

**The Hennigs**  
**Missions in Kanchanaburi Province / Thailand**  
**Newsletter 06 / 2014**

**Dear friends and prayer partners,**

last week we have come to Thailand again. Our one year visa expired with the end of our work at Ban Khaosamchan school and we were promised to get visa for Christian missionaries. The processing of the visa will take some months, probably until mid of August or later. The time until the we have to spend as tourists. Tourists get tourist visa for not more than 2 months both in Thailand and in Laos, and we couldn't afford a flight to Germany now. End of March we went for 5 days to Cambodia, stayed 30 days in Thailand, spent more than 7 weeks in Laos and have now tourist visa for Thailand until Mid August. As we promised, we send you some pictures with this letter.

**Travel to Laos**

Khun Fon, the reliable person, who has worked many months in our household promised to care for our animals and plants and to air the house regularly. Thus we could leave our home on April 28<sup>th</sup> for Bangkok and to Nongkai the next day. At April 30<sup>th</sup> we entered Laos and got there a tourist visa for one month, and it was very easy to get a visa extension later in the country.

As it was clear that we had to stay more than a month in Laos, Christine sought low cost accomodation with swimming pool. For our fist nights we payed 18 Euro each, and for all others (except those two at Luang Prabang) 11 or 12 Euro, however without meals. It was the first time in the life of both of us, that we had daily access to a swimming pool directly besides our house.

During the first weeks we had to translate our last newsletter into English and send it to our English speaking Friends. As in the years before Reiner had promised to write a sheet with problems in astronomy for High School Students. This is part on an initiative to interest these students in science. (These sheets in German can be found at [www.wissenschaft-schulen.de](http://www.wissenschaft-schulen.de))

After these projects we had the time to make real holidays. Since our marriage in 2010 there had been no time for it, because our two big travels to Germany in 2011 and 2013 were both very full and very exhausting times. Now we had to leave our work in Thailand and o other obligations and could finally relax very well.

**Our time in Vientiane, the capital of Laos from April 30<sup>th</sup> to May 21<sup>st</sup>**

We spent our time there in a not so affluent quarter of the city, outside of the center of the city. There we could see some aspects of the life of the middle

and lower classes. Often we could communicate in Thai, and we even learned a bit of the Laotian language, as Thai and Lao are very closely related. We saw many Lao women who seemed to like to be women, and many men who like to be husbands. The sin, the traditional skirt for women and obligatory for female pupils is an elegant piece of clothing. To our regret we had to see that now western fashion with trousers, hot pants and very short mini skirts enters more and more, and that many faces become unhappier and less mature. Many new buildings are built in Vientiane, but we felt, that the aura of Vientiane has disappeared within few years only. That has made us very sad.

Laos is ruled by a communist party, and big posters are displayed painted in the style of Socialist Realism. Often the flag of Laos is displayed together with the red flag of the communist party, showing in gold the big symbol of hammer and sickle. Some of the school children wear the red necktie of the communist youth group, and often young adult members of the communist party wear their blue skirt with the sign of the communist party. We visited the police museum, a big prestigious building. The heart and center of this building is the statue larger than life of Kaysone Phomvihane, who brought the communist victory to Laos, and whose face smiles from all Laotian banknotes.

We attended the Church of the Holy Spirit, a English speaking church for foreigners. In their homepage they ask Laotians interested in the Christian faith to turn to a Laotian Christian Church. This church wants to be open for Christians of all denominations and we had there good services and good encounters with other Christians.

Not far from our guest house we found the office of MAG (Mine Advisory Group) an organization clearing unexploded Ordnance (UXO). During the war in Vietnam the communists brought troops and supplies to South Vietnam using routes through eastern and southern Laos. To block these supply lines the US Air Force tried to make these regions inaccessible by cluster bombs during the years 1964 - 1972. Each cluster bomb dispersed 250 submunitions ("bombelets") with the size of a tennis ball. In total about 270 Millions. When touched or shaken, these bombelets can explode even today and cause heavy casualties or often death. Lots of arable lands can't be used because of this danger. Teams of MAG clear these bombelets. They locate them by hand held magnetometers, put a small TNT charge on them and detonate them by electrical ignition from a safety distance of 30 m. In spite of their heroic efforts the teams of MAG could clear less than 2 % of these bombelets within the last 20 years. We were struck by that and have often thought about it.

Christine got very strong pains in her left cheek, and we first thought, it might be an inflammation in one of her teeth causing the pain in the region around it. We went to the Mahosot Hospital, and the doctor found out, that insects had settled in Christine's ear and caused the pain. He removed them, prescribed her some glycerine alcohol and did a follow up cleaning 3 days later. The total cost for it was the equivalent of 2.35 Euro only, but the pain was totally gone, and Christine could hear even much better with that ear, and after many years

now she can again hear the direction a sound comes from.

### **Stay at Vang Vieng from Mai 21<sup>st</sup> – Juni 10<sup>th</sup>**

We wanted to spend a time outside of the big city and found a very low cost guest house with swimming pool on the countryside near the town of Vang Vieng. When we arrived we were offered a room with two double beds for 11 Euro per night only, and we took it. We had a wide view towards north and mountain ranges east and west. We had a bakery as neighbour and a market about 1.5 km distant. In the town of Vang Vieng, 3 km distant from us, has no sights, but many hotels, guest houses, and shops, all for tourists. We saw may be more tourists than local people, and we were shocked seeing many tourists who didn't respect Laotian moral standards.

### **Trip to Luang Prabang from June 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>**

We did make a short trip by bus to Luang Prabang. It was one of the residences of the Lao kongs and has a well preserved old city, that is acknowledged as world cultural heritage. The bus travel took 6 hours, and we decided to have 2 nights and one full day there and the way back on the third day. With the bus we went through a very thinly populated mountainous region. We saw corn fields on steep slopes and a number of poor villages with the houses attached to the road at the inner side and supported at the outer side by beams several meters long down to the slope outside. Laos has 2 / 3 of the surface of Germany, but only less than 7 million inhabitants. Of these live more than 800 000 in the capital Vientiane. Only 4 % of the surface is arable land. Laos is a lovable country, but very poor, with very little industry and low revenues for the state.

At Luang Prabang we slept in a guest house within the old city. We saw many beautiful houses in the old style and visited the former palace of the Lao king, now a national museum. In the palace garden there is a gorgeous Buddhist temple, and in the center of the entrance is an elevated seat for a senior Buddhist monk to lead Buddhist ceremonies here. That made it very clear, that Buddhism was seen as basis of the royal rule. Reception hall behind the entrance hall was splendidly decorated by glass mosaics and a golden throne for the king. And in a hall besides all the gifts of foreign powers to the king were exposed. The private rooms of the king, however, a library, two sleeping rooms and a dining room were quite modest.

In Luang Prabang the proprietor told us, that many big hotels are bought by foreigners, and many houses by Chinese people. We could see the increasing influence of rich China in poor Laos by the many Chinese writings in public, by Chinese restaurants mainly for Chinese customers and by a beautiful big Chinese bookstore we visited in Vientiane.

### **In Vientiane again from June 10<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup>**

After our return from Luang Prabang we spent some days at Vang Vieng. At June 10<sup>th</sup> we returned to our old guest house at Vientiane to prepare our return to Thailand. We had to give reasons, why we needed more than 30 days to stay as tourists in the country. We saw this time without any other obligations as a chance to have longer visits with friends and to see more of Thailand. We contacted some of our friends and got invitations, that made it possible to get tourist visa for 60 days. As we were not in a hurry, we could cross the border at June 17<sup>th</sup> and go to sleep at Khon Kaen. On June 18<sup>th</sup> we took a bus from Khon Kaen directly to Kanchanaburi and could go the whole way in daylight and could use a songtaew from Kanchanaburi to our home the same day.

### **Back at Lum Sum**

When we came to our home we found everything in order, Khun Fon had worked very well. After more than 7 weeks absence we had to unpack a lot of things and put back into their place. The next day came teenagers we support, and the day after Khun Kanitha with her 3 children and stayed 2 hours. In the afternoon 3 other children came. Sunday morning 7 children came and stayed until the midday meal. We hadn't planned a Sunday service at Sunday afternoon, but as Ploi and 3 children came for it, we held a service and Reiner preached. During the following week we went two times to Kanchanaburi for buying things and one day to Bangkok to get there our new passports, because our old passports had become full within four years only because of the many visa we had to get during this time.

### **What comes next?**

Next Wednesday we go to Chiang Mai for one or two weeks to see close friends there. And Reiner wants to see the North of Thailand, a region he never had the occasion to see. Afterwards we shall go to Phuket to see Kanda Poochiewchanvit, who had travelled with us in Germany last year. And we plan to visit Pumarin Klabjai. God must lead us whom else we ought to visit during the next months. As soon as our missionary visa are ready, we have to get them at the royal Thai embassy at Phnom Penh (Cambodia).

### **Persoinal things about us**

God has put into our hearts that we like to stay in Thailand and in our village. The uncertainty, whether we shall get our missionary visa and the tourist visa needed before, was very hard for us. And it was during our time in Laos only, that we realized, how exhausted we were by all the things during the years before. And it is a big pain for us to see, how little many Christians claim and use the things God has already purchased for them through the death of Christ.

We are grateful that we could pay our whole travel. We are grateful, that we

could understand so much about the country. When we were away, the military has taken over the power in Thailand. That has had no negative effects for us. In the new situation, too, we want to serve Thailand and especially the rural population.

Our calling from God has become to us clearer and dearer. The love between us both has grown. We have more courage than before and are more resolved to go on the way God leads us. We believe that God's way with us is the very best way. We stick to our calling and we continue to believe that God will bring the children village into existence.

**We are very grateful for the connection with with you.**

**Yours sincerely *Christine und Reiner Hennig***

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### **Bank Accounts:**

#### **In Germany:**

**Dr. Reiner Hennig und Christine Margarete Hennig**  
**Account Nr. 5403753110**  
**ING-DiBa (BLZ 500 105 17)**  
**BIC-/SWIFT-Code: INGDDEFF**

We can withdraw cash from this account via ATM in Thailand. The expenses for it are much less than for a transfer from a German account to a Thai account.

#### **In Thailand:**

**Mr. Reiner Georg Dr. Hennig**  
**Mrs. Christine Margarete Hennig**

**Kasikorn Bank**

**Office Kanchanaburi**  
**A/C NO. 221 - 2 - 94827 - 9**

**Mr. Reiner Georg Dr. Hennig**  
**Mrs. Christine Margarete Hennig**

**ธนาคารกสิกรไทย,**

**สาขากาญจนบุรี,**  
**A/C NO. 221 - 2 - 94827 - 9**

**Animism,  
spirit worship  
and  
Theravada-  
Buddhism**



**Flowers, soft drinks, fruits, puppets and animal figurines are offered here.**



**Tiger, horse, elephant and zebra, all in pairs symbolize power to protect the village.**

**in Thailand and Laos**



**The place of offering to the spirit of our village Ban Khaosamchan**



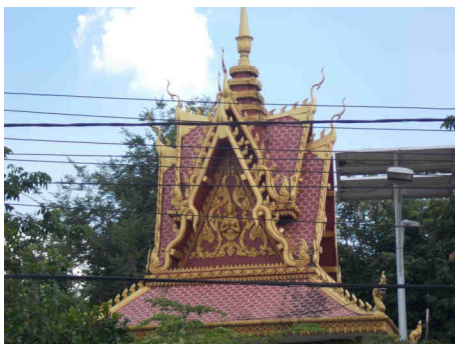
**Here candles and incense sticks are offered to the spirit of the tree.**



**Very poor people offer to the spirit of the tree by fastening some clots of sticky rice to the tree.**



**Little houses for the spirits of the house stand in front of every house of a Buddhist family. Here they are sold in various color and sizes.**



**Magnificent roof of a Buddhist temple**



**Buddha statues at the place of offering in our village Ban Khaosamchan**



**Gorgeous Buddhist temple in the garden of the Royal Palace at Luang Prabang**

# Lao PDR

## Lao People's Democratic Republic



*Poster at the Army Museum in Vientiane*



*Police Museum Vientiane, an example of including Laotian traditions into modern buildings*



*Mini skirts and hot pants not wanted here: Placard at a district office of the communist party in Vientiane*

## Laos – pictures from villages and cities



*Typical village street*



*Restaurant*



*going home*



*Vangvieng: Footbridge across the river*



*Vangvieng: View from our room*



*at a mountain pass: The right side of this house is supported by long beams.*



*Luang Prabang: Old city*



*Luang Prabang: Old city*

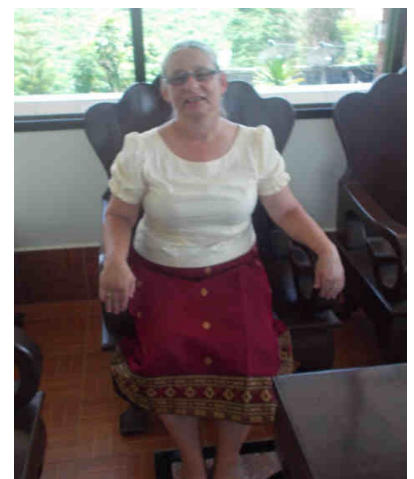


*Vientiane: Modernity devours old beauty.*

**With these pictures we say Good Bye until the next letter.**



*Reiner at the Computer*



*Christine in Lao clothes: Blouse and Sin (Lao Silk).*