

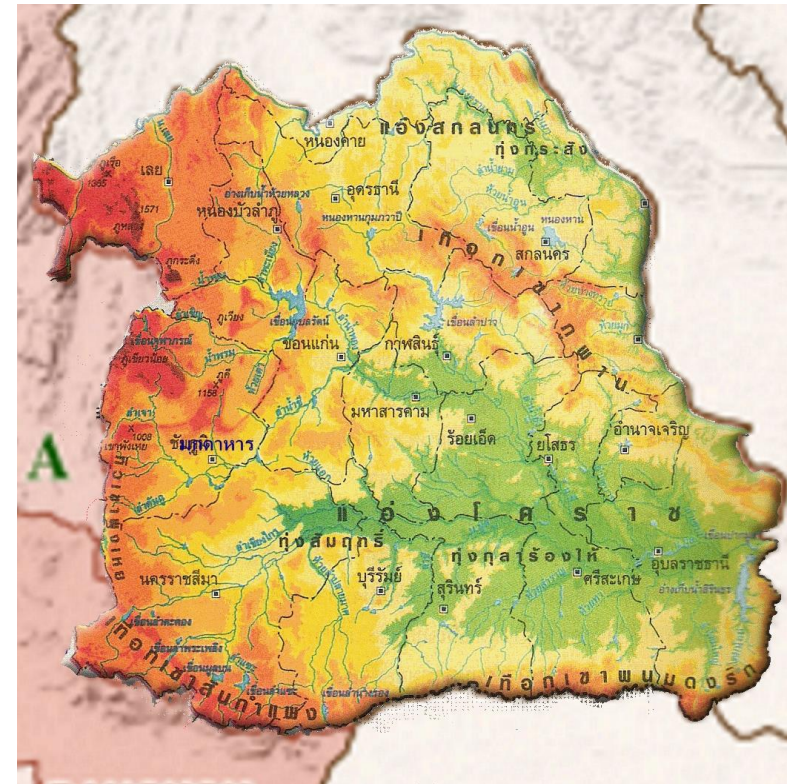
The Daily Struggles of the *Khon Isan* in a Time of Radical Economical Change: An Analysis of Khongrak Khamphairot's Poetry Collection *Phleng Mae Nam*

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(presentation adapted for PDF)

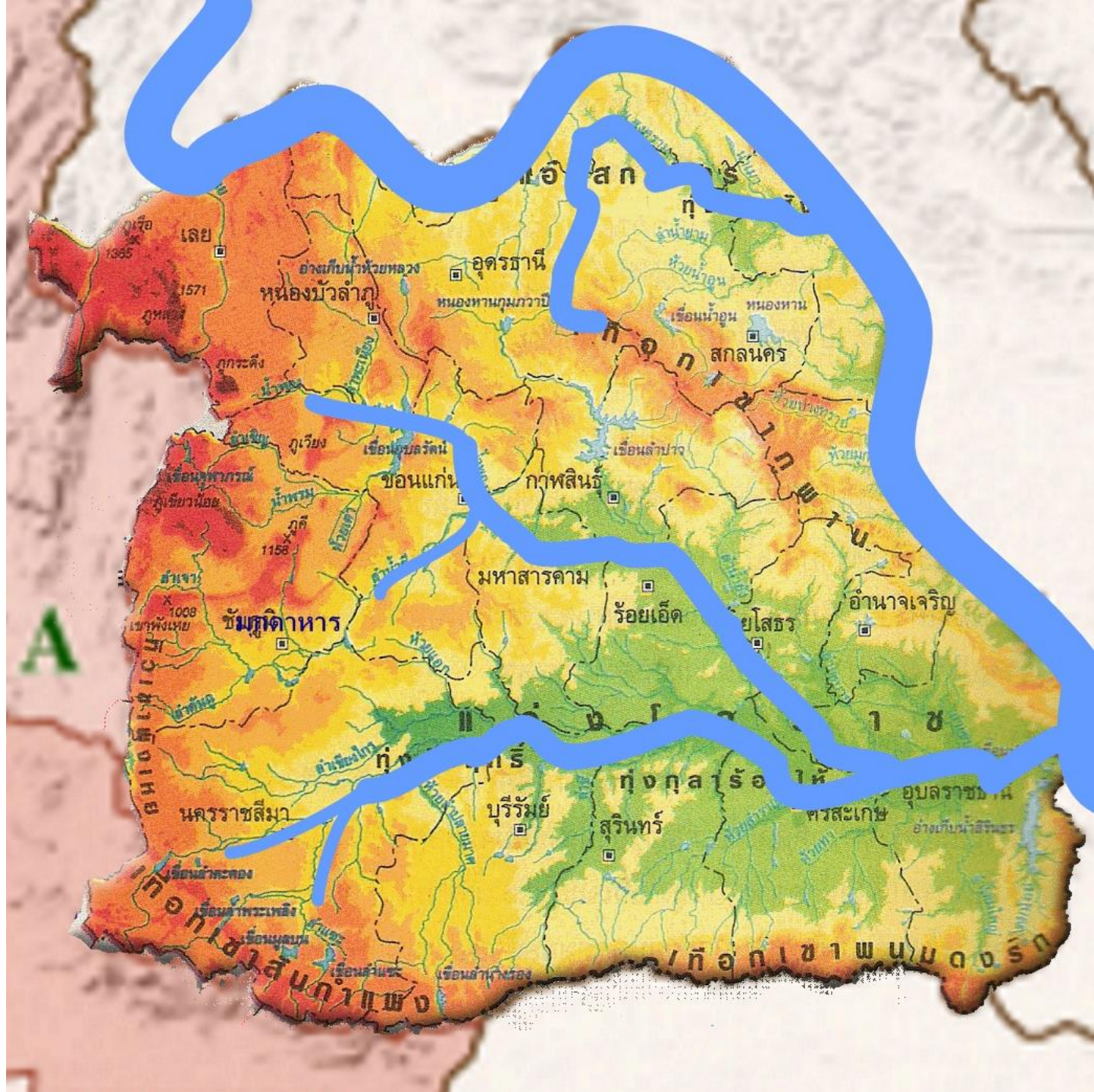
STRUCTURE

- ❖ The „Isan“
- ❖ Modern Isan-Literature
- ❖ Khongrak Khamphairot
- ❖ Poetry Collection: Phleng Mae Nam
- ❖ Conclusion



THE „ISAN“

- Northeast Thailand
- Bordering Laos and Cambodia
- Ethnic Lao
- Extreme weather conditions depending on the season: flooding and draught
- Economically the poorest region of Thailand



MODERN ISAN LITERATURE

- Literature as an important aspect of culture
- Through literature we can learn about a region, its people and their way of thinking at a specific time
- Modern Isan literature in the context of modern Thai literature in general
- Started in the 1950s
- „Isan literature“ = literature written by „Isan authors“
- Who counts as an „Isan author“?

KHONGRAK KHAMPHAIROT

- “Isan author”
- Pen name of Phairot Inthachai
- Born 1978 close to Nongkhai at the Mekong riverbank
- Looking for work in Bangkok
- Deep emotional attachment with his place of origin
- “Fish of two waters”



POETRY COLLECTION: PHLENG MAE NAM

- Translation: Song of the river
- 58 poems, over 200 pages
- Divided into three sections:
 - Phak Ton Nam: Phleng Khong Pho
 - Phak Klang Nam: Phleng Ban — Phleng Mueang
 - Phak Play Nam: Phleng Mae Nam
- Portraying the daily struggles of the Khon Isan under different conditions/in different phases of life

กากระเขียนสำนักพิมพ์

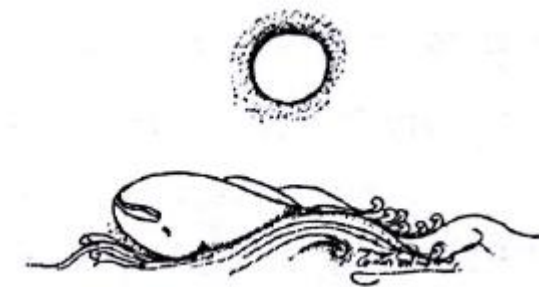


กวีนิพนธ์เล่มล่าสุดของผู้เขียน 'กะนั่งถึงบ้าน ขณะฝันในเมือง'

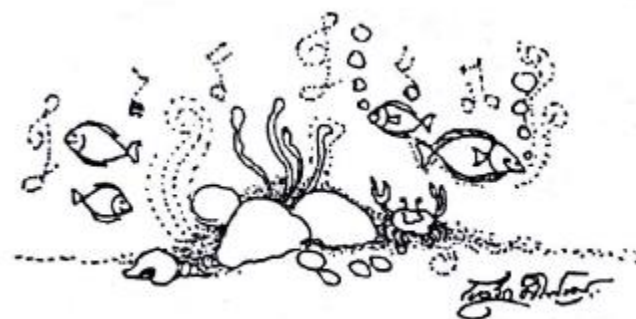
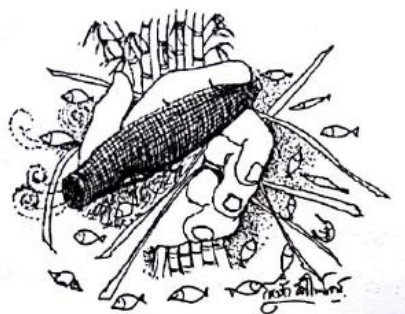
เพลงแม่น้ำ

โขงรัก คำไพโรจน์

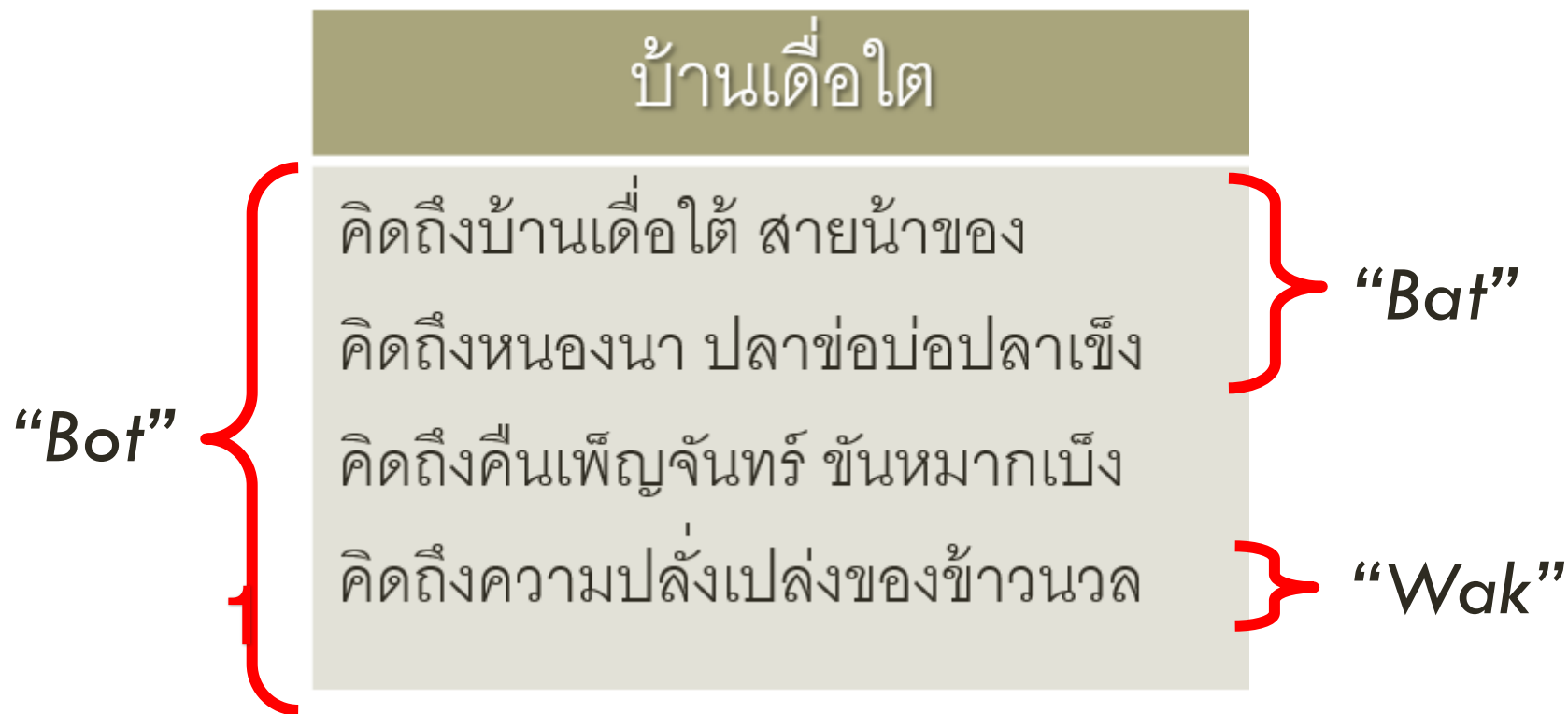
EXAMPLE FOR A POEM (EXCERP)



บ้านदैอไต	ban duea tai	Ban Duea Tai
คิดถึงบ้านदैอไต สายน้ำของ คิดถึงหนองนา ปลาช่อป่อปลาเข็ง คิดถึงคืนเพ็ญจันทร์ ชันหมากเบ็ง คิดถึงความปลั่งเปล่งของข้าวนวล	khit thueng ban duea tai sai nam khong khit thueng nongna pla kho bo pla kheng khit thueng khuen phen chan khan mak beng khit thueng khwam plang pleng khong khao nuan	I miss Ban Duea Tai, the Mekong I miss the swamps and the rice fields, the Kho fish and the breeding pond of the Kheng fish I miss the nights of the full moon, forming banana leaves I miss the shine and the shimmering of the white rice



STRUCTURE OF A POEM (KLON)



STRUCTURE OF A POEM (KLON, KLON PAET)

ban duea tai

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

khit thueng ban duea tai sai nam khong

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (9)

khit thueng nongna pla kho bo pla kheng

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

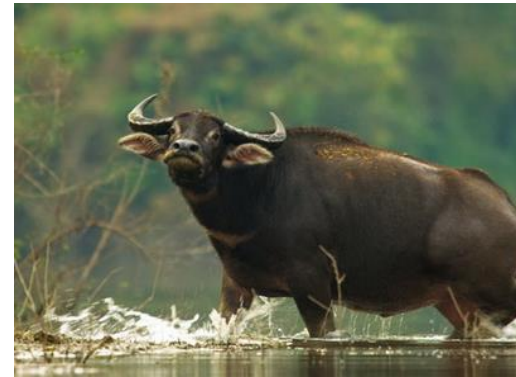
khit thueng khuen phen chan khan mak beng

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

khit thueng khwam plang pleng khong khao nuan

THE BEGINNING OF THE RIVER: THE FATHER'S SONG

- About the life on the countryside in the Isan, at the Mekong river bank
- Focus on the father's activities and the relationship between father and son
- Analysis of the poem: „Tamnan Duean“ („The legend of the moon“)



THE MIDDLE OF THE RIVER: SONG OF HOME — SONG OF THE CITY

- Comparison between life on the countryside and life in a big city/the capital
- Fight for survival of the Khon Isan far away from home
- Analysis of the poem: „Chao Phraya Nai Duang Ta Khapachao“ („The Chao Phraya in my eyes“)



END OF THE RIVER: SONG OF THE RIVER

- Focus on the relationship with the mother (both biological mother and the river = mother)
- Economical development and growth of the Isan, huge changes
- Analysis of the poems: „Cak Mae Khong Thueng Songkhram“ („From Mekong to Songkhram“) and „Ban Duea Tai“





CONCLUSION

- Beautiful poetry collection about the life in the Isan during a time, in which the region and its people experienced not only many hardships, but also faced a lot of change
- Partly autobiographical, close to reality, drawing from real experiences and history
- Vivid descriptions, mentioning of striking symbols and distinct traditions, that evoke a feeling of familiarity and personal associations – or curiosity
- The poems are able to show history on an emotional level and thus, opens this topic up to a new audience: More people can be reached and consequently think about issues that they didn't think of before
- Hopeful mood, development/change is not to be seen one-sidedly (only negatively), posing questions
- One does not have to abandon and neglect their own home and roots, just because of a (temporary) move elsewhere

SOURCES FOR THE PICTURES

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