

shook hands slowly with each of us, looking deep into our eyes as he said goodbye. Loaded with garlands of flowers, he went back into the compartment, then came out again, seeing two old wardboys whom he had missed in the crowd. Slowly the train began to pull out. We waved until the tall figure was lost to sight, then turned away, heavy with sorrow, choking lumps in our throats, and our feet like lead.

Everyone in Miraj was at the station when he came back months later. Several weeks elapsed, a second journey to Berlin had to be made, and then he knew, beyond doubt, that the disease had progressed too far and the prognosis was hopeless. He told no one, not even his wife; not once did he falter or slacken his pace although he knew that sinister and relentless death was overtaking him. On Thursday he operated, skillfully and unerringly as usual—on Sunday he was dead. He had missed only one operating day. Death, like everything else, he had taken in his stride.

Over a thousand people came to see the place where they laid him, in the little Christian cemetery near the ruins of a Mohammedan mosque on the open downs beyond the hospital. A few days later we visited the cemetery by moonlight. We looked at his grave, a gray slab of granite, deathly still, lifeless—he was not there. Then we looked up. The Southern Cross stood over the ruined mosque, erect, jewelled with a million unknown worlds. He was there, uplifted into heaven by the joy that had sustained him all his life:

“In the cross of Christ I glory
Towering o'er the wrecks of time.”

Kru Muang of Thailand

by
Hugh Taylor

HUGH TAYLOR went to Siam (now Thailand) in 1888. For years he was one of the leaders in Lampang, then in 1908 he transferred to Nan. There he built up a school for boys from a mere handful of pupils to a large institution. The latter part of his service was spent largely in evangelistic and church work. He was honorably retired in 1933.



HITE, black, or brown, Kru Muang is the finest character I have ever met," so said one of the American motion picture men who spent a year and a half in almost daily contact with Kru Muang while they were making the motion picture, *Chang*. So say I, who have known Kru Muang since he was a lad of about eleven, nursing his father in the Nan Mission Hospital in North Thailand.

In those days the hospital had no trained nurses and had to depend on relatives to look after the needs of the patients. The lad's father had been seized and badly wounded by a man-eating tiger. Nai Muang, as he was then called, frantic with terror, attacked the tiger with his machete and delivered his father from the jaws of the beast.

When his father had improved enough to be left alone part of the day, Nai Muang spent his spare time in the boys' school. After his father went home, the lad continued his studies. He proved to be better than an average student, active in any fun going on, and reliable for any tasks assigned him. He soon confessed his faith in God,

accepted Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and became a leader in the Christian activities of the school.

Nai Muang was graduated from the Nan Boys' School and, when he completed his higher education, came back as a member of its faculty. At this point in his career, his title was changed from "Nai," meaning master or mister, to "Kru," meaning teacher or professor. Later this title was emphasized when he was ordained to the ministry, a teacher of sacred truths, Kru or Reverend Muang. He married Tiam Tah, a graduate of our girls' school. They made a very happy couple and were blessed with a flock of bright, handsome, obedient children.

When the Chiengrung Station in South China sent out a "Macedonian call" for Lao-Thai evangelistic workers for the Thai people living in that portion of the country, Kru Muang and Tiam Tah felt the call meant them. In a spirit of self-sacrifice, they resigned their comfortable position in the boys' school and went as foreign missionaries to that distant post. When they set forth, they were accompanied by the whole church across the first rice field. There we knelt together and commended them to the grace of God. Cheerfully they started on their twenty-eight days' journey afoot to Chiengrung in South China.

Porters, who went with them to carry their babies and their baggage, soon brought back word that Kru Muang had already won fame and the goodwill of the people of his district by killing with his shotgun a man-eating tiger that had been harrying the neighborhood.

At the end of their first term of service, Kru Muang



KRU MUANG



with his family, which had increased in number and size, returned to Nan on furlough. They had just settled down for their needed rest when two Americans arrived from Hollywood to make a moving picture of jungle wild life. They soon came to the mission asking for a man who knew a little English to act as interpreter in their contact with the Thai. Thinking it was to be an easy job and for only a few months, we recommended Kru Muang.

Kru Muang was employed as interpreter at the salary he had been receiving as missionary. However, he soon became personnel manager and adviser in jungle matters, with salary increases from time to time. From his boyhood experiences in the jungle, he was able to teach the Americans how to make traps and pitfalls with which they captured a whole menagerie of wild animals. He obtained one hundred and sixty-five elephants for their use. He selected the workmen for their pay roll that at times numbered five hundred. And finally, he became star actor in *Chang*, the picture which they produced.

Chang was the pictured story of a native Laos (Thai) man and his wife and two children in their adventures in establishing a home in the jungle. It showed them grubbing out a farm, building their frail, thatched, bamboo house on posts high above the prowlers of the night, and it portrayed their experiences with dangerous and destructive depredators. It was a picture of monkeys and porcupines, of elephants and tigers, of snares and traps and pitfalls, of failures and successes of man in his struggle against the jungle—a picture story that grew out of Kru Muang's own life.

In the year and a half during which Kru Muang worked

for the Hollywood picture men, his life had a very wholesome influence for good. Once in my presence, Nai Sort, the photographer, was joking Nai Per, the director, (Thai names for the two men) about how "sanctimonious" he was becoming. The director very seriously replied, "I'm trying to stop swearing because the other day when I let loose a string of oaths, Kru Muang looked at me wide-eyed and said, 'Oh, Nai Per, you frighten me when you talk that way.'" To me the director added, "I would rather have a millstone hung about my neck and be cast into the sea than to be the cause of Kru Muang's stumbling."

I once introduced to Nai Per a friend of mine as the one who had furnished the money for Kru Muang's education. He clapped my friend on the shoulder and said earnestly, "You never made a better investment in all your life."

Kru Muang was persistent and thorough in his work. One morning the director wanted little kittens for the picture. Kru Muang searched the city over until midnight and reported back with not a single kitten. The director tried to send another man and got the reply, "Nai Per, if Kru Muang couldn't find any kittens, then I know there simply are no kittens to be had. It just isn't the season for them."

It took a year and a half to make the picture. When it was finished, Kru Muang's bonus was the deed to a home in the city, which far surpassed for size and comfort his most ambitious dreams. His position during those months had brought him into familiar contact with the wealthy

and influential people of the land. The picture in which he "starred" was the most popular production in the motion picture world in the year of 1927-28, popular the world around.

I feared that the mission had lost a valuable missionary. But Kru Muang is one "movie star" who was not diverted by the glamor of that artificial life. His feet were still on the ground, his ears still attuned to the voice of God. As soon as he had rested a bit from that year and a half of strenuous, driving work with the motion picture company, Kru Muang with his wife came to me, saying, "The call of the Thai in South China is still ringing in our ears. We wish to go back to them." They went back to Chiengrung.

A feud of some three thousand years' standing exists in South China between the Chinese and the Thai races. It is fed by sporadic outbreaks of war between the two. Such an outbreak occurred at Chiengrung soon after Kru Muang and family arrived for their second term of service. As the mission compound was between the lines of battle, the missionaries had to flee from the city and take refuge in a secluded place in the country.

The mission party soon ran low on provisions at their camp. When a lull came in the fighting, Dr. Mason and Kru Muang returned to the mission compound to get a new supply. Kru Muang discovered that the roof of one of the buildings had been riddled by bullets and was leaking badly on the goods stored there. Not stopping to tell Dr. Mason, he went up into the garret to replace the broken tiles. The doctor learning that another battle was imminent and not being able to find Kru Muang, returned to camp without him, supposing he had already fled there.

The battle surprised Kru Muang in the garret. He tried to make his escape, but was captured by the Chinese. As he was a Thai, they took him for a spy. He was condemned to be shot with a dozen others. The prisoners were lined up on the bank of the Mekong River so that, when shot, their bodies would tumble down some fifty or sixty feet into the water and be washed away, thus saving the trouble of burial. The firing squad had their guns leveled, awaiting the signal to shoot.

In that line stood Kru Muang, facing those leveled guns and his eternity—past, present, and future. His feelings surged within him. Had he failed God? What would become of his wife and children in that far-off land? How his relatives would mourn! Would the church in Nan send someone to take his place among China's Thai? "God bless those in darkness . . . receive my spirit."

But Kru Muang's time had not yet come. A passer-by recognized him and vouched to the officer that he was what he claimed to be, a missionary. He was rescued from the line before the others tumbled into the river.

Again Kru Muang heard the call. This time it was to go still farther inland, separated from the supporting influence of the American missionaries. Traveler-patients from Muang Baw, while at the Chiengrung hospital, had heard the gospel message and wished their whole tribe might hear "The Story." But the rulers of Muang Baw were not like-minded. When Kru Muang and family arrived, they were not allowed in the city. They had to shelter themselves outside the wall at the city dump. At night the city gate was closed, leaving them, without

human help, to cope with robber bands and jungle prowlers.

The chief of the tribe fell ill of what probably was malignant malaria. With this fever the patient soon falls into a comatose state and can be saved from death only by a hypodermic of quinine. This treatment was not known in Muang Baw. Hence his attendants watched their chief through this comatose condition until they thought him dead. They placed his casket at his feet, covered his body with his shroud, and arranged incense and flowers around him. Then they thought of the man outside the city wall, who had been preaching a gospel of resurrection and life eternal.

The city authorities called Kru Muang in, took him to the death chamber, and commanded him to raise the chief from the dead. Kru Muang was astounded by the demand. He felt himself trapped by his own words. What could he do? There was no doctor to consult. What should he do? Pray. Down on his knees he dropped and prayed, "O God, if it is for thy glory that this man be raised from the dead, please raise him."

The chief opened his eyes, threw off the shroud, and, seeing the incense and flowers, brushed them aside, got up, and walked out of the room—well. As a result, Kru Muang and Tiam Tah had their chance to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in the palace and elsewhere throughout the city. Today, Muang Baw has an organized Christian church.

From this second term of service in South China, Kru Muang returned to Nan completely broken in health.

After another rest, however, he plunged with his usual zeal into an intensive spiritual revival campaign, conducting his gospel team on a tour far over the border into French Cochin China.

While resting after this trip, he took charge of a small country church. From that little church, he was called to the Nan city church, the largest in that portion of Thailand, which he is serving at this writing—teacher, preacher-pastor, Kru Muang.

Louis F. Esselstyn
of Iran

by
Charles R. Murray