessness was created in Siam. The Great Depression followed soon after worsening conditions and by 1930, 27% of Northern farming families had no land

Women as well as men, who were forced off their land or in hardship, migrated to the city looking for work. The railway had opened in 1921 and now some caught the trains to Bangkok but many more came to Chiang Mai and slums began to appear in the city.

One such slum area lay behind Wat Saen Fang, along a canal that met Chang Moi Road and Warawot market.<sup>3</sup>



### Dancing and Singing

When the roaring twenties reached Chiang Mai some sex workers found they could earn part of their income from dancing and singing.

The only western style venue was the Blue Moon nightclub on Moon Muang Road where Mandalay



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<sup>3</sup> number ... on bicycle tour map



nightclub stands today.<sup>4</sup> Here 86 women worked as “Romwong” or Taxi dancers. Men would buy a coupon for 25 satang to dance with the women. When his time ran out she would smile walk away and sit back down. She earned 40% of every dance price.

At larger open air restaurants and cafes women sang. To show their appreciation men would buy flower garlands to put around the singer’s neck. Women would get a percentage of the money made from garland sales. It was common practise and good manners for singers to go and sit with their biggest fans after their set.



### **Border what border?**

Europe and North America had been manipulating their immigration and border controls since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Governments used fear of spies in WWI to increase border controls like they did with fear of terrorists did in modern day times. This had led to introduction of passports (1917), establishing immigration police and other restrictive acts in Thailand, and around the world. At times this focus on borders

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<sup>4</sup> number ...on bicycle tour map

also included focus on the migration of women; which then, like now, often means trying to stop us women moving!

As it is today, sex workers were often the most visible women migrants. In 1921 the League of Nations appointed an official body "to gather all facts pertaining to the trafficking of prostitutes." In Thailand concerns about working conditions and the number of Chinese and Vietnamese migrant sex workers in brothels led to the drafting of the first anti-trafficking law in 1928. Six years later the League of Nations reported numbers of Russian, Japanese and European women working in Bangkok brothels

Even though the problem is very old and steadily resolving, a new anti-trafficking law was passed in 2008. We don't know why.

### Massage



Massage has been a part of Thai life for over 2,000 years. Thai massage aims to stimulate the 10 primary energy lines through your body to stimulate:

Your Physical Well Being;  
Your Spirit In This World  
And The Next;

Your Perfect Emotional Balance. Pressing the points is intended to initially lead to a state of relaxation and then meditation. Along the way bad energy is released from the body so that good energy can flow in and take its place.

Its likely that there have always been customers with special stimulation and release requests and that some masseurs have been happy to oblige for a price.

In the 1920's visiting Americans and Europeans in Thailand looked for an equivalent of the popular Turkish Bathes of Europe, where instead of trying to hit pressure points to stimulate energy in your body, the masseur or masseurs concentrate on rubbing and relaxing your major muscles groups.

It was a small step for many enterprising Thai's to combine the skills of massage with the bath and sexual services offered at the tea shops to create the famous Thai soapy massage.



Soapy massage was established in Chiang Mai in the 1940's during WWII. By the 1970's several soapy massage parlors, employing hundreds of workers were operating in Chiang Mai. Larger purpose built parlors developed in the boom of the 1980's including OT, Pandora's, Payom, Siyuri that all still operate today<sup>5</sup>.

### Pandora and OT Soapy Massage

"I was always under the threat of arrest for delinquency in Bangkok until at age 28 in 1957 I left for Chiang Mai. I had been for a visit with my older brother to Chiang Mai before so when I had to run away from the police I came here.

I had 2,000 baht and I stayed at the Siriprakart Hotel. I knew the Chinese cook, Beajung who worked in the hotel restaurant. He was a really good Chinese cook. I wandered around and kicked the dust for a while. Then I bought a lottery ticket and won first prize of 2000 baht! I used that as a stake to open a rice porridge shop. In those days even 1000 baht was enough to for me to set up a bamboo stall on the footpath near the front of Tantraphan on Thapae Road. After about ten years I moved a little up the road."

"I gave up selling rice porridge in 1970 At that time a Bangkok businessman was doing a lot of construction, Mr Sitichai Siribunruang. He had a building available with 30 year lease. He knew I hung around the Massage Parlour crowd and he suggested I go into the massage business and split the profits with him. I opened a Soapy Massage Parlour "Chiang Mai Oab Ob Nuat" I had

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<sup>5</sup> number ---- on bicycle tour map

been a customer so I knew all about the business. I ordered 10 masseurs from Bangkok to come up and at the height of my business I had 100 women working for me. At that time there were starting to be lots of farang customers too. I made much better money than selling rice porridge but had nothing to show for it because I gambled it all away on cards every Monday night!"

"I ran the massage business until after 1977 when a local councilman offered me 13 million baht for the lease. That councillor was the real thing, he played cards for keeps. He was not a man you wanted to cross. He'd had a fight with Little Purple over cards. Each side said the other was cheating and they drew their guns and opened fire on each other! After I handed the massage business over to him I opened Kinzar massage place in Chang Puak then changed soon after to a disco"



"In the 1980's about 6 of us bought the land for Jalerm Muang Plaza near the railway station for about 10 million baht and we borrowed about another 50 million from the bank. After we secured the land we built a plaza like a complex because we already planned to open various

different businesses. I opened a soapy massage called Pandora. The permit originally cost me one million baht and later I sold Pandora and the permit for 70 million baht to a Westerner. He died soon after. I still have a massage business in Jaleru Muang Plaza called OT massage"

### War



Japanese traders had been visiting Thailand since the 1600's. In 1894, 51 Japanese were living in Bangkok. Twenty seven were women, two were wives of brothel owners, 15 were sex workers and the other nine were the wives of foreigners and "ordinary men"

On December 1<sup>st</sup> 1941 350,000 Japanese soldiers arrived in Thailand. Thailand signed an alliance with Japan, allowing them to use Thailand as a base, rather than be occupied by an enemy force. The letter declaring war on the USA was written but never delivered.

A large contingent of Japanese soldiers were accommodated in Chiang Mai. The officers stayed at PAYAP University and many of the rank and file stayed at Kawila Unit 32.<sup>6</sup> and at camps located near temples throughout the city.



Japanese conscripted many local Thai men to work on building roads through the mountains of Chiang Rai, Pai and on to the Burma border. Sex workers and maybe other women were conscripted to work in the brothels of Kawila military camp and other camps around the city. One brothel owner recalled he could charge the Japanese 10 or 20 Baht, more than 40 times the local rate.

*"Local trade boomed. Especially our small sweet bananas were a favorite of the Japanese. The Japanese made their own money and of course this increased the prices. High process and no imports soon saw us back using candles by night and buffalo by day"*

<sup>6</sup> numbers ... and ... bicycle tour map

The Japanese soldiers in Chiang Mai paid with Thai baht so at least women here were not left with worthless Japanese Army bills as they were in Burma. All brothels wanting to service Japanese soldiers were required to register and comply with Japanese Army Regulations.

During WWII Thai women were also working in American Army run brothels as far away as New Caledonia in the Pacific.

*"In 1944 I was an infantry officer stationed in New Caledonia in the Pacific. As officer of the day, I was stationed at a house of prostitution in Noumea. My duty was to see that there were no disturbances in the running of the house, that each American soldier entering had a liberty pass, paid his fee to an American G.I. and was examined by United States medical personnel.*

*When he came downstairs again, he had to go through prophylactic treatment. I had military police with me in case any of the soldiers caused trouble or refused treatment. A few soldiers, perhaps too drunk to follow procedures, were removed by M.P's and sent back to barracks. The prostitutes were mainly women imported from such countries as Malaysia and Thailand."*

Even back then ...Bad Girls Go Everywhere!



In Thailand a document from the Headquarters of the Thai Supreme Commander mentions cooperation of the Thai-Japanese subcommittee in providing “Ying Yon Jai” (Rest and Recreation) for Japanese soldiers. There is a detailed price list stating that a private paid 1 baht an hour, non-commissioned officers paid 2.50 baht and hour. Non commissioned officers were permitted to stay overnight for 4.50 and higher ranking officers for 7.50 baht.

### **Japanese Brothel Rules 1942**

- Visitors must pay reception and get a coupon and a condom
- Coupon is handed to the hostess (sex worker)
- Once only and no refund once the coupon is handed over
- Time allowed 30 minutes
- No alcohol in room
- Leave the premises when finished
- Contact without a condom is prohibited
- No violence
- Mandatory STI check for women 3 times a month
- If STI present women forbidden to work until cured
- Mandatory STI check for soldiers monthly
- Infected soldiers punished by demotion, jail time or beating

*We count the Japanese army rules as the first 100% Condom Use Policy in Thailand. Fifty years later the second 100% Condom use Program by WHO was exactly the same except it failed to include STI checks for customers and protection from violence..shame on WHO.*

*In the WHO program if our employers cooperated with Public Health we would not be raided. We were ordered to well anyone who asked that we used condoms every time. If we were sick we had to hide when the doctors came and we were not taken on clinic visits.*

*Public Health gave free condoms to our employers who sold them to our customers who could decide whether they wanted to use them or not. Some places had stickers that said "100% Condom Use" ...that's all*

Thai soldiers were sent up from Bangkok providing another source of customers. Even though they were Thai they spoke a different language and had different customs to Chiang Mai and other Northern people

Sex workers suddenly had to understand a new language and develop new skills to suit Japanese and Bangkok customs. The Japanese army set up a camp in front of nearly every temple and a big anti-aircraft gun near Chiang Mai Land<sup>7</sup>. The largest of these camps was opposite Wat Suan Dok.

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<sup>7</sup> number ...on bicycle tour map

The airport had a Japanese base and more than 100 missions were flown from there to bomb Burma. The airport and the train station became major targets for attack from the US and Chinese fighter planes. Foreigners were locked up in detention.

"Hundreds of planes would appear over Doi Suthep, drop their bombs, shoot up the railway station and the airport and leave"



The two bridges – the upper, the steel – taken late in 1943.

*"About 30 women were kept in a building behind Wat Prasingh. They were from Taiwan and China. They were said to have been forced and I don't know whether they were or not but I know they all had big happy smiles"*  
Customer...

After the Japanese retreated, workers moved from the military brothels. Some moved to work from long rowboats on the Mae Ping River near the pier under the Narrowat Bridge.



The oarsman and a sex worker would wait in the boat very close to the bridge. Customers would make their payment arrangements and get in the boat. The boats had an area segregated by a cloth partition. It would be rowed to the middle of the river and ... la da la... later the customer would be rowed back to the bank. A second slum area grew along the canal and dirt wall "Kampang Din". It was to become the most well known brothel area in Chiang Mai. It was said unless you visited Kampang Din you hadn't been to Chiang Mai. The brothels began behind a popular theatre at the intersection of Thapae Road. From there a long row of 100

brothels ran along Kampaeng Din Road<sup>8</sup>.

"The slum problem has arisen because people are allowed to trespass and squat in the area. However because they hold leases from the government they cannot easily be evicted. Much of the land is now occupied by people who have taken over these leases and some places have been given over for prostitution. Some of the normal homes also have rooms for prostitution. Local council has asked that no more leases be granted and the land be turned over to them to be put to good use like building bar beers, roads or guesthouses."

*"I was born in Kampaeng Din around 1938 across from the Mae Ping Hotel. At that time Kampaeng Din was a narrow little place backing onto a stream. My parents had leased the land from the government. They built a house, making more room by digging out some of the old wall. Other people bought in graders to make room until the govt banned further building or digging. At first there weren't so many brothels ...only about 2. They were across the road with entrances from behind Suriwong Hotel. One place was owned by Jae Lo, another owned by Jae Tu. Jae Lo was from Sampatong. He had about 50 women. The brothels were wooden with an upstairs for the bedrooms. Downstairs there was a big wooden bench where women would sit and wait for customers. At that time the men paid 10 baht. Most women were from other provinces like Phrae and Chiang Rai. Or else neighbouring districts like Hang Dong, Sampatong or Fang. Most would be working off a debt. Kampaeng Din was a mix of brothels and houses. Locals*

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<sup>8</sup> number--- bicycle tour map

*didn't look down or act disgusted by the brothels. We got along by live and let live...give and take. At least we could all make money by selling food or other goods and services to the women and customers. Samlor drivers, washer women, dressmakers, fortune tellers, doorman everybody made money. I made sweets and sold them to the brothels.*

*In the 1960's there were brothels were on both sides of the road, at most about 50 altogether. Then the land was just a river basin with a huge silk tree for a landmark. In rainy season the water rose and the people of Kampaeng Din laid planks everywhere to get around. The brothels I remember best are Mr Rung's, Mrs Noi, Mr Inthon, Mrs Fong and Mr Samret's brothel was directly across from where the Mea Ping Hotel<sup>9</sup> is. Further south was Grandma Sirikeng who liked to dress as a man. She was from Lampang. Her elder sister bought her this place but later it was taken off her and she was stopped from doing business. About 20 – 30 women lived in the brothels each one had a small square room. If no one came around there would be no money made. The brothel owners had to have a knack of getting customers to come in. They had special rituals using a broom sweeping from the front door to the bedroom would ensure more customers would come. Other brothels were behind Kampaeng Din and there was a single wooden door on the street that led to them. One man would watch the outer door and a second wait inside at the inner door. When a customer came the outer doorman would send the signal for the inner doorman to open. However if it were a drunken soldier they wouldn't open up. Customers came night and day. The most popular time being Loi*

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<sup>9</sup> number --- on bicycle tour map

*Krathong Festival in November. At Loi Krathong mostly men came from other districts and at Songkran many men came from other provinces on holidays. I sold boiled eggs and during festivals I could sell 500 -800 eggs in just a few days! Women were so busy earning money they had no time to go out for food so ordered delivery from me. After 1966 some brothels had glass petitions. Each woman had a number pinned to her. The women sat behind the glass on steps in rows. The price began at 10 going up the steps to 20 then 30 baht."*

*Aunty*



Beginning in the 1960's Kampaeng Din was always in the news with stories relating to brawls, hit and run and murders. In less than a decade 10 students, soldiers and local villagers were murdered in Kampaeng Din. The reputation of Kampaeng Din was mentioned in Lonely Planet in 1990 4<sup>th</sup> edition "Near the night market, the street of 1000 cut-rate prostitutes this is strictly a Thai scene as well as most probably being dangerous"

In 1967 a survey noted 200 brothels with around 2,000 women working in the Chiang Mai city centre. Twenty years later, in 1987, police ran many raids and 100's of women were sent to the social welfare detention centre in Bangkok. More women were bought in to replace them and Kampaeng Din brothels ran for another 10 years.

We were surprised that in the rescue raids of 1991 -1992 that Ruay and the women consistently fled and hid from there would-be rescuers. *"They don't rescue us. They put us in the rehabilitation centre in Bangkok, Baan Kret, it's a prison really"*



*"The brothels were badly built slum houses, just shacks really that the local council did not provide proper services for and the owners did not look after.*



*Here is all the garbage empower helped us throw out.*



*We worked and lived in a small room just a little larger than the single bed it contained.*

*The rooms were partitioned off with cardboard walls. Many of us had never had access to electric lights, fans, seen a TV or used running water before so for us it was actually quite modern compared to home. We were not allowed out if we still owed money.*

*The owners sold us everything our food, our clothes, and our medicines.*

*The police would sell us confiscated goods at marked up prices. I*

*remember they made us all buy watches from them even though none of us could tell the time!*



*The owners were free to make up any number they wanted for our debt or the interest they said we owed. Customers would be let into the brothel at anytime, we were permanently on call. The police not only collected bribes but also had*

*free sex on demand. While ever we owed money we could be sold on to another brothel and have a brand new debt to work off. We were never allowed to decide our own prices or refuse any customer for any reason. There were pimps who made sure we didn't try to run away or misbehave. The police would also help look for us and bring us back if we ran away. I'm so happy these old style brothels are long gone."*

## Drugs

Although the Dutch introduced opium smoking into China, Britain created, manipulated and controlled the opium trade between India and China from the late 1700's well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Chinese



migrants had bought opium smoking with them to Siam. Opium dens like the one pictured here in 1899 were scattered along Sampeang Lane in Bangkok.

There was no home grown opium and opium smoking had not been a part of Thai culture. However by the 1930's opium use was spreading among young Thai men.

Post war American fears of communism in the region were mounting. The US government began funding Thailand to suppress communism. In 1949 The US gave Thailand \$US 2 million to search for and eradicate any communist pockets in the northern mountainous regions. The dirt roads built during WWII by conscripted labour under the Japanese were sealed and many other new roads built opening up the North of Thailand. More land was confiscated as the roads enabled increased logging of the teak forests which the military controlled.

The roads also opened up jungles and remote villages for the first time. Alongside logging the wild animal business flourished.





The rice harvest is completed in April. Families who do not have a good crop or weren't able to make good sales were desperate for cash to survive or risk losing their land. Each April, the new roads and expeditions supposedly looking for communists brought military men who offered to take any girl or young women

to find them work in the cities. Although it is a thing of the past now, it continued into the 1990's and became known as the "Green Harvest". Many families and communities owe their survival to the women and girls who left home and worked in the sex industry.

The US were also supporting the KMT resistance army in China. In 1949 the KMT fled to Shan State and with CIA backing began opium and heroin production for funds. They were then pushed into Thailand and began recruiting hill tribe people to cultivate opium. Soon after, heroin flooded throughout Thailand, including into Chiang Mai. The then head of police Phao Sriyod controlled the drug trade in Thailand.

Tens of thousands of refugees from China fled into Thailand in 1957, many settling in Chiang Mai. They opened family businesses around the area that houses the day market, including opening many new tea shops. Yet Chiang Mai remained a sleepy place...



### Too many bad laws...

The UN released its first report on "prostitution in Thailand" in 1957. The report noted prostitution was "big business" and the author guessed there were about 20,000 women sex workers in Bangkok. They came from Thailand, Burma, China, Laos, Vietnam, Japan and France. Nearly all were at or above the legal age (then 15 years) and most had averaged 5 customers per night. The report found that the existing Acts were "failing to control or suppress prostitution" As far as we can see the thousands of reports since could have just copied this one! Maybe they have.

Around this time ,In the late 1950's the head of the military government, Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat initiated a "Social Purification Campaign". Thailand went through a kind of moral spring cleaning where roads were swept of stray dogs; litter bugs were punished; diverse groups such as beggars, young people wearing tight pants and lepers were locked up; various things such

as samlors (Thai style rickshaws) and dances like 'the twist' were banned and night spots closed down. Thirty day jail sentences for petty crimes were extended to year long periods of rehabilitation.

Of course we were not left out of the big clean up! Sarit's government implemented a Procurement Act under the Penal Code in 1956 in an attempt to punish people buying girls from their families. No one has ever been prosecuted under that law. He ordered all sex workers to be arrested and detained for moral rehabilitation, thinly disguised as vocational training. The now famous institution, Baan Kretakaarn was opened for this purpose.

He went on to create the first law in Thailand to criminalize our work; the Suppression and Prevention of Prostitution Act 1960. Prior to this there was a clear distinction between prostitution which was a legal occupation, and forced labour in the industry, including trafficking for prostitution, which were crimes. Now in 1960, the line became blurred, and protections for people being trafficked or forced largely ignored.

In the 1960 Act, prostitution was defined as a woman providing sexual services in exchange for money to several men. A woman having one regular customer was not defined as a sex worker, but as a mistress or minor wife. The moral problem didn't seem to be that we took money for sexual services but that we had sex with more than one man. The law wasn't about our work but about controlling women's sexuality, and that's another old story played out all around the world!

Aside from protecting men's freedom to have many women, perhaps Sarit was also protecting himself and the 100 women he paid for and kept as minor wives.

However as always laws and policies failed.

In the five years he held power only around 7,000 people were arrested for any charge and 4,738 people were sent to rehabilitation. In the same period hundreds of thousands more continued doing the twist, riding samlors and doing sex work. It was perhaps a hint of the laws inevitable failure that in 1960, in conjunction with the Prostitution Act, the year saw the beginning of the Tourism Authority of Thailand and Thai Airways company.



In Chiang Mai sex whether free or not was thriving so much that the British government opened a VD clinic to provide services to British nationals. Just two years later the United States and

Thailand made an agreement that Thailand would act as a place for Rest and Recreation (R&R) for the American military. Thailand with support from the US government, the World bank and various national and global corporations, had committed itself to rapid economic development. In order to meet loan payments and create an industrial society Thailand began selling its forests. In 1964 the Thai government declared all forest resources belonged to the State.

These "forest reserves" as the government saw them should be made productive by letting national and global corporations log them. Tens of thousands of people were pushed out of the forests and off the land which they had lived and depended on for food, clothing and housing for hundreds of years.

Many other rural Thai were forced off their land to make way for dam and energy projects which flooded huge areas of fertile river valleys. We have been working hard ever since for our families to have land to own and farm

People were confronted with a stark choice; either take their family to live in the slums of the growing cities and work in low-wage jobs; or encourage younger family members to move alone and send back money for the family survival.

In the same year as the relocations began the first American GI's arrived to the US base at Utapao near Pattaya.





From then until 1976, about 700,000 soldiers spent 6 months in Vietnam and arrived to party for a week of R&R in Thailand each year, where their spending reached \$USD20 million. Others lived on the nine bases throughout Thailand including the North East where they dropped 260 million bombs on Laos in their "secret" war.



The combined effects of economic policy and the profit to be made from the American military saw the Entertainment industry, the Green Harvest and migration of young women from the Northeast boom.

Sex workers yet again needed to learn a whole new way of

working. Aside from English language our sisters learned to dress up, wear their hair and makeup like modern American girls; dance to new music ; wear bikinis; perform magic shows like “Pussy darts show”; convert foreign currency; and deftly manage war traumatized men. These are just a few of the new skills demanded



Thailand wanting to be good hosts to their well paying guests plus exert some influence on the industry introduced the Entertainment Place Act in 1966 to regulate venues. Under the Act no staff were recognized as workers with labour rights but as potential criminals who had to register with the police. We also had to wear numbers as the GI's found it hard to tell us apart let alone remember our names! Only about one third of entertainment places have ever bothered registering in any case.



Chiang Mai had followed similar development, if less dramatic,

than that of Bangkok. In 1968 plans were being made for a major tourism campaign "1975 -Visit Chiang Mai Year". Major road works were undertaken , sealing major transport routes by 1970.

Large hotels were built, such as the well known Top North and Montri Hotels and Chiang Mai's first guest house opened "The Rose Guest House" which still operates today.<sup>10</sup>

In 1969 with much fanfare the Siriwathana Market<sup>11</sup> was opened outside the city walls near Chang Puak Gate. It was a huge area complete with a traditional open theatre attracting sellers and buyers from outer districts, and other provinces including Bangkok. The market backed onto a large bit of land owned by the Chotana family called Santitham village. Soon brothels opened to service the men attending the markets and long distance drivers. The slum area of Santitham village became a third major brothel area in Chiang Mai city.



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<sup>10</sup> numbers ... and... bicycle tour map

<sup>11</sup> number ..on bicycle tour

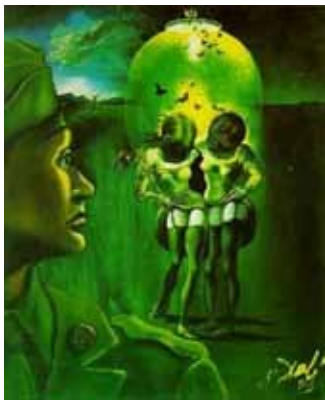
The Thai population was growing and in 1974 Mechai Viravaidya founded the Population and Community Development Association (PDA).



Family planning campaigns heavily promoted condoms, the pill and depo provera, focusing on poor and rural women who were

discouraged from having more than one or two children. As an off shoot these campaigns was that the condom became seen as a 'family tool' something for housewives i.e. good women.

Sadly the image of the condom as



something family friendly and commonplace was destroyed by later HIV campaigns that stigmatized the condom as something for bad women or dirty sex, like this old VD posters by Salvador Dalí

Condoms had been in evidence since before the 1400's made from oiled paper though the latex condom wasn't developed by Goodyear (yes, the tyre company) until the 1920's. Tea houses had been serving Ma Huang tea (Ephrida) to prevent and treat gonorrhea for many years. But still sexually transmitted infections were increasing in Siam.

Tourism to Thailand had grown from 81,000 tourist arrivals in 1960 to 628,000 in 1970. The Vietnamese defeated the USA and won the war in 1975. Our American customers left behind a whole culture of Px products, beer, cigarettes, gum; people adopted western music; clothing, t-shirts, jeans. The US bases and R&R had exposed people throughout the country to new needs. From Korat and Ubon in the Northeast to Chiang Rai in the north, and south to Bangkok and Pattaya, people had adopted western dress, western music, and had come to rely on appliances that they felt they couldn't live without. We sex workers had also developed whole new way of working.

The Thai government, still under the guidance of Uncle World Bank, rushed to find us new customers by attracting tourists in "Year of the Tourist" 1980.

In a message to all provinces Deputy Prime Minister Boonchu Rajanasathien said "Within the next two years, we have need of money. Therefore I ask of all governors to consider the natural scenery in your provinces, together with some forms of entertainment that some of you may consider disgusting and shameful because they are forms of entertainment that attract tourists. Such forms of entertainment should not be prohibited if only because you are morally fastidious. We must do this because we have to consider the jobs that will be created by for the people."

The year was a success 2 million visitors 70% men travelling alone.

Once again sex workers had to learn new skills again in the 1980's that our sisters hadn't needed in the 1960's as tourists from so many different nations had new accents, styles and interests including counter games like Connect Four which arrived in Chiang Mai bars in 1991 and the wooden tower which followed in 1993.

In 1987 Thailand launched its second international visit Thailand campaign "Visit Thailand year 1987".



As part of the Chiang Mai "clean up", ahead of the campaign 300

women were arrested in Kampong din brothels and sent to Baan Kret for rehabilitation. They were all Thai. Just four years later the brothels were raided again and 200 of the 342 women arrested were from Burma. They were all deported and rumours of many executions followed, prompting the Minister of Police to promise there would be no more deportations of women to Burma. This promise held until the anti-trafficking hysteria in 2001.<sup>12</sup>

The "Visit Thailand Year" campaign was carried out on a much larger scale than the previous campaign of 1980. It was even more successful increasing tourism by 23.6 percent with still roughly 70% men. .

Thailand pushed on with its tourism drive the government ran third and most successful and well known campaign "Amazing Thailand" a year later in 1988 and this was followed by Thai Airways Discover Thailand promotion in 1989.



Not satisfied with just trying to get some people to come in, and to keep some people out, Thailand began exporting labour to the Middle East. 1980 saw a massive movement of men travel to work in the Gulf States, especially Saudi.

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<sup>12</sup> for full explanation see empower anti-trafficking report 2011

Many of our customers began inviting us to visit their home countries and we began travelling overseas, especially to Germany and Japan. We had a mixture of experiences, some of us went willingly and made some money; some of us were tricked or ripped off or worse.

Yet, in 1980 alone, women sent home \$US656 million from Japan, \$454 million from Germany. By 1990 this had risen to \$1087 million being sent home from Japan and \$802 million from Germany.

### Chiang Mai bars...

Before the early 1970's very few western tourists made their way to Chiang Mai. It was not home to any US army bases; it had no western comforts and carried a wild west like reputation.

Yet by 1974 enough groundbreaking backpackers had arrived for a Mr Muu to open a small trekking business. He ran 3 day treks that were often held up and robbed by bandits which his added excitement for his trekkers. His shop was between





the Bier Stube <sup>13</sup>that opened the same year and next to a large noodle complex.

A foreigners bar, the Karen Hut<sup>14</sup> was opened in a lane behind where Rydges Hotel stands today. This remained the only foreign bar until the mid 1980's when our customers began to arrive. At first men paid women from Patpong or Pattaya to come with them to Chiang Mai. In the 1980's the noodle complex on Moon Muang was divided up into lots and rented out as bar beers. An enterprising woman, Nuu was the first to take up the offer and opened the "Blue Sky Bar" and employed two sex workers. Others followed creating the famous Bar Beer Centre of Chiang Mai.

In its heyday the Bar Beer centre hosted some 50 bars and some 300 women worked in the small noisy space. In 1993 the "Bar Beer Centre" was described as "a thriving den of wild music, lights, women, drunk farang and ladyboys. Blue Sky Bar open all night, with Nuu resting on a lawn chair, keeping an eye on things."

Soon after other bars opened, My Place near the old Karen Hut; Domino Bar opened on Moon Muang near Top North Hotel; and by the early 1990's bar beers could be found in many of the laneways around Moon Muang ... Black Cat ... Overlander ...

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<sup>13</sup> number --- on bicycle tour map

<sup>14</sup> number \_\_ on bicycle tour amp

Moon Garden ... the Escape ... Up 2 U and for many years Linda Bar was the only bar on Loi Khroa .... and further a field a narrow corridor in the Night Bazaar was becoming home to dozens of more bar beers.



By the early 1990's even though tuk tuks had not yet arrived, Chiang Mai had become a tourism destination second to Bangkok. Airport arrivals went from 19,000 in 1976 the year the airport opened to 176,000 thirty years later.

Although salaries were under the legal minimum, work in a bar beer meant that you had the freedom of living off premises; opportunities to meet men from all over the world and if you were lucky, the chance to increase your earnings.

Many chose this way of working instead of the old brothel system and by the early 1990's few Thai women worked in the brothels of Chiang Mai.

Brokers and owners recruited more women from disenfranchised ethnic families from Thailand and Burma, and Chinese women from Yunnan.

Beginning around 1984 every Saturday, sex workers from Santitham brothels were driven 12 kms to the cow and buffalo markets at San patong. Make shift brothels were constructed at the sale yards and sex worker provided services for men celebrating good sales or mourning bad ones.

The sex industry in Chiang Mai underwent huge improvements in the late 1990's.

In 1996 a new Suppression and Prevention of Prostitution Act was passed to prevent minors and children working in the industry. Our work, as willing adults, was reduced from being punished by compulsory rehabilitation to either a maximum 1,000 baht fine or a maximum of 10 days jail if we were found to be advertising, soliciting, recruiting or associating with others for the purpose of prostitution.

It became difficult for corrupt police to extort more than 1000 baht from us. However, the penalties for involving minors 15 -18 years in prostitution or child commercial sexual abuse were increased. At the same time a policy was put in place to register undocumented migrant workers in 5 professions. This meant that now there were two groups, unregistered and registered migrants, where before everyone was undocumented.

Falling back on the 1979 Immigration Act, it was much more profitable for corrupt authorities to catch people for migration offences, including the harboring of undocumented migrants. The easiest undocumented migrants to find were migrant sex workers, unable to register and conveniently locked in brothels with pretty fairy lights showing the way. Increasing police extortion and ongoing raids on brothels looking for illegal migrants, added urgency for brothel owners to change the way they did business.

Change was in the wind anyway as knowledge among rural Thai families, and families from Burma and ethnic areas about the Thai sex industry had reached a critical mass and young women began to migrate independently. This meant they arrived debt free, had trustworthy contacts, either friends or family, and they willingly applied for work in, or outside of the sex industry.

The supply of captive women was dwindling. At the same time

it had been common practice for the most exploitative owners to rape new arrivals without any protection. By 1998 the worst of the managers and owners had died of HIV/Aids, leaving the smarter businessmen in charge. SSS

The remaining owners understood that change was inevitable. They began to convert their live-in 24 hour brothels into small karaoke bars, massage shops and escort businesses where sexual services were provided off the premises in short time hotels. Now migrant sex workers lived off the premises, in rented beds, free to move around.

Sex workers from the brothels had to learn to sing and memorize or read lyrics. Thousands of women, especially from Burma and China have learned to read Thai from struggling to learn karaoke songs!

### **A Go Go**

Grand Prix Bar , 1969, in Patong was the first A Go Go in Thailand. In the late 1970's a Thai military man opened a small A Go Go bar Chiang Mai's first, called Las Vegas<sup>15</sup> in the brothel area of Ton Poe. It had a small stage and women danced in short skirts to juke box tunes.

It's signature windmill still turns today.

It was soon followed by Star Nine, Star Six, Spotlight and

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<sup>15</sup> number -- in bicycle tour map

Cosy Corner and much later in the 1990's, Foxy Lady. Originally dancers wore bikinis and danced in bare feet, flip flops or tennis shoes. About four dancers would each dance about 3 songs before changing to another team.

In 2003 the police raided the A go go bars and confiscated the poles in an effort to stop inappropriate dancing.

To date Las Vegas, Spotlight, Star Six and Foxy Lady are the only four workplaces for a go go dancers in Chiang Mai.

### **Karaoke**

In 1971 a Japanese musician, Inoue Daisuke combined a car stereo, a coin box and an amplifier calling the resulting device, karaoke – which means “empty orchestra”. Daisuke never patented his invention, a mistake which has cost him an estimated \$USD 200 million.

In 1987 Karaoke arrived in Bangkok and soon made its way to Chiang Mai. The café cabaret club Madam Fluke was the first to embrace Karaoke, switching from live music to karaoke. Soon other café's and nightclubs followed suit.

The first purpose built Karoke Bar in Chiang Mai was “1991”. It's still open today in Ton Poe.<sup>16</sup> Over the next decade the traditional café's disappeared and were replaced by karaoke lounges.

The first machines were coin operated and they are still used in many small karaoke places today.

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<sup>16</sup> number --- on bicycle tour map

Karaoke became the third largest Thai business sector in 2010.

*"Then, oh fabulous day, a wondrous machine arrived. Possibly several decades old it was the forefather of the video jukebox but came complete with microphone that enabled the user to turn off the vocals and follow the lyrics written on the screen personally. This phenomenon was hired in return for eighty percent of the take. Each song required 10 baht to play ... as the privileged owner of the Karaoke slot machine my take was 4 baht per song"*

Other workers moved to massage businesses when they left the brothels. In 2001 Dr. Pennapa the Deputy Director-



General of the Department for Development of Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine made one of her first priorities the development of a study program in traditional Thai massage that would restore the dignity and purity of

the ancient massage and establish an internationally

recognized standard of excellence for traditional Thai massage practitioners. Since then thousands of sex workers in Chiang Mai have completed the eight hundred hour, Professional Thai Massage Study Program and received their certificates.

Since the 1996 Suppression and Prevention of Prostitution Act there have been many new policies and laws that effect our work like laws on Migrant Workers, Money Laundering, Drug Law, Copyright Law, Anti-trafficking Law, Zoning Law, Social Order Policy.

Till this day newly appointed officials have a tradition of raiding our workplaces to show how they will exert their authority in their new position. At other times raids may be carried out by corrupt police looking to extort money. Lately raids also can happen to arrest us for being trafficked. Still regardless of the laws, our work continues to benefit our families, community and the country.

The economic crisis or as it's known the Tom Yum Kung crisis of 1997 left Thailand with a broken economy and high foreign debt repayments, mainly to the IMF. The government turned to us again and re-launched "Amazing Thailand" promoting men to come and see Thailand's beautiful women. Once again we rebuilt the country.



The National Economic and Social Advisory Committee investigated our industry in 2003. Their findings were that our work accounts for 3-4% of the economy, or over \$4.5 billion a year. They also reported that our employers, the owners of soapy massage and Ago go bar pay around \$80 million a year in police bribes, but the same owners pay very little in taxes. The government will have to get in line because the same employers and owners pay even less in wages, benefits and social security payments for their workers!

The 2006 ILO report found we send home \$300 million to rural areas each year, more than any spending by government of international development schemes.

In 2008 tourism, which depends on us, accounted for 7% of the GDP which is the highest income generated by any single sector.

Professor Narong Phetprasert of Chulalongkorn University who was a member of the National Economic and Social Advisory Committee recommended the removal of four punitive articles from the existing anti-prostitution law (Articles 5,6,7,9) in 2003. Those articles are exploitative providing opportunities for police to take advantage of he girls of the night," he said "If we abolish those articles they can do their work legally with fewer opportunities for police and authorities to exploit them." **We are still waiting**

Two hundred sex workers attended a public seminar held by the Ministry of Justice on the legal status of prostitution. Too bad no report of the meeting was ever released. **We are still waiting ....**

The National Human Rights Commission awarded Empower the "Best Human Rights Organization" . Just as importantly they concluded the Entertainment Place Act of 1966 /2003 is an abuse of our constitutional and human rights. They proposed changes be made within a 6 month period .... but a few months later the government was ousted in a military coup before any action was taken. **We are still waiting...**

### Can Do Bar – a just, fair bar – Experimentation<sup>17</sup>

In 1986 sex workers of Empower made their first request to the Thai government for safe fair working conditions like those of other workers.

Twenty years later this request had been made to a lot of different Ministries in a lot of different governments with no result.



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<sup>17</sup> number --- in bicycle tour map

In 2006 we sex workers of Empower Chiang Mai decided we couldn't wait any longer for this or that government to answer us. We decided we needed to build our very own safe fair workplace with the same labor rights and protections as other workers.

We pooled our money and raised over 1 million baht to renovate, decorate and open the first Experitainment bar in Thailand "Can Do Bar"



Since we opened we have been visited by good customers from the National Human Rights Commission; The Director of UNFPA and UNAIDS; the Director of Laos Provincial Public Health; the Department of Social Security; the Department of



Labor; The Deputy Director for Migrant Health; experts on OH&S; Global Fund Against HIV Managers; academics and students from all around the world; sex workers from Canada, Australia Sweden, Denmark, Hong Kong, Burma, Laos, and China and many others.

We have provided access to the National Security Scheme for around 150 sex workers so far. We have been featured in national and international media.

We have shown that we "Can Do" ; sex work is decent work, now we hope our government will follow our example soon.



## A Go Go

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It's signature windmill still turns today.

It was soon followed by Star Nine, Star Six, Spotlight and Cosy Corner and much later in the 1990's, Foxy Lady. Originally dancers wore bikinis and danced in bare feet, flip flops or tennis shoes. About four dancers would each dance about 3 songs before changing to another team.

In 2003 the police raided the A go go bars and confiscated the poles in an effort to stop inappropriate dancing.

To date Las Vegas, Spotlight, Star Six and Foxy Lady are the only four workplaces for a go go dancers in Chiang Mai.

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<sup>18</sup> number -- in bicycle tour map

### Disco fever...

In the mid 1980's disco fever finally reached Chiang Mai beginning with Kinzar then Bubbles Disco. Women found that if they had no customers in the bar that discos provided a second chance. Many discos and dance clubs have become our second workplace.

### From then to now and beyond...

Since 1991 sex workers in Chiang Mai have come together as part of Empower. We now record our own histories so others no longer need to rely on second or third hand traveler's tales, or search between the lines of mainstream media to find us.

Appx One:

### **Empower Chiang Mai**

Empower Chiang Mai is part of the Empower Foundation [www.empowerfoundation.org](http://www.empowerfoundation.org). Our Chiang Mai story is just part of the larger story of Empower and sex work in Thailand.

In 1990 Empower began wondering about opening a center in Chiang Mai. One of the founders, Jackie had moved to Chiang Mai along with a few old students. Pi Noi and Jackie got in contact with a young Thai woman called Da was doing Library Studies at the Chiang Mai University. She began visiting the brothels of Santitham. At that time Santitham was largely a slum area and the brothel area especially was considered out of bounds for 'good girls' like Da.

Empower was shaken by the conditions that the young women were living and working in. On their part, the women were happy to consider the idea of a chance to learn and exchange experiences.

A third woman Wan joined and together they began to explore more of the sex industry in Chiang Mai, mapping its different sectors and listening to the problems, hopes and dreams of the women working in it.

In 1991 Empower Chiang Mai opened a drop in centre in the streets of Santitham. However it was quickly apparent that we had chosen the wrong location. Women locked in the brothels couldn't come out despite the close proximity and women working in other areas didn't dare make the journey into Santitham. Empower Chiang Mai moved to a central area of Chiang Mai city, Ratchamanka Road, and women began to come and help build the space Empower was trying to create.

Yupin from Black Cat bar borrowed a small amount of money from Empower insisting on giving us her sewing machine as collateral. Nong, a former student off Empower Patpong who had retired to Chiang Mai offered to make use of it by teaching sewing classes. Even then no one saw sewing as their career, but rather a way to cut living costs by making work clothes, the kids school uniforms etc. Da and Wan shared teaching of Thai literacy and Jackie began English language classes.

One of the first women to come to Empower was Ruay. She was from Mae Ai and had been working in a brothel in Kampang Din for about 8 years, supporting her family since she was 12 or 13 years old. She wanted to learn to sew. One day she told Empower that we should be going into the brothel and teaching Thai and numeracy to the non-Thai women she worked with. At this time Empower was willing but still uncertain how to get to meet women in closed brothels. Ruay went and talked with her owner and reached an agreement. She would give up going to Empower and her sewing classes, her sole outlet, if the owner would allow



Empower in to teach Thai one hour a day. The only hour the owner was willing to let us have was 5pm – 6pm, the same hour where women showered and ate ready for the night shift.

When Jackie and Da went the first day they saw the Thai alphabet



was chalked on Ruay's door and she showed us a small notebook where she kept track of women's debts and payments as at least some kind of check against the owners extravagant claims. In these impossible conditions she had been teaching her friends. It was Ruay who taught Empower Chiang Mai about many of the complexities of life and work in the brothels and much more.

As you will have read here, these were the "bad old days" and brothels like this are now the rare exception rather than the rule as it was in the 1990's.

In the last 2 decades over 6,000 women have enrolled in Empower's education classes. Thousands more have taken part in other activities and welcomed Empower visits to their workplaces, they are also Empower.

**We look forward to making more history together**

**The Power We Share the Power We have**

## Timeline

- 1292 90,000 men spent 24 hours working to build wall in 4 days
- 1400's Population regulated by sytem of value.."sak ti na"
- 1512 ... Dirt wall of Kampeng Din built
- 1552 – 1558 Lanna kingdom empties
- 1564 ... Introduction of money
- 1583 .... First westerner visits Siam
- 1680 ... Ayudyha brothels in business
- 1727 ... Qing dynasty allows emigration of Chinese
- 1782 ... Rebuilding of Chiang Mai around guilds
- 1800 ...establish of Ping river port
- 1800's... Chinese tea served to cure gonnorrhoea
- 1805 ....New legal system "Law of three seals" mentions sex workers as a member of society. Also law regulated slavery and polygamy
- 1855 .... Bowring treaty increases foreign trade plus internal migration
- 1893 ....Lanna becomes part of Siam
- 1897 ...Introduction of the baht and satang
- 1899 ... End of corvee labor must pay taxes in cash
- 1905 ... End to slavery
- 1909 ....The Control and Prevention of Venereal Disease Act
- 1913 ....Introduction of surnames and patriarchal inheritance
- 1920 ....Latex condoms from Malaysia Thailand rubber
- 1920 .....Rice crops failed, land purchased, first landless of Thailand
- 1921.... Train travel Bangkok Chiang Mai begins
- 1927 ... First housewives (daytime) brothels open in Chiang Mai
- 1928 .....First Thai Anti trafficking Law
- 1932 .....End of absolute monarchy
- 1933 .....Beginning of Singh beer
- 1935 .....End of polygamy
- 1939 .....Siam renamed Thailand
- 1930 ... 86 taxi girls Blue Moon night club on Moon Muang Road
- 1941 .....Japanese occupy Thailand as friendly force.

- 1942 ....Chiang Mai bombed
- 1943 .....Roads to west built under Japanese supervision
- 1940's ... Men in uniforms start the "Green Harvest"
- 1946 .... Somerset Maughn offered soapy massage in Bangkok "Sultan Turkish Bath"
- 1946 ..... brothels behind the cinema at Kampang Din and wrking from baots in the Ping river
- 1949... UN convention on trafficking and prostitution
- 1950 .... Chinese refugees open more teashops."Rong Nam Char"
- 1956 ....Thailand's Procurement law
- 1957 .....Release of UN report on prostitution
- 1950's ...Heroin and opium market controlled by Thai Police, KMT and CIA
- 1957 .....Brothels moved form river to Kampamg Din and Ton Poe
- 1960 .... The "social purification" campaigns by Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat,
- 1960 .... First anti-prostitution law
- 1960 ... Founding of Tourism Authority and Thai airways
- 1962..... USA/Thai agree to host R&R for GI's
- 1963 .... British open VD clinic for their men citizens in Chiang Mai
- 1964 .....World Bank support for industrial development = landloss
- 1964 ... First GI's arrive Uthapo near Pattaya
- 1966 .... Creation of Entertainment Place Act
- 1966 .... Rice whiskey 15 cents a liter (3 baht)
- 1967 ... Government estimates 2,000 women 200 brothels in Chiang Ma
- 1967 ... US military spending on R&R = \$5 million per year
- 1969 ... International Tourism Conference hosted in Chiang Mai
- 1969 .....Grand Prix A go go opens in Patpong
- 1969 ... Chang Puak market opens along with brothels in Santitham
- 1970 ... R&R now \$20 million p.a. = 25% of total rice export
- 1970 .... All weather roads completed using US anti-communism money
- 1970 .....First guest houses Rose Guest house
- 1971 .... Karaoke invented
- 1974 ... Family Planing (ODA) promotes condoms

1974 .... Constitution includes equal rights for women  
1974 .....Mr Muu begins trekking business near noodle complex  
1975 ... US loses war to Vietnam  
1975 .....Soi Cowboy becomes Soi Cowboy  
1975 .....Visit Chiang Mai Year  
1975 ... Las Vegas A Go Go opens in Ton Poe Chiang Mai  
1976 .....19,000 arrivals to Chiang Mai by air  
1978 ...Mahidol University and sex workers research Thai penis size for condoms  
1979 .... Immigration Act comes into force (now 4 legal regimes regulating sex work)  
1980 ....Year of the Tourist 2 million tourists 70% men  
1980 ....Bann Kretagan open  
1984 ...Empower Patpong begins  
1984 ...First reported Thai person with HIV  
1986 ... Government reassures Thai that there will be no Thai to Thai transmission of HIV  
1986 ...Empower and sex workers begin HIV education and awareness in Patpong  
1987.... Visit Thailand year 1987". Top foreign exchange earner  
1987 ....Around 300 women from Kampeng Din arrested and sent to Baan Kret  
1989 .... "Karen Hut" only western bart in Chiang Mai in Soi behind Rydges hotel  
1989 .....Thailand tries mandatory HIV testing  
1990 ... Kampeng Din called "the street of 1000 prostitutes" lonely planet  
1990 ... Empower explores opening center in Chiang Mai  
1991 .....Black Cat, Spotlight A Go Go open along with karaoke Linda Bar on Lou Khro  
1991 –1992 Ongoing raids of Kampang Din and Ton Poe  
1992 .... John's Place & Cozy Corner A Go Go open  
1992 .... WHO 100% Condom Use Program trialed in brothels of Chiang Mai

1993 ...Bars increasing...Dominos, Up 2 U, Outback, Blue Sky, Moon Garden  
1994 .....MP Chavilit extends bar opening to 3am  
1995 .... Ongoing raids restart  
1996 .... New prostitution law and first migrant registration  
1996 .....Brothels changing to karaoke/cafes  
1997 .....People's Constitution and economic crash  
1998 .....Amazing Thailand campaign to pay off IMF loans  
2001 .....Social Order Policy closing 2am/dignity of massage/no sex shows  
2001 .....Beginning of anti-trafficking hysteria... raid and rescue in Chiang Mai  
2002 .....Cobra Gold US military exercises invited for R&R  
2003 .....A Go Go poles taken by Chiang Mai police to stop inappropriate dancing  
2003 .....Government commissioned report advise to decriminalize adult prostitution  
2003 ... More raid and rescues from Christian evangelist organizations  
2004 .... Sex workers shift more to sideline and freelance work  
2004 ... International Aids Conference in Bangkok large sex worker presence  
2005 .....Govt HIV spending down from 82 million (1997) to 25 million  
2005 ..... Chiang Mai arrivals by air = 176,000  
2006 .... National Human Rights Commission rules Entertainment Place Law a human rights abuse  
2006 .... Can Do Bar, an Experitainment in just fair work opens  
2007 ... New entertainment areas open in Chiang Mai increasing from 10 – 17 main areas  
2008 ... Last brothel in Kampang Din converts to Karaoke bar  
2009 ... First fish massage Nuimanhamen Road corner of Soi 9.

Bicycle tour MAP

